

**Reference Number: 2025/1304**

8 December 2025

As the attachment is large, please  
contact  
[LGOIMAOfficer@horowhenua.govt.nz](mailto:LGOIMAOfficer@horowhenua.govt.nz)  
for a copy



Thank you for your email dated 22 October 2025 requesting information regarding independent commercial advisors Mr Earl Hope-Pearson and Mr Sam Cottier under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). Please see below a response to each part of your request.

**1. Records of any conflict of interest assessments conducted before or during engagements of these advisors.**

Horowhenua District Council (HDC) engaged the consultancy services of Mr Hope-Pearson to provide a community housing review to HDC when working for Stimpson and Co in 2015. Council has no record of any perceived or potential conflicts of interest between with Mr Hope-Pearson's position at Stimpson and Co and HDC.

In 2017, HDC engaged the services of Egmont Dixon to provide consultancy advice on property development, procurement and project management across a range of matters that included HDC's property portfolio. Mr Hope-Pearson was a Director of Egmont Dixon and Development Manager at the time. Council has no record of any perceived or potential conflicts between Mr Hope-Pearson's position at Egmont Dixon and HDC.

Given Mr Hope-Pearson's significant expertise and experience in all aspects of commercial and property development, together with a proven track record with HDC, Mr Hope-Pearson was approached to provide commercial and development advice for the Levin Town Centre Transformation in 2023 and currently represents the Levin Town Centre Transformation Challenge Team on the Levin Town Centre Operational Programme Assurance Group (formerly known as the Steering Group until 1 July 2025). At this time, an implementation plan was being created to be approved by Council to outline and prioritise the projects to be identified in the Levin Town Centre programme of work. There were no conflicts of interest associated with Mr Hope-Pearson during this time.

During the period that Mr Hope-Pearson has been providing property and commercial advice to HDC on the Levin Town Centre Transformation, there has been one occasion where Mr Hope-Pearson declared a conflict of interest. This was during the reimagining of the Levin War Memorial Hall and Village Green redevelopment expression of interest and request for proposal review process due to having previously worked with both respondents that progressed to the request for proposal stage, one being The Wellington Company Ltd. Since declaring a conflict of interest, Mr Hope-Pearson has not provided any advice to Council on this matter relating to the sale of the Levin War Memorial Hall

and Village Green to The Wellington Company Ltd, and has not participated in the decision-making process. The Request for Proposal decision and the decision to sell the the Levin War Memorial Hall and Village Green were decisions, voted on and made by the elected members of HDC.

Mr Cottier as Head of Commercial at The Property Group came highly recommended to provide independent commercial and property advice to the Levin Town Centre Transformation programme of work. Council has no record of any perceived or potential conflicts of interest between Mr Cottier and HDC.

At the time any potential conflicts of interest emerge concerning the delivery of the Levin Town Centre Strategy, they would be addressed appropriately on a case-by-case basis along with the parties involved.

**2. Any email correspondence, meeting minutes, or documentation where declarations of conflicts of interest were made by the advisors.**

Both Mr Cottier and Mr Hope-Pearson declared a potential or perceived conflict of interest due to separate respondents during the Expression of Interest evaluation process. Elected Members were notified of this conflict of interest during an In Committee Council meeting report dated 12 June 2024 – Levin Town Centre Transformation – Expressions of Interest – Reimagining the Levin War Memorial Hall and Village Green. The following identifies the relevant paragraph in the Council report that notifies the potential or perceived conflict of interest. The name of the identified respondent applicable to Mr Cottier's declaration of a perceived or potential conflict of interest has been redacted to protect their identity, but as this submission was not short-listed to progress further, Mr Cottier did not have any further conflicts of interest.

**In Committee Meeting of Council**  
**12 June 2024**

- 5.7 All Expressions of Interest were reviewed and evaluated by the Levin Town Centre Steering Group. The two independent members of the Steering Group are experts in the property development industry and offered vital commercial background knowledge and insight into the companies that would, and would not, have the development or financial capability to deliver on the project to reimagine the Levin War Memorial Hall and surrounding areas. It is important to note that both independent members declared a potential conflict of interest on two separate companies individually before the commencement of the evaluation process, i.e. Earl Hope-Pearson in relation to The Wellington Company, and Sam Cottier in relation to [REDACTED] based on prior relationships with people from these respective companies. Neither Mr Hope-Pearson or Mr Cottier had any involvement with these companies in preparing the proposals for the Expressions of Interest. Both members refrained from participating in any discussions when either of these two companies were being reviewed and evaluated.

