

Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 10 July, 2018
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: Council Chamber
Forum North, Rust
Avenue
Whangarei

In Attendance Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai
(Chairperson)
Cr Stu Bell
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Crichton Christie
Cr Vince Cocurullo
Cr Tricia Cutforth
Cr Shelley Deeming
Cr Sue Glen
Cr Cherry Hermon
Cr Greg Innes
Cr Sharon Morgan
Cr Anna Murphy

1. Apologies

Cr Martin (absent), Crs Halse and Cocurullo (late – arrived at 14h36pm).

2. Reports

2.1 Representation Review 2018

Her Worship the Mayor opened the briefing at 14h30. Kathryn Candy (Senior Legal Advisor) and Dale Ofsosky (Electoral Officer) led the presentation and facilitated discussion.

The purpose of the briefing is to present feedback from pre-consultation, provide detail on representation review options and seek feedback from Elected Members on a preferred option.

Background

The Local Electoral Act 2001 requires that a representation review be undertaken every six years. Council's last review was in 2012 and a review is required in 2018 (for the 2019 and 2022 triennial elections).

Current arrangements

- 13 Councillors, 6 wards
 - Bream Bay Ward (2)
 - Denby Ward (3)
 - Hikurangi-Coastal Ward (2)
 - Mangakahia-Maungatapere Ward (1)
 - Okara Ward (4)
 - Whangarei Heads Ward (1)
- No community boards

Options considered

- Six options considered
 - Option 1 (status quo)
 - 13 Councillors, 6 wards
 - no community boards
 - Option 2 (modified status quo)
 - 13 Councillors, 6 wards
 - no community boards
 - slightly modified boundaries for Bream Bay Ward
 - Option 3 (reduced number of wards)
 - 13 Councillors, 3 wards (7 urban, 3 northeastern, 3 southwestern)
 - no community boards
 - Option 4 (reduced number Councillors and wards)
 - 9 Councillors, 3 wards (5 urban, 2 northeastern, 2 southwestern)
 - no community boards
 - Option 5 (at large)
 - 5 – 29 Councillors (legal range permitted), no wards
 - possible community boards
 - Option 6 (mix of wards and at large)
 - 13 Councillors, 4 elected at large, 9 elected from 3 wards (5 urban, 2 northeastern, 2 southwestern)
 - no community boards
- Suggested option of Option 3A (reduced number of wards)
 - 13 Councillors, 4 wards (Denby (3), Okara (4), northeastern (3) southwestern (3))
 - no community boards

Council Feedback

The feedback from Elected Members at the February 2018 briefing was that Option 2 (modified status quo) or Option 3 (reduced wards with the same number of councillors were preferred.

Councillors also suggested some minor boundary changes:

- Crane Road
- Three Mile Bush Road
- Snooks Road
- Keyte Street

Informal preliminary consultation

Pre-consultation was undertaken from 1 – 27 June 2018 via the following methods:

- Council News
- General Information on website
- Online survey
- Social Media
- Brochure
- Advisory groups (disability, ageing, youth) attended
- Te Huinga attended
- Resident and ratepayer groups attended

There were 73 responses to the survey with results showing that most participants are satisfied with the status quo. There was a strong indication that the participants did not think that the current wards reflected Whangarei's communities of interest.

Community Boards

Community Boards must be considered as part of the formal review process. If established, considerations would include the number and names of community boards and the number of representatives elected and appointed to community boards.

Questions / Comments from Elected Members

- If the number of wards and Councillors had to be reduced to 3 wards with 3 Councillors in each ward, could this be modelled? Dale advised that this would be a major review and the wards would have to be remodelled.
- If the status quo is maintained, would there still need to be a formal consultation process? Dale advised yes, the process is prescribed by legislation.
- Could the situation change when the census results come out? Dale advised yes, but councils can choose between the actual results or estimates. Councils are required to review every 6 years but may do so sooner and

some councils have indicated that they will review again when the census results are released.

- Can the boundaries be easily shifted? Dale advised that we must be mindful of communities of interest but they can be modelled although there is a time factor involved.
- Councillors are elected to represent the interests of the whole district, not just the wards they represent.
- It would be good to have 2 or 3 Councillors in each ward to share the workload.
- Combining the wards would cause a huge travel issue. There is a big difference between workload and travel time and distances in rural and urban wards.
- Why the suggested option of 3A? Dale advised to establish the communities of interest better.
- Why not include Glenbverbie in with Derby? Dale advised that this could be mapped and brought back to the Councillors.
- There was discussion on the Denby and Okara ward names but it was advised that this was done so as not to exclude any suburbs.
- Snooks Road was not actioned as this would move 1,550 people from the Bream Bay Ward to the Mangakahia-Maungatapere Ward and would fall outside the 10% rule. Kathryn advised that they could look at what was done previously and bring it back to the Councillors.
- To get the community interested, we must take a step away from the status quo.
- There was discussion around the need for community boards. Some felt that rural councillors work with their communities to save the need for community boards and that coastal areas have strong communities. Another felt that community boards are the future and that the voice of the communities would be represented at council and are more democratic.
- Having less Councillors will make it harder for people to choose and does not help with decision making. More Councillors means more manpower to get the people involved. In our district, we have an urban / rural ward diversity and we need Councillors across these different communities.
- Elections at large eliminates the diversity of people who can stand for election.

- Modern communication methods are different. Would love the concept of better representation for elections in the future using different methods of engaging the community.

Direction from Elected Members

- There was majority support shown for Options 2 (modified status quo) with some support for Options 3 or 3A (reduced number of wards).

Next steps

- Preferred options (Options 2 and 3 or 3A) confirmed.
- Kathryn and Dale will also consider further minor boundary changes for Smeatons Drive, Glenbverbie, Crane Road and Snooks Road.
- Formal consultation process commences on the 26 July 2018.
 - consists of 1 proposal to consult community on.
 - the proposal will include the background, the options considered and how Councillors arrived at the proposal and will include information on voting systems, Maori wards (have already been decided on).
- The formal engagement process will run from the 1 – 31 August 2018 where submissions from the public will be received.
- Hearings on the submissions received will be held in September 2018.
- The final proposal will be put to Council on the 27th September 2018.
- The objections / appeal process will be conducted in October and November 2018.

Engagement Plan

The community will be consulted on the proposal via the following methods:

- Radio
- Leader newspaper
- Website
- Have your say event
- Social media
- Resident and ratepayer groups
- Advisory groups
- Te Huinga
- Te Karearea
- Council libraries

3. Closure of Meeting

The briefing closed at 15.55pm.