MINUTES OF THE REPRESENTATION REVIEW HEARINGS OF THE SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 9AM

PRESENT

Mayor S Broughton; Councillors P Dean, S N O H Epiha, D Hasson, M B Lyall, S G McInnes, E S Mundt, and N C Reid (online).

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs S Mason (Chief Executive); Messrs. T Harris (Executive Director Enabling Services), S Gibling (Executive Director People, Culture & Capability), T Mason (Executive Director Infrastructure & Property); Mesdames D Kidd (Executive Director Community Services & Facilities), A Sneddon (Chief Financial Officer), S Carnoutsos (Acting Head of Marketing & Communications), P Stephens (Long Term Plan Coordinator); and Mrs T Van der Velde (Personal Assistant), and Ms T Davel (Senior Governance Advisor) and C Bennet (Governance Coordinator)

The meeting was livestreamed.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received in respect of Councillors Gliddon and Miller

Councillor Mundt for lateness

Moved – Councillor Epiha / **Seconded** – Councillor McInnes

'That the Council receives the apologies from Councillors Gliddon and Miller, as notified.'

CARRIED

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

RECOMMENDATION TO RECEIVE SUBMISSIONS

Moved – Councillor Epiha / **Seconded** – Councillor McInnes

'That the Council receive submissions, including late submissions, 1 – 615 for information and to hear submissions as per included schedule.'

CARRIED

SUBMISSIONS

Submission 113: Harvey Polglase Darfield Residents Association

Mr Polglase handed out speaking notes and read through them. He said Council agendas were too large to be democratic. He said at the Residents' Association AGM they asked Council to review their costs.

Councillor Mundt arrived at 9.13am

Asked what particular areas he felt Council was failing the community board, he responded they had no powers and no influence on the local community. He said it made them feel disempowered.

Mr Polglase noted he would like the community board to have widespread powers, e.g. street widening, bicycle lanes etc. He added there was a lack of grassroots input.

He also said he supported other wards having community boards.

Submission 187: Sabrina Terrey on behalf of Lesley McAuley

Ms Terrey read a statement on behalf of Ms McAuley. The statement said the proposed system is not equitable and will leave rural areas underrepresented. Communities of interest were more important. In rural areas there was no rubbish services, limited library services and people had their own septic tanks, they also have cycle ways they didn't ask for or want or need, yet they pay for it.

What rural areas want is their own community spaces and halls. She said farmers create food. Community Boards are focussed on local ideas and promote social cohesion in communities. Ward name changes are costly and have no real value. Names need to be in both languages and reference was made to the Rolleston public building which created much turmoil. Public buildings shouldn't have exclusive names. English is the first language in New Zealand and as such should be first.

Submission 198: Erin Van Der Zwet-Brodie

Ms Van der Zwet-Brodie put flax on the Chamber floor noting it represented 247 of the 248 people who filled out a written submission form that she created. They all said yes to the Malvern Community Board in April. She acknowledged everyone who helped her get the signatures in her community.

Erin noted that the representation review was overshadowed by the Long-Term Plan consultation process.

Erin said most people she spoke to did not know that the Council intended to disestablish the community board.

She scrutinised the minutes and summary of the Representation Review consultation but only found a two-line reference to their submissions.

Erin asked Council to honour and respect those who put pen to paper.

Submission 119: Donna Gillatt

Ms Gillatt showed a video on War on Farmers and said Council needed to reconsider its structure. She said she never subscribed to having one Mayor and one Prime Minister as they had too much power and control. She said that if the mayor provides vision and direction, we should be more thoughtful, to ensure they have an exceptional background or at least an unwavering desire to serve residents only.

Ms Gillatt asked whether three mayors wouldn't be better, and that they could potentially be fired by ratepayers without waiting for elections. She questioned the set up for the hearings asking why people should come to Council and Council not go to the community halls in the evenings, bring a plate to share afterwards and immerse themselves in their communities they serve.

She added that whoever controls the food, controls the people and hoped the goal was not to starve the people. She asked why anyone would want to demolish the community board.

Ms Gillatt noted that certain members seemed to want to have absolute control with no consideration of ratepayers, or only those who fit in the new world order.

Responding to questions, Ms Gillatt said she wanted an increase in councillors, with three being appropriate for Malvern.

Submission 196: Arindam Bose

Not present.

