

OIR: 2324/846

18 April 2024

[REDACTED]  
[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 **19 March 2024**. Please find Council's response to your questions below:

**Is Council prepared to follow the lead of other countries that have multiple languages and make their documents that are available to the public in two separate editions? An English edition and a Māori edition? At the time we spoke, I asked what was the best way of implementing my suggestion, and you suggested making a submission under KCDC's long-term plan which is due out shortly.**

Council is committed to ensuring decision-making of Council, committees and community boards including associated governance documents are accessible for everyone. To achieve this, Council's website has been designed to meet the New Zealand Government web standards and accessibility best practice. This includes meeting agendas and minutes which are published in both PDF and web format for easier legibility.

Te reo Māori is an official language of New Zealand and as public servants we are working hard to increase our Council's capability in te reo Māori and reflect it in both our accountability documents and customer communications. This is consistent with the aspirations of [Maihi Karauna](#), the Crown's Strategy for Māori Language Revitalisation.

Council, through Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti, has one of the longest lasting partnerships and local government in Aotearoa New Zealand which has been in place since 1994. The relationship is highly valued by Council and mana whenua alike.

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

While we note your request for Council to split agendas and minutes into two separate versions, one in English and one in te reo Māori, we are at this point in time unable to make this commitment due to staff capability and capacity.

**1. *Is this the same process that was followed for introducing this jumbling of two languages in the first place? If not, how was this jumbling of languages introduced?***

A change to the agenda and minutes template to include te reo Māori headings was implemented in September 2021. The process to change the agenda template was not introduced through the Long-term Plan and was initiated by an independent organisational review conducted in 2019 by Martin Jenkins which triggered a review of all governance documents.

As a result of reviewing best practice report templates across the local government sector, a decision was made to provide the headers in both English and te reo Māori which was supported by elected members. This also aligns with best practice guidelines released by the Māori Language Commission – Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.

**2. *What Council protocol and what Council reports covered this issue?***

Council does not currently have a Māori language policy or strategy and follows guidance released by the Māori Language Commission (Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori) which provides three key elements of effective bilingual language design, **Language Equality** – te reo Māori and English are treated equally. **Language Differentiation** – the eye can spot the difference between each language at a glance, **Navigation cues** – the eye can easily follow its chosen language without confusion and the navigation cues are consistent. Council further follows best practice guidance across the local government sector to include both languages. The changes to the governance documents were not formally adopted as part of a Council agenda or report, however, at the time the changes were supported by both elected members and operational staff.

**3. *Could you please provide evidence of how Council decided to jumble up these two languages?***

A change to the agenda and minutes template to include te reo Māori headings was implemented in September 2021. The change was initiated by an independent organisational review conducted in 2019 by Martin Jenkins which triggered a review of all governance documents.

As a result of reviewing best practice report templates across the local government sector, a decision was made to provide the headers in both English and te reo Māori which was supported by elected members.

Council proactively encourages staff to embrace the use of te reo Māori and working on improving accessibility to governance documents continues to be an ongoing priority of Council. Further work is also underway on a disability approach that will include reviewing the access to Council services which includes Governance.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hara Adams', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Hara Adams**

Te Kaiwhakahaere Rōpū Hononga ā-Iwi  
Group Manager Iwi Partnerships

**OIR: 2324/907**

27 May 2024



Tēnā koe ,

**Request for Information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) (the LGOIMA)**

Thank you for your email of 29 April 2024 expressing concern at our 19 April 2024 response to your request for information of 19 March 2024.

I acknowledge that our response focussed on your request that full translations in te reo Māori be produced, rather than the issue of the Council's compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Right of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), as this is what we understood to be the focus of your request. Your subsequent request has clarified that your focus was on disabilities and this response concentrates on that.

I understand that bilingual content can also have an impact for people who struggle to read text in any language and for screen reader users, and that providing full translations accessible using bilingual navigation labels would be preferred. Thank you for this feedback on this matter.

I acknowledge Council's responsibilities under various legislation to enable those with disabilities to participate in our processes. Council staff strive to make our communications as accessible as possible and acknowledge we have more work to do in this space. Your comments have been noted and provided to appropriate teams within Council to consider.

You have also asked a number of additional questions which I have responded to below, on behalf of various different Council teams:

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

**1. What is KCDC's staff capability and capacity currently? Could you please provide specifics?**

We understand this question is directed at capability and capacity for producing separate documents in English and te reo Māori. While we have some staff who are fluent in both English and te reo Māori, their roles are not focussed on providing translation services. We have contractors we engage to assist with translation services where required.

Providing two separate documents of all publications is not currently budgeted for and we do not have internal capability or capacity to do so. This is explained further in response to your questions 2(c) and (d).

**2.**

**a) In what way does KCDC's staff capability and capacity currently make it unable to comply with my request for KCDC to comply with the UNCRPD as explained?**

Council is aware of its accessibility obligations and is working hard to meet government accessibility guidelines. We accept there is always more that can be done but we need to balance the cost of bringing on additional resources. Please see below explanation regarding providing appropriate translations.

**b) Has KCDC made costings regarding my request and if they have what are they?**

Council has not explored the cost of fully implementing the UNCRPD.

**c) I know of an author that has published a bilingual book recently and this person was adamant that providing a translation can be done in seconds using Google. Consequently I would consider the costings to be negligible and using the excuse that KCDC is unable to make this commitment due to staff capability and capacity doesn't stack up**

**AND**

**d) So in what way is it that KCDC considers my request too onerous on their staff then?"**

Translation of all documents would require appointment of qualified translation specialists. Not all reo Māori speakers are translators - this is a specialist skill that takes training and practice.

