

Response to information request from [REDACTED]

26 October 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

This response is in regard to your requests for information about the Council's variances in budgets and financial reporting procedures.

You latest email was received on Sunday in which you state:

Once more GDC is disrespectful of the LGOIMA and more to the point, to me. But then I am portrayed as a tin foil hatter, all because the CEO dislikes transparency.

More than 20 days have passed since my second updated request and not a word as to why my request has not been answered.

IMHO there is too much scheming behind the scenes by those in charge of the welfare of the Gore District. The trust, credibility and strength to lead this community has long been gone!

So back to the Ombudsmen is it? ●

It may be useful to look at the correspondence series in relation to this LGOIMA.

- **5 July** – you request information from the Council relative to budgets and financial reporting.
- **1 August** – the Council responds with the answers it can. It advises you that given the amount of research required to provide further information, the Council will have to charge a fee in line with its approved Fees and Charges, and would require a deposit. You were asked to confirm acceptance of this charge by contacting the GM Corporate Support.
- **21 September** – you write to the Council reiterating your questions and asking for more information.
- **10 October** – the Council responds to an email from you inquiring about the current LGOIMA, saying it will respond in due course.

With regard to any overspends during the years you have requested (2018 – 2022), as mentioned previously, these would have been highlighted in financial reports provided to the Council.

As also mentioned previously, any variances to approved budgets are either brought before elected members for their approval or reported to them.

The minutes and reports for years 2019 to 2022 are available on our website. Here is the link <https://www.goredc.govt.nz/council/meetings/agendas-minutes>

Information for 2018 can be found following this link <https://web.archive.org/web/20210206211736/https://www.goredc.govt.nz/your-council/council-business/agendas-and-minutes/2018-meetings/>

With regard to your question *Where did these controls fall down to trigger such a big overspend over that period?*, the Council does not believe its financial controls have been deficient.

I have attached all correspondence to date for your information.

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

5th July 2020

To whom it may concern
Gore District Council

Dear Sir/Madam

Under the LGOIMA I am requesting the following information

I have reviewed the last 5 annual reports for Gore District Council and find that the combined overspend (excluding depreciation) come to over \$10M against the (17-18 AP) budget.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSE	\$'000		\$	
	Other Expenses	Total Exclude Depreciation	Budget Increase Over-Budget	
Year ended 30 June 2018	(10,908)	(17,814)	(16,297)	\$ 1,517,000
Year ended 30 June 2019	(11,187)	(18,550)	(17,856)	\$ 694,000
Year ended 30 June 2020	(12,703)	(20,672)	(18,753)	\$ 1,919,000
Year ended 30 June 2021	(13,619)	(21,543)	(19,566)	\$ 1,977,000
Year ended 30 June 2022	(17,068)	(26,625)	(21,293))	\$ 4,332,000
5 year total-over-spends (excluding depreciation)				\$ 10,439,000

- What have been the main drivers for this huge overspend?
- What financials controls were in place to ensure the books were balanced?
- Where did these controls fall down to trigger such a big overspend over that period?
- Who approves the large overspend?
- Was overspend publicly reported during council meetings?

Notes 12 OTHER EXPENSES (Page 85)

Other operating expenses are \$9,214,000. This is nearly 30% of total expenditure

- Why is the \$9.2m so high?
- I am requesting a breakdown of the 20 largest items and the budgets prepared for them
- Are business cases prepared for main expenditure items and in particular for "unbudgeted" items?
- Who approves any overspend?

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

Response to information request from [REDACTED]

1 August 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email earlier this month asking for information about variances in our budgets and our financial reporting procedures.

The information you seek is already available in our Annual Reports. Each report has a note titled "Explanation for Major Variances". You can find our annual reports going back to 2015/-16 on our website. Here is the link <https://www.goredc.govt.nz/council/official-documents>

As you are aware the Council's financial procedures and reporting are audited each year by an external agency. Elected members also receive detailed reports on a regular basis. Any variances to approved budgets are either brought before elected members for their approval or reported to them.

With regard to your request for the 20 largest items included in Other Expenses, and the associated budgets, we estimate it will take our staff approximately 10 to 15 hours to research and compile this information.

This is the third LGOIMA request received from you within a 24 working day period. Under section 17A(2)(b) of the Act these requests can be treated as a single request.

Given the amount of research involved and the number of LGOIMAs we have received from you, the Council will be charging for the work undertaken. The Council's charge out rate is \$80 per hour. Based on the staff commitment, we will need a deposit of \$400, which represents 50% of the total cost, before beginning work.

Please contact our GM Corporate Support Lorna Straith, email lstraith@goredc.govt.nz to confirm you are willing to meet these costs and we will ensure you are invoiced accordingly.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonia Gerken'.

Sonia Gerken
GM Communications & Customer Support

██████████
Gore

21st Sep 2023

Gore District Council
LGOIMA Request

To whom it concerns

Regarding your unsatisfactory response (1st Aug 2023) re my LGOIMA request 5th July 2023.

You omitted to reply to the following

- What financials controls were in place to ensure the books were balanced?
- Where did these controls fall down to trigger such a big overspend over that period?
- Who approves the large overspend?
- Was overspend publicly reported during council meetings?

And

- Are business cases prepared for main expenditure items and in particular for “unbudgeted” items?
- Who approves any overspend?

Please supply answers to my questions not the fob off given in your reply.

As you are aware the Council’s financial procedures and reporting are audited each year by an external agency. Elected members also receive detailed reports on a regular basis. Any variances to approved budgets are either brought before elected members for their approval or reported to them.

I require copies of the actual minutes and detailed reports the elected members received, along with the information on any variances to approved budgets brought before the elected members for their approval or reported to them.

Thank you
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