

19 March 2024

**Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council**

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

File Ref: IRC-5961

@nzme.co.nz

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your email of 5 February 2024 to Wellington City Council (the Council) requesting the following information:

'Please can you urgently confirm the amount of approved and unapproved days of leave that the mayor has taken to today's date.

Please can I also have all communications, notes, texts, emails and other written material which refers to any approved or unapproved absences (or sick leave or absences due to sickness) by the mayor since taking office, or any requests by the mayor to reschedule events that she was required to attend.

Please can you let me know when you will be publishing the mayor's diary for October and following.'

Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).

A spokesperson for the mayor advises that there are no set work hours for elected members, and they are not under employment contracts like staff are. This means that there is no annual leave or sick leave that the mayor can apply for.

A leave of absence is an extended period of leave granted by vote at council when some significant event such as prolonged illness requires the elected member's absence from several formal council or committee meetings in a row.

The mayor's office internally uses the word 'leave' to represent situations when the mayor does not intend to physically come into the office. She, however, is available by phone call, text, or email on those days. This occasionally occurs due to the weekend workload of the mayor, which often includes attending external events.

As there are no days of leave that the mayor can apply for, your request for information about leave taken by the mayor is refused under section 17(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Council.

The mayor's diary is published on our website <https://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/about-the-council/mayor-and-councillors/office-of-the-mayor/mayor-tory-whanau> and is the finalised version. Any apologies or rescheduling of meetings would have been made via phone, text, or email. As searching for any references to apologies or rescheduling of meetings or appointments cannot be undertaken without substantial collation or research, we are refusing this part of your request under section 17(f) of the Act.

I advise that the mayor's diary has now been updated to include October to December 2023 meetings and events attended.

You have the right, by way of complaint under section 28(1) of the LGOIMA, to request an investigation and review of the Council's decision to withhold information by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you require further information, please contact assurance@wcc.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

Susan Sales
Official Information