

Sector Policy and Outlook Working Party

Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. SOLGM is a national membership organisation. Our vision is *“professional local government management, leading staff and enabling communities to shape their future”*. SOLGM exists to build capability within the local government sector, and to provide sector leadership in the issues of relevance to local government professionals.
2. In undertaking its core businesses SOLGM relies on the input of local government professionals to help it:
 - identify the training and professional development opportunities and good practice that build the capability of the local government sector; and
 - provide technical and policy advice to support SOLGM’s sector leadership activity.

Purpose

3. The Sector Policy and Outlook Working Party (SPO) supports achievement of SOLGM’s vision by identifying policy issues and trends with the potential to impact on local authorities now and in the medium to long-term future and advising the sector on these issues and trends. The intent is that SPO will act as the sector’s thinktank.

Scope

4. SPO will:
 - a. scan the environment for trends and issues that are, or have the potential to impact on local authorities, and their ability to deliver on their statutory purpose; and
 - b. provide SOLGM’s Chief Executive with timely advice in regards to these issues.
5. SPO may investigate any issue or trend (as defined in paragraph 4. above) as it sees fit, and subject to meeting the accountability requirements of paragraphs 6 – 8 below. Examples of matters considered in recent years include:
 - the impact of technology on local authorities
 - co-governance and collaborative approaches
 - the role of local authorities in adaptation to climate change including managed retreat
 - demographic change.

Accountability

6. SPO is accountable to the SOLGM Chief Executive, and may not undertake any action not in accordance with these terms of reference without the approval of the Chief Executive.
7. SPO must prepare a proposed annual work programme for consideration by the Chief Executive. That proposed work programme will include sufficient detail of financial, staffing, and consultancy needs to enable accurate costing of the proposals.
8. SPO must provide the Chief Executive with a report on its activities, at least once per year, or at other times as the Chief Executive determines. In turn, the Chief Executive will report to the Executive Committee.

Responsibilities

9. The Executive expects members of SPO to:
 - a. monitor developments in the environment in which local authorities, both internal and external to the sector and provide the Chief Executive timely identification of these developments
 - b. monitor international literature (journals, websites, blogs) for issues or thinking that is relevant to New Zealand local authorities
 - c. consider the implications of anything identified from a. and b. for the sector both now, in the medium term and long term
 - d. present SPO's thinking to the sector in an appropriate manner
 - e. make recommendations for inclusion in the SOLGM's programme of good practice and capability building initiatives
 - f. build relationships with those stakeholders with interests in, or the ability to influence local government's operating environment.

Powers

10. In fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities, SPO may:
 - a. appoint subcommittees to cover subject areas of particular interest
 - b. appoint working groups or teams
 - c. recommend the retention of specialist advisors to the Chief Executive of SOLGM for one-off projects.
11. In fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities, SPO must:
 - a. ensure that its activities do not conflict with the policies and procedures of SOLGM
 - b. ensure that its advice meets any SOLGM standards for policy advice.

Membership

12. The SOLGM Executive may, at its discretion, appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of Working Parties. All other working party members will be appointed or removed by the Chief Executive. Any vacancy on SPO may only be filled by the Chief Executive having first called for nominations from amongst the membership of SOLGM.
13. Members of SPO must be a full member of SOLGM. Members of any subcommittees or project teams need not be members of SOLGM. The appointment of members from outside the sector to a subcommittee (other than observers appointed under paragraph 15) will require the approval of the Chief Executive of SOLGM or their nominee.
14. Except as provided above, SPO may appoint and remove members to its subcommittees or project teams as it sees fit.
15. At its discretion, SPO may invite representatives from other organisations to attend meetings in an "observer" capacity. Observers will have speaking rights, but may not move or vote on recommendations. Participation in meetings by observers does not bind those organisations to any statement, submission or other release or publication, however issued, by SPO and may not to be taken as the position of any or all of the other participating organisations.

Review of Terms of Reference

16. SPO will review these Terms of Reference not less than once every three years. At this time it may make recommendations to the Chief Executive that it considers will ensure SPO can effectively achieve its purpose.
17. The Chief Executive may review these Terms of Reference at any time.