

**Mayor and Councillors**  
COUNCIL

12 DECEMBER 2013

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

## **RMA HEARING COMMISSIONER TRAINING 2014**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1 This report seeks Council's approval for the attendance of Elected Members at the RMA Hearing Commissioners' Training Course 'Making Good Decisions' in 2014.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION**

- 2 This report does not trigger the Council's Significance Policy.

### **BACKGROUND**

- 3 Each Triennium Elected Members are offered the opportunity to become accredited Hearing Commissioners by undergoing the 'Making Good Decisions' two day course run by Opus Education on behalf of the Ministry for the Environment. The course is run over two days and there is coursework required both before and after the workshop. The workload is substantial but the resulting accreditation is a valuable addition to the Elected Member's profile, and allows the Elected Member to hear resource consents and plan changes.
- 4 Elected Members were recently canvassed for their interest in taking up this training and Cr Bell, Cr Elliott and Fiona Vining (Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Board) have indicated they would appreciate the opportunity.
- 5 There are currently four accredited Elected Members: Cr Ammundsen, Cr Cardiff, Cr Lloyd, and Jocelyn Prvanov (Waikanae Community Board). The qualification lasts five years at the end of which time there is an option for the Elected Member (if they have been re-elected) to seek re-accreditation through undergoing a one-day course run by Opus. Cr Cardiff and Cr Gurunathan have recently completed re-accreditation as panel members, and Cr Ammundsen refreshed her accreditation as Panel Chair during the previous Triennium. Cr Lloyd would like to undergo Chair training and there is a course available in March 2014
- 6 Further information on the course is at Appendix 1.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Issues**

- 7 Changes to the RMA expected to be enacted in July 2014 will require all Hearing Commissioners to be accredited, and the only way to obtain this status will be through the MfE course.

- 8 It would be beneficial to add a number of newly accredited Elected Member Hearing Commissioners to the pool of Hearing Commissioners.
- 9 Courses are generally run only twice a year, although Opus can run courses as required provided there are the numbers.

### Financial Considerations

- 10 The costs associated with Elected Member attendance is as follows: There are sufficient funds in the training budget to fund the attendance of Cr Elliott, Cr Bell, Cr Lloyd, and Ms Vining.

<b>Elected Member</b>	<b>Course cost</b>	<b>Airfares/Mileage</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Cr Lloyd	Chair course \$1,372 (Auckland)	\$326 return	1,698
Cr Elliott	Panel course \$1,907 (Wellington)	\$88	1,995
Cr Bell	Panel course \$1,907 (Wellington)	\$59	1,966
Ms Fiona Vining	Panel course \$1,907 (Wellington)	\$51	1,958
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>\$7,617</b>

### Legal Considerations

- 11 There are no legal considerations.

### Delegation

- 12 Council has the delegation to consider this matter.

### Consultation

- 13 There are no consultation implications.

### Policy Implications

- 14 There are no policy implications.

### Tāngata Whenua Considerations

- 15 There are no tāngata whenua considerations.

### Publicity Considerations

- 16 There are no publicity considerations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

17 That Council approves the attendance of Cr Lloyd at the “RMA Making Good Decisions” Chair Recertification course in Auckland in March 2014, and the attendance of Cr Bell, Cr Elliott and Community Board member Fiona Vining at the Foundation Course in Wellington in 2014.

**Report prepared by:**

**Approved for submission by:**

Vyvien Starbuck-Maffey

Stephen McArthur

**Democratic Services Team Leader**

**Group Manager Strategy and Partnerships**

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

**Appendix 1 - Course information RMA ‘Making Good Decisions’**

## RMA HEARING COMMISSIONER TRAINING OPUS ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING – RMA ‘MAKING GOOD DECISIONS’

Opus Environmental Training Centre now delivers the “Making Good Decisions (MGD) Programme” on behalf of the Ministry for the Environment. The purpose of MGD is to help councillors, community board members, and independent commissioners make better decisions under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). It provides RMA decision-makers with the skills needed to run fair and effective hearings, and to make informed decisions.

The Programme was originally developed by the Ministry for the Environment and Local Government New Zealand in consultation with stakeholders and professional bodies, including the New Zealand Planning Institute. The training material delivered from 2013 onwards has been extensively revised by the Ministry to accommodate a number of recent legislative changes, including the expanded scope in accreditation requirements from 2014.

The Foundation Course is intended for Councillors, Council officials, industry professionals and iwi groups to obtain certification to sit as an accredited member of a Hearings Panel.

It covers 10 modules and is run over two days. An assessment is required to be completed prior to attendance and an assessment completed within 1 month post attendance.

The Programme contains the following modules:

Module 1 - Natural Justice and Ethics

Module 2 - Principles of RMA Decision Making

Module 3 - Considerations Relating to Māori

Module 4 - The Planning Framework and Hearings

Module 5 - Consent Hearings

Module 6 - Roles of Participants in Hearings

Module 7 - Procedures for Hearings under the RMA

Module 8 - Managing Hearings

Module 9 - Considering, Testing and Weighing Evidence

Module 10 - Deliberation and Preparing Decisions