

18 July 2024

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-28428

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2024-143**

I refer to your request for information dated 29 June 2024, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 1 July 2024. You have requested the following:

*“Can I please get answers to the following questions which relate to previous financial years but also what is proposed – or finalised – for the 2024-25 year*

*What were your council’s actual or expected rate increases for each year from 2017-18 up to and including 2024-25?*

*What cost cutting measures has your council implemented to soften the scale of the coming year’s rate increase?*

*What was/is your council’s total budget for each of the following financial years: 2018-19, 2020-21, 2022-23 and 2024-25?*

*What percentage of that income in each of those years was/is from general rates, what percentage is from targeted rates and what percentage is from government grants etc?*

*For those same years, please state the number full time equivalent staff employed by your council.*

*What percentage/number of your staff earn more the \$100,000?*

*Has your council reduced staff numbers to lower the impact of rate rises? If not, why not?*

*Please provide data and commentary for each of the 2018-19, 2020-21, 2022-23 and 2024-25 years about which areas of council work have increased the most, by how much, how many extra staff this has required and why this has happened?*

What work programmes is your council expecting to increase the most in the coming few years and why?

Does your council expect to recruit more staff for these work programme?

What work programmes does your council expect or intends to cease or reduce in the coming years?

What is your council's expectation for rate rises beyond 2024-25?

How will your council intend softening the impact of future rate rises?"

**Greater Wellington's response follows:**

For ease of responding we have numbered each part of your request.

**1. What were your council's actual or expected rate increases for each year from 2017-18 up to and including 2024-25?**

The following table has the links a page references to this information requested.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Rate Increase</b>
2017/18	<a href="#">2017/18 Annual Plan</a> (refer page 79)	5.6%
2018/19	<a href="#">2018-28 Long Term Plan</a> (Refer page 268)	6.8%
2019/20	<a href="#">2019/20 Annual Plan</a> (refer page 82)	6.0%
2020/21	<a href="#">2020/21 Annual Plan</a> (Refer page 59)	2.96%
2021/22	<a href="#">2021-31 Long Term Plan</a> (Refer page	12.3%
2022/23	<a href="#">2022/23 Annual Plan</a> (Refer page 60)	12.8%
2023/24	<a href="#">2023/24 Annual Plan</a> (Refer page 47)	17%
2024/25	<a href="#">2024-34 Long Term Plan</a> (Refer page	20.55%

**2. What cost cutting measures has your council implemented to soften the scale of the coming year's rate increase?**

The following table outlines the key activities or services that were reduced in order to 'soften' the rates increase.

	Source of saving	Detail of Savings	Saving 2024/25	Impact of saving on rates	Draft Rates Increase 2024/25
		Initial High Level of service rates impact			<b>37.3%</b>
less	All Activity Groups	Non contractual operating expenditure savings across the organisation -OPEX	\$8.4m	4.2%	
less	Metlink	Fare ticket Increase 10% (additional revenue)	\$8.2m	2.0%	
less	Metlink	Reduction of Mode shift from 40% to 20% - OPEX	\$6.5m	1.6%	
less	Metlink	Additional Metlink savings from Long Term Plan Committee prioritisation workshops - OPEX	\$8.2m	2.0%	
less	All Activity Groups	Rescheduling of additional FTE and slower hiring - OPEX	\$3.8m	1.9%	
less	Strategy	Rescheduling of Let's Get Wellington Moving program - OPEX	\$2.4m	1.2%	
less	Finance	Finance tools (include CentrePort Subvention and Dividend) - OPEX	\$11.6m	5.8%	
add	Environment	Increase in flood resilience maintenance - OPEX	\$2.8m	1.4%	
	<b>Total savings made</b>				<b>17.5%</b>
		Draft Rates Increase Y1 2024_34 LTP			<b>19.8%</b>
add	Environment	Whiatua change	\$1.8m	0.75%	
<b>Final Rates increase 2024/25</b>					<b>20.55%</b>

3. What was/is your council's total budget for each of the following financial years: 2018-19, 2020-21, 2022-23 and 2024-25? AND
4. What percentage of that income in each of those years was/is from general rates, what percentage is from targeted rates and what percentage is from government grants etc?

The following table has the links a page references to this information requested.

