

4 December 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-24180

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2023-270

I refer to your request for information dated 6 November 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 6 November 2023. You have requested the following:

“This follows on from your response to [REDACTED] LGOIMA request 2023-257 that he has shared with me. I refer to it in the following request.

- *Can you supply all analysis and report you hold on the costs and benefits of increasing the 290 route frequency in July 2022?*
- *Can you supply the methodology referenced in your response that you used to allocate costs at the route level for the 2021/22 financial year*
 - *Can you confirm that the costs reported include all the sources of operating funding and application of funding contained in the MetLink Funding Impact Statement*
 - *Did you include capital funding and application? Are wider Met Link/GW O/Hs applied, if not what percentage would you typically use used to recover these?*
- *Can you provide the parameters used in this methodology to allocate costs at the route level for:*
 - *The second half of FY21/2 (thus reducing impact of COVID).*
 - *The budgeted figures for FY22/23*
 - *The actual figures for FY22/3 from your management accounts*
- *For the 290 route can you also supply for the Waikanae Station to Otaki SH1 leg of the journey the (a) number of bus trips and (b) passengers trips by fare type, for:*
 - *The second half of FY21/2*
 - *FY22/3*

- *Can you provide this data split by {week day}/{week end or public holiday}, and by the service within that. NB in aggregate across a number of months, so no privacy issues.*
- *Confirm the fare for this leg is 3 zones and the distance for the Waikanae Station to Otaki SH1 leg.”*

Greater Wellington’s response follows:

Can you supply all analysis and report you hold on the costs and benefits of increasing the 290 route frequency in July 2022?

This part of your request for information is refused under section 17(e) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) on the basis that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

When refusing under this section we are required to consider consulting the requestor. We have considered this and believe that consulting with you would not change our decision to refuse to provide the information under this ground.

Further information

Metlink did not undertake a formal benefit-cost assessment of the change to route 290. Enhancements to the 290 service during 2022 were the result of three factors:

- The 2020 Bus Network Review Rest of Region recommended increasing the span and frequency of services with a specific focus on providing bus timetables that provide travel options for the journey to work in Otaki (route 290). For more information, please refer to: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/assets/Bus-Network-Review/Bus-Network-Review-Rest-of-Region-Summary-Insights-and-Recommendations.pdf>
- Metlink Growth bus fleet planning to support the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) 2021-31 Goal for a 40% mode shift to public transport included 2 growth buses for Kapiti. One of these buses was allocated to cover growing school bus demand and the other allocated to Otaki to support required additional peak school capacity.
- Ministry of Education’s (MoE) restriction of their service coverage for Otaki from term 1 2022 to rural catchments only as per their service remit. This resulted in a need for Metlink to add additional capacity to the Otaki 290 service to accommodate urban-based students unable to access Ministry of Education bus services. This extra capacity was provided from the planned growth buses for Kapiti noted above.

Prior to the current operator, Uzabus, being the operator of the bus route 290, Otaki College students who live in Otaki town had the option of using the MoE bus. These students are not

technically eligible to use the MoE service as it was only for children living in rural areas. However, there was an informal agreement between the community and the provider at that time, Tranzit, that the driver would allow all children on the service.

When the MoE contract changed (at the start of 2022) from Tranzit as the provider, to Uzabus, the MoE was informed of this informal agreement and directed Uzabus to operate the service strictly as specified in the MoE contract, including the provision that the bus is only for children living in rural areas.

The initial response to this route frequency change has been strongly positive – Metlink have seen about 30% increase in patronage in the first year, in addition to school students. The greater travel options for commuters combined with growing population in Otaki support the regionally agreed goal in the RLTP for a 40% shift to public transport and active modes by 2031.

Can you supply the methodology referenced in your response that you used to allocate costs at the route level for the 2021/22 financial year

Under the current legislation, all public transport services that are identified in a region's Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) as integral to the public transport network are arranged into operating units. In the Wellington Region, all public transport services that operate within the Kapiti Coast are grouped under Unit 14 (Kapiti). Currently eleven public bus routes and eight school bus routes operate in Kapiti Coast that are grouped under Unit 14.

