

13 February 2025

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Kia ora [REDACTED]

Official information Request: Powerpoint to Representation Review Hearings

I am writing to you in response to your request received 12 February 2025 for the following information:

Could you please send me a copy of the document presented by the CEO Janice Smith yesterday on the Zoom Meeting. It was titled Representation Review Hearings 2025.

We have assessed your request under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). I have received the presentation which is attached to this letter.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. If this request is selected it will be published at <https://swdc.govt.nz/lgoima-proactive-release/>, with your personal information removed.

You have a right to request a review by the Ombudsman on this response. Further information about this process can be found on <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-make-complaint> or email info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Nāku noa, nā



Paul Gardner
General Manager, Corporate Services

Representation Review Hearings 2025



**SOUTH WAIRARAPA
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Kia Reretahi Tātau

Early 2024:

During two workshops with elected members in February and May 2024 the following topics were raised, as key issues for the Rep Review in 2024.

This was an open workshop to the public: No public attended.

1. The rural community were expressing a need for greater representation.
2. The past Representation Review and our community expressing a need to look at boundary lines for our three wards.
3. The lack of candidates standing for Community Boards at the last election raised the questions if this was still something our community found represented them.
4. The growing work across our region (with MDC and CDC), eg District Plan and Wairarapa Policy Working Group raised the questions with elected members if “At Large” (district) representation could be something we look at.



During those two workshops, the follow was raised and discussed:

1. The rural community expressing a need for greater representation:

“Rural” in South Wairarapa includes lifestyle blocks, vineyards and coastal communities etc. Is this request coming from all these communities or is the need for representation from our farming community?

Key question raised:

- Do our Coastal Communities view themselves as rural communities?

How we addressed it:

During our Consultation we held a number of engagements, including going out to our coastal & rural communities and asking them. They responded that they did view themselves as rural with shared interests around rates and roading. However, they also had other shared interests, such as for coastal, tourism and how that effects their local communities (eg rubbish collection and roading funding).



During those two workshops, the follow was raised and discussed:

2. The past Representation Review and our community expressing a need to look at boundary lines for our three wards.

Key questions raised:

- How does our rural community feel about boundary lines for the current three wards, with particular interest around our rural community of Kahutara and Tauwharenikau around the No 1 line.
- How do we deal with our growing number of lifestyle blocks that sit just outside our townships, are they happy with their current wards and boundary lines or do they see themselves as rural?

How we addressed it:

Elected members asked for some feedback on this before decisions on the Initial Proposal needed to be made. An engagement survey was pushed out through social media. 74% said they are happy with their boundary lines and current wards. 15% said they were not happy.

Further engagement with our community during the EAP process and the consultation confirmed this. There was a connection in our community to the wards representing the old boroughs of the district.



During those two workshops, the follow was raised and discussed:

3. The lack of candidates standing for Community Boards at the last election raised the questions if this was still something our community found represented them.

Key questions raised:

- Do we retain or disestablish our community boards?

How we addressed it:

The engagement survey included a question on Community Boards, which came back generally in support of them. Further engagement with our community during the EAP process confirmed this and Community Boards were retained in the Initial Proposal.

This area received the greatest level of interest and feedback from our community during the consultation process. Predominately in support of keeping them.



During those two workshops, the follow was raised and discussed:

4. The growing work across our region (with MDC and CDC), eg District Plan and Wairarapa Policy Working Group raised the questions if at large (district) representation could be something we look at and may help the geographical challenge of the Martinborough ward.

Key question raised:

- Do our community see value in At Large representation going forward?

