

Report 15.57
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Committee Council
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Submission to the Local Government Commission on the Draft Proposal for Reorganisation of Local Government in Wellington

1. Purpose

To present a draft submission to the Local Government Commission on its draft proposal for local government reorganisation in the Wellington Region and to seek Council's approval to submit the submission to the Commission.

2. Background

The Local Government Commission released a Draft Proposal for Reorganisation of Local Government in Wellington in December 2014. This followed two applications for reorganisation lodged in 2013 – one by the three Wairarapa territorial authorities and one by Greater Wellington Regional Council. The Commission also received a number of alternative applications following the notification of the original applications.

The Commission considered the applications and further options for local government arrangements in the region. It released a Draft Proposal setting out its assessment of the options alongside its rationale for making changes to the current arrangements. It has called for submissions on the Draft Proposal. Submissions are due by 2 March 2015.

3. Comment

The Commission is following a process set out in the Local Government Act 2002 which requires it to consider all reasonably practicable options. This includes the status quo. Having considered the reasonably practicable options the Commission then determines its preferred option.

The Commission's preferred option for local government arrangements in the Wellington Region is a unitary authority for the Wellington Region, excluding the small part of the Tararua District currently in the region, with eight local boards.

Councillors have been provided with the details of the proposal, including copies of the Commission's reports.

The Commission's preferred option is very similar to the application lodged by this Council. Therefore it is appropriate that the Council submits in support of the Draft Proposal. There are a number of matters, however, that the Commission should give further attention to. These include:

- The powers of the Local Boards
- The proposal for the appointment of members of the Governing Body to Local Boards
- The arrangements for Māori participation
- The speed and resourcing of the transition arrangements.

A draft submission is in **Attachment 1**. The submission outlines the reasons for the Council supporting the Draft Proposal, in line with the rationale contained in the Council's original application. The matters that require further consideration are also discussed.

The Commission will hold public hearings for those submitters wishing to speak to their submissions. It is recommended that the Council takes the opportunity to be heard.

4. Communication

The approved submission will be sent to the Local Government Commission. No further communications are proposed.

5. The decision-making process and significance

5.1 The matters referenced in this report have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties. This report sets out a submission on a draft Proposal to reorganise local government in the Wellington region. Under the Local Government Act 2002 the Local Government Commission is the decision-maker on reorganisation of local government.

5.2 The matters requiring decision in this report have been considered against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

5.3 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance and engagement policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance, as the Council's decision is to lodge a submission to another decision-making body.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

5.4 Engagement

Engagement on the matters contained in this report aligns with the level of significance assessed. In accordance with the significance and engagement policy, no engagement on the matters for decision is required.

6. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. **Receives** the report.*
- 2. **Notes** the content of the report.*
- 3. **Agrees** to lodge a submission to the Local Government Commission on its Draft Proposal for Reorganisation in Wellington, as set out in Attachment 1.*
- 4. **Agrees** that the Chair represents the Council at the Commission's hearing to speak to the submission.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Draft submission to the Local Government Commission