

REPORT

TO: Councillors

FROM: Mayor Richard Kempthorne

REFERENCE: C785

SUBJECT: **Relationship between Southland District Council, Community Boards and Community Development Areas**
- Report prepared for meeting of 20 August 2009

BACKGROUND

For many months it has been apparent that the relationship between our Community Boards and Tasman District Council has been far from satisfactory. The Chief Executive and I have discussed on many occasions the desire to improve the relationship. During a meeting of Zone 5 & 6 in Christchurch (the Mayors and Chief Executives of the Councils of the South Island) Paul and I discussed this issue with the Mayor and Chief Executive of Southland District Council, Frana Cardno and Dave Adamson. We were invited, if we wished, to visit Southland to see for ourselves how the Council related with their Community Boards and Community Development Areas (CDAs) and explore with them how they fund their Boards and the Board delegations. We would be able to meet Board members and visit one of their Community Board meetings.

OUR OBSERVATIONS

We were treated very well by Southland District Council. Dave Adamson, Chief Executive, was extremely helpful in explaining to us the Southland District Council process and involvement with Community Boards and CDAs. It was clear that Southland has a good working relationship with their Boards and CDAs. They have 12 Community Boards and 16 CDAs. Their largest Board covers a population of approximately 2000 people.

The Boards have clear delegations. The Community Boards are instrumental to the connection to their local community. The Boards decide what projects, within their delegation, they will undertake and they are all funded by their own Targeted Rate, called a Community Board Rate. They are accountable to their local community. Each Board has one Councillor associated with it. Staff time is included in the general rate but the projects that are carried out by the Council in Community Board areas are funded by the Community Board Rate. Their delegations currently include waste water, water supply, footpaths, street lighting, public toilets and town centre upgrades. Their delegations do not include planning or roading, which are conducted on a district wide basis and not funded by the targeted rate. There has been some discussion about moving some of the delegations to a district wide basis.

Board meetings are run very efficiently. The Chief Executive and I saw this at the Winton Community Board meeting, where focus is maintained on items delegated

to the Boards. We think that it would be advantageous to look at how we relate to our Boards and residents associations.

The Tasman District has two Community Boards and ten Residents Association/Community Councils. It is our opinion that any changes we make to the operation of Community Boards may also be applied to Residents Associations. There will need to be considerable discussion with both the Boards and Associations so that changes will result in an improved situation. It is also our expectation that this is not a simple thing to do.

FUTURE SUGGESTIONS TO EXAMINE

- Establish regular meetings between the Mayor and Chief Executive with Community Boards Chairs and possibly Residents Associations. The frequency of these meetings would need to be considered and it may be that the Board Chairs meet more often than Association Chairs. In Southland, the Mayor and Chief Executive meet with Community Boards Chairs quarterly and CDA Chairs six monthly. The purpose of these meetings is an informal two-way clearing house to keep the various parties aware of relevant issues.
- Examine what costs should be attributed to Community Boards budgets and also Association budgets, should it be considered an advantage to delegate functions to Residents Associations
- Reconsider delegations and examine which functions should be carried out and funded on a district-wide basis and which functions would be more appropriately delegated to Boards or Associations and funded by them through their own budgets (targeted rate). Delegated functions give individual communities the ability to choose a higher or lesser level of service if they wish, and fund accordingly. This should maintain clear accountability.

GOVERNING PRINCIPALS

Here are some governing principals for consideration:

- Efficiency; any change should maximise efficiency and avoid unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Effectiveness; likewise changes should result in maintaining or improving the effective operation of the organisation or delivery of service.
- Mutual respect
- Ground rules; should be established for all aspects of communication and relating together.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Council asks the Chief Executive and Managers to examine these issues and report back to Council with suggested changes, with a view that any significant changes be incorporated for the next term of Council. Communication with Community Board and Association Chairs should be carried out as part of these considerations.