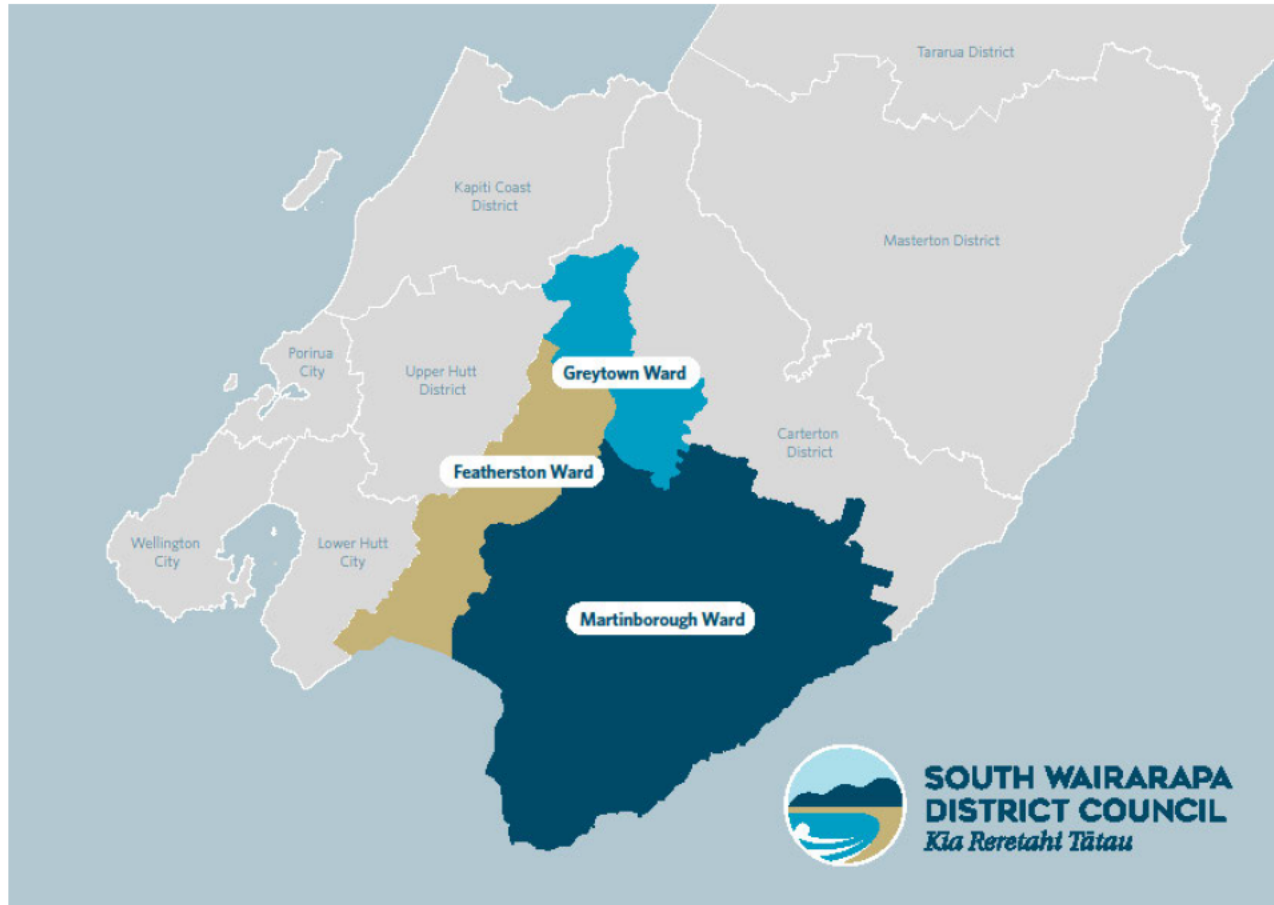
How we address it:

The engagement survey included a question on At Large, which came back generally in support. The Initial Proposal also included At Large representation with a mixed response and several comments related to how this option might work (eg rural candidates standing etc).

During deliberations elected members felt there wasn't enough support for At Large in the upcoming elections.



