

23 November 2023

Chris McCashin
Via FYI website

Kia ora Chris,

Consultation for LTP

Thank you for your request made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act), received on 26 October 2023. You requested the following information:

In light of the recent Castalia Report please provide

1. Copy of the Castalia Report
2. List of the Assumptions that Castalia have wrong in their reporting The Assumptions that Castalia should have used per councils current situation
Additional to this and in light of the imminent consultation for the long term plan can you please provide
3. Any and all reports completed relating to council finances
4. Any and all memos formal and informal in relation to council finances Specifically in relation to income versus OPEX and CAPEX - I don't want asset values included in the analysis - strictly cash coming in versus cash coming out
5. Any and all memos / reports notes / requests for Central Government Funds - specifically GST as I know the Mayor was wanting a handout
6. Ultimately a comprehensive statement of the current accounts so that Wellingtonians can reasonably consult on the long term plan - we need to know the councils financial position
7. Any and all notes formal and informal relating to council and their 225% debt limit

1. Copy of the Castalia Report

We do not hold a copy of the Castalia report and are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Act as the information is not held. This was commissioned by private individuals who used extracts of their report in a submission to Council (can be found from page 89 - wellington.govt.nz/-/media/your-council/meetings/committees/long-term-plan-finance-and-performance-committee/2023-11-01-agenda-ltpfpc.pdf).

2. List of the Assumptions that Castalia have wrong in their reporting and the assumptions that Castalia should have used per councils current situation

Council are still developing their assumptions to inform future work programmes, for example our capital expenditure programme. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Act as the information is not held.

3. Any and all reports completed relating to council finances

Please see our annual report which has been independently audited: [WCC Annual Report 2021-22 \(wellington.govt.nz\)](https://www.wellington.govt.nz/annual-report/2021-22)

4. Any and all memos formal and informal in relation to council finances Specifically in relation to income versus OPEX and CAPEX - strictly cash coming in versus cash coming out

We don't produce cash only information, because we are required to accrual account by accounting standards this is the approach we take. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Act as the information is not held.

You may wish to review the quarterly report which is in the agenda for the 9 November LTP, Finance and Performance Committee meeting.

5. Any and all memos / reports notes / requests for Central Government Funds - specifically GST

It has been publicly reported that Mayor Whanau wrote to political leaders in September 2023 wanting confirmation from parties that, if elected, they would investigate broadening the revenue-raising scope for Wellington City Council. For example: [Election 2023: Wellington mayor joins Wayne Brown in telling Government to share GST - NZ Herald](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/wellington-mayor-joins-wayne-brown-in-telling-government-to-share-gst/)

6. Ultimately a comprehensive statement of the current accounts so that Wellingtonians can reasonably consult on the long term plan - we need to know the councils financial position

Your request for a comprehensive statement of the current accounts can be met through the provision of the quarterly report.

Your request also seems to be related to consulting on the LTP. The process for long-term planning is underway, including the development of Council budgets. However, elected members are yet to make decisions on what will be included or not in the future LTP. Until we have this we can't provide reasonable forecasts. These will be completed in mid December, and we will be consulting with the community on the LTP in April 2024. This is the same timetable all local authorities will be working towards, and the same timeframe we have used in prior years.

7. Any and all notes formal and informal relating to council and their 225% debt limit

This limit was set in 2021 – therefore the 2021-31 LTP will have some discussion on the limit. In terms of current rate, this is available in Volume Two of the Annual Report. Page 11 has the details on our actual versus planned deficit.

Page 29 has the information about our borrowings (see the borrowings figures under both the current and non-current liabilities). What isn't in this report is that this equates to an actual debt to revenue ratio of 168% (or if we were to include our "insurance buffer" it would be closer to 210% - both still below our self-imposed ratio of 225 and well below the covenant level of 280.

A number of your requests in the past, including this one, have requested publicly available information from our Annual Reports and Long Term Plans. I encourage you to review these and if you have specific questions let us know.

Right of review

If you are not satisfied with the Council's response, you may request the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate the Council's decision. Further information is available on the Ombudsman website, www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note, we may proactively release our response to your request with your personal information removed.

Thank you again for your request, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards