OIR: 2526/454

24 June 2026

[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 **12 June 2026** requesting the following information:

I am writing as a concerned ratepayer in the Kāpiti Coast District regarding the ongoing increases in rates and the growing financial burden being placed on residents and businesses throughout our district.

Like many ratepayers, I understand that councils face increasing costs and significant infrastructure challenges. However, I am struggling to understand how Kāpiti Coast District Council continues to justify substantial rates increases when many residents feel they are receiving less value for money and seeing little improvement in the services that matter most.

As a ratepayer, I would appreciate a detailed explanation of:

1. How the proposed rates increases have been calculated.

To calculate how much revenue is collected through rates, Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) models total operating expenditure and then offsets all non-rates revenue budgets. The rates revenue is then adjusted for regional growth.

2. The specific projects and operational costs driving these increases.

Increases in costs from 2025/26 to 2026/27 is largely driven by either inflation or the capital works programme (additional depreciation and interest on debt).

3. The current total debt position of Kāpiti Coast District Council.

As at 31 May 2026, net debt is $302.1m.

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

4. ***The projected debt levels over the next 5 and 10 years.***

Projected net debt by 30 June 2027 is $324.5m. KCDC debt forecasts for years 2027/28 are currently being worked on through the Long Term Plan.

5. ***The annual interest costs being paid on Council borrowings.***

See Annual Plan 2026/27 page 65 – net interest payable of $12.6m/annum.

6. ***The total cost of salaries, wages, and management overheads across Council.***

Total annual Personnel costs per the Annual Plan 2026/27 is $43.6m.

For actual personnel costs refer to page 125 in the Annual Report 2024/25.

7. ***The number of full-time equivalent staff currently employed by Council compared with five years ago.***

This is provided in the table below:

	June 2021	**June 2026**
Permanent (Full time & Part time)	339 (FTE)	379 (FTE)
Fixed term / Casual*	152 (Head count)	108 (Head count)

**this is headcount as casuals employees by nature of their employment do not have set hours or regular pattern of work.*

Note: the increase in the permanent over the last 5 years and the decrease in the fixed term / casual employees is due to change in employment to reflect the employment type definitions in the Employment Act.

8. ***The remuneration of senior leadership positions and how these are benchmarked against comparable councils.***

Please see Salary bands on page 160 of the Annual Report 2024/25. The remuneration for senior leader roles and the grades are evaluated by Strategic Pay and use the Local Government Labour Market data provide the respective remuneration.

Many residents are concerned that Council spending has continued to grow while essential services and infrastructure projects appear to experience delays, cost overruns, or limited visible improvements. It would be helpful for ratepayers to understand how Council measures performance and what accountability exists when projects exceed budget or fail to meet expected outcomes.

I would also like access to the latest available financial information, including:

1. Most recent Annual Report.

2024/25 Annual Report is on the KCDC website.
Annual Reports The Annual Report 2026/27 will be available on the KCDC website in October 2026.

2. Latest audited financial statements.

Annual Report 2024/25 (from page 111) is on the KCDC website.

3. Current Long-Term Plan financial forecasts.

Long-term Plan 2024-34 (from page 146) is on the KCDC website.

4. Any reports outlining debt levels and future borrowing requirements.

Debt levels are reported in the KCDC Performance Reports, Annual Report and Annual Plan documents on the KCDC website. Future debt levels are forecast as part of the Long Term Plan, with 2024-34 being the latest forecast.

5. Performance reports relating to capital expenditure and infrastructure delivery.

The February Performance Report is available on the KCDC website.
Performance Report ended 28 February 2026

As ratepayers, we are effectively the shareholders of this district. We are expected to fund Council operations through continually increasing rates, and therefore it is reasonable that we expect a high level of transparency regarding how our money is being spent and what outcomes are being achieved.

There is a growing perception within the community that Council requires a thorough review of its structure, spending priorities, efficiency, and overall value for money. At a time when many households are facing significant financial pressure, Council should be demonstrating the same discipline and accountability that residents and businesses must apply to their own budgets.

I would appreciate a detailed response addressing these concerns and providing the requested financial information.

Ratepayers play a critical role in funding Council services, and that comes with an expectation of transparency, accountability, and clear outcomes. These are things both Councillors and staff are very focused on, especially as we continue work on our 2027–37 Long Term Plan (LTP).

Affordability is front of mind for Councillors. Earlier this year we commissioned an affordability study to give us a clearer picture of what our community can reasonably sustain. The findings of this report will help guide decisions for the next LTP. You can find the Infometrics Rates Affordability Report for the Kāpiti Coast District Council on our website.

As we get into developing the plan, we'll be taking a close look at our priorities, the services we provide, and how we make sure we're delivering value for money.

To help us do this we need to hear directly from our community. We encourage you, and others, to get involved in our pre-LTP engagement, which commenced on 22 June. It's an opportunity to have your say on what matters most and how we strike the right balance between affordability and the services and investment our district needs.

You can find more information and ways to participate on our website and we appreciate you raising these points and encourage you to stay involved as the process progresses.

