

29 January 2024

Sent via email to [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION – RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 10 December 2023 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

Topic A - Ombudsman's report 'Open for Business' dated October 2023

1. What steps has your territorial authority taken regarding the Ombudsman's report?
2. What actions/motions have been passed by your territorial authority in response to the Ombudsman's report?
3. What steps are still under consideration?
4. What has or will the total cost be of any changes?

Topic B - costs relating to councillors interactions

1. How much has your territorial authority budgeted in each of the last three years for any costs related to councillor conduct. This could include individual conduct or between other councillors, mayor / chair, or Chief Executive. This may include mediation, legal fees, legal investigations and similar.
2. How much has your territorial authority spent in each of the last three financial years for any costs related to councillor conduct. This could include individual conduct or between other councillors, mayor / chair, or Chief Executive. This may include mediation, legal fees, legal investigations and similar.

Topic C - staffing numbers

1. What is the full FTE staff number if your territorial authority was fully staffed?
2. What is your current FTE staff number employed?
3. What percentage of full FTE staff required is currently vacant?
4. What percentage of the vacant positions are not being actively recruited to fill (e.g. what percentage are currently remaining vacant)?
5. What effect will these vacancies have on the services your territorial authority delivers / can deliver?

Topic D - senior leadership

1. Has your Chief Executive resigned, or a new CE been appointed in the last three years?

2. How many of your Tier Two leaders resigned, or a new leader been appointed in the last three years?
3. Has your territorial authority had a staff restructure implemented, considered by senior leadership, or consulted in in the last three years? This includes a restructure of the whole territorial authority, or one or more departments.

Topic E - contractors

1. How much was budgeted by your territorial authority in each of the last three years for external contractors?
2. How much was the budgeted amount as a percentage of total income for each of the last three years?
3. How much was spent by your territorial authority in each of the last three years for external contractors?
4. How much was the amount spent on contractors as a percentage of total income for each of the last three years?
5. Is your territorial authority's spend on contractors expected to increase this year because of staffing shortages?
6. Could the services contracted for be hired directly under the territorial authority?
7. What were the three companies receiving the highest contractors spend in the last year?

QLDC response

Topic A - Ombudsman's report 'Open for Business' dated October 2023

1. *What steps has your territorial authority taken regarding the Ombudsman's report?*

The report has been reviewed by staff, alongside a review of other sector practice. Staff also attended a webinar hosted by Taituarā and Simpson Grierson providing legal advice on the Ombudsman's report. Following a discussion with the executive the report was discussed with elected members at a workshop session in December 2023. Direction was provided on a way forward that will be implemented in the first half of 2024.

2. *What actions / motions have been passed by your territorial authority in response to the Ombudsman's report?*

No formal resolutions have been passed, nor are required, however direction has been provided that all workshops and briefings will be held open to the public unless subject to grounds to exclude the public under sections 6 or 7 of the LGOIMA. Council will also be publicly notifying workshops alongside its monthly meeting schedule notification, providing additional information (such as workshop and briefing agendas and minutes) on the Council's website, and amending report templates to increase detail provided in resolutions to exclude the public. Additional training for staff is also being developed to enhance existing onboarding and training regarding report writing, working in a local government environment, understanding the LGOIMA, etc.

3. *What steps are still under consideration?*

Currently the direction has been to hold workshops and briefings open to the public, but not to record or livestream. That direction will be reviewed after the first six months of open workshops / briefings.

4. *What has or will the total cost be of any changes?*

There has been no cost to date but there will be additional cost in the future as the changes are implemented as additional governance support staffing is required and there will be ongoing cost increases to public notification in print. That forward information is not available as it does not at this time exist.

Topic B - costs relating to councillors interactions

1. *How much has your territorial authority budgeted in each of the last three years for any costs related to councillor conduct. This could include individual conduct or between other councillors, mayor / chair, or Chief Executive. This may include mediation, legal fees, legal investigations and similar.*

QLDC does not specifically budget for responding to councillor conduct issues.

2. *How much has your territorial authority spent in each of the last three financial years for any costs related to councillor conduct. This could include individual conduct or between other councillors, mayor / chair, or Chief Executive. This may include mediation, legal fees, legal investigations and similar.*

There have been two matters considered formally under the code of conduct. One was resolved in September 2020 at the cost of \$6,400. The second was resolved in May 2021 at no additional cost above operational costs.

Topic C - staffing numbers

1. *What is the full FTE staff number if your territorial authority was fully staffed?*

For the 2023 / 24 financial year we have 551 FTEs budgeted.

2. *What is your current FTE staff number employed?*

As of 31 December 2023, we had 479.75 FTEs – based on minimum contracted hours.

3. *What percentage of full FTE staff required is currently vacant?*

We are 88.19% against budget so we have 11.81% vacant roles.

4. *What percentage of the vacant positions are not being actively recruited to fill (e.g. what percentage are currently remaining vacant)?*

We are actively recruiting (whether it's job required submitted, active advertisements, interviewing or onboarding – all different stages but no one hired yet) around 28.43 FTEs as it stands in January 2024.

5. *What effect will these vacancies have on the services your territorial authority delivers / can deliver?*

We continue to deliver the service levels required for the community.

Topic D - senior leadership

1. *Has your Chief Executive resigned, or a new CE been appointed in the last three years?*

No.

2. *How many of your Tier Two leaders resigned, or a new leader been appointed in the last three years?*

Three people.

3. *Has your territorial authority had a staff restructure implemented, considered by senior leadership, or consulted in in the last three years? This includes a restructure of the whole territorial authority, or one or more departments.*

Yes.

Topic E - contractors

1. *How much was budgeted by your territorial authority in each of the last three years for external contractors?*

- Contractor spends listed below are for Contractors under salaries and wages.
 - 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 - \$3,291,949
 - 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 - \$3,478,512
 - 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 - \$3,606,715

2. *How much was the budgeted amount as a percentage of total income for each of the last three years?*

- Income noted is Operational Income only, excluding Capital Income.
 - 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 – 2%
 - 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 – 2%
 - 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 – 2%

3. *How much was spent by your territorial authority in each of the last three years for external contractors?*

- 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 - \$3,859,390
- 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 - \$4,943,358
- 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 - \$5,718,120

4. *How much was the amount spent on contractors as a percentage of total income for each of the last three years?*

- 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 – 3%
- 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 – 3%
- 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 – 3%

5. *Is your territorial authority's spend on contractors expected to increase this year because of staffing shortages?*

- The spend is not expected to increase due to staff shortages.

6. *Could the services contracted for be hired directly under the territorial authority?*

- Yes, contractor spend in salaries and wages is generally to cover periods of staff vacancy, absences or to manage workloads.

7. *What were the three companies receiving the highest contractors spend in the last year?*

- Solutions Team Limited
- Harrison Grierson Consultants Ltd
- ComplyNZ Limited

We trust this response satisfactorily answers your request.

Ngā mihi,



Senior Official Information Advisor