

13 March 2024

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2024-018

I refer to your request for information dated 14 February 2024, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 14 February 2024. You have requested the following:

"Please supply the following information related to Te Whanganui-a-tara Whaitua for the Long-Term Plan periods 2018-2028, 2021-2031 and 2024-2034:

- 1. A schedule of committee members, their meeting attendance records and remuneration costs (if not already a paid public official).*
- 2. The cost of meeting facility hire, including catering, for all committee meetings.*
- 3. The cost of secretarial support for the committee.*
- 4. The estimated time and cost for council officers attending to the needs of the committee.*
- 5. The cost of specialist investigations, reports, and external consultant contributions to meet the needs of the committee.*
- 6. The costs incurred by WWL to support the work of the committee and how these were funded.*
- 7. An estimate of the cost and timeframe for Upper Hutt City and Hutt City to implement the recommendations of the committee."*

Greater Wellington's response follows:

On 28 February 2024, Nicola Patrick (Director Catchment) emailed you about item 7 of your request advising that Greater Wellington would not have the necessary information to provide an answer. You replied on 29 February 2024 agreeing to withdraw item 7.

The Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Committee (Whaitua Committee) held its first meeting on 8 February 2018 and was disbanded on 23 September 2021. Our response covers the 2018-2028 and 2021-2031 Long Term Plan (LTP) periods. The 2024-2034 LTP is out of scope.

We note that the much of the work to support the Whaitua Committee was also to support other related work programmes. Technical analysis and reports, for example, were prepared as evidence for Proposed Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region and were also drawn on by the Whaitua Committee. The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) requires councils to set water quality targets in the regional plan underpinned by rigorous freshwater accounting and modelling.

This meant that work undertaken for the plan change as required by the NPSFM, was also used by the Whaitua Committee. We highlight this to help you understand that the costs you are seeking are not easily assigned to the Whaitua Committee itself as it is not possible to separate out the costs of servicing the Whaitua Committee from the plan change process.

The Whaitua Programme also contributes to Council's partnership commitments with mana whenua and working relationships with agencies such as territorial authorities. It also provides opportunities for community members to actively be involved in council decision-making.

We suggest that a proportionate amount of 50 percent of the overall costs provided to you could be reasonably considered to be for the Whaitua Committee, with the other 50 percent for the plan change.

Our response includes references to the Whaitua Implementation Plan (WIP) and Whaitua Committee meeting records which can be found at the following links.

WIP: https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2021/12/Te-Whaitua-te-Whanganui-a-Tara-Implementation-Programme_web.pdf

Committee meeting records: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/whaitua-te-whanganui-a-tara/whaitua-te-whanganui-a-tara-committee-meetings/>

1. A schedule of committee members, their meeting attendance records and remuneration costs (if not already a paid public official)

- Page 12 of the WIP provides a list of the committee members.
- The committee meeting records include a record of attendance.

- Honoraria was paid to members who were not already paid elected officials. Remuneration costs were as follows:
 - 2018-2028 LTP: \$300,000 (incl GST)
 - 2021-2031 LTP: \$30,000 (incl GST)

2. The cost of meeting facility hire, including catering, for all committee meetings

There were a total of 25 full day in-person meetings and field trips in the 2018-2028 LTP period and one in the 2021-2031 LTP period. Other shorter meetings online did not incur facility or hire costs.

Meeting venues varied. 14 were held in a council or associated agency premise and did not incur hire costs. 12 meetings required a venue hire fee which varied but was on average \$600/day.

Catering costs were subject to Greater Wellington's Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure Policy with a cap of \$35 per person per day (for morning and afternoon tea, and lunch). Attendance numbers varied at each meeting, but there were on average 25 people including Whaitua Committee members and supporting officers. For each meeting, we have calculated the catering costs to be 25 (people) multiplied by \$35 (per head).

Meeting facility hire and catering costs were as follows:

- 2018-2028 LTP: \$29,075 + GST
- 2021-2031 LTP: \$875 + GST

3. The cost of secretarial support for the committee

Secretarial support for the committee was provided by Greater Wellington officers as part of their BAU work for the Whaitua Committee. This cost is covered in our response to part four of your request.

4. The estimated time and cost for council officers attending to the needs of the committee

Committee support was led out of Greater Wellington's policy department. Other regular contributions were provided from science, iwi liaison and operational departments (e.g., flood protection and land management). Junior and senior staff were involved. Over the lifetime of the Whaitua project, 15 council officers worked directly or indirectly on the project, ranging from a few hours a week to 30 hours a week. There is also significant variance in salaries in the different positions of the staff over the 2019 to 2021 period. Staff also work on a number of projects concurrently and do not code time to specific tasks. This means that the time and cost of council officers is not able to be derived. Other services were provided from across council (e.g., democratic services, communications) as required. This is considered BAU and relatively minor.

It is therefore necessary to refuse this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) that the information requested is

not held by Greater Wellington and we have no grounds for believing that the information is either

–

- (i) Held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation; or
- (ii) Connected more closely with the functions of another local authority, or a department, or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

5. The cost of specialist investigations, reports, and external consultant contributions to meet the needs of the committee

External consultant contributions to explicitly meet the needs of the committee included meeting facilitation and technical advice in meetings. As noted in the introduction, many of the other specialist investigations, reports, and external consultant contributions were to support council's development of the plan change as well as the Waitua Committee.

The cost of specialist investigations, reports, and external consultant contributions to meet the needs of the committee (and other related work) was as follows:

- 2018-2028 LTP:
 - Consultants – \$151,400 + GST and \$342,745 + GST
 - Investigations - \$465,650 + GST
- 2021-2031 LTP: \$6,420 + GST

6. The costs incurred by WWL to support the work of the committee and how these were funded

Greater Wellington does not hold this part of the request. We have consulted Wellington Water Limited and further correspondence will be provided by them.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Lian Butcher

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao | Group Manager Environment

PROACTIVE RELEASE