

30 March 2026

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Dear [REDACTED]



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www.goredc.govt.nz

Thank you for your Official Information request for the number of disputes complaints or non-compliance with Council rules and statutory obligations, received on 28 January 2026, and your subsequent clarification.

This LGOIMA request is about disputes, complaints, or non-compliance with council rules and statutory obligations, including rates, dog registration, or other council charges, and the effect these have had on council resources. Please provide the following information for the period January 2022 – today:

1) The number of personal grievances or formal complaints relating to disputes with the public over council rules or statutory obligations, and any high-level reports or summaries about trends or impacts of these disputes on staff or council operations. *Clarified - refers to issues and problems faced by council's employees specifically. It would be complaints staff have raised about interactions with the public. Especially on matters triggered by people harassing or targeting the council or specific employees.*

2) The number of cases where people have disputed or delayed paying rates, fees, or charges, or refused to comply with council requirements (for example, dog registration), and any summaries or reports describing the nature or volume of these disputes. *Clarified - are about issues and problems triggered by sovereign citizens disputing the council's authority or refusing to pay rates, fines and fees citing pseudo-laws arguments*

3) Total costs, including legal fees, court or debt recovery costs, or extra staff time, related to handling the above disputes, and any reports or summaries assessing the impact on council resources or finances. *Clarified - are about issues and problems triggered by sovereign citizens disputing the council's authority or refusing to pay rates, fines and fees citing pseudo-laws arguments*

4) The number of LGOIMA requests received that relate to disputes over council rules, charges, or enforcement, and any internal summaries or reports about high-volume requests or the impact of repeated requests on staff and operations. *Clarified - without using the words 'paper terrorism', hints at the practice of flooding councils with LGOIMA requests. This is done by organised groups or individuals who are trying to clog the council or are disputing the council's authority. So, I would be interested in those specific instances.*

I do not need any personal identifying information about individuals, and summaries or anonymised data are fine.

Council has reviewed your request and can provide the following information to you.

To answer your question on complaints staff have raised about interactions with the public, the table below provides the number of incidences reported by Council staff, broken down by financial year.

Incidences reported by Council staff, broken down by financial year.

Financial Year	Total
2022/2023	13
2023/2024	20
2024/2025	23
2025/2026 (to 02/02/2026)	13

To provide further context to these figures, there were 13 incidences recorded at council staff while working out in the field; 45 were within a council facility, and 11 were received via email or the phone.

To respond to your second question, I can advise that since January 2022, Council has had five Sovereign Citizens disputing Council's authority. The Council does not hold any reports on these cases.

Question 3 – sent by email 1 April 2026

These figures relate only to sovereign citizens in the 2025/26 financial year:

Legal costs incurred by the Council year to date \$33,560.96 (GST incl). These relate to two separate sovereign citizen cases.

Legal costs incurred for debt recovery year to date \$1,162.00

Estimated staff time year to date 60+ hours

Finally, since January 2022, the Council has received 14 LGOIMAs related to disputes over Council rules, charges or enforcement. These LGOIMAs specifically relate to non-payment of rates, Council insurance and public liability policies, debt collection policies and agreements.

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

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact the Governance team via governance@goredc.govt.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bainbridge-Zafar', written in a cursive style.

David Bainbridge-Zafar
General Manager Operations