

PROTOCOL BETWEEN
ZONE CHAIRS AND SECRETARIES, AND *Local Government New Zealand*
8 September 1999

1. Principal Purposes of Zones

- 1.1** Zones operate using the ‘mutuality of ownership’ concept whereby zones are the joint interest and responsibility of both the zones themselves, and the *Local Government New Zealand* (as a whole) of which they are constitutionally a part (Section D of *Local Government New Zealand Rules*). They are therefore part of the ‘working body’ of *Local Government New Zealand*.
- 1.2** Zones are not only the electoral college that is the purpose given in the constitution, but also exist to:
- i) act as working fora of *Local Government New Zealand* on a geographic basis
 - ii) provide an opportunity for two-way communication between the development process of one or two key strategic issues from zone and *Local Government New Zealand*, where input into the policy zone members is sought, and *Local Government New Zealand* reports back to members on major national developments
 - iii) provide networking, sharing (information) and developments.
- 1.3** Each zone operates as suits its needs, but with a commitment to a common approach and operating policy, with recognition of *Local Government New Zealand* as the national body.
- i) Full participation by councillors is to be encouraged, both by zones and by the *Local Government New Zealand*, and by councils
 - ii) Two-way communication between *Local Government New Zealand* and zones and their administrators is critical, as is communication and input by the zone National Council representatives.

- iii) The *Local Government New Zealand* office commits to supporting zones with political and staff representation and providing full briefings on major topical issues; likewise for zones to support the *Local Government New Zealand* on important national issues.

Interest in the zones will be stimulated by:

- linking the *Local Government New Zealand* and the zone representatives reports
- developing meetings around a theme
- zone specific issues
- using zone meetings to develop liaison with zone area MPs
- good speakers on topical matters.

- iv) Other points to aid the effective achievement of zone purposes:

- build some or all meetings around a theme; this gives the meeting a ‘hook’ to interest councillors and give a focus
- normal practice is not to have the media attend the meeting, but a key newsworthy item that may be prepared as a press statement/media release
- if media is present, chair will seek the approval of the meeting.
- consider the occasional overnight meeting to enhance personal contact and sharing of information
- consider the occasional joint meetings with a neighbouring zone to enhance contacts, give a wider base of information, and - as another benefit - cut down on duplicatory requests to speakers to talk to zone meetings.

2. Agreements for calling and setting up meetings, attendance, follow-up etc

2.1 Dates

- i) For planning and scheduling of President and Vice Presidents attendance, quality of *Local Government New Zealand* briefings etc, ‘bunching’ of zone meetings is preferable viz the meetings in each round being reasonably close together (but not clashing).
- ii) Integrating zones and wider *Local Government New Zealand* business are:
- a) following National Council meetings (so zones can be briefed on current issues discussed/decided there)
 - b) early New Year meetings to be scheduled if possible to allow for consideration of the Association’s proposed annual workplan

- c) a round of meetings pre-conference could be useful, to allow zone consideration of any conference issues.

2.2 Agendas

- i) To aid the meetings' productivity, draft agendas will be prepared by the zone chair/secretary in consultation with the zone representative on National Council, and copied to *Local Government New Zealand* (Internal Governance Coordinator) to ensure relevance with strategic issues and overall coherence.
- ii) There needs to be a threshold/minimum criteria for acceptance of agenda items to cover these issues, guide zone chairs and secretaries, and make the meetings productive, as follows:
 - a) how relevant is the issue?
 - b) is it specific to zone or of national interest?
 - c) what preparation/research has been done by proposer?
 - d) is it re- inventing the wheel? *Local Government New Zealand* has a role to play here by developing a 'clearing house' facility on issues that could be consulted on.
 - e) what are the implications of the issue in other zones
 - f) what is the nature of the action being called for, and by whom (with Zone or *Local Government New Zealand*/Wellington action), and is this appropriate?
 - g) has it already been dealt with in recent times? Is there any change in the situation that warrants addressing it again?
 - h) has the item, and all background papers, been received in time for circulation and consideration by member councils?
- iii) If proposed agenda items do not meet all or most of these criteria, then zone chairs and secretaries should invite the proposing authority to defer the matter and undertake more work on it before it goes on a later agenda.
- iv) A standard agenda item will be included in all agendas along the lines of:

