

22. PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF BOARD STANDING COMMITTEES

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The purpose of this report is to assist the Board in its consideration to establish Standing Committees for the three year term, and to suggest a possible structure and process for handling the Board's decision making. Section 101ZU of the Local Government Act 1974 makes provision for community boards to establish committees.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective:

The objective of this report is to provide information on the current Board process for handling decision making and to provide proposals on a committee structure for consideration.

Overview of Issues:

- Current situation shows 63 meetings were held over the 12 month period October 2000 to September 2001. This includes all ordinary and special Board meetings; committees, and seminars which were paid meetings.
- Advantages of the current system - discussion of matters at Board meetings are open to the public. Committees and working parties are established on a needs basis. Scheduled seminar date provides a date and time for any meetings.
- Disadvantages of the current system - Confusion over membership, payment, purpose, decision making delegation. Poor attendance. Difficulty in setting dates, and times when members available. Number of meetings required to be held outside of normal working hours and resourcing issues. High number of ad hoc meetings required, difficult to plan ahead.
- Information from other Community Boards and the processes adopted. All but one other Board has adopted a committee system. One Board to hold two ordinary Board meetings per month to reduce the need for committee meetings.
- Financial information showing previous years costs and budget provision for current year to support whatever process is adopted.
- Proposal suggesting possible committee structure, membership and appointment of chairpersons. Proposal is to have three committees - Works, Traffic Safety and Environment; Finance Policy and Planning, and Community Services and Leisure committees. Membership to be four or five; chairpersons appointed either by the Board or the committee; meetings to be held only as needed, not regular meeting schedule. All items requiring committee consideration to be referred to one of these committees, therefore no ad hoc committees should be needed.
- Process for referring items to committees - either from the Board, or via staff with criteria applied.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

- Conclusion discussing the benefit of a committee structure being to provide a more efficient and effective decision making process which meets the community's desire to be involved in the decision making process and providing opportunity to do so; and improved use of staff resources. Expectation that increased delegations will increase the Board's workload, needs to be monitored as this may not necessarily be best handled through committee meetings.
- Recommendation that the Board decide either to keep the status quo, or adopt a three committee structure; consider membership and chairpersons for committees, and establish one regular date and time each month for the committees to meet if required.

BACKGROUND

The Board has sought a report on possible committee structures, including information on procedures adopted by other Community Boards.

Meetings of the Shirley/Papanui Community Board over the 12 months October 2000 to September 2001 have been analysed, the purpose being to establish how many meetings took place over a 12 month period, and the purpose of those meetings. The meetings analysed are all those that were organised through the Advocacy Team which generally were as a result of a Board decision, and include committees, public and special meetings. The analysis does not include unpaid meetings, eg working parties, attendance at meetings of outside organisations or informal site visits.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Shirley/Papanui Community Board has not previously established Standing Committees, but has set up ad hoc committees or working parties on a needs basis, to work through the details of issues. In 2000/2001 year the Board established a number of committees to handle various issues as they arose, some of these committees were on-going (for example Shirley Research Committee and the Events Committee), others for a short time while dealing with a specific issue.

During this period there were 63 meetings altogether. This is an average of 5.25 meetings per month. The lowest number of meetings in one month was 3, with the highest being 11 in August 2001. Of these meetings 20 were Board, Seminar, Special or Review meetings that all members were able to attend (32% of all meetings). All others were committee meetings where two or more members attended.

Four of these committee meetings involved other parties, such as Kapuatohe Historic Reserve Management Committee, Papanui Community Facility Project Team, Joint Heritage Awards Committee and representation on the Neighbourhood Week Joint Board Committee. In the 12 month period these meetings made up 24 of the 63 meetings for the year (38% of all meetings). The remaining 28% of all meetings were ad hoc committee meetings.

