

# CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

## NOTES OF A SEMINAR OF THE COUNCIL

**Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices  
on Tuesday 10 July 2007 at 1.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Carole Evans (Chairperson),  
Councillors Sally Buck, Graham Condon, Barry Corbett,  
David Cox (from 1.40pm), Pat Harrow, Bob Parker,  
Bob Shearing and Gail Sheriff (from 1.40pm).

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies for absence were received and accepted from  
Mayor Garry Moore and Councillors Helen Broughton,  
Anna Crighton, Sue Wells and Norm Withers.

### 1. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Peter Mitchell, in introducing the seminar, referred to his memorandum, drawing attention to the Auditor General's comments.

The current Code of Conduct had been adopted in 2004, but to change it required a majority of 75% of the Council.

He suggested that as the current Council has experience in dealing with the Code, it would be appropriate to consider any changes at this stage, so it would be available to the new Council. Otherwise in effect the new Council would have to continue utilising the 2004 Code, until it went through a similar process as that of today.

With the discussion that followed, comment was made in respect of:

- There is no generic template for the role of the Deputy Mayor. This was something that had been just added to in the course of time.
- Could not the Code of Conduct be tied to the "swearing in" of new elected members.
- The Code held no power by which to stand Councillors down.
- The "Register of Elected Members' Interests" needed to be looked at in terms of the linkages that would be attached.
- Some members were opposed to having to declare their interests, and in particular that of their spouses or partners.
- The issues of confidentiality matters were considered and needed to be respected in the process should be formalised.
- Any Code of Conduct should be kept simple, and signing off on it should not be required as there were sufficient tools in Standing Orders to cover most situations.

There were various other views, both for and against expressed, such as it just a guideline and if the person was not to be respected at least the position should be.

### **Disclosure of information**

- This does not include PX items

### **Ethics**

- It was seen that while issues have arisen, these were for various reasons had not progressed to the Ethics Committee. It was noted that depending on the composition of a Council this in turn could determine whether or not a complex or simple situation could arise.

### **Public Excluded**

- It was suggested that there are ways of managing more closely the distribution of reports, agendas etc. If need be a confidentiality agreement could be utilised. This was viewed as a serious matter and any process that covers this would need to be robust.
- If any matter needed to be considered in public excluded, there needed to be a full discussion on this, so that the decision arrived at was well judged.
- A check was to be made with other local authorities as to their process.

### **Personal Liability**

- This could serve as a reminder in the Code of Conduct depending on outcomes.

### **Outcomes**

- A better understanding of public excluded was needed through training.
- The Deputy Mayor's role needed to be included.
- There was majority support for the Code of Conduct, provided that it was kept as simple as possible.

The seminar concluded at 2.25pm.