

18 March 2021

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Response - Official Information Request

I refer to your request for information received on 19 February 2021. Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and I provide the following information.

I would like information regarding the extra 4 days leave granted to Council staff this past year. I wish to know the total cost of the granted leave already taken over Christmas/New Year period, including the employer Kiwisaver contribution cost, and the total gross pay for this.

The cost of paying staff for 4 days was \$236,784 based on payroll information for the fortnight that covered the period 5-8 January 2021.

The amount mentioned is the cost of paying HDC staff for 4 days at any time of the year. This would have been paid to staff regardless, therefore there was no additional cost other than the people that worked those days and were granted the additional days. The cost of this (\$37,000) has already been supplied further in this LGOIMA response.

The decision to grant an additional four days leave to permanent staff was to recognise the difficult year we had with an unprecedented amount of work being undertaken. Covid-19 had a massive effect on the organisation. Although lockdown for the majority of people meant being unable to continue to work, for almost all Council Officers it meant additional work as we navigated new ground, implemented innovative ways to provide support for the community and ensure that 'business as usual' services continued.

Throughout lockdown and the months following, officers evolved remarkably well to a new way of working including supporting the Incident Management Team (IMT) who were on standby to move into Emergency Management mode at a moment's notice. Members of the IMT continued their usual role as well as taking on Covid-19 management work. As a consequence of Covid-19, expected job losses and downturn in the economy, the government provided an opportunity for Councils to apply to the Crown Infrastructure Fund and Provincial Growth Fund. There was a quick turnaround time allowed for the application process, which involved identifying projects, scope, programme of works and initial costings. An incredible amount of work was undertaken within a matter of weeks, which resulted in several projects receiving the green light. This included the Queen Street (Levin) upgrade and round-a-bout installation, infrastructure work for Tara-Ika development and Foxton River Loop Project.

In terms of the provision of community services, our Community Centres found new and innovative ways to ensure the community had access to books and online services. Council's Customer services continued to function as per usual as did the provision of essential services such as water, wastewater and solid waste collection. Officers also continued to support Council throughout as we worked to quickly put in place new processes to enable Council and committee meetings to be held via zoom, and support an increased number of workshop and briefing type sessions for elected members. This ensured they were well supported and kept comprehensively informed during these unprecedented times.

As Chief Executive, I am extremely proud of the amount of work undertaken by the organisation in 2020. This, coupled with a second year of a wage freeze and a -1.83% rates revenue reduction for the 2020/21 financial year, prompted the Senior Leadership Team to look at options to acknowledge staff at no or little extra cost to the organisation. Closing the Civic Building and allowing for four days' additional leave, meant that officers were able to take an extended holiday which supported their health and wellbeing and showed our appreciation for their efforts in 2020.

The only extra cost to the organisation is attributed to staff who were required to work the four days (Aquatics and Community Centre staff) and have therefore been granted the four days leave to take at a later date. This becomes a cost to the organisation should the staff member leave and is required to be paid out their leave that is owing.

This affected 62 staff with a potential cost of \$37,000.

I also wish to know the total projected cost for the 62 staff who had to work and so the additional 4 days leave was added to their leave entitlement, including the again projected employer Kiwisaver contribution cost.

As above, this includes PAYE and Kiwi Saver employer contribution.

I request information re the rate the council pays for the employer Kiwisaver contribution and how much annual leave and other leave entitlements do employees get as council staff.

Horowhenua District Council contributes to employees Kiwisaver as per the rate set by Government which is 3%.

Annual Leave entitlements are as per the provisions of the Holiday Act, four weeks per year. An extra one week's leave per year is granted on completion of five years' service. A one-off one-week's leave is granted as Long Service Leave on completion of 10 years' service.

I would also appreciate information detailing whether council paid it's staff 100% of their usual earnings during Covid-19 lockdown & level 3 & 2 covid restrictions and if not what rate. If staff worked more than their usual hours during these periods, did they get paid for these extra hours

Yes, officers were paid 100% of their salary. There were many instances where officers went above and beyond, undertaking many extra hours work during alert levels 4, 3 and 2. Officers were not paid extra for this work.

If you have any queries regarding this information please contact the LGOIMA Officer on 06 366 0999 or email LGOIMAOfficer@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,



David Clapperton
Chief Executive