

31 January 2020

Committee Secretariat
Governance and Administration Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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PUBLIC SERVICE LEGISLATION BILL

Kāpiti Coast District Council (Council) supports the intent of the Public Service Legislation Bill, particularly in regards to modernising its operations; setting out shared purpose, principles, and values across the public service; establishing organisational forms and ways of working *to achieve better outcomes for the public*; and affirming that the fundamental characteristic of the public service is *acting with a spirit of service to the community*.

Council is surprised to note, however, that local government is not really mentioned anywhere in the Bill. Local government also “acts with a spirit of service to the community” and “seeks to achieve better outcomes for the public”. Therefore, the exclusion of local government from this Bill is a missed opportunity.

In her LGNZ Rural and Provincial Sector Speech of 21 November 2019, Hon Nanaia Mahuta emphasised the importance of collaboration across central and local government to achieve better outcomes:

... the scope of this Government's programme of reform reflects the vital importance of local government – and the work that you all do day-to-day – to the wellbeing of New Zealanders. We are committed to a strong, robust local government sector, focused on wellbeing. To achieve this, *we need an effective partnership between central and local government, and iwi/Māori, guided by the aspirations of our local communities* (emphasis added).

While there is intention to establish a greater regional presence (e.g., the establishment of regional leads in the public service), Council would argue that there is much more that the Bill could do to develop the central and local government partnership. Council is not arguing that local government should be subsumed by central government, but rather that the Bill provides an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the two.

Council recommends consideration of the following:

- Include a section articulating the relationship between the Local Government Act 2002 and the Public Service Bill;
- Include a section articulating the relationship between public service agencies and the Local Government Commission;
- Require the Public Service Commissioner to oversee, and report on, the relationship between central and local government;
- Set out principles for working across central and local government, similar to those set out in the clauses on interdepartmental ventures and joint operational agreements;
- Acknowledge the similarities between the central and local government workforces (particularly in relation to policy development, for example) and consider how skill development could be strengthened in local government as well as central government;
- Recognise that the public service values and standards of integrity and conduct for public service employees / employers that are outlined in the Bill also apply to local government employees / employers.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to submit on the Public Service Legislation Bill.

Yours sincerely



Wayne Maxwell
CHIEF EXECUTIVE