Te reo Māori is a contextual language and cannot be translated directly word for word, so Google Translate struggles to create robust translations and is not recommended for formal documents.

Given its specialist nature, our current approach to te reo Māori translation is to engage contract support. We do not have internal roles that provide this function. Our current budget for the services does not allow for full translation of all documentation or communications.

The approach taken by Kāpiti Coast District Council is consistent with the approach taken by other councils and central government agencies.

As noted above, we are working hard to meet government accessibility guidelines and accept there is always more we can do. We need to balance to cost of bringing on additional resources with operating within our financial means.

**3. *Why was my LGOIMA request of 19 March 2024, OIR: 2324/846 referred to the Group Manager Iwi Partnerships?***

The Manager Iwi Partnerships signed the letter as the response was focussed on the use of both te reo Māori and English within the same document. It is consistent with our LGOIMA policy that a Group Manager signs off official information requests.

**4. *When the Group Manager Iwi Partnerships stated that "...we are at this point in time unable to make this commitment due to staff capability and capacity." is this person actually referring to their own department within council? If that is the case was an alternative considered?***

This statement referred not only to the Iwi Partnership team but to wider Council capability to provide translations. We have limited capability and capacity across Council as a whole and we need to balance the cost of bringing on additional resource with operating within our financial means.

**5. *As an example of what Council deems to consider an acceptable cost for providing bilingual signs, can Council please provide the total cost of providing bilingual signs at Haruatai Park?***

The total cost of materials, including advice from the parties involved, was approximately \$740. This cost is low because the majority of the advice and assistance was provided out of goodwill and was free of charge.

**6. *In my request of 19 March 2024, I submitted the following question : "Could you please provide evidence of how Council decided to jumble up these two languages" (referring to the Māori and English languages) The reply contained the following paragraph : "A change to the agenda and minutes template to include te reo Māori headings was implemented in Sep 2021. The change was initiated by an independent organisational review conducted in 2019 by Martin Jenkins which triggered a review of all governance documents." I clearly stated that I wanted evidence.***

***While I appreciate Council's partial reply, I would appreciate it if Council is to provide the documents and/or the links to these documents which are related to these reviews of all governance documents and the changes to the agenda and minutes template.***

**AND**

- 7. Council's reply which I quoted in Question Six, clearly only covers governance documents and the agenda and minutes template. What evidence can Council provide to all other forms of Council communication that falls outside of these two specific instances? How were those decisions negotiated?"**

You can access the independent organisational review by Martin Jenkins at the link below.

[Martin Jenkins Independent Organisational Review - Kāpiti Coast District Council \(kapiticoast.govt.nz\)](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/martin-jenkins-independent-organisational-review)

Following this report, Council reviewed its report template to Council in 2021. This was approved by Council's Senior Leadership Team in August 2021.

As part of the report template review, on advice from Council's Iwi Partnerships Manager and Group Manager People and Partnerships, it was recommended that Council incorporate bilingual headings, te reo Māori and English. This advice aligns with the best practice guidelines released by the Māori Language Commission - Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori. Staff advice referenced above was obtained through a series of meetings between staff involved in this project at the time and is not documented in emails.

Consistent with this advice, this approach has been adopted with other key documents, for example, Council agendas. In addition, as advised in our previous response to you, our approach to including te reo Māori in other forms of Council communication is in line with the Crown's Strategy for Māori Language Revitalisation, and with our valued partnership with our local iwi.

There is no specific record of negotiation of this approach as it has developed over time.

- 8. Council's final sentence in their reply to my LGOIMA of 19 March 2024 is as follows : "Further work is also underway on a disability approach that will include reviewing the access to Council services which includes Governance." I don't know what to make of this statement.**
- a) What further work is underway?**
  - b) What is meant by a disability approach?**
  - c) What review of access to Council services?**
  - d) Why is Governance singled out?"**

To clarify:

- The reference to 'further work *also* been underway' refers firstly to the development of our new Age Friendly Approach which includes community-wide actions to improve accessibility (refer to <https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/media/bs5ljpiw/kapiti-age-friendly-approach.pdf>). In regards to the 'disability approach'<sup>1</sup>, this wider piece of work will be actioned with the Disability Advisory Group and provide a set of principles that inform day-to-day actions to practically improve accessibility for residents and users of Council, and our services. The output will likely be renamed the 'accessibility approach'.
- A review of 'ease of access' to Council services will be undertaken amongst other work to determine the focus for the accessibility approach, and to inform how we improve the accessibility of Council services.
- Governance services were singled out as an example, in response to your original query. I can confirm that the coverage for our wider work will not be limited to governance services.

Thank you for raising these matters with us. Council is conscious not only of our responsibilities under formal mechanisms like the UNCRPD, but also as an organisation that strives to be transparent and provide information that everyone in our community can engage with. We hope to improve our approach to this over time and feedback like yours will help us do this.

Ngā mihi,



**Sarah Wattie**

Manager Governance and Legal Services  
Te Kaiwhakahaere Ratonga Kāwanatanga me te Ture

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<sup>1</sup> This replaces the previously noted 'Accessibility strategy' outlined in the Policy Work Programme 2021-24. The shift to 'approach' rather than 'strategy' will mean that the principles set around accessibility flow into all existing and new strategies set by Council. Further information on this is set out in the Age Friendly Approach on page 4.