

Meeting Notes – Review of Council Committee Structure

Project Name Review of Council Committee Structure

Date / Time: 14th November 2018 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Attendees: John Carter, Kelly Stratford, Felicity Foy, Bruce Robertson, Anne Court, Tania McInnes, John Vujcich, Mike Edmonds, Adele Gardner, Terry Greening
Shaun Clarke, Andy Finch, Dr Dean Myburgh, Darrell Sargent, Samantha Edmonds, Richard Edmondson, Michelle Sharp

Apologies: Colin Kitchen, Sally Macauley

Absent: Dave Hookway, Mate Radich

Facilitated by: Bruce Robertson

Venue: Chambers

Workshop Notes**Item**

The workshop was opened and the upcoming LGNZ diagnostics exercise with Elected Members was discussed – this will focus on building Elected Members strengths and performance as governors and district leaders. This workshop today is the start of the conversation.

The purpose of the workshop is to address the resolution set in February (to review the operation of the new Committee structure within six months of commencement).

- Is it working for Elected Members?
- Is it working for staff? – Elected Members can view staff as free and frank advisors
- What's good, what's not so good, what can we do about it?
- Consultation and collaboration is key

Today's context – we are here to discuss the 'structure' of the Council (it's not about relationships).

There was acknowledgement that the new Committee structure is only six months in, so not long enough to have embedded the Committee structure. A suggestion was made to just tweak rather than review and agree to set this as a task in twelve months' time?

There is a clear view that it's not working from the Chairs' perspective. Some feel they are not being informed as well as they should be (trust issue) due to the gaps. A possible solution is to go back to six weekly meetings under the last triennium.

The district wide view versus ward view was highlighted and discussed. With Community Board Chairs present on Committees, this allows Councillors to duck out of meetings if needed as ward is still represented.

The current structure was reiterated to provide context to the discussion.

Each Elected Member was asked to write down five things they felt were going well (pairs or groups).

1. More lead time = better reports. Current structure lends itself to better quality and timely reports. The old system was too short.
2. Committees more relevant e.g. full decision making delegations; Elected Members have a reason to participate.

3. The level of quorum has been raised which allows more Elected Members to participate.
4. We have a Council / Management cycle which everyone understands.
5. Key decisions are made on a monthly basis.
6. There is growing alignment between portfolio lead and Committee.
7. There is less pressure on Elected Members between meetings due to 2 monthly Council meeting cycles – more breathing space.
8. Community Board Chairs are more involved – Elected Members feel they are more in tune with the individual community needs having Community Board Chairs present.
9. Audit, Risk and Finance (ARF) have a standing agenda – clear line of sight on programme of work for Councillors and staff. Staff know what they need to prepare in advance. Ideal is to have a triennium agenda e.g. three year view.
10. Complimentary and balance between Committees.
11. Experience of deputations at Committees is good, but it was questioned for Council? Less formal at Committee level. Takes up too much time at Council meetings.
12. Workshops that compliment the work of Committees.
13. Agenda previews with Chairs – no surprises. Items should be relevant to the controversial or topical issues of the day. Updates at Committees can be verbal which allow rapidly moving issues to be discussed. Often written reports are out of date.

Elected Members were asked to identify what could be improved

1. Agenda volume for Infrastructure Network (INC) and Council is too full.
2. Strategy = Council or Committee (LTP / Workshops).
 - Clarity of purpose
 - Alignment of workshops with Council business
 - How are workshops managed e.g. staff run versus Councillor run
 - Deliver value to decision making.
3. Schedule versus time available. Length of Committee meetings are not long enough e.g. two hours is sometimes too short. This ties back to what should be workshopped prior to the Committee meeting if a topic / report is deemed controversial.
4. Agendas on-line and collateral.
5. Agenda call – items on / off agenda. Confusing and doesn't allow time for Elected Members to read and consider item. Late items are an issue. Develop agenda earlier?
6. Can we simplify agenda? Identify up-coming items? Drop unnecessary items.
7. Standing orders – time management.
8. Pressure on individual councillors (bulk of reading arriving on a Friday, cherry picking what they read due to time constraints). Specifically relevant to INC Chair in context with all the commitments the Chair has.
9. Risk of ad hoc Councillor updates e.g. verbal updates without staff input.
10. Eight week gap between Committee items. If an item is left on the table and has to come back; its eight weeks before a decision is taken.
11. Committees should be spread out rather than in the same day / two day period.
12. Advance notice of amendment notices (notify for drafting).
13. Point of the Committee.
14. Standing agenda set for all Committees.

General Comments

Staff doing a fantastic job. This workshop has been cathartic.

Accept the current situation for the remaining year and it was suggested to revisit this in 2019 after the outcome of the Diagnostics exercise.

A reminder to all attendees that there is pressure to agree the formal meetings calendar by end of the year.

Suggested refinements

1. Re-align Infrastructure Network Committee / Governance Strategic Relationships Committee. ARF and GSR will be on same day, INC will be prior or following week.
2. Standing Agenda on all Committees from 2019.
3. Review and possibly refine Terms of Reference (TOR) Committees.
4. Chair and General Manager commit to one month preview of agenda items.
5. A further review of the Council Structure may be undertaken in 2019 after the 26th November LGNZ Equip diagnostic exercise. No review period was set or confirmed at this workshop.
6. Additional workshops to replace dates used for Infrastructure Network Committee
7. Possible review of GSR Committee to include Strategy from 2019 and consider quorum; given the nature of strategy items previously included all Councillors.

Next Steps

Amend the formal meetings calendar 2019 – re-align INC / GSR. Take this amendment and covering report with above refinements to 13th Dec Council meeting.