

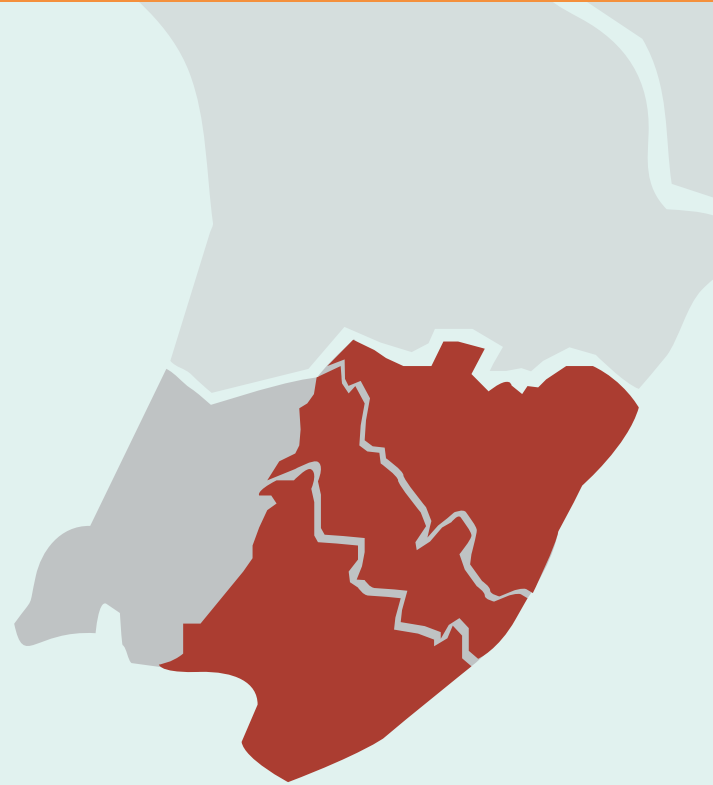


Local Government  
Commission

Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

# What do you want for the Wairarapa?

Tell us what you think about  
future council organisation in  
the Wairarapa



[www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz)

South  
Wairarapa  
District  
Council

Carterton  
District  
Council

Masterton  
District  
Council

Greater  
Wellington  
Regional  
Council

# What is this all about?

**The Local Government Commission is working with your councils and community on options to strengthen the Wairarapa's local government arrangements. We want to find an option that your community supports.**

The Commission consulted on a proposal for a unitary council for the whole Wellington region in December 2014. This followed two applications for council reorganisation: one from South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils and one from Greater Wellington Regional Council. We then withdrew the region-wide unitary proposal in June 2015 due to lack of community support.

**We've been working with your community, mayors and councillors on options that could meet these objectives.**

**We workshopped these options at three community meetings in February 2016.**

We wanted to give the community more options to choose from and give you one source of information about those options.

South  
Wairarapa  
District  
Council

Carterton  
District  
Council

Masterton  
District  
Council

Greater  
Wellington  
Regional  
Council

Most Wairarapa people didn't support the idea of a unitary council for the Wellington region, but they did want:

- A stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage
- A more effective, more resilient council now and in the future
- Costs kept down
- More Wairarapa influence on regional council responsibilities
- Environmental standards maintained
- Local identity and representation maintained
- A connection kept with Wellington

Together with the region's four councils, we commissioned an assessment of six options. These are summarised in this booklet.

See [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz) for the full assessment.







This is an exciting opportunity for the Wairarapa to shape its future council arrangements.

We look forward to hearing what you think.

# What do councils do?







## What do district councils do?

The responsibilities of district councils include:

- Local water, sewerage, stormwater, and roading infrastructure (including footpaths) 
- Libraries, public swimming pools, recreation and community centres 
- District emergency management 
- Building consents 
- Resource consents and planning for land use under the RMA 
- Regulatory activities like noise control and dog control 
- Environmental health such as food licences

## What do regional councils do?

The responsibilities of regional councils include:

- Environmental management under the RMA such as quality of air and water 
- Flood protection 
- Pest management 
- Land management 
- Regional transport planning 
- Public transport
- Regional emergency management 

## What do unitary councils do?

A unitary council has both district and regional council responsibilities in one council.