Submission 205: John Morten

Mr Morten noted that Selwyn was an urban authority with most living east of the SH1. He added that remuneration shouldn't be part of the decisions, with the focus being on representation. He thought council has mostly got it right but did not agree with the disestablishment of the community board. He said he didn't think it was time to look at a different system from district-wide rating and that rural and urban communities needed each other.

Responding to questions about meetings between residents' association and council, Mr Morten said the current community board was being judged on its recent performance. He said a community board continued to have a role in such a large ward as Malvern. It could input into Council's decision-making, but it is a challenge.

Morning tea 10.20am – 10.40am

Submission 352: Judith Pascoe

Mrs Pascoe provided a quick overview of her experience with local government in particular. She said a community board can assist with keeping contact between council and the community. Any councillor is fully involved in council meetings and district wide issues. This is supposed to be a part-time job and to expect one councillor to serve all the people in the Malvern ward is a huge task.

She advocated to retain the community board, they are a part of the elected representation and should be working in consultation and partnership with councillors. They would need more delegations though.

Submission 287: Allison Rosanowski

The council suggests fewer councillors and she believes the workload being put on them is too great, adding they will be spread too thinly for a greatly increased population base. The reason for the decrease in number of councillors is about remuneration because the amount to be paid is set by the Remuneration Authority. If there are 8 instead of 10, then each councillor will receive more payment.

Adding to this, Mrs Rosanowski said a reduction from 2 councillors to 1 and the abolishing of the community boards, is a loss of six elected members and this was not localism. She added a community board needs to be effective.

Submission 312: Paul Rosanowski

Mr Rosanowski noted he supported democracy in action. He commended Council for its advertisements, local newspapers, online and postal opportunities. Having worked in other countries where this is completely unknown, he said it should be commended and supported.

He added that any changes must be predicated by Council's decisions, and in turn guided by principles of fair representation, truth, integrity, doing the right thing and responsibility and accountability for the people they were chosen to serve. He said there must be a more democratic solution than the proposed one.

Submission 220: Robert McInnes

Councillor Sophie stepped away from the table to hear the submission from her husband.

Mr McInnes said he supported the suggestion of four wards and the inclusion of te reo maori. He said both languages are spoken and neither is held in higher regard. People need to remember te reo was not only for display but it is a fully developed language and therefore important to hear it and normalise it.

Some cultures have already lost their language and culture. Today we have a choice to support reo maori. What strengthens maori strengthens us all.

Councillor McInnes stepped back to the table.

Submission 293: Ken May

Mr May said Malvern was a very large area by land with the smallest number of representatives. He said it should not be population based but area based. Reducing the number of councillors would be reducing representation. He said the problem with the community board is that they have no delegations. They need to be given something to do to focus them, incentives to overcome the apathy that exists.

Submission 323: Mark Alexander

Mr Alexander noted Selwyn transitioned from rural district to urban with a rural element. He said he would like to support the community board but can't as he struggles to identify any success of this community board in this term or the last. His proposal is for 3 wards, 8 councillors, no community board. In response to a question on community board delegations, Mr Alexander said they do not need more delegations but they have power which they either choose not to use or do not understand how to.

Submission 499: Mark Alexander – Rolleston Residents Association Inc

The submission from the Rolleston Residents' Association Inc is not dissimilar to the previous submissions. They do not see any clear value for the community board.

Submission 256: Peter Williams Russells Flat Landcare

Mr Williams said he did not think one councillor can service the large Malvern ward. The community board is the contact in the community and also between councillors and council. He said it was too challenging to get through to council. He referred to how it was when it was still a county council noting it was a far better system then.

Hearings break 12.18pm to 1pm for lunch

Submission 342: Melissa Jebson

Mrs Jebson said she was not in favour of reducing councillors from 2 to 1 in both Malvern and Ellesmere wards. Mrs Jebson commented that there are over a dozen rural communities and communities of interest in Malvern. Malvern is a diverse ward with many rural areas and communities, all these communities have different concerns and problems. The area has been adequately served with current representation and she does not see the logic in reducing representation to one councillor and questioned how Malvern can be effectively represented if reduced to one councillor in the ward as well as the fairness for one councillor to have that responsibility.

Mrs Jebson added that Malvern rural rate payers pay a lot of rates and wants Council to consider the money from rural ratepayers and who want to see what their hard-earned rates are paying for. With Malvern attracting many visitors every year Ms Jebson wants Council to hold onto and look after Malvern as an integral part of the Selwyn District.

