

[REDACTED]

From: Official Information
Sent: Tuesday, 18 April 2017 5:08 p.m.
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: LGOIMA 17/111 response - [REDACTED] - communications spending

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email, received on 17 March 2017. You requested the following information, under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

1. *"How many full time-equivalent communications staff did you have in the 2015/16 financial year (including positions that were temporarily vacant)?"*
2. *What was the total communications department cost (including wages and spending) for 2015/16 financial year?
(a) If recorded, please provide the cost of solely external communications for that period.*
3. *How much was spent on external Public Relations (ie firms/advice/services/contractors/communications) in the 2015/16 year?*
4. *How many full time-equivalent communications staff did you have in the 2010/11 financial year (including positions that were temporarily vacant)?"*
5. *What was the total communications department cost (including wages and spending) for the 2010/2011 financial year?
(a) If recorded, please provide the cost of solely external communications for that period.*
6. *How much was spent on external Public Relations (ie firms/advice/services/contractors/communications) in the 2010/11 year?"*.

You also stated that: *"Communications staff would include, but not apply solely to, media teams / liaisons. When answering, please include all departments that come under your organisation."*

Release of information

We will respond to each of your questions in turn.

1. *How many full time-equivalent communications staff did you have in the 2015/16 financial year (including positions that were temporarily vacant)?*

We have confined the numbers to those staff with communications, media, marketing and editorial in their titles. This figure does not include community consultation/engagement staff and design staff. We had 27.12 FTEs in communications, marketing, media and editorial (including digital channels) roles in the 2015/16 year.

2. *What was the total communications department cost (including wages and spending) for 2015/16 financial year?*

(a) If recorded, please provide the cost of solely external communications for that period.

The department cost (wages and associated staff costs and overheads) for the 2015/16 financial year was \$3,010,402.89.

The Council organisation spends prudently on its communication function. We have a significant role and responsibility to communicate, engage and consult with the people of Christchurch and we utilise this team to lead this work.

Given the unit has undergone several restructures in the period requested, we have confined the salaries to those staff with communications and marketing in their title as well as requested the media team and also those who are in the editorial team producing digital content (this team was created in March 2015).

Staff are responsible for providing information about the Council and its services. This includes writing and producing photographs and videos for the Council's digital news channel as well as producing content for other Council publications such as the Annual Plan and Annual Report. Other duties include developing and managing social media channels, developing e-newsletters, producing content for the Council's website, responding to media queries and producing information for Council projects and consultations, such as the introduction of new cycle routes, a review of the District Plan and rebuilding Council facilities. Council communications staff are also assisting with communications for both Development Christchurch and Regenerate Christchurch. Staff have recently worked on the Civil Defence emergency response in Kaikoura and Hurunui and also the more recent Port Hills fires. Supporting the Council's communication and engagement function is a big part of the team's responsibilities and this includes hosting public meetings and producing consultation resources.

3. *How much was spent on external Public Relations (ie firms/advice/services/contractors/communications) in the 2015/16 year?*

The Council provides a full in-house service for communications – we do not hire external consultants. Therefore the answer to question 3 is zero.

4. *How many full time-equivalent communications staff did you have in the 2010/11 financial year (including positions that were temporarily vacant)?*

We have confined the numbers to those staff with communications, media, marketing and editorial in their titles. This figure does not include consultation/engagement staff and design staff. We had 22.80 FTEs in communications, marketing, media and editorial roles in the 2010/11 year.

5. *What was the total communications department cost (including wages and spending) for the 2010/2011 financial year?*

(a) If recorded, please provide the cost of solely external communications for that period. See above.

The department cost (wages and associated staff costs and overheads) for the 2010/11 financial year was \$2,551,781.47.

6. *How much was spent on external Public Relations (ie firms/advice/services/contractors/communications) in the 2010/11 year?*

As is the case now, in 2010/11 the Council provided a full in-house service for communications – we did not hire external consultants. Therefore the answer to question 6 is zero.

Other Information

To provide some further context for your inquiry, I have also included below the major costs incurred over the period of your questions for related functions such as production, printing and distribution costs of communications material.

Until the 2013/14 financial year, the Council's annual communications budget included the printing and distribution of a monthly publication Our Christchurch. The amount spent was as follows:

2009/10: \$283,946

2010/2011: \$286,592

2011/2012: \$276,852

2012/2013: \$244,425

2013/14: \$48,028

The publication ceased in 2013/14 - partially reflecting a changing community preference for digital format, but also as a cost-saving measure. It has not been reinstated.

The Council then produced a joint publication, Future Christchurch Update, led by the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA). CERA funded the publication and the Council's in-house team provided resources for design and distribution. This publication was distributed to 148,000 households each month and ceased in October

2016. The cost to the Council for the publication was \$35,838 in 2014/15 and \$399,045 in 2015/16. However, these costs were recovered from/reimbursed by CERA - therefore there was no direct cost to Council/incurred by Christchurch ratepayers.

In March 2016 the Council launched a digital news channel, Newslive, which has replaced the previous "Our Christchurch" and "Future Christchurch" written publications. This was in response to the Council's emphasis on a move to digital communications as a cost-effective way of communication with citizens. To establish Newslive the Council spent \$25,603.40 on camera and video equipment. However, while this equipment is used for photographs and videos for Newslive, it is also used for other Council imagery which appears on the Council website, intranet and also for Council marketing and communication campaigns. The in-house photographic and video resource is resulting in savings to the Council. The staffing cost of running the Newslive service is included in our total FTE of 27.12 FTEs.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review our decision. Complaints can be sent by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz, by fax to (04) 471 2254, or by post to The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Publication of responses to LGOIMA requests

Please note: our LGOIMA responses may be published on the Christchurch City Council website a month after they have been responded to, with requesters' personal details withheld. If you have any concerns about this please contact the Official Information team on officialinformation@ccc.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Sinclair

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