For financial and contract management purposes, the operating costs associated with the services that are operated within a Unit are not required to be broken down by routes. Cost information at route level is not recorded in Greater Wellington accounts and needs to be estimated. The methodology used to estimate cost per route may vary depending on the purpose of the analysis.

To make a high-level estimate of cost for the bus route 290, the total operating costs for all the bus routes grouped under Unit 14 (Kapiti) was allocated to the routes within the Unit by:

1. Dividing the service kilometre for each route (including route 290) by the total service kilometre for Unit 14; and
2. Multiplying the total operating cost for Unit 14 by the result of the calculation in step 1.

Can you confirm that the costs reported include all the sources of operating funding and application of funding contained in the MetLink Funding Impact Statement

Total operating cost for Unit 14 used for the estimates of costs at route level is included in the Funding Impact Statements in Greater Wellington's Annual Report. However, the total operating cost used for route level allocation only includes the payments made to the operators of the services within Unit 14.

Did you include capital funding and application? Are wider Met Link/GW O/Hs applied, if not what percentage would you typically use used to recover these?

Capital expenditure is not included in the cost estimates at route level. No percentage assumptions are made for capital expenditure for the purpose of allocating total operating costs to routes.

Can you provide the parameters used in this methodology to allocate costs at the route level for:

- **The second half of FY21/2 (thus reducing impact of COVID).**

Total operating cost for Unit 14 used for the estimates of costs at route level included any costs associated with the impact of COVID-19. During and after COVID-19, cost reductions (e.g. due to reduced service levels) or increases (e.g. by increased level of service sanitisation or public health measures) were generally recovered by central Government.

- **The budgeted figures for FY22/23**

Greater Wellington's budget is not broken down by routes. In the financial year 2022/23 the total unit cost budgeted for the unit 14 was \$3.8 million. No budget assumption or parameters were used for the analyses that resulted in allocation of operating expenditure to routes for the route 290.

- **The actual figures for FY22/23 from your management accounts**

Greater Wellington accounts do not hold the actual operating costs broken down by routes. In the financial year 2022/23 the total actual unit cost spent for the unit 14 was \$4.7 million. The actual unit cost for Unit 14 was allocated to the routes within the unit using the methodology described under our response to your second question above.

For the 290 route can you also supply for the Waikanae Station to Otaki SH1 leg of the journey the (a) number of bus trips and (b) passengers trips by fare type, for:

- **The second half of FY21/2**
- **FY22/3**
- **Can you provide this data split by {week day}/{week end or public holiday}, and by the service within that. NB in aggregate across a number of months, so no privacy issues.**

Confirm the fare for this leg is 3 zones and the distance for the Waikanae Station to Otaki SH1 leg.

Please refer to **Attachment 1** which contains a spreadsheet of the requested data. Note the 290 is a round trip Waikanae-Otaki-Waikanae:

- Waikanae-Otaki direction – we can report passenger types as they are the tag ons at Waikanae (or Paraparaumu-Waikanae for a few trips that start there)

- Otaki-Waikanae direction – this is near the end of the trip and we have had to extract numbers of passengers on board by stop 1776 (last Otaki stop before heading to Waikanae) from a different cube in our reporting tool. This cube does not identify passenger types. People get on and off throughout the trip and the passenger types left on board are not reported, just the number of people. Note also, these numbers may be slightly high as we do not know when people with paper tickets alight from the trip, we only have the Snapper tag off data for this.

The distance between Waikanae station to the Otaki SH1 leg is approximately 16.5 kilometres.

The second tab in this spreadsheet presents how Waikanae to Otaki is 4 zones. You can find this zone map on our website here: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/getting-started/tickets-and-fares-2/fare-zones/>

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Samantha Gain

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Waka-ā-atea | Group Manager Metlink