Ms Jebson added to be effective Selwyn District Councillors need to be knowledgeable and informed of what occurs in the district therefore two Councillors is the bare minimum to be effective.

Submission 555: John Verry Malvern Community Board

Mr Verry commented that Selwyn is a district of unique communities, each with its own needs, priorities and aspirations, which makes the district special. Mr Verry added it is essential to respect and honour the voices of residents as per the high number of responses in the initial proposal. People choose to live in Selwyn due to the balance of lifestyle and the Selwyn District has a community-focused environment, which makes Selwyn one of the fastest growing districts in New Zealand.

Mr Verry touched on Council's decision to allow both electronic and pen and paper submissions adding it was an inclusive approach.

Mr Verry commented that the Malvern Community Board submission was rooted in genuine community engagement undertaken by the Board members. The Malvern Community Board has five elected members and engage daily with the residents and the community and understands their issues and concerns.

Mr Verry provided the Board's summary of the feedback and an unofficial analysis of the submissions and discussed themes reflected in the submissions. He commented that across the district the importance of Community boards, especially in rural areas like Malvern is indisputable.

Mr Verry said that there are calls for stronger partnerships between the council and the Malvern Community Board and this requires effective delegations and more authority to enable the board to provide better services and amenities for the betterment of the community.

In closing he commented that the Malvern Community Board should not be disestablished, residents in Malvern had the right to be heard and to have fair and effective representation in the Selwyn district.

There was discussion on face-to-face communication and using community halls and Mr Verry commented that he does consider face-to-face meetings effective in keeping interconnectedness with people in the community.

There was discussion over the Board having more responsibilities and delegations and what this might look like. Mr Verry commented that he has done initial research with community views and has put this forward to Council's CE and added he would like to see more delegation in regards to community facilities and reserves and recreation.

Submission 592: John Verry

Linked with above submission

Submission 328: Douglas Frazer

Mr Douglas Frazer spoke to his submission. He commented that he thinks it is fair to say that New Zealand is in a recession and has been so since September 2022. Mr Frazer commented that New Zealand Rural farmers are the backbone of GDP.

Mr Frazer commented that removing the Ellesmere or Malvern councillors would be a very backward step and that rural communities are needed if New Zealand is to pull themselves out of a recession. Mr Frazer added voices from rural councillors are important in the Selwyn District.

Mr Frazer touched on population and commented that rural communities do not have a hope of growing their population in comparison to the urban population as rural farmland can only contain so many houses.

Mr Frazer objects to the Māori placenames being placed first and has a preference to see them after the English name, stating that this will be in keeping with central government requirements to be named the English name first than Māori name.

Mr Frazer commented that there has been a Chinese bank takeover of Synlait and commented that this is currently happening at a worldwide scale and would not like to see this occur in New Zealand. He advised that the population in Selwyn has increased so would like to see more councillors in rural areas.

Submission 278: Graham Evans

Mr Graham Evans spoke to his submission that representation should not be based on population but on community interest based on the ward. Mr Evans commented that there is a need to keep the Malvern Community Board, and there used to be more community boards. The wards should be able to elect a community board if they want to and should be encouraged if they want one.

Mr Evans commented that reducing councillors would not save the community any money. Mr Evans would like to see better representation and would like to see a good mix of new and long-standing councillors and added that there is a need to raise profile of councillors and reducing the number of councillors is not the way to go.

Mr Evans does not have an opinion on how representation should be calculated should it not be calculated on population and is fine with the status quo

Submission 556: Bruce Russell

Mr Russell spoke to his presentation and does not want to see the Malvern Community Board disestablished, and incorrectly stated *yes* on his submission. The Malvern ward has farming communities, small townships and areas of growing population, and varied communities, and the community requires fair and effective representation to meet the needs. Mr Russell added that current representation is meeting part of those needs. One Councillor alone cannot adequately advocate for the different needs in the district, especially with rural and semi-rural needs. With only one councillor the ability to stay accessible and maintain contact with communities seems impossible.

Mr Russell commented that Councillors are elected by their own ward and preference is to their own wards, he added that having only once councillor out of eight risks Malvern being overshadowed on decisions that could impact the community and whole district.

Mr Russell commented on support of both use of Māori and English names, he advised that feedback suggested that the English name be first followed by the Māori names. Mr Russell commented that he was amazed with the explanations of the Māori names and would have liked to have seen the explanations as part of the consultation/submission process which would have provided more context of why both Māori and English names were being considered.

