

2 February 2024

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-24790

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe

Request for information 2023-309

I refer to your request for information dated 19 December 2023 which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 19 December 2023. You have requested the following:

*"I request the following information for the **2022/23 Financial Year**:*

1. **Average residential rates**

- *The average residential costs of rates and other Council charges, where **average residential costs = $(X + Y) / Z$** . Please ensure that the figures used (X, Y, and Z) are disclosed in the response, where:*
 - *X is the total of all rates (general and targeted) charged by the Council to residential rating units;*
 - *Y is the total amount of user charges or levies applicable to residential rating units (for example charges relating to metered water, infrastructure contributions, refuse collection, fire protection etc.); and*
 - *Z is the number of residential rating units (however defined by the Council) within the Council's district or city. If the Council does not have a classification for residential, please use the closest definition (such as urban).*
 - *Please do not include Council charges that are not part of the rates demand (for example retail sales of Council rubbish bags).*
- *If possible, the median residential rates payment by residential units.*

2. **Average non-residential rates**

- *The average non-residential costs of rates and other Council charges, where **average non-residential costs = $(X + Y) / Z$** . Please ensure that the figures used (X, Y, and Z) are disclosed in the response, where:*
 - *X is the total of all rates (general and targeted) charged by the Council to rating units except those defined as residential*;*
 - *Y is the total amount of user charges or levies applicable to rating units except those defined as residential* (for example, charges related to metered water, infrastructure contributions, refuse collection, fire protection etc); and*
 - *Z is the number of rating units except those defined as residential* (however defined by the Council) within the Council's district or city. If the Council does not have a classification for non-residential, please use the closest definition (such as commercial).*

- Please do not include Council charges that are not part of the rates demand (for example, retail sales of Council rubbish bags).
- If possible, the median non-residential rates payment for the council.
 - *Please ensure that this definition matches that used to calculate average residential rates so that the respective X values of both requests add up to total rates income for the 2021/2022 Financial Year.**

3. Personnel

- The total number of staff dismissed due to poor performance.
- If applicable, the FTE number of staff employed by council-controlled organisations.
- If applicable, the total FTE number of staff employed by the council, excluding council-controlled organisations.
- The total number of staff (non-FTE, including casual staff)
- The total number of staff including those employed by council-controlled organisations receiving remuneration in excess of \$100,000.
- The total number of staff including those employed by council-controlled organisations receiving remuneration in excess of \$200,000.

3.1. Management

- The FTE number of managers employed.
 - The Taxpayer's Union defines a manager as: any staff member who is responsible for a team of staff, or who has an employee/employees reporting to them and organises them to achieve their department's or organisation's specified goal. The Chief Executive team is included in this definition.
- The ratio of management to total staff numbers.
- The average and median salary of a manager.

3.2. Communications

- The FTE number of communications & marketing staff employed.
- The average and median salary of communications & marketing staff.

3.3. Consultants & contractors

- Total expenditure on consultants and contractors. Please ensure that this includes CAPEX and OPEX spending. (Figure D)
- Total number of consultants and contractors paid (Figure E)
- The average payment for consultant or contractor services. This is calculated by dividing Figure D by Figure E.

3.4. Core services

- The FTE number of staff employed to work on the delivery of local services.
 - The Taxpayer's Union defines Infrastructure FTE as staff who are directly responsible for maintaining council assets and physical services, including biosecurity, collection of biological data, natural hazards/monitoring of the environment, and Civil Defence Emergency Management (if applicable).
- The FTE number of staff employed to provide regulatory functions.
 - The Taxpayer's Union defines Regulatory FTE as staff who are directly responsible for upkeeping and enforcing council functions and income, including building, resource and planning consents, compliance monitoring, enforcement of bylaws and rules, and democracy services.
- The FTE number of staff employed in customer-facing roles.

- *The Taxpayer's Union defines Customer Service FTE as staff who are directly responsible for communicating and providing aid for members of the public, such as pest and weed control services, environmental health hotlines, and receptionists at council offices, whether in person or by phone.*

4. Audit and Risk Oversight

- *How many members are on the Council's Audit and Risk Committee (or equivalent)?*
- *Of those members, how many are elected and how many are independent of the council?*
- *Is the Chair of the Committee an independent member?*
- *Does the Council have a lawyer (with a current practising certificate) on the Committee?*
- *Does the Council have an accountant (with a current practising certificate) on the Committee?*
- *Does the Council have a code of conduct requiring political neutrality from Council staff?*

5. Payments to third parties

- *The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to any Chamber of Commerce, including GST.*
- *The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), including GST.*
- *The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to Taituarā (New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM)), including GST.*

6. Debt

- *Net debt (total for the council) as a percent of rates income*
- *The dollar amount of debt per rating unit*
- *The dollar amount of interest paid per rating unit"*

Greater Wellington's response follows:

We have provided the following answers to your questions. If you require more information, our Annual Plan¹ and Annual Report² which are published on the Greater Wellington website contain much of the information you have requested here.