# There are six options

## In short...

**Option A is no change**  
**Option B is a single district council for the Wairarapa**  
**Options C and D are a single district council with formal committees with the regional council**  
**Option E is a single district council which takes over major regional council responsibilities**  
**Option F is a unitary council**

**Option A** means no disruption and your councils will continue to share services where they can.

**Option B, C and D** would provide for a more effective and resilient council. They also enable the Wairarapa to have more influence on regional council decisions. These options would cost about the same as the no change option, including all of the costs of establishing the new council.

**Options B to F** would give the Wairarapa a stronger voice in the region and on the national stage.

**Options E and F** would provide the most autonomy for the Wairarapa. These options would cost more than the other options. They would require increases in rates and/or user charges, and/or changes to council services.

# How do the options compare?

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
	<i>No change</i>	<i>Wairarapa District Council</i>	<i>Wairarapa District Council with joint Unitary Plan Committee</i>	<i>Wairarapa District Council and two committees with the regional council</i>	<i>Wairarapa District Council takes on major regional council responsibilities</i>	<i>Wairarapa Unitary Council</i>
	<b>Four councils</b>	<b>Two councils</b>	<b>Two councils</b>	<b>Two councils</b>	<b>Two councils</b>	<b>One council</b>
<b>Strong Wairarapa voice</b>	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
<b>An effective council</b>	★	★★	★★	★★	★★	★★
<b>Wairarapa influence on regional council responsibilities</b>	★	★	★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★
<b>Cost</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$

# Option A

## No change

- The four existing Wairarapa councils remain.

South  
Wairarapa  
District  
Council

Carterton  
District  
Council

Masterton  
District  
Council

Greater  
Wellington  
Regional  
Council

# No change

## Decision-making

No change - Option A is the status quo

### Benefits

- No disruption
- Councils collaborate and share services where they can
- High number of councillors per person

### Issues and risks

- The three district councils duplicate decision-making committees, policies, plans, and some bylaws
- Time-consuming decision-making on services shared across the three districts
- Staff 'spread thinly' across a wide range of responsibilities
- Challenging for small councils to cope with unexpected change and big challenges

### Cost

- No change to current costs
- Using the rating policies and service levels set out in each council's Long Term Plan, this option results in a combined forecast surplus of \$46.9 million over the next ten years



# Option B

## Wairarapa District Council

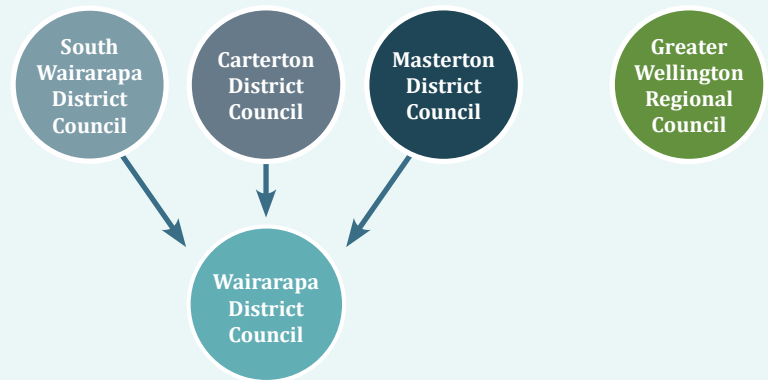
**The three district councils would become the Wairarapa District Council.**

The new council has one mayor plus twelve Wairarapa District Councillors elected from seven wards – two councillors for Carterton, five for Masterton, and one each for Greytown, Featherston, Martinborough, and two rural wards.

The community boards for Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough would be retained with five members each instead of six. New community boards for Carterton (six members) and Masterton (seven members) would be established. Note that seven community board members are also councillors.

A Rural Advisory Committee and a Māori Advisory Committee would be established.

