



## IMPORTANT DATES

Open for written feedback

5 August

Provide your written feedback by

8 September

# South Wairarapa District Council Representation Review | Statement of Proposal

Council is required to review the representation arrangements for SWDC once every six years, and the last time we did this review was in 2018 under the [Local Electoral Act 2001 \(LEA\)](#).

Representation Reviews are an opportunity for the community to consider if the existing representation arrangements are efficient and effective now and for the future. This means looking at the number of councillors and how they are elected, the number of wards and their boundaries and community boards. Council is required to develop an Initial Proposal of what representation could look like for 2025 and 2028 local government elections.

On 31 July 2024 Council adopted their Initial Proposal for representation arrangements for the local government elections in 2025 and 2028. We are now seeking formal feedback on this proposal.

Full details of the Initial Proposal are on pages three and four, and we want to hear your views on whether this proposal will provide efficient and effective representation for South Wairarapa today and in the future.

## What are the proposed changes?

There are two changes to the status quo included in the Initial Proposal:

### 1. Reduction in the number of councillors elected through General Wards

There would be a reduction in the number of councillors for Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough General Wards. The Initial Proposal has two councillors elected from each General Ward, rather than three.

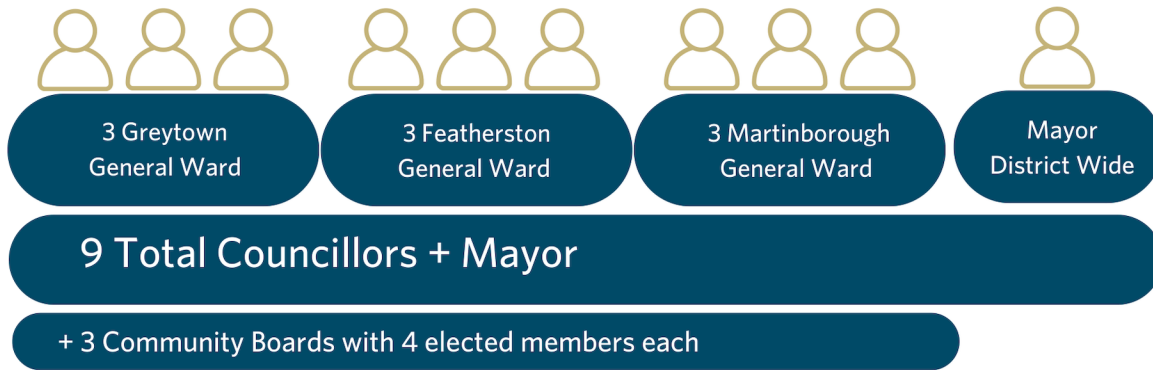
### 2. Introduction of at large representation

This would see two councillors elected at large (by everyone) across the district.

The proposal also includes a Māori Ward with one councillor. In November 2023 Council decided to establish a Māori Ward and will not revisit the decision as part of this consultation.

# Current representation arrangement

The Council is currently represented by nine councillors elected by the ward system and a Mayor elected to represent the whole district. The three General Wards are Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough. There is also a Community Board for each ward. These arrangements have been in place since the constitution of South Wairarapa District in 1989, with no change during the last two Representation Reviews in 2012 and 2018.



## What do we have to think about?

When undertaking a Representation Review, we are required to consider fair and effective representation. We need to review our electoral arrangements in respect to:

- the number of elected members
- whether those members are to be elected at large (district wide), by ward, or by a combination of both
- ward boundaries, ward names and the number of elected members for each ward
- whether there should be community board(s) and if so, the nature and structure of the community board(s)

## Fair representation

When reviewing representation, we have to take into account the number of residents each ward councillor represents. This is called a "population per member ratio" or the +/- 10% rule and helps us to consider whether our proposed representation arrangements provide fair representation.

To calculate this ratio, we take the total population and divide it by the total number of ward councillors (excluding the Mayor). We then work out a range 10% higher or lower than the overall ratio. The number of Councillors per ward must not exceed the higher or lower limits of the ratio. The Initial Proposal for representation complies with the population per member ratio.