Part 1: Average residential rates

a The average residential costs of rates and other Council charges

¹ <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2022/07/Greater-Wellington-Annual-Plan-2022-23.pdf>

² https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2023/11/Annual-Report-2023-final-version_30-Nov.pdf

These tables from the 2022/23 Annual Report show our residential rates across the Region.

Residential, including GST	Average capital value	Increase in 2022/23	Increase per week	Rates 2022/23	Rates per week	% Increase
Wellington city	\$1,269,140	\$153	\$2.95	\$826	\$15.89	22.8%
Hutt city	\$632,628	\$87	\$1.67	\$800	\$15.38	12.2%
Upper Hutt city	\$587,865	\$54	\$1.04	\$702	\$13.50	8.4%
Porirua city	\$671,620	\$45	\$0.87	\$698	\$13.43	6.9%
Kāpiti Coast district excl Ōtaki	\$746,864	\$99	\$1.91	\$719	\$13.83	16.0%
Ōtaki rating area	\$517,959	\$44	\$0.84	\$411	\$7.90	11.9%
Masterton district	\$480,729	\$36	\$0.70	\$315	\$6.05	13.1%
Carterton district	\$507,132	\$46	\$0.89	\$355	\$6.83	14.9%
South Wairarapa district	\$608,575	\$37	\$0.71	\$407	\$7.83	9.9%

2022/23 residential region-wide rates, for an average value residential property

	General rate		River management rate		Public transport rate		Economic development rate		Total region-wide rates	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Wellington city	\$330.73	\$400.91	\$0.71	\$0.70	\$325.60	\$407.63	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$673.14	\$826.49
Hutt city	\$275.11	\$319.38	\$108.25	\$127.32	\$313.04	\$335.56	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$712.50	\$799.51
Upper Hutt city	\$259.08	\$297.74	\$62.66	\$65.58	\$310.00	\$321.43	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$647.84	\$702.00
Porirua city	\$286.31	\$324.95	\$3.04	\$2.42	\$347.44	\$353.51	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$652.89	\$698.14
Kāpiti Coast district excl Ōtaki	\$288.49	\$329.08	\$55.93	\$65.71	\$259.50	\$307.18	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$620.02	\$719.22
Ōtaki rating area	\$199.36	\$228.22	\$38.65	\$45.57	\$113.01	\$119.66	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$367.12	\$410.70
Masterton district	\$185.34	\$205.23	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$77.01	\$92.33	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$278.45	\$314.81
Carterton district	\$195.24	\$225.43	\$3.93	\$3.95	\$93.96	\$108.71	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$309.23	\$355.34
South Wairarapa district	\$231.66	\$258.89	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$122.55	\$130.92	\$16.10	\$17.25	\$370.31	\$407.06

b If possible, the median residential rates payment by residential units

Greater Wellington does not currently hold information containing the median residential rates payments by residential units as the Territorial Authorities collect all rates payments on our behalf. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) on the basis 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.

Part 2: Average non-residential rates

a The average non-residential costs of rates and other Council charges

Greater Wellington does not produce or report on the average non-residential costs, broken down by funding areas, such as the general and targeted rates, as we do for the residential rating categories (above).

The following tables outline the average cost of rates for non-residential rating categories; rural and business.

Rural, excluding GST	Average capital value	Increase in 2022/23	Increase per week	Rates 2022/23	Rates per week	% Increase
Wellington city	\$1,542,000	\$81	\$1.55	\$547	\$10.52	17.3%
Hutt city	\$883,000	\$79	\$1.52	\$660	\$12.68	13.6%
Upper Hutt city	\$881,000	\$51	\$0.99	\$594	\$11.42	9.5%
Porirua city	\$1,335,000	\$54	\$1.04	\$734	\$14.12	7.9%
Kāpiti Coast district	\$981,000	\$64	\$1.23	\$554	\$10.65	13.0%
Masterton district	\$989,000	\$34	\$0.66	\$461	\$8.87	8.0%
Carterton district	\$1,047,000	\$52	\$0.99	\$517	\$9.95	11.1%
South Wairarapa district	\$1,193,000	\$43	\$0.83	\$558	\$10.72	8.3%
Tararua district	\$1,598,000	\$75	\$1.43	\$643	\$12.37	13.1%

These projected rates exclude the targeted river management rates that are not charged to all ratepayers

