
Workshop - Council NOTES

Date: Tuesday 11 November 2025
Time: 11.31 am
Venue: Camellia Chambers, Civic Offices,
53 Hereford Street, Christchurch

Present

Chairperson	Mayor Phil Mauer
Deputy Chairperson	Deputy Mayor Victoria Henstock
Members	Councillor Kelly Barber
	Councillor David Cartwright - via audio/visual link
	Councillor Melanie Coker
	Councillor Pauline Cotter
	Councillor Celeste Donovan
	Councillor Tyrone Fields
	Councillor Tyla Harrison-Hunt
	Councillor Nathaniel Herz Jardine
	Councillor Yani Johanson
	Councillor Aaron Keown
	Councillor Sam MacDonald
	Councillor Andrei Moore
	Councillor Mark Peters
	Councillor Tim Scandrett

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The agenda was dealt with in the following order.

1. Apologies Ngā Whakapāha

An apology for absence was received from Councillor McLellan.

Councillor Fields left the workshop at 12.06 pm and returned at 12.11 pm during Item 2 – Government Reforms.

2. Government Reforms

Presented by Tom Lee – Principal Advisor Policy, Mark Stevenson – Head of Planning & Consents, and Steffan Thomas – Head of Building Consenting

Staff presented on four key reforms that the Government has underway or planned that will impact Local Government – Local Water Done Well, Local Government Act, Building Consents and Resource Management.

Key discussions:

- **Water Reform**

Council has adopted an in-house delivery model for water services, with the Water Services Delivery Plan approved by DIA in October. This approach involves significant financial investment with transparent water rates, ensures direct governance accountability over service standards, and implements the “Local Water Done Well” model operationally. Next steps include developing a water services strategy, introducing ring-fenced funding, and establishing oversight and reporting mechanisms by 2028.

- **Local Government Act Reform**

The Government has emphasised that Councils should “*do the basics brilliantly*”. The Local Government Systems Improvement Amendment Bill introduces significant changes, including the removal of the four well-beings, a core services list, enhanced reporting and benchmarking requirements, and greater transparency. While regulatory relief is proposed, a rates cap is still under development. In its submission, Council raised concerns that the Bill may not ease rates, called for reduced regulatory burden, and sought closer collaboration with Central Government. Next steps include the Select Committee report due on 25 November, Cabinet consideration of the rates cap policy prior to Christmas, and further reforms anticipated in the next term.

- **Building Act Reform**

The reform aims to accelerate building processes and reduce regulatory barriers. Key changes include removing consent requirements for granny flats (subject to criteria) and adopting a risk-based approach for earthquake-prone buildings. An upcoming Bill will encourage BCA consolidation, shift liability to a proportionate model, and introduce self-certification for builders and plumbers. These changes will impact Council’s consenting, inspection, and liability processes, with potential insurance benefits from reduced liability. Regional BCA collaboration discussions are already underway.

- **Resource Management Reform**

The RMA will be replaced by the Planning Bill (land use) and the Natural Environments Bill (resource protection). The Minister has directed Councils to halt new plan changes until December 2027, while Council is applying for exemptions for five plan changes. These reforms will impact planning roles, funding, staffing, and systems, requiring strategic alignment with city growth plans. Next steps include awaiting imminent legislation, analysing the Bills, briefing Council, and preparing submissions.

- The following points summarise responses provided to members' questions –
 - The potential for a nationwide standardised water charging system? Not able to confirm this. Confirmation that the ring-fencing framework has been approved, with implementation to come.
 - Oversight and reporting arrangements are still to be determined.
 - Budgeting for reforms has been completed, but updates will follow as changes progress.
 - Council engagement with Wellington continues through DIA, Commerce Commission, and Taumata Arowai.
 - Financial details for reforms through 2028 will be shared in future briefings, and the capital programme is currently aligned with reform requirements under the existing LTP.
 - Liability under self-certification and potential insurance implications from capped liability under the Building Act.
 - Under the Local Government Act, no additional enforcement for Code of Conduct is proposed.
 - The impact of a potential rates cap on services remains unclear pending Cabinet decisions.
 - All proposed reforms will entail costs for the Council, including increased scrutiny and system updates.
 - Resource Management discussions addressed the single application approach for five plan changes, with consideration of splitting, and concerns about deprioritising indigenous vegetation.
 - For water regulation, no update on chlorination exemption was available, though a regulator briefing is planned; Apex Waters and other companies already engaged in improving water efficiency.