1. Current Boundaries of Wards and Ward Names

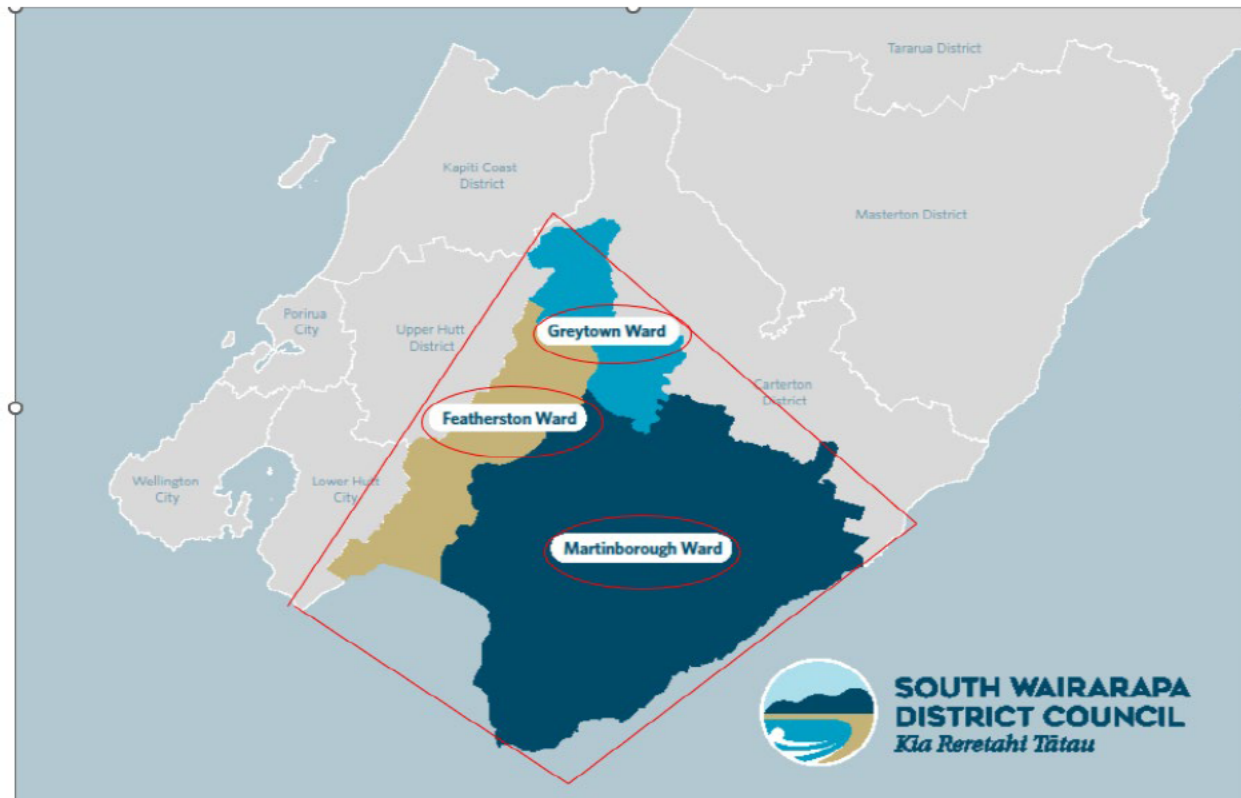


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1. Map of the South Wairarapa Communities



1. Rural Ward options discussion during the workshop in June 24, which was again open to the public.



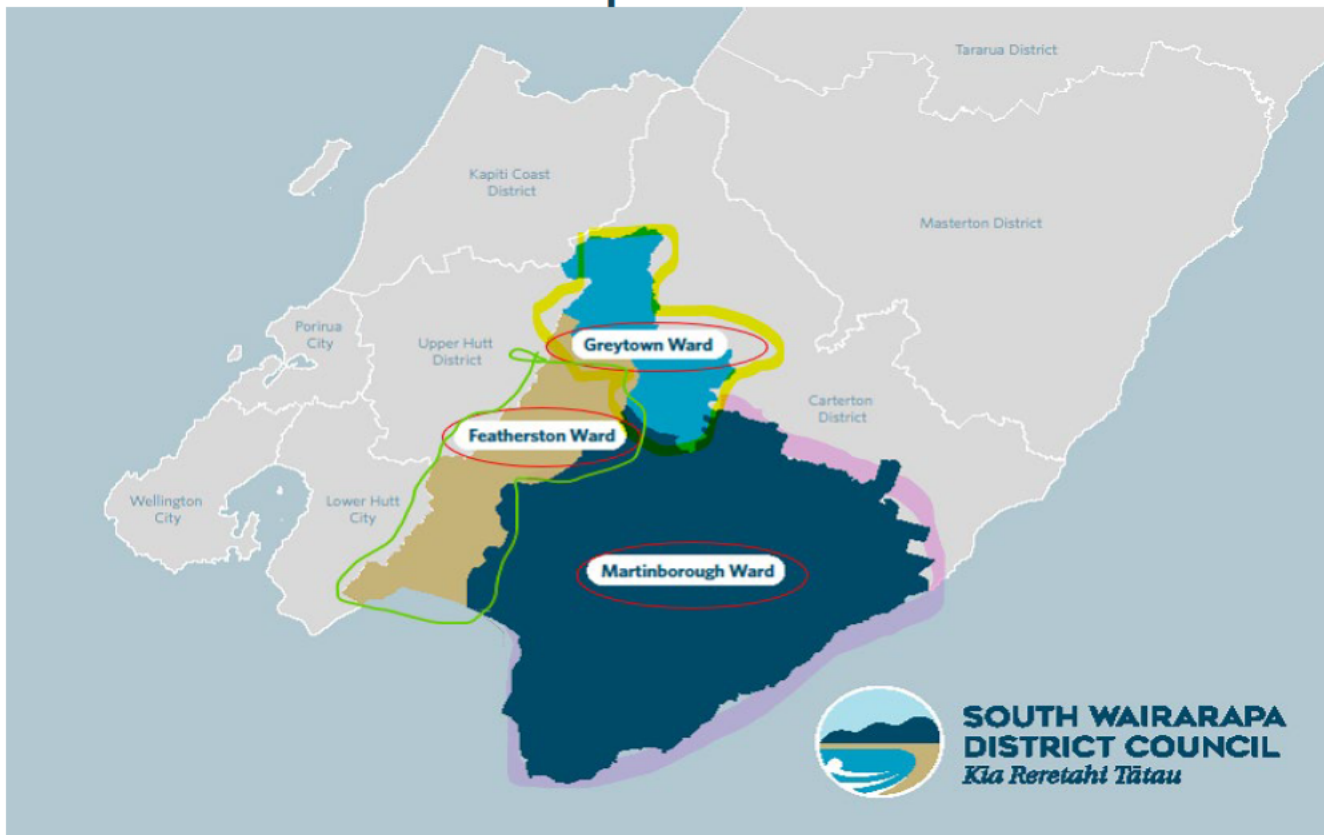
3 General Wards that fall around the boundaries to the three towns.

