

## **Central Government - Local Government Chief Executives' Forum**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Context**

- 1 The central-local government relationship includes several forums and groups covering particular portfolios or sectors. There is also ad hoc engagement issue-by-issue between departments and various councils or sector representatives. These groupings do not gather in a whole-of-system view of how piecemeal reform affects the local government system. Current interactions do not provide a permanent framework for a relationship about the wider local government system and can be limited by specific political mandates.
- 2 There is nowhere for local government structural initiatives to be discussed in a high-level forum to inform advice for central and local government politicians. Similarly there is no forum to discuss general practice or management issues in local government that would benefit from central government involvement (noting that the sector is highly self-sufficient in many such areas). Central and local government political leaders' forum do not have a counterpart at a chief executive level or an obvious first point of referral for issues requiring further work.

#### **Purpose**

- 3 The chief executives of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) and the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) have therefore jointly established the Local Government Chief Executives Forum (the Forum)
- 4 The Forum:
  - enables the discussion of key issues and developments which are impacting, or may impact, on the whole local government sector;
  - provides an opportunity for information sharing on key priorities and pressure points, and better alignment of central and local government priorities and initiatives and better integrate and coordinate plans and activities;
  - addresses specific problems and build on opportunities for the local government system; and

- allows for discussions following on from the Central Government and Local Government Forum.

### **Leadership**

- 5 The Forum will be chaired by the DIA chief executive and SOLGM president jointly or individually, as they decide (or by delegates as they determine).

### **Membership**

- 6 The Forum will have 12-15 core participants determined by the joint chairs [or numbers could be determined jointly and DIA and SOLGM joint chairs select their participants]. Six to nine of the participants are from the local government sector. Participants are to be chief executives, or their delegates when this is necessary.
- 7 Central government participants are from departments with a strong interest in or impact on local government. Local government participants come from a mix of types, sizes and locations of local authorities. DIA and SOLGM will each supply a participant in addition to the chairs.
- 8 The joint chairs may invite other observers or additional participants on an ad hoc or long term basis, e.g. LGNZ, OAG.

### **Meetings**

- 9 The Forum meets at intervals of between three to four months, or ad hoc on particular issues. The joint chairs intend that the Forum does not meet only in Wellington.
- 10 Agendas are set by the joint chairs.
- 11 Forum meetings are by invitation only and Forum papers and records are not publicised as a matter of course. Forum papers and other records are, however, subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and Local Government Information and Meetings Act 1987.

### **Relationships with other parties (Maybe we don't need to specific explicitly)**

- Ministers
- Departments not represented at the Forum
- SOLGM Executive Committee
- Elected members
- LGNZ
- Councils not represented at the Forum

### **Administration**

- 12 DIA and SOLGM will provide administrative support for the Forum, with such assistance as councils and other departments can offer.