

08 September 2026

New Zealand Labour Party

PO Box 784

Wellington 6140

Dear [REDACTED]

Local Government Official Information Request – SR.114442 – Head Start Costs

I refer to your official information request received by the Western Bay of Plenty District Council (Council) on 18 August 2026, where you have requested information pertaining to the costs that Council has incurred since 5 May 2026, due to the Government's Head Start local government initiative.

The answers to your questions are set out below:

1. What was the total cost to the council for of all activities and work undertaken to develop and finalise its response to the Government's Head Start local government initiative? For clarification purposes, this request is for the total cost or the best estimate of the total cost to the council of the Head Start initiative. Points 2-5 below are for components of this total.

\$16,117.66 (being the total of cost A + B as set out below).

2. What consultants and contractors were engaged to advise or provided information or analysis for the council's response to Head Start and what was the cost of each provider's services? What were the titles of any reports provided by these consultants or contractors?
Development of Council's head start proposal (and associated community engagement) was delivered by existing Council staff. There were no consultants or contractors involved.

3. What was the total cost to the council for informing or consulting with local communities and how much was spent on surveys, advertising, informational publications (flyers, pamphlets, etc.), public meetings, websites and other such activities.

Council produced a community engagement document based on potential reorganisation scenarios, ran six 'table talk' community engagement events across the district, and provided online information and feedback form through its 'Your Place' engagement platform.

- The engagement document was produced by staff in-house, and Council used its existing 'Your Place' community engagement/feedback platform for online feedback.
- Advertising costs totalled \$7648 - This included \$5848 on print, digital and radio promotional spend, and \$1800 on social media.
- Printing of community engagement booklets and pull up banner collateral for the six 'table talk' community engagement events totalled \$1561.70.
- Hire of venues for six 'table talk' events across the district totalled \$1,017.75.
- Catering at six 'table talk' events totalled \$426.

Total cost A: \$10,653.45

4. What was the total cost of any extraordinary or special council meetings or workshops held regarding Head Start or the council's response to it?

There were no extraordinary or special council meetings required.

There were 8 joint elected member workshops held with TCC (and at times, elected members from Thames Coromandel District Council and/or Bay of Plenty Regional Council were in attendance). Lyall Thurston QSO JP was engaged as Independent Chair for these workshops. The total cost of his engagement was \$10,713.54, with costs shared between Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council. Therefore, \$5,356.77 is attributable to WBOPDC.

Catering cost for WBOPDC totalled \$107.44.

Total cost B: \$5,464.21

5. What other costs were incurred by the council under this initiative and what was the value of those costs?

Not applicable.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Potton', with a horizontal line drawn underneath the signature.

Matthew Potton
Chief Executive Officer