The Board set a Seminar meeting date for the second Wednesday following the Board meeting, the purpose being to forward any items which required a separate meeting to that seminar. However, the number of items which were referred for further consideration meant that a considerable number of other meetings were required as well. Several items were scheduled for discussion at the one seminar date, however this complicated attendance times, as not all members were required for each item.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES WITH THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Advantages with Current System:

Previously the Board has been reluctant to have business considered by committees as it has been felt that decisions are made out of the public forum. While there is nothing to prevent the public from attending committee meetings, they are not generally well publicised. The reason being one of timing in that often the meetings are established within short notice. However interested parties can be notified and invited to take part in the meeting in a more informal manner than at the monthly Board meeting. This could also be the case if standing committees are established.

The fact that the Board does conduct a considerable amount of business outside of its monthly meetings under the present system, does somewhat negate the openness of discussion argument.

The reason for establishing a monthly seminar meeting date was so members could have this regularly booked in their diaries. The meeting could be a specific committee, or a seminar session for all Board members to discuss the issues referred. Members of the public could be invited. These meetings previously were not paid, however if the meeting was formally structured, with decision making and reporting back responsibility, these meetings should be paid.

Disadvantages with Current System:

At times there has been confusion over membership, payment, purpose, timeframes, power to act, etc at the seminar and committee meetings. While all members were able to attend these meetings, on occasion very few did. Other problems which arose with the current system were establishing times and dates to fit in with members busy schedules and work commitments, and also to provide staff resources, particularly when the majority of these meetings were required to be held after normal working hours. It is accepted that this will always be the case, however the greatest difficulty with these meetings is that it is difficult to plan ahead, and avoid conflict with other commitments. For many of these meetings it is necessary to have the appropriate staff available, and this is not always possible with meetings arranged at short notice and outside of normal hours.

OTHER COMMUNITY BOARDS

The other Community Boards in Christchurch have established committee structures as follows:

Burwood/Pegasus - Will hold two Board meetings per month, with items divided between the two meetings to avoid the necessity for staff to attend both meetings.

Fendalton/Waimairi - Three Committees:

Works and Traffic Safety - All traffic related safety issues; and associated road streetscape design, kerb and channel. All Parks and Waterways related matters.

Finance and Planning - All matters linked to the Council's annual planning process, including planning for consultation on projects for inclusion in the programme and annual plan submissions. Associated recommendation to the Board for allocation of the Boards annual project and discretionary funding.

Community Services - All community and social issues. Overview of community facilities and the implementation of the Council's people policies.

Hagley/Ferrymead - Three Committees:

Works and Traffic - similar to Fendalton/Waimairi, including bus stops, LATMS, NIPs.

Environment - Green space issues, cemeteries, estuary, rivers and Living Streets

Community, Policy and Finance - incorporating Funding, Early Childhood Education, OSP, policy issues.

Riccarton/Wigram - Four Committees

- Transport and Roding
- Environment and Leisure
- Community Services
- Finance and Policy

The staff and committee chairs are to go through the Board objectives and identify relationship to each committee, and establish terms of reference.

Spreydon/Heathcote - Four Committees

- Finance and Policy
- Community Service and Development
- Transport
- Parks, Environment and Leisure

Generally the chairs of these committees are Board members.

FINANCIAL

The following are the actual costs for the Shirley/Papanui Board year to 31 June 2001:

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| Salaries & Meeting Fees | \$73,302 |
| Travel and Mileage | \$1,906 |
| Conferences | \$5,497 |
| Miscellaneous | \$9,254 |
| <i>(Includes food, entertaining, training photocopying, parking, advertising, etc)</i> | |

Budgeted for year to 31 June 2002:

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| Salaries & Meeting Fees | \$101,000 |
| Travel & Mileage | \$2,000 |
| Conferences | \$3,000 |
| Miscellaneous | \$10,000 |
| Training | \$2,600 |

The salary figures do not include the Councillor members. Cost of staff time is also not included. Additional costs for elected members salaries and training are included in the current year to reflect changes associated with election year, salary and meeting fees changes. Funding is available to meet the costs of meetings.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSONS

Committees:

The following is put forward as a suggested committee structure for discussion. Most of the meetings required would fall within these categories:

- Works, Traffic Safety and Environment
- Finance, Policy and Planning
- Community Services and Leisure

Terms of reference for each committee would need to be prepared. Based on the issues considered last term, the following issues could form the basis for each committee's terms of reference.

