

24 September 2021

Request for Official Information responded to under the Local Government and Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) (the Act) – reference: 2122-65

Thank you for your information request, which we received on 6 September 2021.

We will respond to your five questions in turn.

- 1. All demographic information collected for respondents and interviewees (the 16 people who took part in 'long semi-structured interviews', the 25 people who took part in workshops, the 19 people who responded to the online survey, the 80 participants in interviews conducted as 'market stall pop-ups and the 28 participants in 'street intercept interviews') mentioned in the memo titled 'Community insight to inform and inspire Kāpiti Coast District's representation arrangements' prepared by Empathy Design.***

We have contacted Empathy Design (Empathy) in relation to your request as this information was not held by Council. Empathy were able to provide the following general demographic information on those recruited to participate in preliminary engagement activities:

"We used five different design research activities. Each was chosen and tailored to achieve the purpose of different phases of work, to ensure we heard from a wide mix of people, and to provide the robust and well-rounded understanding in a cost-effective way.

In the design research, we only sought and analysed input from people who are eligible to vote in Kāpiti Council elections. We analysed input from people who live in Kāpiti, and people who own property in Kāpiti but live elsewhere.

People in specific geographic catchments were invited to come to each community workshop. People were invited by way of an unaddressed paper invitation placed in letterboxes. No other criteria was imposed.

One of the activities involved recruitment of people to fit specific requirements – the recruited, long-semi structured interviews. [See the response to Q2 below for more information on the selection criteria for this activity]

Three of the five activities – street intercept interviews, market pop-ups, online survey – did not involve prior recruitment of people. They also did not require people to say where they are from. People were asked whether they live in Kāpiti, but not where within the district. Some offered the information, but most did not.

From time to time, people younger than voting age contributed, with permission from their guardian. For example, whole families would chat to us at the market pop-ups. We set that information aside for analysis.

We did not fact-check people's credentials for any of the design research activities. It is possible a person did not accurately respond to questions about living or owning property in Kāpiti, or prior engagement with council. But asking the questions clearly, our method of initial engagement – letterbox drop, cold-calling through white pages, advertisements in council channels, etc – and the responses received give us confidence that participants meet our criteria.”

Empathy have advised they are not able to provide specific demographic information on respondents and interviewees who participated in preliminary engagement activities as this information is held in confidence, please see the detail below. As Council does not hold this information, we must decline this aspect of your request for information under section 17(g) of the Act.

“Tabulated results are held in confidence by the core project team. People we engaged with were promised that individual responses would not be shared. Even if name and contact details are removed, responses are very contextualised to each person's life, and is largely deemed to be ‘person-identifying information’.

It is Empathy's policy to not share field notes or individual summaries of conversations except when strict protocol is agreed and established at the beginning of projects. This is a very rare occurrence. Putting those protocols in place for this project would have significantly impacted the quality, quantity and specificity of information received from people. That approach was not appropriate for this project.”

2. The criteria by which those who took part in the ‘long semi-structured interviews’ were selected.

Information on the criteria for recruitment participants to take part in the ‘long semi-structured interviews’ is set out at page 8 of the Empathy Community Voice memo, which is publicly [available here](#). We have contacted Empathy in relation to this request who, in addition to the information provided in response to question 1 above, have provided the following information:

“We recruited and scheduled people for the long semi-structured interviews. We specifically targeted people unlikely to engage in the process otherwise. As a base screening, we asked whether people had put their view forward to council over the last six months. We asked this in a few different plain-English ways, and asked the nature of the input and frequency of prior input. As such, we started with a quantitative screening, then added a qualitative screening to ensure we were targeting people unlikely to engage in the process otherwise.

In addition to meeting that base qualifying criteria, we aimed for a mix of other demographics in our semi-structured interviews – suburbs of residence, age, sex, income level, and employment type. We asked additional questions to allow us to get a mix of those criteria.

The people we spoke with from Paekākāriki did not meet our base qualifying criteria. Even when we dropped the threshold to three months (i.e. they had not put their view forward to council in the last three months), only a few people passed that screening question. They were then removed from consideration on further questioning, based on their likelihood of engaging with the process in other ways.

