

Response to RIMU recommendations for improvement

Recommendation	Comment / progress
RECOMMENDATION 1: Strengthen the relationship with the Governing Body	
i. Establish a panels' forum with the Mayor: a six-monthly meeting with panel representatives to provide an update to the Mayor, raise major issues, and participate in a Q&A. Consider holding a nomination process within the panels to choose a representative for each forum meeting.	Yes, to be arranged in partnership with the Mayor's office
ii. Provide orientation to liaison councillors about the expectations for the role (role at meetings, attendance, being an advocate).	Yes, to be delivered in partnership with the Chief Liaison Councillor
iii. Clarify the mechanisms that other councillors have to engage with the panels (e.g. that they can be invited to or ask to attend panel meetings).	Yes, additional guidance will be provided to councillors
iv. Schedule at least three joint Panels/Governing Body/ELT meetings each term.	Yes, these meetings were valued by the panels and will continue to be scheduled
v. Continue to identify other opportunities for councillors to engage with the panels.	Yes, staff will continue to identify ways of involving councillors with the panels
RECOMMENDATION 2: Alter the expectations about the community forums	
i. Retain the community engagement budget.	Yes
ii. Remove the expectation that the panels would deliver community engagement.	Yes, during recruitment and orientation, the panels' role in community engagement will be made clear.
iii. Provide staff support dedicated to organising community engagement activities, with panels having a less operational role.	The community engagement budget will be used, where required, to provide support. In addition, synergies will be sought as below.
iv. Find synergies with engagement that the council is doing themselves, but ensure that panel members are able to take a lead role in confirming what engagement they get involved with.	Yes, the terms of reference have been updated to recommend synergies with other council activities
RECOMMENDATION 3: Provide good practice guidance and more support for online engagement with communities	
i. Work with the panels to identify the most appropriate and sustainable ways of communicating and engaging with their community online.	Yes, the council has access to a range of tools that can be utilised by the panels for digital communication and engagement with their communities
ii. Provide operational support to implement and maintain digital engagement channels. This could be done by existing or additional panel support staff.	Ways of delivering this support will be explored in the coming months.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Clarify the panels' role in connecting the council with communities	
i. Clarify the role the panels play in connecting the council to their communities.	Yes, expectations will be set during the recruitment process that the panels will assist the council in improving its engagement guidelines to reach Auckland's diverse communities, not act as an ongoing conduit.
ii. Communicate these expectations to the panels and council staff.	Yes, staff will ensure that guidance is provided to staff to manage expectations.
RECOMMENDATION 5: Strengthen the mechanisms for closing the loop	
i. Require council staff who receive advice from the panels to send a document outlining key messages back to the panel.	Options for the best way to manage this will be explored.
ii. Adopt an action tracker template for all panels, incorporate feedback detail provided by council staff.	Yes – this was adopted by many of the panels in the 2016-2019 term so will be rolled out to all panels.
iii. Strengthen ongoing communications between consulting staff and the panels around projects.	Yes – clearer expectations will be set with staff who wish to consult with the panels
iv. Strengthen the report template guidance regarding the panels' input and include an optional 'demographic advisory panels' heading where appropriate.	To be considered in partnership with the Quality Advice Programme.
v. Encourage staff to invite panel chairs to present alongside them at committee meetings.	Guidance will be provided to staff where appropriate, bearing in mind panel members' availability.
RECOMMENDATION 6: Consolidate panel-related resources on Kotahi (the council intranet)	
i. Consolidate all the information about the panels onto a single page on Kotahi to make it easy for staff to access information about the panels and make it easy for the support staff to signpost interested people to the right place.	Yes, most information is already available in a guidebook but new Kotahi pages are in progress
RECOMMENDATION 7: Set clear expectations about workload (support staff)	
i. Revise the expectation of time commitment for lead and deputy lead officers from one day per month to at least two days per month.	The role description for staff is currently being updated based on feedback received.
ii. Set up a formal arrangement where managers agree the amount of time that staff are released from their other roles to support their work with the panels.	Staff will seek to ensure that support staff are well supported in their role.
iii. Clarify the respective responsibilities between support staff.	Yes. This will be covered during staff orientation
RECOMMENDATION 8: Provide orientation and support (support staff)	
i. Hold an induction workshop for lead and deputy lead officers.	Yes

