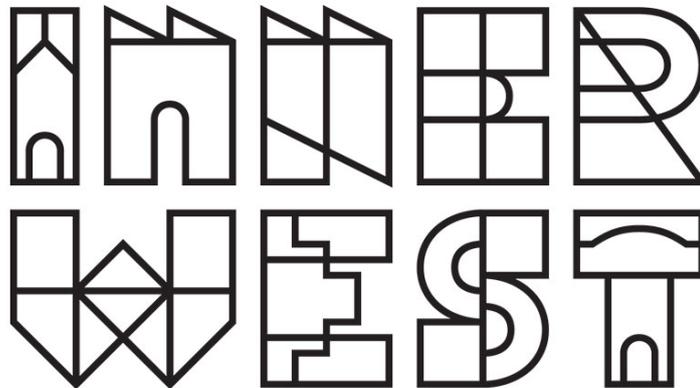


SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA 2

Distributed on 25 June 2021



EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 29 JUNE 2021

6.00pm

REMOTE MEETING

MEETING AGENDA – PRECIS SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

The following report/s appear as late item/s with Mayoral approval as information required for the preparation of the report/s was not available at the time of distribution of the Business Paper.

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Item No: C0621(4) Item 2
Subject: OFFICERS COMMENT RELEVANT TO NOTICE OF MOTION: PROGRESS ON DEMERGER POLL
Prepared By: Peter Gainsford - General Manager

Item 2

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive and note the report.

BACKGROUND

At the Extraordinary Meeting on the 24th May Council resolved as follows:

“That Council:

Use the opportunity presented by the recent amendments to the Local Government Act to investigate de-amalgamation of Inner West Council and to prepare a report for an Extraordinary Council meeting in the first week in August 2021. Councils’ case should include:

- a) Councils’ financial position;
- b) Councils’ future financial position;
- c) harmonisation changes in rates and costs;
- d) service performance of Council has not improved and has been subject to significant community concern;
- e) strong community dissatisfaction with the merger remains after 5 years;
- f) communities of interest and community cohesion;
- g) the dramatic fall in community representation (Councillors/population ratio) has not been good for our people;
- h) the merged Council has created a huge bias which favours political party control of Council; along with reduced opportunity and greater hurdles for non-political party representation on Council;
- i) Council engages in community consultation;
- j) Thorough cost benefit analysis on demerger by a reputable independent source that has the capacity to assess complex economic social and environmental issues;
- k) The ongoing costs and benefits on each of the councils if they were to demerge. The estimated cost of demerger in the ranges in vicinity of \$20M to \$34M and an annual cost ranging from \$11M to \$15M year;
- l) The impact on staff, to be assessed independently;
- m) The effect on the consolidated information communication and technology costs;
- n) The effect on current governance arrangements; and
- o) The effect on the ability to introduce new or improved service delivery.

2. Pursuant to section 14 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW):

- a) Take a poll of electors on the question of whether the Inner West local government area should be de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville; and
- b) Hold the poll on the day of the 2021 NSW local government elections, being Saturday, 4 September 2021 or such later or other day as may subsequently be proclaimed.

3. Examine any additional cost of a poll on the amalgamation as part of the quarterly budget review;
4. Write to Local Government NSW and seek to place on the business paper for the forthcoming Local Government NSW Conference the following motion, that: The NSW Government pay 100% of costs of de-amalgamation of local government areas forced to amalgamate where a referendum of residents has chosen to reverse the forced amalgamation; and
5. Write to the Premier, Minister for Local Government, Leader of the Opposition, and cross benchers in the NSW Parliament asking their support for the NSW Government to pay 100% of costs of de-amalgamation of local government areas forced to amalgamate where a referendum of residents has chosen to reverse the forced amalgamation.”

At the 8th June Ordinary Meeting Council resolved as follows:

“THAT Council:

1. Requests that the NSW Electoral Commission draft the question on whether the Inner West local government area should be de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville as resolved at the 24 May 2021 meeting, which will then be used in the poll of electors for the 2021 NSW local government elections;
2. Seeks advice from the NSW Electoral Commission and the Australian Electoral Commission on best practice on conducting a poll and requests to the Commission and prepare unbiased, non-partisan information for local citizens regarding the poll question, which is to be provided to residents prior to the commencement of voting; and
3. Receive a report back on the advice from the NSW Electoral Commission and the costs identified a funding source to the first available Ordinary Council meeting.”

DISCUSSION

Council has engaged Morrison Low to prepare a cost benefit analysis in response to Council’s resolution and this report is on track to be considered at the Ordinary Council meeting on the 3rd August. An independent staff survey has also commenced, and the results will also be available by the first week of August.

Council has been liaising with the Electoral Commission who advised that they will review any material prepared by Council in relation to the poll question as well as the one-page summary of the advantages and disadvantages for each option. There is no additional fee associated with such works.

Council’s communication team will put together a one page summary document for the Electoral Commission’s consideration following the 3rd August Council Meeting. In relation to our promotion of the de-merger poll the community will be advised through the following communication channels:

- Information in Inner West Council News September/October edition (distributed in August prior to the election) to all residents
- Flyer distributed to all residents and businesses specifically containing the for and against case, as approved by the Electoral Commission
- Information contained in the Rates Newsletter and the ‘save the date’ flyer distributed in the Rates Newsletter to all ratepayers
- Dedicated Your Say Inner West project page
- Updates on Council’s website on the dedicated elections page
- Updates in Council’s enews and social media channels
- Media release

Information will be translated to Council's top community languages and be available in accessible formats. Access to the Interpreter service and National Relay service will be promoted to assist people from CALD communities and people with disability.

The only additional funding required will be for the printing of the dedicated flyer to all residents which is estimated at \$20,000 and will be funding in the first quarter budget review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If your report has resourcing or budget implications above your current allocation of resources or budget, please contact Daryl Jackson (9392 5019). Please enter "Nil." if there are no financial implications.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.