**Greater Wellington Regional Council's responsibilities would be unchanged.**





# How does this option compare?

## Decision-making

New single district council for Wairarapa

Regional council unchanged

## Benefits

- Stronger voice for the Wairarapa
- Improved capacity and capability of council staff
- Would remove duplication of committees, plans, policies and bylaws
- More resilient council – better able to cope with unexpected change and big challenges

## Risks

- Risks associated with amalgamation such as loss of institutional knowledge
- Council might not empower community boards enough

## Cost

- Would cost about the same as no change, including costs of establishing the new council
- Using the rating policies and service levels set out in each council's Long Term Plan, this option would result in a forecast surplus of \$46.6 million over ten years



# Option C

## Wairarapa District Council with joint Unitary Plan Committee

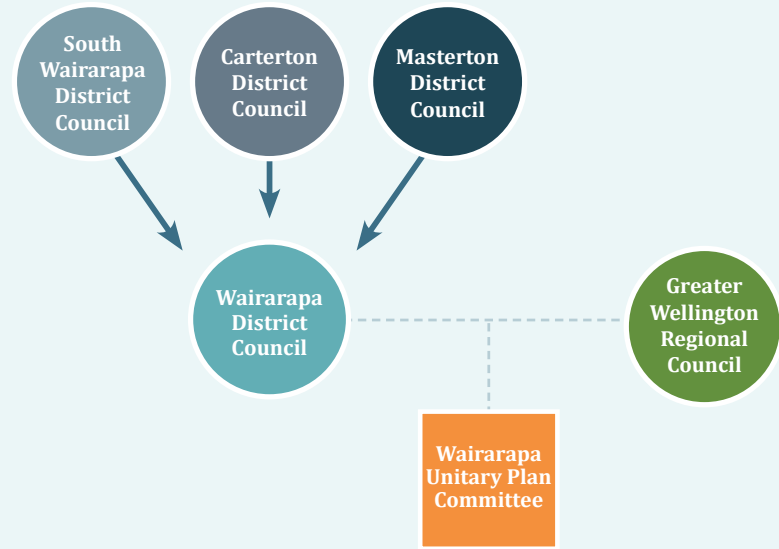
The three district councils would become the Wairarapa District Council. The new council would have wards, community boards and advisory committees as per Option B.

A new joint Wairarapa Unitary Plan Committee would also be established to develop a unitary plan. The unitary plan would combine both the regional and district council Resource Management Act plans into a single plan.

The committee would have twelve members:

- three from Greater Wellington Regional Council
- three from the new Wairarapa District Council
- three nominated by Rangitāne o Wairarapa
- three nominated by Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa

Greater Wellington Regional Council's other responsibilities would be unchanged.



# How does this option compare?

## Decision-making

New single district council for the Wairarapa

Regional council would remain separate

Joint committee, including both district and regional councillors, would recommend district and regional planning policies and rules in unitary plan

## Benefits

- Stronger voice for the Wairarapa
- Improved capacity and capability of council staff
- Would remove duplication of committees, plans, policies and bylaws
- More resilient council – better able to cope with unexpected change and big challenges
- All resource management policies and rules would be in one plan instead of two

## Risks

- Risks associated with amalgamation such as loss of institutional knowledge
- Council might not empower community boards enough
- Council decision-making for unitary plan complicated

## Cost

- Would cost about the same as no change, including costs of establishing the new council
- Using the rating policies and service levels set out in each council's Long Term Plan, this option would result in a combined forecast surplus of \$44.2 million over the next ten years



# Option D

## Wairarapa District Council and two committees with the Greater Wellington Regional Council

The three district councils would become the Wairarapa District Council. The new council would have wards, community boards and advisory committees as per Option B.

Two regional council committees focused on the Wairarapa would also be established:

