Submission on Initial Representation Review Recommendations

Derek Wilshere
562 7920/0274303596
derek@wilshere.co.nz

I recommend that:

1. Council rejects the recommendation for the dissolution of the three Community Boards,
2. Council agrees to establish City Wide Community Boards based on the successful model of the existing three Boards and significantly supports the establishment of the new Boards. This includes reviewing the Terms of Reference for them.

Introduction

"We will lose something valuable that will not be replaced"

"Community Democracy is the foundation for Good Governance"

"People reject the tone of this Report"

"He Tangata He Tangata"

This Report is underwhelming and does not recognise the achievements of Boards over the years.

My submission addresses the proposed dropping of Community Boards which I oppose.

- I am happy with the recommendations for the ward structure, councillor numbers and the mix of ward and at large councillors and Maori representation (which hopefully survives!) and Agents who could fill a useful gap in the structure. I am disappointed that the proposal in my consultation submission to reconsider the Boundary for the Harbour Ward be changed to include a change to the eastern boundary beyond Burdans Gate to be removed from Wainui o Mata and added to the Harbour Ward has not been addressed

- The value of community democracy clearly identified by residents in areas with Community Boards has been overlooked not recognised and those without Community Boards have been accorded an undue weight

- The suggestion in the report that somehow the existing structure is out of time is ludicrous

- An opportunity to provide recommendations which could address Hutt City Council's (and others) historic shortcomings and propose some innovative opportunities and governance models has been overlooked and lost.

Some odds and ends

- Residents Associations and other models exist through our city. They fulfil a valuable role and feed good stuff to Community Boards which recognise and collaborate closely with them
- But only Community Boards are democratically elected and have a statutory link to the Council. Indeed. Council attempts to complement elected Boards with ward representatives have proved weak and ineffective
- The Report cites on several occasions that historically HCC (and some other Councils) have not recognised Boards potential to contribute adequately.
- Councillor workload, already significant would increase
- Council delegations to Community Boards need not be limited by the statutes. Indeed, a better Council could benefit by fostering and respecting this by having it recognised by a more inclusive governance model. Through the link to Councillors and staff very productive and respected outcomes could led to significant financial benefit
- In Hutt City the Community Boards have provided a fine opportunity for Board Members to become notably effective councillors
- The Report makes scant reference to Community Board costs….so, are they relevant? or simply a relevant cost to good and effective governance?
- The Eastbourne community response to the recommendation to scrap Community Boards has been indignant. and loud. Indeed, the quality of submissions is excellent, respected, and complementary to this submission
- The New Zealand Government which may well propose a new model for Local Government constantly alludes to the importance of "Local"

Recommendation

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Viva the Eastbourne Community Board