

Response to information request from STUFF

7 July 2023

Dear Rachael

Thanks for your email earlier on 7 June asking for the following:

1. How much the council has spent on legal advice/opinions since October 8 2022 and now?
2. What is the council's budget for legal services for the year?
3. Could you please detail what legal advice has been sought in relation to the ongoing issues between Stephen Parry and Ben Bell, and how much that has cost?
4. At the last council meeting it was mentioned that the council had changed lawyers - can you please explain why, and who is now providing legal advice?

You can attribute the following response to our Chief Executive Stephen Parry:

1. Legal expenses incurred by the Council's governance arm on legal and employment advice since October 8 2022 is \$103,563. This is 51.25% of the overall spend on legal fees in the 2022/23 financial year. There may be more costs as invoices for June are still being received.
2. The budget for the 2022/23 financial year was \$180,396.
3. The Council will not be releasing details of the legal advice sought, in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act Section 7(2)(g) – to maintain legal professional privilege. The Council does not itemize legal expenses against specific employment issues for privacy reasons.
4. The Council has not changed legal advisors. It continues to receive advice from Janet Copeland, of Copeland Ashcroft and Michael Garbett, of Anderson Lloyd. Latterly, it has also been receiving advice from King's Counsel Maria Dew.

Thank you for your patience in awaiting a response.

If you are unsatisfied with the response, you are entitled to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsmen. You can find more information on its website <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz>

Kind regards



Sonia Gerken
GM Communications & Customer Support