1 Rural ward that sits across the district.



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2. Rural Ward options discussion during the workshop in June 24.



3 Town wards

3 Rural wards

= 6 General Wards + Māori Ward



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June 2024:

Following some early community engagement it was decided the initial proposal would include:

- At Large Representation
- Reduction in the number of general ward councillors
- Community Boards

It also asked for feedback on the idea of a Rural Advisory Group.



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The Initial Proposal received 129 submission, with a strong focus on Community Boards.

Formed letters received

Out of the 44 email or letter submissions received, 35 were a form letter (eg the same letter signed by different people). This is 27% of the total submission

The main themes of that letter are that rural is different to urban, and that a third of the population in the South Wairarapa live rurally therefore, a third of the Councillors should be rural.

Consultation Feedback

From the consultation question: *are there any other forms of representation you would like to see*, 34 people responded no and 38 yes. This outcome led the elected members to believe there wasn't enough of a mandate for change at this time.



Hearings, Deliberations and Final Proposal

10 people spoke to their submission, along with the Greytown and Martinborough Community Boards. The hearings included Jenny & Alistair Boyd, Jim Hedley and Dan Riddiford and included submissions for and against a rural ward.

Deliberations included the following discussions:

- Current representation for rural around the Council table.
- Current representation for rural through speaking spots, submissions etc.
- Who is asking for rural representation is it just farming, and what communities need rural representation.
- The submissions for representation predominately related to rating issues and would a rural ward help with that.



Final Proposal

Following the low number of submissions from our consultation (129 people). Council believes a rural & coastal advisory group is a fair representation to our rural community as it:

- Allows us to include all our rural communities, which may not have had as strong a voice as others.
- Guarantees representation from farming and acknowledges that flexibility in an advisory group may be easier for our rural/farming community to attend meetings closer to where they live or at a day/time that works better for them.
- Our farming community currently have representation through regular speaking spots at Council, submissions to all consultations and support from Federated Farmers. The rural & coastal advisory group would strengthen these current avenues and allow greater communication and feedback to this group.
- That given the low number of submissions, there was no mandate for change and that our community was happy with the status quo.



Final Proposal

Council believes a rural & coastal advisory group to be an effective representation for our communities because.

- SWDC is a large geographical area and this will allow us to include representation from geographically different places (eg Kahutara, Ngawi, Tukurumuri, Hinakura)
- It will allow us to consider what the needs are for all our communities that live rurally and respond to those.
- It will allow our farming community to have greater input into district-wide work via MDC and CDC Rural Advisory Groups.
- It will allow us to consider particular issues eg rates or climate change with the group and collect input and advise before decisions are made (which we believe will be more effective than a rural ward).