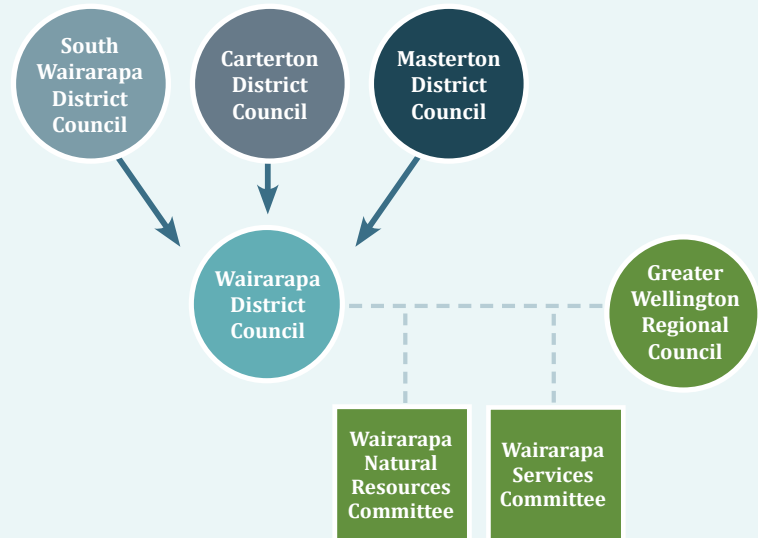
- a Wairarapa Natural Resources Committee
- a Wairarapa Services Committee

The Wairarapa Natural Resources Committee would have the same delegations as the existing regional council natural resources committee. It would review and develop regional plans and appoint hearing commissioners to decide resource consents. Like the existing natural resources committee, half of the committee's members would be nominated by local iwi.

The Wairarapa Services Committee would make recommendations to Greater Wellington Regional Council for final approval. The committee's responsibilities would include flood and land management.

No unitary plan

Greater Wellington Regional Council's remaining responsibilities would be unchanged.



# How does this option compare?

## Decision-making

New single district council for the Wairarapa

Regional council would remain separate

Wairarapa District councillors would be on regional council committees

## Benefits

- Stronger voice for the Wairarapa
- Improved capacity and capability of council staff
- Would remove duplication of committees, plans, policies and bylaws
- More resilient council – better able to cope with unexpected change and big challenges
- More Wairarapa influence on a wide range of regional council responsibilities

## Risks

- Risks associated with amalgamation such as loss of institutional knowledge
- Council might not empower community boards enough
- Greater Wellington Regional Council decision-making more complicated

## Cost

- Would cost about the same as no change, including costs of establishing the new council
- Using the rating policies and service levels set out in each council's Long Term Plan, this option would result in a combined forecast surplus of \$44.3 million over the next ten years



# Option E

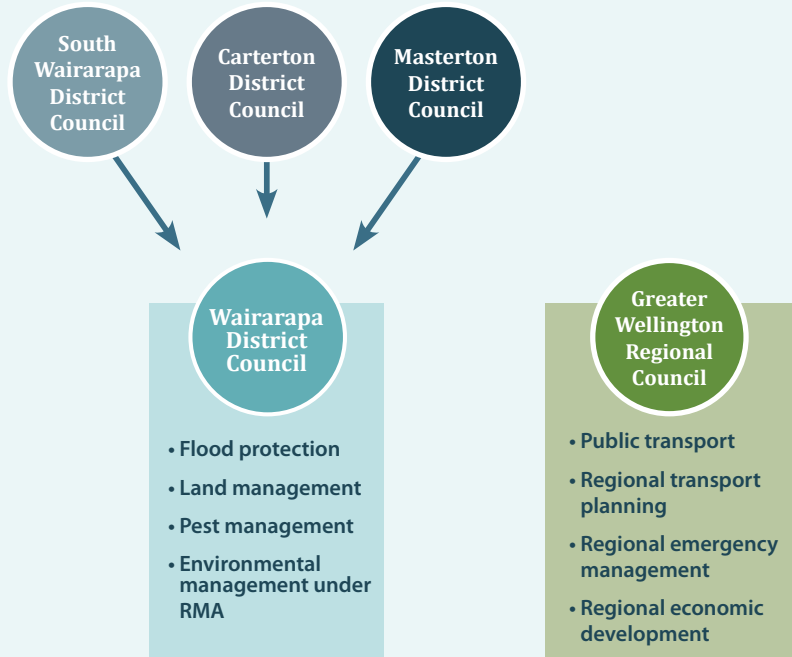
## Wairarapa District Council takes on major regional council responsibilities

The three district councils would become the Wairarapa District Council. The council would have wards, community boards and advisory committees as per Option B.

