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Corporate Plan Output: Resource Consents	

The purpose of this report is to comment on having resource consents hearings on Mondays and Tuesdays.

On the whole the practice of generally having hearings for notified resource consents on Mondays and Tuesdays has worked well. The main advantage of this system is that hearings can be organised well in advance and with the certainty that specific dates will always be available. This has assisted the Council to meet its obligations for holding hearings within the statutory deadlines prescribed in the Resource Management Act. It has also meant that staff are able to advise applicants more precisely about when an application is likely to be heard.

In addition, when hearings have been longer than anticipated it has been easier to provide other days later in the same week for the hearing to continue.

There may have also been cost savings as a result of often having more than one hearing on the same day. However figures to verify whether this is the case are not available at present.

The system has also worked well because it has been flexible. Where necessary, hearings have been held on other days during the week to accommodate applicants time frames, the availability of legal counsel and expert witnesses and when, as recently, there has been a large number of hearings to be dealt with.

There can occasionally be problems organising panels when Mondays and Tuesdays clash with other meetings which potential panel members might have. Occasionally too, staff resources can be stretched. In particular if there are hearings at two venues on the same day it can sometimes be difficult to get second planners. This is particularly so since Dave Clark entered semi-retirement.

**Recommendation:** That the practice of generally hearing resource consents on Mondays and Tuesdays be continued.

The Chairman comments:

The practice seems to be working reasonably well, and in terms of value for meeting fees, Councillors now generally assume that a day's hearings means a full day's work. It is important that Councillors are seen to give value for money.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the officer's recommendation be approved.