



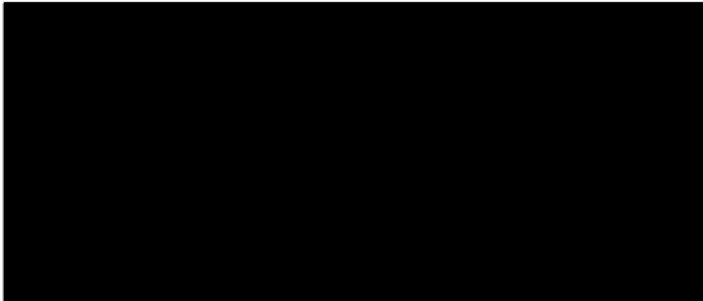
Ref: [REDACTED]

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9 October 2025

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OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST FOR THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI AT NELSON CITY COUNCIL

I refer to your official information request dated 2 October 2025 regarding Nelson City Council's use of generative AI

Your request is reproduced in **bold type**, with our responses below each part:

1. **What purposes council staff have used the AI tools for? Could you provide a generic breakdown (email writing, creating podcasts, creating social media content, replying to public requests, interpreting public feedback, creating internal documents or learning materials, surveying, creating videos, generating public engagement campaigns or other campaigns, chatting with AI tools as if they are a colleague and/or friend, processing submission, etc.)?**

Nelson City Council staff have used AI tools for purposes such as assisting with drafting a range of documents, summarising large bodies of text, research, processing anonymised submissions and feedback, creating transcripts for internal meetings and for customer facing teams to access knowledge to help them answer customer enquiries quickly.

2. **How often these tools have been used? If this question is to be denied due to the large amount of work required to collate the data, could you provide a generic breakdown of it (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)?**

This is very dependent on the sort of role a person has at Council. For some roles there would be a need for AI tools to be used daily, whereas there are some staff who may never have used AI tools.

3. **Have council staff members used generative AI to draft or design policies, long-term plans or any other documentation produced by the council? If yes, how was AI used (what sort of inputs was given to the agent)?**

Staff may have used generative AI to assist in drafting such documents, they may have used an AI tool to assist with making documents easier to read, or to reorganise content. Our AI strategy is clear that any use of AI must not be solely produced using AI and must be thoroughly checked by a human.

- 4. Has private information belonging to ratepayers or people living in the area covered by the council been uploaded on these services (email addresses or other contact details, land or home value, physical addresses, emails, written requests, names, etc.)? If yes, why (for what purposes)?**

No. Council's AI policy and training to staff specifies that such use should be avoided.

- 5. Has the council subscribed to paid premium plans? If yes, when and what was the cost paid? If not, were paid subscriptions discussed?**

Council has a very small number (7) Co-pilot Pro licences in use to assist with specific roles and to explore opportunities to innovate using AI. These licences cost approximately \$50 per user per month. There is one Otter AI pro licence in use which costs approximately \$17 per month.

- 6. Has the council purchased in-house AI tools or agents (platforms that allow the council to retain the data and the discussions in-house without being uploaded on a separate server/cloud system)? If yes, why and at what costs? If not, has any consideration been put into this?**

No, Council has not purchased such tools to date, though it could be said that there is an element of that functionality available using Co-pilot within our Microsoft 365 tenancy. There has been some very initial discussions about this for other AI Tools.

- 7. What sort of AI training is in place for council staff? Have you run any training sessions? If yes, when, why, what did the sessions consist of and how long were the sessions? If not, has this been considered?**

AI training has been offered to interested staff this year. Some staff may have attended more than one session. The training has included possible uses of AI and best practice and guidance around its use.

- 8. Has any position or role been replaced by AI assistants/agents/tools? If yes, which ones, when and how many?**

No

- 9. Has the council encouraged its staff to delegate some tasks to AI? If yes, which ones?**

No

- 10. Does the council have a strategy regarding the use of AI, or a document highlighting guidelines/ethics?**

Yes

11. Has the council employed external firms using AI to process submissions, draft documents, urban development design, or do any other tasks? If yes, which company and when? How much did it pay?

No, but we worked with a company called the AI Factory in 2024 to assist us to develop a tool that we can use review anonymised submissions to our long term plan, using a closed Open AI instance that they hosted on our behalf, to provide us with insights and sentiment information from resident opinions and supplement staff insights. It also automated the process of replying to submissions that were made. This cost \$20,000.

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 www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane McLeod', with a stylized circular flourish at the beginning.

Jane McLeod

Chief Information Officer