## Effective representation

Effective representation considers the number of councillors in relation to things like the size and geography of the area and the diversity of its people. This includes the ease of access to your elected members and how well those elected members are able to represent the diverse range of people and interests in their area.

## Identifying communities of interest

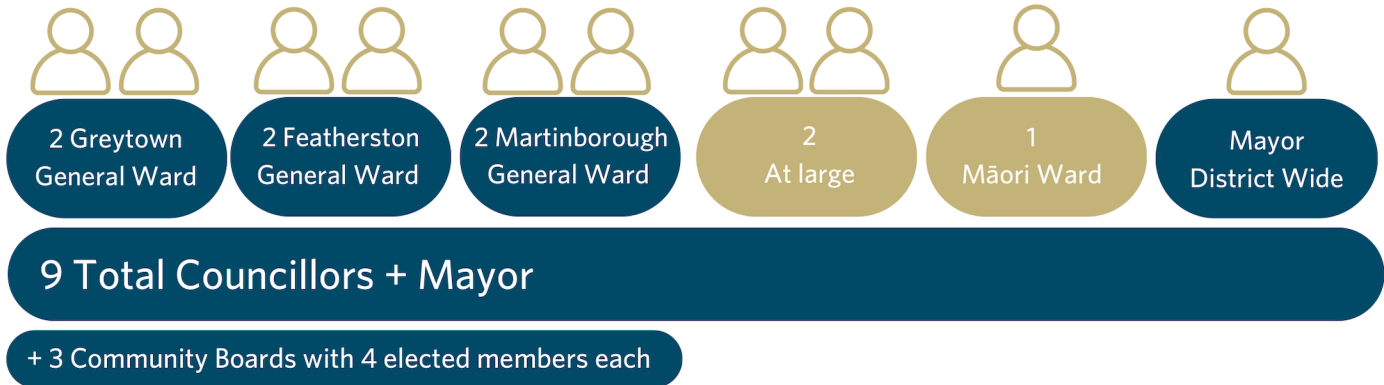
One of the goals of a representation review is to achieve effective representation, which means that wards should be based on communities of interest which are areas that people identify with and relate to. Legislation does not define what a community of interest is, but the concept includes things like people feeling a collective sense of identity and belonging to the area; people using the same services, like schools, pools, libraries, roading networks; councillors being able to effectively represent the interests of the area.

# The Initial Proposal

The Council’s Initial Proposal contains some changes to the current arrangements to ensure we continue to provide effective representation for our community. Your thoughts on the proposal are important to us and we need to hear from you, whether you agree or disagree. Your feedback will be important in arriving at a final proposal.

## Initial Proposal for representation arrangements

On 31 July 2024 the South Wairarapa District Council reviewed its representation arrangements, and resolved that the following proposal apply for the Council and its community boards for the 2025 and 2028 local elections.



## Council representation

It is proposed that the Council comprise of the Mayor, elected at large, and nine councillors: seven elected from three General Wards and the Māori ward, plus two elected at large. The three existing Community Boards would be retained, one for each of the General Wards with four elected members in each.

Wards are designed to reflect communities of interest. South Wairarapa’s communities of interest are identified by the following wards:

Ward	Community of interest
Greytown General Ward	The Greytown ward includes commercial and urban residential, as well as rural communities. Those in the urban center share amenities, roading and schools and face common issues related to services and water supply. The Greytown ward has a strongly identifies with heritage and has its own celebrations.
Featherston General Ward	The Featherston ward includes commercial and urban residential, as well as rural communities. Those in the urban center share amenities, roading and schools and face common issues related to services and water supply. The Featherston ward has its own Masterplan for growth over the next 30 years and into the future.
Martinborough General Ward	The Martinborough ward includes commercial and urban residential, as well as rural communities. Those in the urban center share amenities, roading and schools and face common issues related to services and water supply. The Martinborough ward also contains a large geographical area with its own rural communities and coastal communities.
South Wairarapa Māori Ward	The ward comprises the whole South Wairarapa District. Our mana whenua have shared interests, history and amenities (marae). Our community has told us they have a sense of shared belonging and identity.