Local Government New Zealand Report/Update

2.3 Briefing Notes from *Local Government New Zealand*

These will:

- a) be written and sent/faxed to the zone secretary for circulation 7 working days prior to the meeting
- b) be short and concise
- c) be up to date on current issues
- d) take "as read" all previous relevant material sent out to members
- e) cover both national items and items raised by the particular zone

- f) be prepared for a round of zone meetings as a whole (to aid common information going to all zones) and updated as the round progresses
- g) be spoken to by the (President/Vice Presidents/*Local Government New Zealand* officer attending) only when requested to do so

2.4 Attendance

- i) *Local Government New Zealand* attendance will be:
 - a) one of the President/Vice Presidents with the Chief Executive as reserve.
 - b) one or two *Local Government New Zealand* staff
- ii) Other Attendance
 - a) Non member attendees will be present for the item or items on which they are to discuss, contribute etc.
 - b) Generally, the meetings are for members only, to aid full briefings on key matters and to allow for free and frank discussion. The press may attend on occasions, where arranged in advance between the Chair and the *Local Government New Zealand* (so the latter is aware of their presence). However generally, briefings can be given to the press after the meetings (by Chair/President/Vice Presidents as appropriate) rather than their attending the meeting as such.
 - c) Community board representatives are encouraged to attend where possible.

2.5 Minutes

In addition to zone members, zone meeting minutes will be copied to:

- i) the *Local Government New Zealand* office
- ii) other zones.

2.6 Follow-up on Issues from Meeting

Where a zone wants *Local Government New Zealand* to act on decisions made at a meeting, *Local Government New Zealand* follow-up will formally be commissioned on receipt of a letter/memo from the zone secretary, with reasonable notice, rather than on unconfirmed minutes. (The preference is for one letter per topic with any background paper attached.)

3. Protocols re: Third Parties Addressing Zone Meetings

- i) The operating policy on third parties addressing meetings is as follows:
 - a) that it is up to zones to accept or otherwise any request from organisations to attend and address their meetings (current practice around most zones is for the final decision on third party attendance to be in the hands of the Zone Chair/Secretary; they may consult with others before finalising the agenda ie. zone executive or zone representative on National Council).
 - b) that where an approach is made to *Local Government New Zealand*, it may endorse or assist such organisations contacting zones and may encourage zones to agree to have them on their agenda
 - c) that any requests or decisions by NC for organisations or speakers to go to address zone Meetings will be done under the auspices of the *Local Government New Zealand*/National Council item.

4. Importance of Zone Representatives

A major responsibility for a zone representative should be to report to National Council what is happening in the zone, and in turn to report back after a National Council meeting.

5. Thresholds for follow-up action, motions etc

There need to be minimum requirements to be met before follow-up resolutions are submitted to *Local Government New Zealand* Office for action, along the lines of:

- i) avoidance of “shallow” resolutions
- ii) proposal should be well researched
- iii) supportive data attached should accompany proposals/resolutions
- iv) there should be significant evidence of support in a zone before an issue is referred to the *Local Government New Zealand* office for action
- v) linkages to the annual workplan need to be identified where these exist.

6. Protocols re: MP attendance at Zone Meetings

- Written invitations are sent to MPs to attend.
- Set times are established for their presence (they are unlikely to stay all day).
- Topics pertaining to their interest are identified and prepared in advance by the zone committee, and quality checked; on the day, raised in the established time frame; and put to them with requests on their views.
- The timetable is adhered to rigidly unless there is a major interruption to cause otherwise.
- The MPs are asked to make a contribution without seeing it as an opportunity to make speeches and “politicise” the process.

- The MPs are formally thanked from the Chair at the end of that session.
- The MPs are invited to stay or may withdraw.
- Letters of thanks for attendance are sent out by the Chair – asking for feedback or comment on future matters.

7. Future Zone Workshops

Further meetings of the zone Chairs and Secretaries will occur as required to review their operation.