



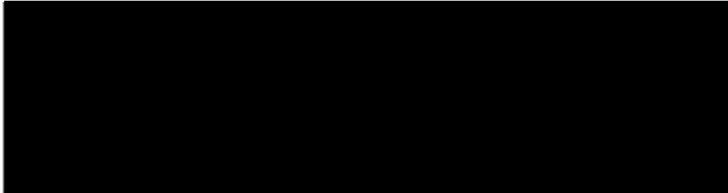
Ref: [REDACTED]

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12 March 2024



Dear [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST REGARDING PERSONNEL COSTS DISCUSSED IN THE AUDIT RISK AND FINANCE MEETING

I refer to your official information request dated 14 February 2024 for information relating to the personnel costs as discussed in the audit, risk and finance committee meeting on 14 February 2024. In particular the agenda noted that personnel costs were over budget by \$1.24m: "This is mainly due to the expected savings from the vacancy provision (\$1.5m provision) not being achieved. Instead, any cost savings from vacancies have been spent on term staff, higher duty allowances and other staff related costs". You have asked for a response to the questions below. The information you requested is enclosed.

How many vacancies are there in the council, and how does this figure compare to a year ago?

December 2023 there were 21 vacancies. In December 2022 there were 40 vacancies.

Please provide a breakdown of how much is being spent on temp staff and higher duty allowances. For each, please provide the amount for the 2022-23 financial date, and the amount for the first two quarters of the current financial year.

Temp staff for the 2022/23 year = \$794,083 vs. budget of \$257,404, Temp staff for 1st 2 quarters of 2023/24 year = \$470,276 vs. budget of \$130,890. Per payroll reports: Higher/Extra duties allowances for the year ended 2022/23 = \$208,197.34. Higher/Extra duties allowances for the 1st 2 quarters of the 2023/24 year = \$154,209.64.

Why was the need for temp staff and higher allowances not allowed for in the budget? (ie. why was a \$1.5m saving from personnel costs expected)

There are budgets for temp staff and higher duty allowances (see previous answer) but these are estimates. There are also additional FTE approved since the Annual Plan was finalised, some funded from operating expense offsets, i.e. reducing the budget in other expenditure

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lines. The \$1.5m is an estimated vacancy saving based on 9.3% of the total year-to-date salary budget.

When are the vacancies expected to be filled, and what are the main challenges in filling those roles?

Some vacancies are very difficult to fill due mainly to scarcity of talent in New Zealand. It is for this reason we may still hold vacancies throughout the year. We are however expecting to see a reduction in vacancies this year due to active recruitment processes, changes in the labour market, and an increase in staff retention.

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



Nikki Harrison
Group Manager Corporate Services