Attachments

- A Presentation - Briefing Incoming Council - Government Reforms 

Councillor Johanson departed at 12.17 pm and did not return.

Councillor Barber left the meeting at 12.17 pm and returned at 12.20 pm during Item 3 – Standards New Zealand – Local Government Standing Orders.

3. Standards New Zealand - Local Government Standing Orders

Presented by Katie Matheis – Senior Democratic Services Advisor

Staff provided an overview of Standards New Zealand's draft Local Government Standing Orders and highlighted key differences compared to the Council's current Standing Orders.

Key discussions:

- The proposed Local Government Standing Orders (LGSO) currently out for consultation has been developed by Standards New Zealand through a 10-member committee and are intended for adoption by all Territorial Authorities, Regional Councils, and Community Boards.
- The key structural changes in the proposed LGSO include restructuring into 10 parts instead of 3 for improved usability, removing the Principles section that previously provided governance context, and introducing more detailed subsections with cross-references for clarity.
- The LGSO will be mandatory for the Council and Boards, with three discretionary areas: the procedure for speaking and moving and seconding motions and amendments, the provision of a casting vote, and the time limits for debate and public participation.
- The proposed LGSO limit meetings to a maximum of six hours including adjournments and would require breaks every two hours unless the meeting resolves otherwise.
- It would empower the Chief Executive to refuse or delay reports that involve significant cost or resource unless resolved by the meeting, or reports that fall outside scope of the requesting body. Further, the CE could withdraw a staff report but only the sponsoring member could withdraw their own report from the agenda.
- Public participation requests must be submitted at least one clear working day before the meeting, with a default five-minute speaking time. While the Chair retains discretion, requests can be declined if the matter has already been considered, decision-making authority lies elsewhere, or the request contravenes policy or legislation. Additionally, electronic petitions would be permitted and not restricted by word count.
- The LGSO aligns audiovisual attendance provisions with legislation, acknowledging that AV attendance counts toward quorum. The LGSO would require members to provide two working days' notice.
- Members with conflicts of interest would be required to physically withdraw from the table and leave the room if the matter is public excluded. There is no requirement that members disclose the nature of the conflict, nor does a non-vote constitute an abstention.
- Debate processes are clarified, including a structured approach to questions before debate, a default three-minute speaking time per member, and updated requirements for

amendments to ensure compliance with the LGA and prevent negating prior decisions. Additional clarifications cover foreshadowed motions and amendments and procedural motions to improve meeting efficiency.

- The LGSO retains the 10-working-day notice period for Notices of Motion (NoM) but now require a seconder. Additional reasons a NoM may be declined include if it is ambiguous, offensive, or contravenes legislative requirements. Repeat NoMs would be restricted for 12 months unless supported by one-third of members.
- Copyright restrictions remain a concern, as Standards New Zealand requires purchase for access, prohibits reproduction or sharing without permission, and may impose heavy fines for unauthorised use —raising significant transparency and accessibility issues.
- The indicative timeline is that the Select Committee report is due on 25 November, with final publication expected between late February and March following consultation and approval.
- The Chief Executive acknowledged Katie Matheis for her contributions and commended her dedication and hard work on the Standards New Zealand Development Committee and Local Government Standing Orders project.
- The following points summarise responses provided to members' questions –
 - Clarification that members with conflicts of interest must physically withdraw from the table under the proposed LGSO.
 - Governance staff will support refining ambiguous NoM; however, the Chief Executive retains the discretion to decline any NoM that remains unclear.
 - The working group comprises 10 members, including six councils and representatives from LGNZ, Taituara, DIA, and Standards NZ.
 - Conflicts of interest are not defined in the Standing Orders and remain the responsibility of members, with perception of bias being critical.
 - Copyright restrictions may limit public access to Standing Orders, as reproduction without permission could result in significant penalties. DIA and Standards New Zealand are currently working through the finer details.
 - The proposed LGSO would apply to Community Boards with flexibility for discretionary items.
 - The enforcement mechanism DIA may adopt if Standing Orders are not followed remains uncertain.
 - Reasons for declining public forum requests may be provided verbally or in writing upon request; however, doing so in writing could potentially raise copyright concerns.

Attachments

- A Presentation - LGSO Key Changes - 11 November Workshop 

Meeting concluded at 12.46 pm.