

I refer to your request of 11 February 2016 for the following information:

- 1) The amount council spent on legal costs each year for the past three years.
- 2) The number of cases those costs went towards each year.
- 3) The court each case was heard in (eg. High court, district, court, environment court).
- 4) The case that attracted the biggest legal bill each year for the past three years.

With reference to the first question, please find below a table which shows the legal firm and associated costs for the last three years:

LEGAL FIRM	2013	2014	2015	Total
DAVYS BURTON	56,068	69,876	32,554	158,498
SIMPSON GRIERSON - AUCKLAND	-	18,383	1,050	19,433
SIMPSON GRIERSON - WELLINGTON	11,706	9,332	12,620	33,659
TOMPKINS WAKE	-	-	151,556	151,556
HARKNESS HENRY LAWYERS	-	12,767	827	13,594
LANCE LAWSON NO 2 TRUST ACCOUNT	-	-	2,970	2,970
BUDDLE FINDLAY	4,638	654	2,712	8,004
GRAYSON NEAL LIMITED	1,077	3,525	1,954	6,556
HEANEY AND CO	136,547	-	-	136,547
BROOKFIELDS TRUST ACCOUNT	233,244	78,488	18,976	330,708
O'SHEA BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS	345	-	-	345
TOTAL	443,624	193,025	225,220	861,870

With regard to questions 2-4, this would take a considerable amount of staff time to research and compile as each of the invoices related to the firms above would need to be recovered from records and a manager who holds knowledge of the activity at the time would need to identify what work each invoice related to. This is estimated at approximately 700 hours of staff time. Under section 13 of the Act council is entitled to charge a fee for this time. Council's normal approach is to charge at a rate of \$85 per hour. Therefore your request would incur a substantial fee, and for this reason council has declined questions 2-4 of your request under section 17(f) of the Act *"That the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research."*

Under legislation we are obliged to advise that if you have any concerns with the adequacy of our response you may contact the Ombudsman by writing to:

The Office of the Ombudsman
P O Box 10 152
WELLINGTON 6143

Or alternatively by email to complaint@ombudsmen.parliament.nz

Regards

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