

6 September 2023

LGOIMA No. 8140011855
(Please quote this in any correspondence)

Hunter K
By Email: fyi-request-22541-62d88d8b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Hunter

Local Government Official Information And Meetings Act 1987

Structural engineering reviews

Thank you for your information request dated 23 April 2023, regarding the structural engineering reviews for building consents. My sincere apologies for the delay in getting this response to you and thank you for your patience while we have worked on this response.

In response to your request, I consulted with the council's Regulatory Engineering department to provide information relevant to your request. The specific details of your request and our response is below.

Under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), please provide all information regarding:

- 1. How Auckland Council selects its external consultants, including (but not limited to):**
 - a) any policy or process documents on tenders or procurement relating to external consultant engineers; and**
 - b) any information setting out the minimum standards of external consultant engineers and that of their staff (e.g. CPEng registration).**

The selection is through a tendering process which includes all details including KPIs, Quality assurance and consistency requirements.

Please refer to **Attachment 1** for more details about the proposal for selection of consultants, where we ask applicants to provide information and then it is evaluated against set parameters and the selection is based on the valuation outcome.

- 2. If there was a tender process for external consultants, how many companies applied and how many were successful? Please also provide any information regarding how applicants were evaluated, selected and rejected, and in particular the reasons for why certain candidates were successful and others unsuccessful.**

Yes, there is a tendering process.

12 companies applied and 4 were selected as per the evaluation matrix based on Experience & track record, Relevant skills & resources, service delivery Methodology

and grading system was used to evaluate each. A tender evaluation team was formulated to complete the selection process.

Please refer to **Attachment 2** for the evaluation matrix results for the selection process adopted.

3. The performance expectations or KPI external consultant structural engineers are expected to meet, including:

- a) any performance expectations the external consultant engineers are expected to meet, such as budget per project, communication with industry design engineers (e.g. availability, contactability, correspondence, phone, meetings);**

Same conditions apply as they apply to inhouse engineers. We do not have a budget per project as it is not feasible due to variations in the type of application, quality of documentation provided, type of construction, size and scope of valuation required etc etc. All KPIs, Quality of service requirements, Quality of output is clearly defined, as you can read through the proposal document.

- b) details of how the work of review engineers are reviewed/evaluated (e.g. assessment criteria, marking schedules etc);**

As per the contract we apply same policy for inhouse engineers and external Contractors and have assessment criteria for both. Before Covid 19 hit us, all contractors worked alongside our own staff. The information to both internal staff and external consultants is provided through **Attachment 3** (AC0812 Request for specialist review). The starting point of review is same for all engineers to attain consistency. The details of performance evaluation and monitoring follows.

- c) policy, processes or any other systems ensuring that consistency is maintained between engineers (both external consultants and internal Council engineers).**

Please refer to information provided, which provides full details about performance, KPIs, Quality and consistency. All engineers both internal and external are required to complete an extensive checklist (**Attachment 4**) and explain what was reviewed and how they take decision for completion of the review. This is the process we use for maintaining consistency among both internal and external engineers. Please also refer to **Attachment 5** for information on evaluation process.

4. The process by which complaints about external consultants are addressed, and any relevant documentation.

Please refer to the following steps:

- a) Complaints received by Regulatory Engineering Team Leader for structural team.
- b) Complaint reviewed and relevant supplier contacted for comment.
- c) Supplier feedback considered.
 - i. If further input or feedback required, contractor notified and additional discussion, review undertaken.
- d) Response prepared to customer.

NB: If Council believes the services are considered non-compliant or defective, Council may require the supplier to rectify the non-compliance or defect or may reduce the price payable for such services and/or engage another person to rectify this service at the supplier's expense.

5. The policy/process for resolution of technical design disagreements between Council review engineers (internal or external companies) and the design engineers (e.g. policies/process for escalation to senior CPEng engineers).

If an escalation of any disagreement arises, it is brought to the notice of team leaders / Manager or can get escalated to General manager level. Where necessary any design disagreements may be reviewed by Principal or senior engineers or by specialists within Auckland Council or we can use services of suitably qualified consultants who are on our panel. (CPEng).

6. The minimum credentials of internal Council and external consultant engineers who deal with industry practitioners.

Please refer to the attached position descriptions based on which selection of internal engineers is completed.

For external consultants we have the process as per the contract, where pre identified engineers with suitable qualifications can only review the council applications. We are providing the position descriptions used for the purpose of maintaining minimum credentials for our engineers. External consultants should have no lesser requirements than internal staff.

7. Process for deciding which projects undergo further review following a building consent submission to the Council (at present a Building Consent Application with a PS2 often goes through without further review, but at other times it goes for further review by Council external consultants - seems arbitrary);

Please refer to the [AC2301 - Producer Statement Policy](#) document which provides full details about how further review is determined based on risks. On occasions PS2 documents cannot simply be accepted without a level of technical review. Eg: This could be reason such as producer statement author not on council register, scope not consistent with PS1 or design changes after PS1/ PS2 is issued. In such cases we may need to undertake review of such documents to ensure what is designed and built will comply with the building code. Irrespective of whether PS1 or PS2 is issued, it is the Building Consent Authority's decision to determine whether we are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the design, when built, will be compliant with all provisions of the building code.

8. Please provide the average fee per project charged for Council structural design reviews as followings:

a) Residential subdivisions 3 storeys and under

We have interpreted this request as relating to 3 storey dwellings, rather than subdivisions. There are numerous factors that influence the cost to assess a building consent. Building consents can include a number of units on a single consent, or a single dwelling. Individual elements can require detailed review, and producer statements supplied can also impact the complexity and depth of an assessment. Our external suppliers are more likely to receive multiunit applications, hence their rates are higher than internal staff.

External : Median fee per project \$3045.24 (15.38 median hours booked per consent @\$198)

Internal : Median fee per project \$1089 (5.5 median hours booked per consent @\$198)

- b) **Only considering cost per project that are under \$20,000/project and under, and**

All projects subject to structural engineering reviews are listed as projects having a value in excess of \$20,000.

- c) **for the year ending 31 March 2023.**

Refer to answers to request a and b above.

9. **Please provide the total fees paid by the Council to QDesignz Limited for building consent structural reviews for the year ending 1 March 2023.**

\$545,000

Decisions about this response to your request were made by **Daniel Lawrence-Sansbury**, General Manager Regulatory Engineering.

Should you believe Auckland Council has not responded appropriately to your request you have the right to seek a review of the decision from the Ombudsman.

I hope you find this information useful. If you have any further queries please contact me on 09 301 0101, quoting LGOIMA No. 8140011855.

Ngā mihi



Jenny Hua
Senior Privacy & Official Information Business Partner
Governance Services