



22 September 2025

Aaron Humphreys

s7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Aaron,

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) 1987

We refer to your official information request received on 3 September 2025, in which you asked for information about the “40 RFI max policy,” including when and how this policy was introduced and how it was publicised.

On 5 September, we acknowledged your request and asked for clarification. Later that day, you responded and explained that your query related to a recent experience where your building consent application was refused and returned to you after the number of Requests for Further Information (RFIs) exceeded 40. You advised that you were informed this was due to an internal policy, and you asked to see evidence of this, including when it was introduced and how it was communicated to the public or to professionals who regularly engage with the consenting team.

On 15 September, you contacted Council to request that a response to your information request be expedited ahead of a meeting with your client on 16 September. While this request was passed on to the relevant team, unfortunately it did not allow sufficient time to gather and confirm the necessary information. We advised you of this and confirmed that your request would continue to be managed in line with the LGOIMA legislation.

Answer:

On 12 May 2025, a Continuous Improvement initiative (CI-615) was raised in response to growing concerns about the volume of RFIs and the need for multiple RFI rounds. These concerns included the impact on statutory timeframes and on costs to customers when addressing Building Code compliance issues.

Following discussion at a quality assurance meeting, it was agreed that clear criteria and guidance should be developed to support officers in making refusal decisions where applications are of poor quality. A draft update to the internal refusal work instruction was subsequently prepared, including a new section titled "Criteria for Refusal Decisions." This draft is currently under review by team leaders and the technical leader and is expected to be formally introduced within the next week.

In the interim, officers have been instructed to consult with their team leader before making a technical decision to refuse an application that generates a significant number of RFIs. During informal discussions, 40 RFIs was considered a reasonable threshold for what may be deemed "significant." Several applications have been refused since May on this basis, following consultation with team leaders.

In relation to your specific application, the team has confirmed that a thorough analysis of the RFIs was undertaken and that, based on the findings, the refusal decision was considered appropriate.

At this stage, we are not releasing the draft internal work instruction, as it remains under active consideration and has not yet been formally adopted. Should you wish to request this document once finalised, you are welcome to do so.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: [Office of the Ombudsman - Complaints](#), or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response to your information request may be published on Hutt City Council's website: [Proactive releases - Hutt City Council](#).

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R van der Splinter', written in a cursive style.

Rebekah van der Splinter

Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy