

4 March 2021

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Response - Official Information Request

I refer to your request for information received on 24/02/2021. Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and I provide the following information.

Mr. Law,

On page 49 of your report to the Finance, Audit and Risk committee this afternoon (24 February 2021) you state, "Mahi Space - Funding towards the operations of the Mahi Space. It aims to support small businesses and startups, as well as self-employed people, entrepreneurs and those who commute or work from home, and need a place to work remotely - \$225k received."

According to a Provincial Growth Fund August 2020 dashboard document by MBIE \$400,000 was provided to the Council for the Mahi Space - not \$225,000.

1. Please explain the variance?

Horowhenua District Council was allocated \$400,000 of funding for The Mahi Space. The funding is uplifted in installment payments subject to completion of relevant project milestones outlined in the agreement between Horowhenua District Council and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE). All expected funding milestones to date have been met, with the final milestone payment expected in October 2021.

Also, an article in the Horowhenua Chronicle said Council would pick up the tab after the funding runs out.

2. Why should the ratepayer be picking up the tab when all "economic development" activities are now supposed to be carried out by the Horowhenua New Zealand Trust?

The Mahi Space is incorporated as part of Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō and contributes to the wider kaupapa of this facility; it is not viewed as a standalone economic development activity. The Mahi Space is designed for community use as an office space for those that need access to secure high-speed internet to support their work and enable individuals, small business and start-up businesses to connect and collaborate within the office environment as well as the broader facility provision for conferences and events.

3. Why has there been no breakdown showing what the funding is being spent on at the Mahi Space, which essential provides hardware in an existing space?

A detailed line-by-line breakdown of income and expenditure is provided to MBIE as requirement of the funding agreement. This detailed level of reporting is not required within the Financial Report presented by the Chief Financial Officer to the Finance Audit and Risk Committee.

The Mahi Space project has previously been reported on to the Finance Audit and Risk Committee within the Community Facilities Activity Update. The next update would be expected in April following production of the quarterly report to MBIE.

If you have any queries regarding this information, please contact Nicki Brady, Group Manager Communities, Partnerships and Business on 06 366 0999 or email - nickib@horowhenua.govt.nz

Horowhenua District Council publishes responses to Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) requests that we consider to be of wider public interest, or which relate to a subject that has been widely requested. To protect your privacy, we will not generally publish personal information about you, or information that identifies you. We will publish the LGOIMA response along with a summary of the request on our website. Requests and responses may be paraphrased.

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Slade
Executive Sponsor - LGOIMA