

**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**MONDAY 15 MARCH 1999
AT 3PM**

**18. PROPOSED BANKS PENINSULA/CHRISTCHURCH CITY
AMALGAMATION: PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

RR 9526

Officer responsible City Manager	Author Stephen Phillips
Corporate Plan Output: Various	

As Councillors are aware the Local Government Commission announced on 19 February a Draft Reorganisation Scheme for the amalgamation of Christchurch City and Banks Peninsula District Councils (Council 25.2.99).

The purpose of this report is to gain the Committee's approval of a process for seeking community views on the Draft Reorganisation Scheme under the umbrella of the Seeking Community Views Policy.

The outcome of the recommended process will help provide a basis from which the Council can formulate its submission to the Local Government Commission.

Budget provision of up to \$20,000 from the contingency exists for this process.

BACKGROUND

The explanatory notes to the Draft Reorganisation Scheme identifies "What happens next?" as follows:

- The Draft Scheme is open to submissions until 20 May 1999.
- The Commission meets with those who have made submissions.
- The Commission considers the submissions and makes any other investigations or inquiries it considers necessary.
- The Commission decides to:
 - Issue a final scheme
 - Issue a final scheme but with modifications to the draft; or
 - If it considers the proposal does not meet the Local Government Act criteria, not issue any final scheme at all.
- If the Commission issues a final scheme, separate polls are held in Banks Peninsula and Christchurch City. For the scheme to be successful over 50% of votes cast in **each** poll must be in favour of the proposal.
- If the polls vote in favour of the proposal the scheme is implemented by Order in Council.

THE CITY COUNCIL'S POSITION

When the Council responded to the Commission on 13 August 1997 it said:

“We would emphasise that the Christchurch City Council has no position in favour or against the amalgamation. It is requesting that a review be undertaken to provide the Christchurch City Council with better information, but more importantly also the residents of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula.”

That review has been conducted and staff from both Councils have undertaken a considerable amount of detailed work on the likely implications of an amalgamation financially. Further work on the impact on rates of different funding policies is underway and will be collated for Council consideration during May.

SEEKING COMMUNITY VIEWS

The Strategy and Resources Committee has been delegated the authority to define the parameters for a public consultation process on the proposed amalgamation. There are three major benefits in seeking the views of the Christchurch community:

1. The Council will give effect to its Seeking Community Views Policy; (there is no statutory obligation to consult);
2. We open the opportunity to give information and identify issues to allow the community to form their opinion on this matter; and
3. The Council will have the benefit of understanding the perspectives of the community before formalising its submission to the Commission.

The value here is that if the Commission issues a final scheme, with or without modifications to the Draft Scheme, the community are better informed.

In determining whether, or not, to issue a final scheme the Commission is required to consider the relevant Sections under Part IIB of the Local Government Act.

In particular Section 37ZQA which reads as follows:

“[37ZQA. Criteria –

- (1) The principal local authority or the **Commission**, as the case may be, shall, when considering any reorganisation proposal or any reorganisation scheme, satisfy itself that the proposal or scheme –*
 - (a) Will promote the good local government of the districts concerned; and*
 - (b) Will, in particular, ensure that each proposed local authority and each local authority continued in existence under the proposal –*
 - (i) Will have the resources necessary to enable it to carry out its functions, duties, and powers; and*
 - (ii) Will have a district that is appropriate for the efficient and effective exercise of its functions, duties, and powers; and*

- (iii) *Will contain within its district a sufficiently distinct community of interest or sufficiently distinct communities of interests; and*
 - (iv) *Will be able to meet the requirements of **Section 223C** of this Act.*
- (2) *The principal local authority or the **Commission**, as the case may be, shall, when considering the matters specified in subsection (1) of this section in relation to any reorganisation proposal or any reorganisation scheme, consider –*
- (a) *The area of impact of the functions, duties, and powers of the local authorities concerned; and*
 - (b) *The area of benefit of services provided; and*
 - (c) *The likely effects on any local authority of the exclusion of any area from its district; and*
 - (d) *Such other matters as it considers appropriate.]”*

The Council’s submission should address the criteria upon which the Commission must “satisfy itself.....”

Therefore it would be helpful if feedback could be sought from the community to assist the Council in forming its views on these criteria.

The production and communication of balanced and focused information is a critical piece of the process as proposed.

TIMEFRAME

In order to meet the Commission’s timeframe (20 May) the seeking community views process needs to be completed and collated in a report to a special Council meeting on or around 17 May.

The process proposes preparation of the information and organising the various techniques by late March.

The seeking of community views process will run through April allowing time to collate the various strands for the May meeting.

THE PROCESS

The objective of the process is to seek the views of Christchurch citizens on the Draft Reorganisation Scheme.

The strategy recommended has two clearly defined parts:

- (i) The promulgation of balanced and focused information, and
- (ii) Seeking the community’s views

A range of options to raise awareness of issues, provide information and seek community views on the proposed amalgamation exist.

In order to reach and inform as many people as possible a range of techniques should be considered.

Options include:

Community Workshops

Hosted by Community Boards and facilitated by Community Advocates. Opportunity for community stakeholder groups and individuals to seek information. Agendas would be set to meet specific requirements, but would centre around a presentation followed by an open forum to facilitate feedback and questions.

City Scene

The production of a special issue focused on this topic. Seeks to raise awareness, give information and include a reply paid clip out form for feedback.

Web Site

Information can easily be placed on our Internet site. The opportunity exists for people accessing the site to source information and click on an icon to bring up a response form which could be printed out and returned.

The Press

We are discussing the opportunity of the Press running a “Pin Point” process about the proposed amalgamation.

Research

An important step in gauging Christchurch’s opinion and determining the issues that need to be clarified and developed further. This step should come after we have promulgated information. It will be a valuable tool. It is suggested that we undertake a quantitative survey of 400-500 people, probably a telephone survey, although we would seek advice from research companies gaining quotes and proposed programmes.

Whilst we could engage with the community through one or two of these options, for the sake of completeness utilising all the options will ensure that as many stakeholders as possible have an opportunity to gain information and if they wish express their views.

All of these proposed options are either cost neutral (The Press) or can be accommodated within existing budget provisions except for research which would be funded from the contingency allowed.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the techniques for seeking community views be as outlined above be adopted.
 2. That the City Manager liaise with a working party of the Mayor, Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee and two other Councillors over detail of wording to be used in information material.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** To be tabled at the meeting.