

4. LOCAL COMMISSION TO REVIEW ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES IN CHRISTCHURCH CITY

RR 9502

Officer responsible City Manager	Author Mike Richardson
Corporate Plan Output: Various	

The purpose of this report is to enable progress to be made towards the appointment of two independent persons as local commissioners to prepare a report for the City Council on the pattern of community of interest in Christchurch and the manner in which ward and community boundaries can best reflect it. At the time of writing I am optimistic that the independent chairperson would have been appointed by the meeting. That individual is briefed to start work immediately and is contracted to take responsibility for managing the process and delivering a report to the City Council. It is understood that two additional commissioners would be joining that individual in due course.

BACKGROUND

At its February meeting, the Council resolved:

1. That three independent persons be appointed as local commissioners to prepare a report for the City Council on the pattern of community of interest in Christchurch and the manner in which ward and community boundaries can best reflect it.
2. That \$70,000 (previously provided in the year 2 of the programme) be applied to this task.
3. The City Manager be authorised to appoint an independent chairperson for the commission.
4. That the Strategy and Resources Committee be authorised to nominate two other persons as commissioners.

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the project are as follows:

“TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PREPARATION OF REVIEW TO ADVISE THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL ON APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES FOR ELECTION OF COMMUNITY BOARDS AND WARDS FOR CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The outcome of this review will be a report to the Christchurch City Council that sets out alternative possibilities for boundaries and recommends a preferred option.

The report will take account of the following:

1. *All relevant sections of the Local Government Act (see separate legal brief).*
2. *The decision of the Local Government Commission in March 1998 in its determination of appeals against the present Ward and Community boundaries in Christchurch City.*
3. *The draft reorganisation scheme for Banks Peninsula and Christchurch City Councils issued by the Local Government Commission on 19 February 1999.*
4. *Matters relevant to identifying distinct and separate communities of interest within the existing Christchurch administrative area. Inclusive as appropriate (but not limited to): demography, urban settlement history and form, natural features, catchment areas for services, facilities, clubs, etc; the perceptions of community leaders and community groups such as residents and neighbourhood associations.*

The primary focus of the report should be the existing administrative area of Christchurch. In the event of an amalgamation not proceeding, the report will be used by the City Council as the basis for determining its boundaries for elections in 2001. The report will also be the basis on which the City Council makes a recommendation to the Local Government Commission on appropriate boundaries for a final reorganisation scheme and is likely to be influential in such decisions made by the Local Government Commission. Detailed work is not required on community of interest issues within the existing Banks Peninsula area, but the authors should advise whether a more suitable arrangement than that set down in the draft reorganisation scheme section 4(2) seems appropriate.

The target date for completion of the report to the City Council is 13 May. If it is considered that this provides insufficient time for adequate consultation on the report, some extension may be possible with the agreement of the Local Government Commission with regard to the timing of aspects of the Christchurch City Council's submission on the draft reorganisation scheme.

The programme of work should allow for interested parties to make submissions on alternative possibilities, although it is acknowledged that the timeframe will limit the length of time available for such procedure.

City Council Support

In order to make most efficient use of the "consultants" (or "local commissioners") it is expected that maximum practical use will be made of the City Council resources available through the following contacts:

1. *Mike Richardson (City Manager) on issues of scope and direction.*
2. *John Dryden (Environmental Policy and Planning Manager) on matters relating to urban statistics, catchment areas and facilities, maps and other urban planning issues.*
3. *Peter Mitchell (Legal Services Manager) all legal and procedural aspects.*
4. *Stephen Phillips (Community Relations Manager) on matters relating to neighbourhood associations, residents groups, community boards, etc.*

5. *Max Robertson (Council Secretary) for administrative support including arrangements of venues and administration for significant meetings, word processing, advertising and other administrative support as necessary.”*

ADDITIONAL LOCAL COMMISSIONERS

It may be helpful to establish some criteria for the appointment of additional commissioners. The following criteria are suggested:

- A commitment to local government and the principles embodied in the model of representative democracy.
- A good knowledge of the functioning of local government in particular at the elected member level.
- A good knowledge of Christchurch.
- Good skills in chairing meetings/hearings.
- Good analytical skills in identifying the key points of an argument and forming a judgement thereon.
- Individuals able to command widespread respect.

An understanding of urban geography/sociology would be a strength, although these skills will be available in the person appointed as chair.

There may be benefit in one or more of the individuals having experience as an elected member in local government in the Christchurch area, but I believe it would be inappropriate to appoint an individual who might reasonably expect to stand for election to the City Council in the future.

Recommendation: That the above criteria be used in selecting appropriate individuals.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.