Wairarapa District Council would also take on flood protection, land management, pest management, and environmental management under the Resource Management Act from the regional council.

The Wairarapa District Council would have to fund these new responsibilities.

Greater Wellington Regional Council would only be responsible for public transport, regional transport planning, regional emergency management, and regional economic development in the Wairarapa.



# How does this option compare?

## Decision-making

Wairarapa District Council's responsibilities would be expanded

Greater Wellington Regional Council's responsibilities in the Wairarapa would be reduced

Public transport would remain the responsibility of Greater Wellington Regional Council

## Benefits

- Stronger voice for the Wairarapa
- Would remove duplication of committees, plans, policies and bylaws
- Wairarapa autonomy over major regional council environmental responsibilities
- Simplified transparency and accountability
- Fewer Resource Management Act plans needed for Wairarapa

## Risks

- Financial pressures for the Wairarapa
- Potential reduction in council environmental activities in the Wairarapa unless rates and/or user charges increase
- Less resilient council – may be less able to cope with unexpected change and big challenges
- Duplication of regional council activities and staff
- More challenging to find and retain specialist environmental staff

## Cost

- More costly than no change. Rates and/or user charges would have to go up and/or council services go down to make the option affordable
- Using the rating policies and service levels set out in each council's Long Term Plan, this option would result in a combined forecast shortfall of \$71.9 million over the next ten years



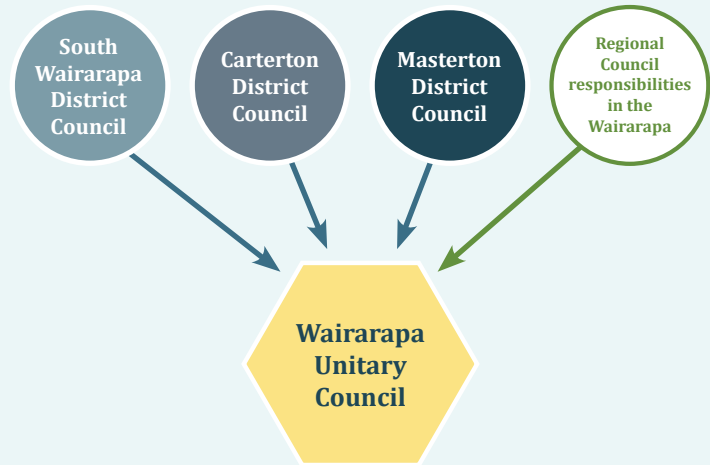
# Option F

## Wairarapa Unitary Council

The three district councils would become the Wairarapa Unitary Council. The council would have wards, community boards and advisory committees as per Option B.

The unitary council would take on all regional council responsibilities for the Wairarapa. The unitary council would have to fund these new responsibilities.

Greater Wellington Regional Council would have no responsibilities in the Wairarapa.





# How does this option compare?

## Decision-making

Decision-making and funding responsibility for all council functions would go to the Wairarapa Unitary Council

No regional council in the Wairarapa

Wairarapa no longer part of Wellington region

## Benefits

- Stronger voice for the Wairarapa
- Would remove duplication of committees, plans, policies and bylaws
- Would provide full autonomy for council decision-making in the Wairarapa
- Coordinated response to Wairarapa issues
- Fewer Resource Management Act plans needed for Wairarapa
- Simpler, more responsive decision-making

## Risks

- Financial pressures for the Wairarapa
- Potential reduction in council environmental activities in the Wairarapa unless rates and/or user charges increase
- Less resilient council – may be less able to cope with unexpected change and big challenges
- Duplication of current regional council activities and staff
- More challenging to find and retain specialist environmental staff

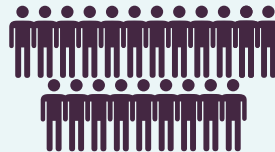
## Cost

- More costly than no change. Rates and/or user charges would have to go up and/or council services go down to make the option affordable
- Using the rating policies and service levels set out in each council's Long Term Plan, this option would result in a combined forecast shortfall of \$100.1 million over the next ten years



1 Mayor and 12 councillors

+



21 community board members

One councillor per 3,162 people

# Questions and answers

**Q: Is a super city for Wellington and the Wairarapa still an option?**

A: No. The Local Government Commission has withdrawn that proposal.