Works, Traffic Safety and Environment - all traffic, safety, city streets issues, Living Streets, bus stops, LATMS, road works, markings, site meetings with residents, Green open space, Parks and Waterways works issues including on site meetings. Consultation on related issues.

Finance, Policy and Planning - Board objectives, planning process, research, review of Council policy drafts, project proposals, project funding.

Community Services and Leisure - Research, events, Community Service Awards, Garden Awards.

Separate committees could still be retained for Youth Development. Those committees which include joint community representation would also need to be retained, for example, Community Funding, and Joint Heritage Award.

Issues such as Project Proposals, Project Fund allocation, could either be handled by a full Board meeting, or go to an appropriate committee.

Membership:

Four or five members for each committee could be an appropriate number. (All Board members would be able to attend and enter discussion but would not be able to vote and would not be paid).

Committee Chairperson:

In accordance with Standing Orders the Board may appoint a member of any committee to be the chairperson of that committee. If the Board does not choose to exercise that right, the committee may elect its own chairperson.

PROCESS AND DECISION-MAKING

A regular programme of meetings for any committee the Board decides to establish is not envisaged. Committee meetings would only be scheduled when required. Issues could be referred to a committee by two methods:

1. An issue could be raised at a board meeting and referred to a committee, the committee would then report back to the next Board meeting. Committees would not have power to act unless the item was urgent. It needs to be noted that where a committee has power to act, that meeting must be publicly advertised, and open to the public. If the matter is one for discussion in Public Excluded then it needs to go through the same resolution as at an ordinary Board meeting public excluded section.
2. An issue could be identified by staff and criteria applied (which would need to be developed) and referred to a committee. The committee would then make a recommendation to the Board for a decision. In this case a full staff report would need to go to the committee. Time would need to be allowed for report preparation.

Deputations and/or interested parties, could be invited to attend the committee meetings, rather than the full Board, and become part of the discussion. For example residents of a street, park, other local concerns, staff presentation.

Not every issue would go to a committee, for example requests for funds. However a committee may provide the opportunity for a useful vehicle for dialogue on issues that might take up a considerable amount of Board meeting time. It could also allow for more community interaction with Board members and for more site visits. Site visits could be referred to the appropriate committee including appropriate staff and a report made back to the Board for discussion and as a record of the on-site discussion.

Committee meetings would provide a less formal environment for discussion than the ordinary Board meetings.

CONCLUSION

The advantage of establishing committees would appear to be an attempt to provide a more efficient and effective decision making process which meets the needs and opportunities for engagement of the community, and also is an efficient use of resources. To meet both needs there needs to be flexibility in the process adopted. The committee structure would eliminate the need for ad hoc meetings.

One of the reasons for the need for a committee structure is that Boards expect that additional delegations are going to provide an increased workload. While this could be the case, referring more work to committees may not necessarily be the best way to handle the workload, as it could reinforce the fear that too much of a Board's business was being handled in meetings which the public were not aware of, and therefore unable to attend.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board needs to decide whether to retain the status quo, thereby retaining its current committees, and setting up ad hoc committees and working parties, seminars, as and when required. If a committee structure is desired, it is recommended:

1. That three committees be constituted, Works, Traffic Safety and Environment; Finance, Policy and Planning, Community Services and Leisure, or similar names, the terms of reference to be finalised as appropriate.
2. That the Board finalise membership of each Committee so constituted.
3. That the Board resolve as to the method of appointing the Chairperson of its committees.
4. That the Board allocate the second Wednesday after the Board meeting as a committee/seminar meeting date.

For discussion.