Ngā mihi,

Mark de Haast
Group Manager Corporate Services
Te Kaihautū Ratonga Tōpū

OIR: 2526/471

16 July 2026

[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 **24 June 2026** requesting the following information:

Thank you for your response to my LGOIMA request, OIR 2526/454. I appreciate the information provided, however I do not feel the response gives ratepayers enough detail to understand where the money is actually being spent, what is driving the continued rates pressure, and what meaningful savings Kāpiti Coast District Council is actively considering.

The headline figures in your response are concerning:
KCDC's net debt was $302.1m as at 31 May 2026 and is projected to increase to $324.5m by 30 June 2027. Net interest payable is listed at $12.6m per annum. Personnel costs are $43.6m, and permanent staff numbers have increased from 339 FTE in June 2021 to 379 FTE in June 2026.

These are significant numbers for a district of our size. Ratepayers are being asked to absorb ongoing increases while many households and local businesses are under real financial pressure. In that environment, Council should be able to clearly show that every possible saving and efficiency has been investigated before asking the community to pay more.

Your response explains that increases are largely driven by inflation, capital works, additional depreciation and interest on debt. However, it does not provide enough detail on which specific areas, departments, projects or operational decisions are causing the largest increases.

I am therefore asking for a more detailed response to the following:

1. ***Please provide a breakdown of the top 20 operating cost increases from 2025/26 to 2026/27, including the dollar amount, department, and reason for each increase.***

   Please refer to the slides presented to the Council on 16 December 2025, 18 December 2025 and 5 February 2026 which are on the Council's website.

   https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/council/forms-documents/annual-and-long-term-plans/annual-plan/annual-plan-202627/

2. ***Please provide a list of the top 20 capital projects currently contributing to increased debt, depreciation, or interest costs, including the original budget, current forecast cost, and expected completion date.***

   Please refer to the Capital Works programme section of the Annual Plan 2025/26 and 2026/27.

3. ***Please provide staff numbers and personnel costs by department for 2021 and 2026, so ratepayers can understand where the increase in permanent FTE has occurred.***

   Due to department changes in the organisation's structure and business group names over the last five years, the Council has not captured this information in the format that is sought by your question. New information would need to be created to provide an answer. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 17(e) of the Act as the documents alleged to contain the information requested does not exist, or despite reasonable efforts to locate them, they cannot be found.

   However, the table below provides the information for each of the previous financial years.

	as at 30 June 2026	as at 30 June 2025	as at 30 June 2024	as at 30 June 2023	as at 30 June 2022
FTE*	413.4	415.0	400.7	309.3	293.1
Personnel Costs**	$43,117,497	$40,204,102	$36,090,441	$25,629,449	$23,887,433

**includes permanent full and part time employees and Fixed term full and part time employees as at 30 June each year*
***Based on the FTE salary*

4. ***Please advise whether KCDC has considered a freeze on non-essential recruitment, and whether every vacant role is reviewed before being replaced.***

   An FTE cap of 436 was implemented prior to the 2025/26 annual plan.

5. ***Please provide the current annual cost of consultants, contractors, professional services, communications, strategy work, and external reports.***

The Council does not capture and record this information in the manner you are seeking and to provide a response would require the creation of new information. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 17(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist, or despite reasonable efforts to locate them, they cannot be found.

However, our website includes a response to an earlier information request in relation to contractors and consultants that you may find helpful. That response can be seen here.

6. ***Please provide a list of discretionary spending areas, including grants, funds, sponsorships, economic development programmes, community programmes, events, communications campaigns, and non-essential projects.***

The Council does not maintain a category of expenditure described as ‘discretionary spending’. Accordingly, this part of your request is refused under section 17(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

7. ***Please explain what savings targets have been given to each department for the 2027–37 Long Term Plan.***

The budgeting process and assumptions for the Long Term Plan have yet to be confirmed and approved. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 17(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

8. ***Please confirm whether KCDC has carried out, or intends to carry out, an independent value-for-money review of its structure, staffing, service levels, and capital programme before adopting the next Long Term Plan.***

The budgeting process and assumptions for the Long Term Plan have yet to be confirmed and approved. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 17(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

9. ***Please provide detail on the Datascape / ERP system costs, including total approved budget, actual cost to date, forecast final cost, whether it is over budget, and what measurable savings or efficiencies are expected from the project.***

Total approved budget for the Datascape project is $7.0m and as at 31 May 2026 the forecast is $6.0m by 30 June 2026 and the remaining $1.0m during the 2026/27 financial year.

10. ***Please explain what steps Council is taking to reduce future borrowing and interest costs, rather than simply passing those costs on to ratepayers through higher rates.***

    The Council's Financial Strategy currently provides for debt repayments. The Financial Strategy is being reviewed as part of the 2027-37 Long Term Plan.

Should you have any further queries, I would like to extend an invitation to you to meet directly with our Chief Financial Officer, at a mutually convenient time, to discuss them.

You have the right to request the Ombudsman to review this decision. Complaints can be sent by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz, or by post to The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi,

Mark de Haast
Group Manager Corporate Services
Te Kaihautū Ratonga Tōpū