Financial Year	Reference	Total Budget	% from General Rates	% from Targeted Rates*	% from Govt Grants	% from other revenue**
2018/19	<a href="#">2018-28 Long Term Plan</a> (Refer page 264)	\$355,119,000	12.7%	23%	22%	42.3%
2020/21	<a href="#">2020/21 Annual Plan</a> (Refer page 23)	\$367,228,000	13.5%	22.5%	21%	43%
2022/23	<a href="#">2022/23 Annual Plan</a> (Refer page 48)	\$501,631,000	14.6%	21.3%	28.3%	35.8%
2024/25	<a href="#">2024-34 Long Term Plan</a> (Refer page 230)	\$558,625,000	14.2%	23.5%	23.8%	38.5%

\*Excludes Water Levy's

\*\*Includes Water Levy'

5. Please state the number full time equivalent staff employed by your council.

The following table has the links a page references to this information requested.

Financial Year	Reference	Total Full Time Equivalent Staff
2018/19	<a href="#">2018/19 Annual Report</a> (Refer page 162)	467
2020/21	<a href="#">2020/21 Annual Report</a> (Refer page 157)	583
2022/23	<a href="#">2022/23 Annual Report</a> (Refer page 161)	606
2024/25	Annual report due late October 2024	761

**6. What percentage/number of your staff earn more the \$100,000?**

The following table shows the percentage of staff earning more than \$100k.

Total number of employees: <i>(includes the Fixed Remuneration for Permanent, Fixed term and casual contracts)</i>	794
Number of employees \$100k +:	427
Percentage of over \$100k:	<b>53.78%</b>

**7. Has your council reduced staff numbers to lower the impact of rate rises? If not, why not?**

No. Savings were achieved to deliver the agreed rates increase, which included leaving positions vacant.

**8. Please provide data and commentary for each of the 2018-19, 2020-21, 2022-23 and 2024-25 years about which areas of council work have increased the most, by how much, how many extra staff this has required and why this has happened?**

Please refer to the plans and reports provided in the links above which will explain the work Greater Wellington does. You can also use the Fact Sheets.<sup>1</sup> They are broken down by territorial authority area.

Greater Wellington does not hold the information you have requested in the second part of this part of your request. This information would need to be created and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) does not place an obligation on Greater Wellington to create the information in order to respond to your request. We are therefore refusing the second part of 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 department or Minister of the Crown or organisation; or
- (ii) Connected more closely with the functions of another local authority or department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

**9. What work programmes is your council expecting to increase the most in the coming few years and why?**

During our Long Term Plan consultation, we received 740 submissions from 567 unique submitters, including residents, school students, farmers, environmentalists and business

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-reports/annual-plans/>

owners. The Long Term Plan Committee read, listened to, and considered, them all. Many of the submissions provided insight into the topics consulted on and others also shared their thoughts on other issues that were important to them. As a result of this, several changes have been made to the finalised 2024-34 Long Term Plan.

Some of the primary initiatives which are focused on in the 2024-34 Long Term Plan are the areas of environment, flood protection, and increased pest management, among others.

**10. Does your council expect to recruit more staff for these work programme?**

Yes - a number of projects in the 2024-34 Long Term Plan will require additional staff to implement.

**11. What work programmes does your council expect or intends to cease or reduce in the coming years?**

The 2024-34 Long Term Plan focused carefully on maintaining service levels where possible and where necessary reprioritising the scheduling of projects and their components into the outer years of the plan.

**12. What is your council’s expectation for rate rises beyond 2024-25?**

The following table has the information requested. You can find it in the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (Page 185)<sup>2</sup>

LTP Years	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Proposed average rates increase %	20.5	14.5	13.3	7.1	6.7	3.1	3.1	1.4	1.4	2.0

**13. How will your council intend softening the impact of future rate rises?”**

To soften the impact of future rate rises, Council has already agreed to some of the mechanisms within their control, such as including delaying capital projects, leaving positions vacant, cutting operating costs and extending the length of borrowing terms.

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.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2024/07/Greater-Wellington-Long-Term-Plan-2024-34\\_web.pdf](https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2024/07/Greater-Wellington-Long-Term-Plan-2024-34_web.pdf)

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

PROACTIVE RELEASE