**Q: Will my rates go up if we choose a new council?**

A: Whether your individual rates would go up or down depends on the choices a new council might make about its rating policy and council service levels. Options B, C and D would cost about the same as no change (option A). Under the no change option, each district council has planned a three to four per cent increase in rates each year over the next ten years.

Options E and F would have greater costs than the no change option. Rates and/or user charges would have to go up and/or council services go down to make the option affordable. How much depends on the choices a new council makes about its rating policy and service levels.

Under Options E and F, the new council would need to collect an average of 1.8 percent more rates for every \$1 million of additional expenditure. This is on top of the yearly three to four percent rates increases councils already have planned.

**Q: If there is change, where will the head office of any new council be?**

A: It's too early to know, but the community would be consulted on options for the location of a head office.

**Q: Do these change proposals affect the council elections in October 2016?**

A: No.

**Q: Would a new council take on the debt of existing councils?**

A: Yes, a new combined district council would take on existing debt, along with all the assets of the three existing district councils. Under options E and F a new council would take on all the relevant regional council assets in the Wairarapa, along with any associated debt.

**Q: What does a community board do?**

A: Community boards are designed to bring local government closer to communities. Community boards are elected every three years, along with councillors. A community board is an advocate for the community and undertakes responsibilities delegated to it by its parent council.

# What happens next?

Please fill in our questionnaire to let us know what you think.

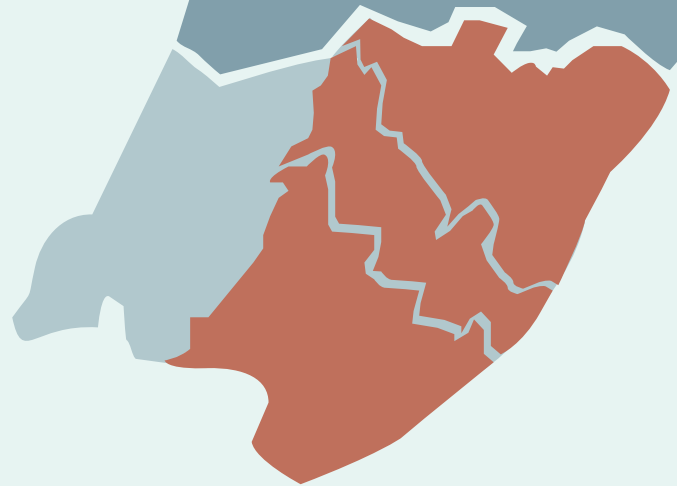
You can complete it online at [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz) or pick up one from your local library. Make sure that it reaches us by **8 July 2016**.

We will collate everyone's feedback and report back to the community in late **August 2016**.

If the community chooses an option for change, then the Local Government Commission will work up the option in detail for further consultation leading to a final proposal.

A poll on a final proposal would be held if ten percent of electors in any district request it.

If more than half of people vote for the final proposal, a new council could be elected at the end of 2018. These councillors would have an initial four-year term, to bring elections in line with the three yearly election cycle.



# Tell us what you think

## Drop-in centres 10am-4pm

**Tue 21 June**      **Carterton District Library**

**Wed 22 June**      **Greytown Town Centre**

**Thu 23 June**      **Martinborough  
The Village Café**

**Tue 28 June**      **Featherston  
Information Centre**

**Thu 30 June**      **Masterton District Library**

## Community meetings 7.30pm

**Tue 21 June**      **Carterton Events Centre**

**Wed 22 June**      **Greytown Town Centre**

**Thu 23 June**      **Martinborough  
Town Hall**

**Tue 28 June**      **Featherston  
ANZAC Hall**

**Thu 30 June**      **Masterton  
Solway College Hall**

Or come to our Wellington lunchtime meeting

**Thu 16 June**  
**12.30pm-1.30pm**

**Te Wharewaka  
o Pōneke, Odlins Plaza**

Find out more at [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz)