

Attachment One: Terms of Reference for The Local Government Reform Elected Member Steering Group

Draft Terms of Reference

Background

The Triennial agreement between all four Northland councils recognises the need for local government reform and includes a proposal to advance reform of local government arrangements in the interests of improving service delivery and outcomes for the region as early as practicable. The Local Government Reform Elected Member Steering Group (SG) is established for the purpose of assessing options and recommending proposals for local government arrangements in Northland.

Purpose

The purpose of the SG is to:

- Provide collaborative strategic oversight and regional leadership for the assessment of options for the delivery of local government roles and functions in Northland.
- Make recommendations to participating councils on proposals for local government arrangements in Northland with evidence and analysis to support the case for change.

Responsibilities

The overall role of the SG is to provide strategic oversight and regional leadership for the development of a reorganisation proposal and the supporting analysis and evidence base, including:

- Oversee the development and implementation of the project plan and programme planning for local government reorganisation proposals and the functions and outputs of the cross-council project group
- Support collaboration and coordination across participating Councils
- Provide direction and guidance on engaging with Māori on reorganization plan development
- Provide regular reports on progress to participating councils
- Liaison with the Chief Executives Forum and the External Advisory Group
- Liaison with the Local Government Commission and Minister of Local Government as needed.
- Oversee the identification and management of risks associated with the project, in particular the risks of resource management reform occurring over a similar timeframe
- Support and oversee consultation and engagement on draft reorganisation proposals
- Following consultation and engagement, develop a draft regional reorganization plan and associated recommendations to participating councils
- Support the assessment of recommended reorganization proposal(s) by the Minister and Local Government Commission
- Any other roles and responsibilities allocated by the participating councils.

Delegations

The SG has no authority to make decisions on behalf of councils unless expressly delegated by resolution of participating councils.

Membership

The SG is to comprise:

- The Mayors and two other elected members from each of the Far North, Whangārei and Kaipara District Councils).
- The Chair and two other elected members of the Northland Regional Council.

- One representative of DIA in an advisory, non-voting capacity.

Whangārei District Council Mayor will chair the SG.

The initial membership of the SG initially comprises of 13 members.

The SG can agree to add other members to the group (without going back to member councils for resolution) if there is a consensus among members to do so.

Meetings

- The SG will meet as required, but no less than once every two months.
- Meetings are not open to the public but may be attended by Chief Executives of participating councils and members of the Independent Advisory Group, the Cross Council Project Teams, Project Manager and secretarial staff.
- Meetings may also be attended by councillors and / or external subject matter experts with approval of the Chair.
- A quorum for meetings will be at least one Elected Member from each Council.
- Agendas will be approved by the Chair, and minutes will be recorded for all meetings.
- Recommendations and decisions will be made by consensus where possible, or by majority vote if consensus cannot be reached.
- Secretariat services for the SG are to be provided by Whangārei District Council.

Reporting

- The SG will report progress to the participating Councils at 3 monthly intervals or as otherwise required.
- The SG will report back to Northland Forward Together.
- SG members can share all meeting agenda and papers with their fellow elected members who are not on the Steering Group (Northland Regional Council members will do this).

Term and disestablishment

The SG will be disestablished by resolution of all participating councils upon:

- The Local Government Minister and / or Local Government Commission making a decision on the recommended Regional Reorganisation Plan, or
- Legislative changes requiring establishment of an alternative body (such as a Combined Territories Board) or mandating different approaches to reorganization processes, or
- The decision of all participating Councils.

Review and amendments

- The effectiveness and relevance of these Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually, or at any time as needed in response to changes to relevant legislation or government policy or direction agreed by all participating councils.
- Any proposed / recommended amendments to these Terms of Reference are to be approved by resolution of all participating councils.