File ref: IRC-3609

04 August 2022

Harris Leigh

Via FYI website

Kia ora Harris

**Release of pre-election report**

Thank you for your request made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act), received on 12 July 2022. You requested the following information:

1. Was the leak of the report to the Stuff website authorised by a council officer; if so, what is the job title of that officer?
2. Will a leak inquiry be launched; if so, will it be conducted internally, or will an external authority be tasked with the inquiry?
3. What sanctions could apply to an officer found to have leaked this report?
4. When was the report first published on the WCC website?
5. When was the report first made available to Councillors?
6. When was the report first made available to the Mayor?
7. When was the report first made available to Stuff?
8. A copy of any communications plan or similar document setting out the plan for releasing the statutory Pre-Election Report
9. Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the CEO and Mr Richard McLean or any other Council officer purporting to authorise the leak to Stuff
10. Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the CEO and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report
11. Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the Mr Richard McLean and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report

It is common practice within the public service and local government for key reports to be released under embargo to one or more media outlets. The pre-election report is an independent report by the Chief Executive to the city, once every triennium. Its content must be provided independently of the elected council and not be constrained by a political view. This report, as with previous WCC pre-election reports, provides a range of factual data and outlines the key issues that a future council is likely to face. It also gives extensive coverage to the significant planning and decision-making this council has undertaken this triennium to address the challenges.

Wellington City Council has partially granted your request for information. The report was not leaked. Therefore, questions one, two, three, and nine are refused under section 17(g) as the information does not exist. The remainder of your questions are answered below.

**4.** **When was the report first published on the WCC website?**

**5.** **When was the report first made available to Councillors?**

**6.** **When was the report first made available to the mayor?**

**7.** **When was the report first made available to Stuff?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 4. | Report published on Council website | 8:30am Tuesday 12 July |
| 5. | Report made available to Councillors | 7:56am Tuesday 12 July |
| 6. | Report made available to Mayor | Printed version of the report was provided to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on Monday 11 July |
| 7. | Report made available to Stuff | 5:23pm Thursday 07 July |

**A copy of any communications plan or similar document setting out the plan for releasing the statutory Pre-Election Report**

A copy of the communications plan is attached (item 1).

**Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between the CEO and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report**

The Chief Executive, Barbara McKerrow, received a text message on 10 July from a Stuff reporter to which she did not respond (item 2).

**Any emails, SMS texts, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or similar messages between Mr Richard McLean and journalists at Stuff relating to the release of the report**

The report was sent to Stuff News Director Gina Crampton on 07 July via email (item 3).

Below are the documents that fall in scope of your request and my decision to release the document. Any redactions made are for privacy reasons.

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| **Item** | **Document name/description** | **Decision** |
| 1. | Communications plan | Release in full |
| 2. | Screenshot of message from Stuff reporter to Chief Executive | Release in full |
| 3. | Emails from WCC media team to Stuff News Director | Release in full |

**Right of review**

If you are not satisfied with the Council’s response, you may request the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate the Council’s decision. Further information is available on the Ombudsman website, [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ombudsman.parliament.nz%2F&data=05%7C01%7CAssurance%40wcc.govt.nz%7C7a1409231ccb4350aa2808da70112b31%7Cf187ad074f704d719a80dfb0191578ae%7C0%7C0%7C637945516422701830%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=vhW9rU0ipLmofd3UAhcAcQdl6VgtBKMWStSgrQuKWE4%3D&reserved=0).

Please note, we will release our response to your request on our website.

Thank you again for your request, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Claudia Holgate

**Senior Advisor, Official Information**