We used targeted direct channels to invite people. We started with a small database of people who are known to our recruitment specialist. That did not prove fruitful, as people who were interested in taking part did not meet our qualifying criteria. As a next step, we used telephone directories and cold-called people. We also engaged two people who had responded to us approaching and recruiting them on the street, who met the qualifying criteria.”

3. Any briefings, notes, or other documents prepared by council staff for the Empathy Design company giving guidance or advice as to the scope or methodology of the research reported on in the memo titled ‘Community insight to inform and inspire Kāpiti Coast District’s representation arrangements’.

The purpose and scope of preliminary engagement is referenced within The Local Government Commission *Guidelines for local authorities undertaking representation reviews* (LGC Guidelines) at page 35 [available here](#), noting that preliminary engagement is not a substitute for formal consultation.

Empathy were engaged by Council to undertake preliminary engagement activities to gather and analyse community views on representation. Empathy worked with Council officers on preliminary engagement activities, each taking on different and complementary roles. The engagement took a people-centred design approach with engagement activities tailored to reach voices that are often harder to hear, not just those who are confident and driven to reach out to Council. Further information on the approach is set out in the Empathy memo ‘Community insight to inform and inspire Kāpiti Coast District’s representation arrangements’ publicly [available here](#).

The specific objectives of the preliminary consultation were to:

- guide all community engagement activities – what the activities were for, how we would achieve them and the prompts and materials we would use
- lead facilitation of some community engagement activities
- lead the process of making sense of, and uncovering meaning from, what we hear from the community
- enable Council to considerate the community view alongside other important inputs
- document aspects of the community view.

The scope of works and different phases of engagement are outlined in the Empathy Statement of Work set out in Attachment 1. Please note we have removed the last three pages of this document under s7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act on the basis that this contains commercially sensitive information and intellectual property of Empathy relating to detailed costs, assumptions and terms, which is not outweighed by the public interest in release.

4. Any assessment carried out for, or by, the council to determine how representative the respondents and interviewees mentioned in the memo titled 'Community insight to inform and inspire Kāpiti Coast District's representation arrangements' were of the Kapiti population as a whole.

In addition to the information set out in the Empathy memo 'Community insight to inform and inspire Kāpiti Coast District's representation arrangements' [available here](#), Empathy have provided further information on the criteria used to select participants for preliminary engagement activities, which is set out above in response to questions 1 and 2.

A design research approach was selected for preliminary engagement activities to ensure that Council heard from a wide mix of people, and to provide the robust and well-rounded understanding in a cost-effective way. A recent report from the New Zealand Productivity Commission 'Local Government Insights' dated 19 February 2020 highlights some of the challenges of traditional methods of engagement and consultation, and challenges both central and local government to consider alternative ways of ensuring a diverse mix of views and interests are represented in Council decisions. The report is [available here](#).

It is important to note that preliminary engagement activities do not seek to replace the formal consultation period for a representation review. Council is currently consulting on the initial representation review proposal and submissions may be made until 5:00pm Monday 4 October 2021. You can find out more information and have your say [here](#).

5. Any reviews, assessments or evaluations of the research carried out by Empathy Design reported in the memo titled 'Community insight to inform and inspire Kāpiti Coast District's representation arrangements.'

Empathy were selected to undertake preliminary engagement activities based on their credentials, independence and methodology including the ability to take a design research approach to provide robust and well-rounded understanding and to assist in reaching diverse voices across the district in a cost-effective way. As outlined above, the approach taken to preliminary engagement seeks to compliment but not replace the formal consultation process, that is currently underway.

Council has not undertaken any formal evaluation or assessment of the preliminary research undertaken by Empathy, nor does it have reason to do so at this stage.

When referencing the Act I am required to advise you that you have the right to make a complaint under section 27(3) of the Act to an Ombudsman, to seek an investigation and review of this response. Please find details on the following link <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/make-a-complaint>

Ngā mihi



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Te Kaihautū, ngā Rangapū, Tāngata hoki

Attachment

1. Statement of Work Empathy Design Statement of Work - 5 January 2021