There was a discussion around the table about youth not having much input into the consultation and the importance of the roles that young people play in decision-making in our community. Mr Russell commented that the youth are our future and we must look after them.

Submission 398: Darryl Griffin

Mr Griffin advised he has been a resident of Malvern for many years and provided information on his background with experience in local government and Representation reviews.

Mr Griffin spoke to his submission and points he wanted to emphasise being local democracy, effective representation and communities of interest, number of elected members, and community board, a summary of this was provided as supplemental information.

Mr Griffin provided an option for consideration as a compromise with another Councillor added to the Ka Mania Rolleston ward and no changes to the ward boundaries for a total of 11 Councillors and provided the rationale for this. Mr Griffin also spoke to less positive outcomes of reducing the number of councillors.

Mr Griffin commented that local government is becoming more complex than less complex. In his opinion, the right number of councillors for Selwyn is between 11-13. The council should also consider further enhancing its community links and look to reinstate the MCB as a rural community board.

As well as rethinking numbers Mr Griffin commented that the Council should also reconsider further enhancing its community links and reinstate the Malvern Community Board as a Rural Community Board and added strong local government starts with excellent effective community boards feeding into the Council decision-making process.

Mr Griffin advised that remuneration should not be considered as part of the representation review.

Submission 116: Name withheld

Mr Calvin Payne spoke on behalf of the submitter, who was a Malvern rural ward ratepayer.

Mr Payne gifted the Councillors a jar of honey and commented that this is proof of working in the community, honey was made by worker bees on their property and processed by a local honey company.

Submission 509: Calvin Payne

Mr Payne spoke to his submission and advised that he was an elected member of the Malvern Community Board, speaking to his personal submission as a resident and rate payer in the Malvern Ward. Mr Payne thanked the community for being motivated and having their say. He commented that all communities are important and need effective and fair representation. Mr Payne provided a summary of his submission and provided supplementary information with a new option and discussed this option.

Mr Payne added that for the Community Board to be effective they need appropriate delegation. He said that Waimakariri have four community boards over a smaller area than Selwyn. He also advocated for more Community Boards in other areas including Ellesmere.

Council stopped for afternoon tea between 3:01pm – 3.30pm.

Submission 534: Colin Giddens

Mr Giddens does not support the boundary changes. He was concerned what will happen next if Councillor numbers were reduced and the Community Board disestablished. He suggested that the changes to the Ward names be put to a referendum.

Submission 531: Fred Bull

Mr Bull went through the answers he had provided in his written submission. He extended his thanks to the Malvern Ward Councillors for the work they have done. He described Council as over staffed, with too many grandiose ideas and needing to control spending. In answering Councillor questions about how best to provide fair representation he said he was not wanting to see any changes. He did not believe the Malvern Ward could be served by one Councillor. He thought having a smaller geographical ward area would make it easier for Councillors to travel.

Submission 537: Peter Schnell

Mr Schnell questioned why Council are having hearings and he described the process as a waste of rate payers' money. The Mayor explained that it is to meet legislative requirements and it is important to have face to face conversations.

Submission 539: Janelle Schnell

Mrs Schnell is concerned how one Councillor will service the Malvern Ward. Councillors asked if she would prefer the status quo. Mrs Schnell said yes, she would if it resulted in fair representation. She said she did not feel she is being heard. Mrs Schnell agreed when asked if the Malvern Community Board should look after the pools, parks and reserves but only if they have the time.

Meeting adjourned at 3.55pm for a break and reconvened at 4.35pm

Submission 448: Grant Prescott

Mr Prescott expressed his concern regarding the cost of the Representation Review to ratepayers. He has spoken to residents who told him they found it difficult to make a submission. He was not happy with the proposed Ward boundary changes. He did not support West Melton being included in a Ward with Prebbleton and Lincoln. He did not believe that this would result in fair representation. He also did not support the name changes.

Mr Prescott believes that the Malvern Ward Councillors are being bullied and there is not fair representation. He suggested that Rolleston could be divided up into four and each quarter could be included into another Ward.

With no further business being discussed, Day 1 of the Representation Review hearings closed at 4.39pm and will reconvene on Day 2, Friday 27 September 2024 at 9.30am in the Chambers.

DATED this 10 day of October 2024

CHAIRPERSON