Business, excluding GST	Average capital value	Increase in 2022/23	Increase per week	Rates 2022/23	Rates per week	% Increase
Wellington city	\$3,533,000	\$329	\$6.33	\$2,771	\$53.29	13.5%
Wellington city - CBD	\$3,943,000	(\$225)	(\$4.33)	\$10,155	\$195.29	-2.2%
Hutt city	\$2,089,000	\$342	\$6.57	\$2,695	\$51.83	14.5%
Upper Hutt city	\$1,886,000	\$206	\$3.96	\$2,316	\$44.54	9.8%
Porirua city	\$1,748,000	\$145	\$2.79	\$1,901	\$36.55	8.3%
Kāpiti Coast district	\$1,363,000	\$215	\$4.14	\$1,369	\$26.33	18.7%
Masterton district	\$1,292,000	\$130	\$2.49	\$969	\$18.64	15.4%
Carterton district	\$567,000	\$75	\$1.45	\$454	\$8.73	19.9%
South Wairarapa district	\$912,000	\$89	\$1.71	\$700	\$13.47	14.5%

These projected rates exclude the targeted river management rates that are not charged to all ratepayers

b If possible, the median non-residential rates payment for the council.

Greater Wellington does not currently hold information containing the median non-residential rates payments by residential units as the Territorial Authorities collect all rates payments on our behalf.

We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Act on the basis 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.

Part 3: Personnel

a The total number of staff dismissed due to poor performance.

No Greater Wellington or Wellington Water staff were dismissed due to poor performance.

b If applicable, the FTE number of staff employed by council-controlled organisations.

Wellington Water Ltd is a Greater Wellington CCO. The total FTE in 2022/23 was 319.39

c If applicable, the total FTE number of staff employed by the council, excluding council-controlled organisations.

There were 656.86 FTE at Greater Wellington in 2022/23.

d The total number of staff (non-FTE, including casual staff)

Greater Wellington details are in the table below. Wellington Water has 327 employees.

e The total number of staff including those employed by council-controlled organisations receiving remuneration in excess of \$100,000.

Greater Wellington details are in the table below. Wellington Water has 117 employees earning over \$100,000.

f The total number of staff including those employed by council-controlled organisations receiving remuneration in excess of \$200,000.

Greater Wellington details are in the table below. Wellington Water has nine employees earning over \$200,000.

The following table identifies the number of full-time employees, including employees on maternity leave and their fixed term replacements, and the full time equivalent number of all other part time, fixed term and casual employees as at the end of the reporting period, 30 June 2023.

Employee remuneration	Number of employees	
	2023	2022
\$60,000 and below	15	47
\$60,001 - \$79,999	142	183
\$80,000 - \$99,999	193	170
\$100,000 - \$119,999	121	109
\$120,000 - \$139,999	86	73
\$140,000 - \$159,999	37	23
\$160,000 - \$179,999	31	26
\$180,000 - \$199,999	24	13
\$200,000 - \$239,999	14	10
\$240,000 - \$440,000	15	8
Total employees	678	662
The number of full time employees as at 30 June	606	600
The full time equivalent number of all other non-full time employees	51	46
The number of employees receiving total remuneration of less than \$60,000	15	47

A full time employee or full time equivalent is based on a 40 hour week.

Total annual remuneration has been calculated to include any non-financial benefits and other payments in excess of normal remuneration such as employer KiwiSaver contribution.

If the number of employees for any band was 5 or less then it has been combined with the next highest band. Including the Chief Executive, the top band range is \$240,000 - \$440,000.

3.1 Management

- a *The FTE number of managers employed. (The Taxpayer's Union defines a manager as: any staff member who is responsible for a team of staff, or who has an employee/employees reporting to them and organises them to achieve their department's or organisation's specified goal. The Chief Executive team is included in this definition.)*

There were 163.29 FTE managers at Greater Wellington in 2022/23

- b *The ratio of management to total staff numbers.*

There were 165 (people leaders) to 513 (general staff) at Greater Wellington in 2022/23

- c *The average and median salary of a manager.*

The below figures are base salary for managers:

Average: \$143,793

Median: \$138,183

3.2 Communications

a The FTE number of communications & marketing staff employed.

There were 30.5 FTE's working in the 'communications & marketing' part of the business.

b The average and median salary of communications & marketing staff.

The below figures are base salary for 'communications & marketing' staff:

Average: \$97,445

Median: \$88,419

3.3 Consultants and contractors

a Total expenditure on consultants and contractors. Please ensure that this includes CAPEX and OPEX spending. (Figure D)

	Council			Group	
	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual 2022 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual 2022 \$'000
Contractors and Consultants	86,727	84,468	74,771	110,952	95,121

b Total number of consultants and contractors paid

Consultants and contractors are paid in different ways depending on their contract. In 2022/23, 46 contractors were paid via our payroll and the rest were paid via finance. There is not a separate creditor account for contractors paid via finance, so we are unable to provide this level of detail. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under 17(g) of the Act on the basis 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.

c The average payment for consultant or contractor services.

