



05 November 2015

Official Information Request No. 9000138223
(Please quote this in any correspondence)

Mr. Ben Ross

By email: fyi-request-3221-46e0c343@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Ross

Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

Re: Costs running committees of the whole

I refer to your email, which we received on 14 October 2015, requesting information regarding the costs of running an Auckland Council Committee of the Whole or the full Governing Body.

The costs associated with committee meetings are based on a number of variables, including reports produced, administration tasks, and councillor and staff attendance. As such, it is difficult to quantify exactly how much any one meeting costs, particularly as the costs are largely opportunity costs – that is, the costs of elected members and staff time comes at the expense of not doing something else. The council does not keep records of the costs of committee meetings.

The media have recently used a figure of \$20,000 per hour for a committee of the whole meeting. This figure was based on a previous estimate of \$19,000 per hour, which was used as a scene setter for a discussion on changes to financial delegations of staff. That figure was based on an estimate of a typical Governing Body meeting of four hours and consisting of around ten committee papers. The figures include the cost of writing a report and time to QA and approve each paper (but excluding the policy development costs), the pre-meeting administration (assembly of agenda items, printing costs and organising the meeting), the meeting itself (councillor time, democracy services staff, presenting staff and ELT members), and post meeting costs (producing and distributing minutes). The cost estimate did not include costs for communications or legal staff, catering, web casting, security and concierge staff, or building costs (general wear and tear and energy).

The estimated Governing Body costs will be similar to other committee of the whole meetings, although the actual distribution of costs may differ. Smaller sub-committees will have lower cost structures.

Our estimates are not actual costs but are based on our assumptions of input costs. So for the example quoted above (four hour meeting with ten committee papers) we estimate:

- Committee paper production costs of \$33,913 per meeting or \$8,478 per hour (for ten papers). This is the cost of writing and developing a committee paper.
- Pre meeting costs of \$922 per meeting or \$231 per hour. This is the cost of assembling, printing and distributing an agenda and papers.
- The meeting itself would cost \$37,130 or \$9,038 per hour. This includes councillor time, staff time and catering costs.
- Post meeting activities costs of \$1,500 or \$188 per hour.

The council does not record the total costs of committee meetings, and therefore we cannot provide comparators to previous years.

If you have any further queries please contact me on (09) 301 0101 quoting Official Information Request No. 9000138223.

Should you believe Auckland Council has not responded appropriately to your request, you have the right by way of complaint, under section 27(3) of the LGOIMA, to apply to the Ombudsmen to seek an investigation and review of the decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isis van Geenen', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Isis van Geenen
Privacy and LGOIMA Team
Auckland Council

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