Mr Hope-Pearson declared a conflict of interest due to working with both respondents during the expression of interest and request for proposal review process to reimagine the Levin War Memorial Hall and Village Green. Elected Members were notified of this conflict of interest in the public excluded meeting of Council report dated 26 March 2025 – Decision to sell the Levin War Memorial Hall and Village Green for Proposed Development. The following identifies the relevant paragraph in the Council report that notifies the perceived or potential conflict of interest.

17. Officers met with the Challenge Team on 3 October 2024 to review the responses and provide feedback on the design aspects of the proposals. This was intended to provide insight and advice to the evaluation panel as they reviewed the proposals. Earl Hope-Pearson, who is also a member of the Challenge Team and is the Challenge Team's representative on the Levin Town Centre Transformation Steering Group, declared a conflict of interest having previously worked with both of the respondents, and therefore was not included in either the evaluation or design review process. During the review with the Challenge Team, it was identified that Graeme McIndoe and Marc Baily had also previously worked for one of the respondents, which is not unusual given the nature of urban design work throughout New Zealand. To support the evaluation process, an Independent Design Expert was engaged to be part of the Evaluation Panel.

Both Council reports are withheld under section 7(2)(h) of the LGOIMA, to enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities, however we have provided the paragraph in the council report that identified a conflict of interest to elected members and is outlined below.

**3. Any email correspondence between Council staff, elected members, and the advisors mentioning The Wellington Company, Ian Cassels, or Wayne Bishop.**

On 31 October and 3 November 2025, a request for refinement was sent to you as you request in its current form would result in thousands of miscellaneous emails. We received a refinement on 10 November 2025 asking for ***'email correspondence to council from Advisor Earl Hope-Pearson that mentions The Wellington Company/Ian Cassells, and the responses'***.

Emails to/from Mr Hope-Pearson that references The Wellington Company and/or Mr Ian Cassels are included in within the attached supporting documentation (which includes correspondence in response to both Questions 3 and 4), acknowledging that there is little correspondence to include due to Mr Hope-Pearson's early declaration of a conflict of interest with The Wellington Company once an Expression of Interest from The Wellington Company was received. Therefore, to protect both Mr Hope-Pearson, HDC and the integrity of the process, Mr Hope-Pearson has not been included in any correspondence specifically concerning the decision making and actual sale of the Levin War Memorial Hall and Village Green to The Wellington Company.

**4. Any email correspondence or recommendations from the advisors to Council staff or elected members concerning:**

- **Bath/Salisbury Street Carpark**
- **Levin Memorial Hall**
- **Relocation of the train station or discussions on a transport hub**
- **Oxford street shops, sold by council and others purchased by council**

The requested correspondence is included in the attached supporting documentation. In response to the enclosed material, it is necessary to withhold some information for the following reasons:

- Personal information is withheld in accordance with s7(2)(a) of the LGOIMA, to protect individual privacy

- Commercial information is withheld in accordance with s7(h) of the LGOIMA, to enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities

**5. A copy of the report completed by Earl Hope-Pearson on Core and Non-core properties.**

Please find attached HDC Non-Core Property Assets – Disposal Options Report provided by Egmont Dixon Ltd dated February 2019. As this report is now six years old, some recommendations listed have been enacted, whereby other aspects have not been due to a change of context, perspective and direction from Council since the writing of the report.

The attached report has been redacted to exclude commercially sensitive information and is withheld under section 7(2)(h) of the LGOIMA, to enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.

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](http://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 David McCorkindale (Group Manager Community Vision and Development) on [davidbm@horowhenua.govt.nz](mailto:davidbm@horowhenua.govt.nz), or [LGOIMAOfficer@Horowhenua.govt.nz](mailto:LGOIMAOfficer@Horowhenua.govt.nz).

Ngā mihi | Best regards



Monique Davidson  
**Chief Executive**