

OIR: 2425/1224

4 February 2025

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

**Request for Information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) (the LGOIMA)**

Thank you for your email of **14 December 2024** requesting the following information:

**1. *Will there be unelected Iwi representatives on the council?***

Within the Council's current Governance structure and delegation arrangements (appended), mana whenua Iwi are able to nominate representatives that are formally appointed to Council (with speaking rights only) and committees (with full voting rights). These appointments reflect the Council's partnership with mana whenua as documented in the memorandum of partnership. The decision to allow for these appointments was made by the Council at the start of the triennium and will be reconsidered by the newly elected Council, after the next local body elections in October 2025, when deciding its Governance structure at one of its first meetings. The Council also has the option to adjust these arrangements at any time during the triennium.

**2. *Will they have the same voting rights as elected councillors?***

Under the Council's current Governance structure and delegation arrangements, mana whenua have full voting rights at committee meetings that they are appointed to. They do not have voting rights at Council meetings as under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) only directly elected representatives to the Council are legally permitted to have voting rights at meetings of the territorial authority.

**3. *Will the salaries of Iwi representatives be paid by Ratepayers?***

Mana whenua representatives are reimbursed through an annual payment to the respective Iwi. The Council has set this amount at \$50,776 per annum (for the 2024/25 financial year) per Iwi. This amount is funded through rates.

*Please note that any information provided in response to your request may be published on the Council website, with your personal details removed.*

**4. *If so, why should ratepayers have to pay for unelected representatives?***

Under the provisions of the LGA, the Council can appoint committees and other subordinate decision-making bodies, and the membership of these bodies can consist of both elected and non-elected members as considered appropriate by the Council. For example, councils around the country often appoint non-elected experienced financial and legal professionals to their Risk and Assurance Committees to supplement the expertise provided by elected members in relation to the considerations that are made by these committees.

Under the provisions of the LGA, the Council must establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision-making by the local authority and the Council considers the input of mana whenua representatives as a valuable mechanism to ensure the voice of mana whenua and tangata whenua is heard as part of the overall decision-making process.

**5. *What is the yearly cost of having unelected Iwi representatives on the Council?***

Each mana whenua Iwi is paid an annual Governance payment of \$50,776 (rate for the 2024/25 financial year) to reimburse the attendance of one representative each to attend meetings of the Council and Committees they have been appointed to and support the decision-making process. In addition, under the non-elected members fees framework (appended), mana whenua can also claim attendance at Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti meetings and can claim expenses in relation to discharging their roles as mana whenua representatives. For the 2023/24 financial year, the total amount paid to all three Iwi (Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga – Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki) was \$201,490. The yearly costs may differ slightly as it depends on the number of meetings held and the amount of expenses incurred by the representatives.

**6. *When will these details be communicated to the ratepayers?***

The Council first resolved the appointment of representatives from mana whenua on 7 June 2022 and re-confirmed the arrangements after the 2022 local body elections on 24 November 2022. The reports outlining the appointments and the minutes confirming the resolution made by the Council are all available on the Council's website ([Meetings and agendas - Kāpiti Coast District Council](#)). The Council's Governance structure and delegations document is also publicly available on the website ([Governance 2022–25 - Kāpiti Coast District Council](#)).

**7. *Māori have the same opportunities to become an elected Councillor, why is it necessary to have unelected Iwi on the Council?***

As noted under question 2, while non-elected mana whenua representatives are attending Council meetings, they are legally not permitted to have voting rights at these meetings.

**8. Please explain the justification for going against the principle that we are all New Zealanders with equal rights**

The Council's relationship with its mana whenua partners is highly valued and ever evolving and the Council and mana whenua aim to work together in the spirit of Kotahitanga towards a common goal for Kāpiti. The establishment of a Māori ward seat at the Council table does not remove any votes for other voters in the district nor does it provide more votes for voters enrolled on the Māori electoral roll. The establishment of the new Māori ward seat simply means anyone enrolled on the Māori electoral roll can vote for the candidates standing for the Māori ward seat whereas anyone enrolled on the General electoral will continue to vote for the candidates standing within the General ward they reside in.

As noted under question 2, while non-elected mana whenua representatives are attending Council meetings, they are legally not permitted to have voting rights at these meetings.

**9. How much money collected from rates has been given to iwi between 2021 to 2024?**

For the four financial years from 2020/21 to 2023/24 inclusive, a total of \$3,768,063 has been paid to our mana whenua partners.

**10. What are the reasons for the current high level of debt?**

Debt levels are principally driven by capital expenditure, in particular to improve levels of service and to accommodate future growth. The Council has invested significantly for growth and resilience in recent years.

**11. Please would you provide details of the reasons for this high rates increase detailing all projects where the money will be spent.**

Details can be found in the [2024-34 Long-term Plan](#), in particular the Financial Strategy from page 32, Infrastructure Strategy from page 48 and Capital Works programme from page 130.

**12. Please explain the reason why Kapiti Council allowed the debt to become so high and the impact of this high debt on the rates.**

Debt levels are principally driven by capital expenditure, in particular to improve levels of service and to accommodate future growth. The Council has invested significantly for growth and resilience in recent years. The impact of debt levels on rates can be found in the [2024-34 Long-term Plan](#).

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark de Haast', written in a cursive style.

**Mark de Haast**

Group Manager Corporate Services  
Te Kaihautū Ratonga Tōpū

If you are interested in the attachments which accompany this response, please contact us at:  
[informationrequest@kapiticoast.govt.nz](mailto:informationrequest@kapiticoast.govt.nz)