

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RATES INQUIRY



General Manager responsible:	General Manager Regulation and Democracy Services, DDI 941-8549
Officer responsible:	Democracy Services Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the appointment of Christchurch City Council representatives to attend a meeting with the Independent Local Government Rates Inquiry Panel to be held in Christchurch on Thursday 22 March 2007.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Independent Local Government Rates Inquiry will hold a meeting in Christchurch with Councillors and senior Council management on Thursday 22 March 2007 at the Christchurch Convention Centre. The meeting will start at 9.30am and will run until 12.30pm. The meeting will be open to members of the public and the media as observers.
3. The Inquiry Panel, comprising David Shand (Chair), Christine Cheyne and Graeme Horsley, has extended an invitation for up to five representatives from the Christchurch City Council and management to attend the meeting.
4. The meeting is an opportunity for the Panel to meet with Councillors and Council management so as to:
 - Listen to Council views on key issues to be addressed by the Inquiry,
 - Obtain information to assist in its work.
5. Notes of the issues raised and comments made at the meeting will be recorded. While the Inquiry expects to receive formal submissions from many councils this submission process is separate from this meeting. Formal submissions close on 30 April 2007.
6. The meeting will commence with an introduction by the chair followed by a discussion around the main terms of reference and the key questions identified by the Panel. In view of time constraints, comments by the participants are expected to be brief.
7. A copy of the Inquiry background paper is attached to this report. This covers the consultation and submission process and identifies particular aspects of the terms of reference that the Inquiry would appreciate comment on.
8. The Inquiry Panel will also hold a public meeting at the same venue between 2pm and 4.30pm on the afternoon of 22 March 2007 to enable the Inquiry to listen to and question interested individuals and local organisations.
9. To permit the Council's representatives to attend the meeting with the Inquiry Panel on Thursday 22 March 2007, the Council meeting previously scheduled for the same date to consider the draft Annual Plan will now instead be held the following day, on Friday 23 March 2007.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

10. There are no direct financial or legal considerations relating to the subject of this report. However, it is important that this Council is represented at the meeting, as the Inquiry's eventual recommendations to central government could result in significant changes to the present legislation relating to local government funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council appoint up to two elected members, supported by the relevant staff, to represent the Council at the meeting with the Inquiry Panel to be held on Thursday 22 March 2007.