There is a large range of payment methods for consultants and/or contracted services such as invoicing, payroll, or third-party payments. Because of this the average payment information for consultant or contractor services would need to be created which we are not obligated to do under the Act. Therefore, we are refusing this part of your request under 17(g) of the Act on the basis 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.

3.4 Core Services

a *The FTE number of staff employed to work on the delivery of local services.*

There were 220.75 FTE staff employed to work on the delivery of local services in 2022/23

b *The FTE number of staff employed to provide regulatory functions.*

There were 39.65 FTE staff employed to provide regulatory functions in 2022/23

c *The FTE number of staff employed in customer-facing roles.*

There were 28.35 FTE staff in customer-facing roles in 2022/23

Part 4: Audit and Risk Oversight

a *How many members are on the Council's Audit and Risk Committee (or equivalent)? and*

b *Of those members, how many are elected and how many are independent of the council? and*

c *Is the Chair of the Committee an independent member?*

Council's equivalent committee is the Finance, Risk and Assurance Committee.

The information you have requested at parts 4a, 4b and 4c is published on our website at <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-council/council-and-councillors/committees/>

Therefore, we are refusing these three parts under section 17(d) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) on the basis that the information requested is or soon will be publicly available.

d *Does the Council have a lawyer (with a current practising certificate) on the Committee? and*

e *Does the Council have an accountant (with a current practising certificate) on the Committee?*

Greater Wellington does not collect the information requested under parts 4d and 4e. We are therefore refusing parts 4d and 4e of your request under section 17(g) of the Act on the basis 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.

f *Does the Council have a code of conduct requiring political neutrality from Council staff?*

Council does not specifically require political neutrality for committee members; however, Greater Wellington staff are required to:

Act in a politically neutral manner by:

- *Ensuring that advice given and actions taken are impartial and maintain public confidence.*

- *Ensuring your individual comments do not compromise Greater Wellington (e.g. by stating or implying that your personal view on an issue is the Oview of Greater Wellington or putting yourself in a situation where there is an actual or potential conflict of interest).*
- *Ensuring that your activities and contribution to any public debate or discussion are consistent with the need for you to be politically neutral in your work.*
- *Ensuring that you do not publicly criticise Greater Wellington in the performance of its statutory responsibilities.*
- *Ensuring your participation in political matters does not bring you into conflict or the appearance of conflict with your duty to act in a politically neutral manner.*
- *Ensuring that you do not let your personal beliefs or commitments adversely affect your ability to carry out your functions at Greater Wellington.*

Part 5: Payments to third parties

- a The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to any Chamber of Commerce, including GST.*

The total payments to Chamber of Commerce from Greater Wellington in 2022/23 was \$7,656.12.

The total payments to Chamber of Commerce from Wellington Water in 2022/23 was \$16,387.50.

- b The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), including GST.*

The total payments to LGNZ in 2022/23 was \$305,972.36.

No payments from Wellington Water.

- c The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to Taituarā (New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM)), including GST.*

The total payments to Taituarā in 2022/23 was \$632.50.

No payments from Wellington Water.

Part 6: Debt

- a Net debt (total for the council) as a percent of rates income*

The debt is 416 percent of rates income.

Note	Council			Group		
	Actual 2023 \$'000	Budget 2023 \$'000	Actual 2022 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Actual 2022 \$'000	
Current liabilities						
Derivatives	21	-	-	96	-	96
Trade and other payables	22	118,257	75,163	87,163	125,939	95,960
Interest bearing liabilities	23	153,477	138,850	124,064	146,517	115,603
Employee benefits liabilities and provisions	24	6,427	5,960	6,912	10,380	10,571
Income tax payable			-		2,725	-
Total current liabilities		278,161	219,973	218,235	285,561	222,230
Non current liabilities						
Interest bearing liabilities	23	622,000	644,585	514,000	622,000	514,000
Derivatives	21	496	-	5,451	496	5,451
Deferred tax liabilities	9	-	-	-	131,050	140,650
Employee benefits liabilities and provisions	24	164	-	139	287	302
Service concession liability	15	22,861	22,864	24,615	22,861	24,615
Total non current liabilities		645,521	667,449	544,205	776,694	685,018
Total liabilities		923,682	887,422	762,440	1,062,255	907,248
Net assets		1,238,377	1,257,876	1,305,010	1,759,847	1,843,618

b The dollar amount of debt per rating unit

The amount of debt per rating unit is \$4,429

c The dollar amount of interest paid per rating unit

The amount of interest paid per rating unit is \$52.40

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



Alison Trustrum-Rainey

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Pūtea me ngā Tūraru | Group Manager Finance and Risk