

Reference Number: 2025/1192

24 March 2025

Tēnā koe | Dear

Thank you for your email dated 25 February 2025 requesting under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), information relating to Councils' expenditures on legal and employment related matters from 2021-2025. Please see outlined below a response to each part of your request.

Legal fees – Total spent on external legal advice, representation, and proceedings related to employment matters.

Mediation costs – Total payments made for employment dispute mediations, including facilitation services.

Personal grievances – Total costs of settlements, legal fees, and any associated expenses.

We are unable to extract and identify specific amounts solely related to employment matters, as our costs also encompass additional services, such as support for Executive Leadership Team interviews and advice on policies and processes.

Cost type	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Legal Fees	26612.64	46,479.98	24558.78	26977.43
Staff departures	75	88	65	68

Staff turnover – The total number of employees who left the council each year, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

The figures can be found in the above table. Please note, this number includes all casuals and part time employees.

Redundancy payments – Total amount paid in redundancy payouts to employees.

Other employment-related settlements – Any additional costs related to employment disputes, complaints, or litigation not covered above.

Personal grievances – Total costs of settlements, legal fees, and any associated expenses.

It should be noted that Council underwent a change process that required the disestablishment of 27 roles to the Council long term plan budget between April 2024 and July 2024.

Please find the links below to our Annual Report that indicate the severance payments paid out.

[Annual Report 2020-2021](#) page 51
[Annual Report 2021-2022](#) page 188
[Annual Report 2022-2023](#) page 226
[Annual Report 2023-2024](#) page 192

For the 2024-2025 year to date we have made severance payments totally \$54,742.74

As we are a small to medium sized Council, all figures are provided to you as a total sum to prevent identification of individuals and protect their privacy under s7(2)(a) of the LGOIMA.

Employment Relations Authority (ERA) cases – Total costs incurred in defending or settling ERA cases.

Employment Relations (ERA) cases are publicly available. However, Horowhenua District Council (the Council) have not had any ERA cases in years 2021-2025.

Exit agreements – Total expenditure on severance packages, ex gratia payments, or financial settlements as part of employee exits.

We don't have ex gratia payments, and financial settlements are included in the data provided in the annual plans and details above for 2024-2025.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

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.

If you would like to discuss this decision or any of the information provided as part of this request, please contact Jacinta Straker (Group Manager Organisation Performance) on jacintas@horowhenua.govt.nz, or LGOIMAOfficer@horowhenua.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi | Best regards



Monique Davidson
Chief Executive