ii. Consider arranging peer-support mechanisms for the support staff.	Yes
RECOMMENDATION 9: Provide training and orientation (panel members)	
i. Provide a training program for panel members, including topics such as governance, policy making, and conflicts of interest, and a separate training module for chairs.	Yes, discussions are underway with the Kura Kawana programme to access some of the same training modules for panel members which could be provided throughout the year
ii. Provide time for active whakawhanaungatanga and team-building with fellow panel members and with support staff.	Yes, time will be set aside at the start of the term and annually
iii. Allow panel members to get familiar with each other before selecting a chair. The council can appoint an interim chair and deputy chair for the initial time period or offer an option for the liaison councillor to facilitate the discussions in the interim.	The recommended approach is that the Mayor appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair within the first three months of the term.
iv. Provide opportunities for upskilling. Have regular check-in conversations with panel members about the way panel membership is going for them.	Training will be provided as appropriate to their advisory role. Check-in conversations will also be initiated.
RECOMMENDATION 10: Set clear expectations about workload (panel members)	
i. Clarify the expectations about the amount of time and the type of remunerated and unremunerated work that panel members would be expected to commit to the role.	An hourly rate is proposed for panel members to support any pre-approved activity additional to attending panel meetings.
ii. Make sure that the scope of work required of panel members is in line with the expectations set out before they accept the role.	Yes – recruitment material will be reviewed and updated as appropriate
iii. Introduce an hourly rate to allow recognition of additional work by panel members.	Yes – this has been included within the updated terms of reference
RECOMMENDATION 11: Make changes to the appointment process (panel members)	
i. Enable the re-appointment of up to half of existing members to enhance continuity. Whether or not a panel member is re-appointed should depend in part on their good attendance and participation in the previous term.	Yes – however, in general there have been less than half panel members who wish to continue
ii. Create a lessons-learned guide each term that passes on the knowledge between the panels.	Some information was gathered at the end of the term but this will be progressed for the 2019-2022 term.
iii. Set a two-term or three-term limit for panel members.	Yes – staff recommend two terms
iv. Strengthen the language used in the terms of reference about non-attendance to state that any member who misses three consecutive meetings without an apology would be deemed to have abandoned their position and replaced.	Yes – terms of reference have been updated to strengthen this

v.	Simplify the process of replacing panel members, by creating a pipeline of approved candidates and/or delegating the responsibility for mid-term panel appointments.	Yes – the terms of reference have been updated to clarify this
RECOMMENDATION 12: Enhance diversity and representation within the panels		
i.	Actively apply a diversity lens during recruitment in order to promote diversity within the panels. Involve the Diversity and Inclusion Team during the recruitment of the panel members.	Yes. Efforts will be made to reach into a wide range of diverse communities to attract candidates who can help us to meet this goal.
ii.	Raise the minimum number of members on the panel from six to eight to enable greater diversity among members.	Yes. Terms of reference have been updated to reflect this.
iii.	Offer intersectional candidates, who fit the demographic profile of two or more panels, a choice as to which panel to serve on.	Yes – this will be managed in way that will help to enable greater diversity within each panel
iv.	Encourage and support panel members to move between panels in different terms to enhance diversity and cross-over.	Yes – within the proposed two term limit for panel members.
v.	Demonstrate the importance of Te Ao Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi by providing more emphasis on the Treaty throughout the term as well as support and guidance during orientation.	Yes – the terms of reference for the panels will be increased to two members with Te Ao Māori experience and guidance about the Treaty will be provided as part of the orientation process.
RECOMMENDATION 13: Clarify the role of advocacy and support the panels to advocate on behalf of their communities		
i.	Clarify the role of advocacy in panel functioning	The panels are established to provide advice to the Mayor and Governing Body. Enabling an advocacy role creates tensions between the panel being able to deliver on their core function.
ii.	Consider offering panel members means to choose, shape and support a project they feel passionate about in collaboration with the relevant council department.	To be considered in partnership with the panels and the liaison councillors
iii.	Consider time and resource implications of this change: panel members should be remunerated for their time working on the project.	Yes, as appropriate.
RECOMMENDATION 14: Encourage inter-panel interactions and collaborations		
i.	Look for more opportunities to bring panel members together, both in formal and informal capacities.	Yes – opportunities will be identified where appropriate
ii.	Consider establishing cross-panel working groups on specific issues but be mindful of purpose, workload, and appropriate remuneration.	Yes – opportunities will be identified where appropriate

RECOMMENDATION 15: Provide technology solutions to enhance communication	
i. Provide technology solutions to enhance communications between the council and panel members and to reduce paper usage.	Yes – the council's new technology platform Nexus will fulfil this
RECOMMENDATION 16: Revisit the set-up of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel	
i. Revisit the remit and purpose of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel before the new panel is set up and recruited. For example, the recruitment onto the panel could be skills-based (e.g. experience-based ability to consider the views of newcomers and migrants)	Work is underway to develop skills criteria for the recruitment process
ii. Reflect the growing diversity of Auckland in the ethnic compositions of all demographic advisory panels.	Yes – will be considered during the recruitment process
RECOMMENDATION 17: Consider changes to the set-up of the Youth Advisory Panel	
i. Reduce the number of panel members from 21 (local-board based) to 13 (ward based). This would maintain the historic geographic spread of the panel and help the panel maintain continuity during the term in spite of relatively high turnover.	Partly – this is proposed to be the same set up as other panels with 8-12 members and no geographic connection. There is an opportunity to formally arrange youth hui with local youth groups once or twice a year (18 local boards have youth groups).
ii. Clarify and emphasise the fact that the panellists are not ward representatives.	Yes – reducing the size of the panel and the geographical connection will remove any confusion.
iii. Increase remuneration levels to that of other panels.	Yes - the criteria set within the fees framework have been reviewed and can be adapted so that YAP members are on the same remuneration level as other panel members.