## Why we decided on this proposal

Following a workshop on 26 June 2024 and the Strategy Working Committee meeting 3 July 2024 elected members discussed and debated our communities of interest and the best way to provide representation to them for the next six years. On 31 July 2024, the Strategy Working Committee adopted its Initial Proposal for representation at the 2025 local elections.

We think what we are proposing is necessary to ensure representation continues to be effective and efficient now and into the future. We are deeply aware of the challenges our communities face and the importance of providing diversity of thought and representation to enable good governance.

- **The number of Councillors:** The total number of Councillors in the Initial Proposal (nine) will remain the same as it currently is, as we think this number is working well given the workload and complexity ahead for South Wairarapa. We believe this number of elected members also enables residents access to their representatives.
- **General Wards for Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough:** The boundary lines and names remain unchanged as we believe the existing wards of Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough help to provide effective representation for each unique area.
- **At large (district wide) representation:** We looked at whether councillors should be elected by ward (the status quo), at large (where all members are elected by all voters district wide) or a combination of the two systems. We are proposing to change to a combination of wards and at large representation across the district to help with future planning and greater representation for our district as a whole. This change reflects our regional growth and changing population and the need for district wide representation. Everyone will be able to vote for candidates that stand at large, across the district. For example, a person who lives in the Greytown General Ward will receive one vote for the Mayor, two votes for their ward councillors, and two votes for at large councillors.
- **Retain community boards:** The Initial Proposal retains community boards for each of the Greytown, Martinborough and Featherston General Wards. Each community board would comprise of six members in total, four elected members along with two councillors appointed from the respective wards.

## How we got here

- August '23: Council decides to retain the First Past the Post voting system
- November '23: Māori Standing Committee unanimously support Māori Wards on behalf of South Wairarapa iwi
- Workshop November '23: Elected members workshop on Māori Wards
- November '23: Council resolve to establish Māori Wards
- Workshop Feb and May '24: Overview of presentation review and recent population data
- Workshop June '24: Early engagement was included in this workshop for consideration of preferred options
- July '24: Strategy Working Committee direct to council officers on preferred options
- July '24: Strategy Working Committee Initial Proposal adopted

## How do I make a submission?

Our Initial Proposal is now open for submissions meaning you can have your say on whether you agree or do not agree with what we are proposing. The easiest way to do that is to fill in the feedback form and, if you would like to, share your submission in person during the Hearings.

## What are other options for local representation?

Local representation can take many forms, with Council, community or business led options being a positive way to advocate for their communities and local areas.

- Rural Advisory group: This could provide the Council with a rural perspective on issues associated with Council services affecting rural communities. This could ensure that the rural perspective is taken into account for Council policy decisions and planning.
- Resident Advisory Committee: A group established by Council to provide feedback on council plans and in some circumstances provide direction on local targeted rates.
- Resident Associations: Established by the community (e.g. Registered Association with limited liability) with voluntary annual membership. Advocate on behalf of local residents to Council, they often put on community events and run local initiatives. They often get annual grant funding from councils to pay for administration and running local initiatives.
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs): Established by businesses voting in a particular area and ratified through a business association AGM. This creates a targeted rate for the business association to enable larger long-term business lead projects.
- Business Associations: Established by the business community with voluntary annual membership subscriptions. Advocate on behalf of local businesses and put on local events.
- Enhanced Community Boards: Developing annual plans with the community to deliver local services in parks, community facilities and footpaths.

## What happens following the hearings?

- Once the proposal has been reviewed and finalised (if required) then it will be publicly notified as a Final Proposal.
- If the Final Proposal does not change, those who submitted it can appeal.
- If Council changes the Final Proposal, anyone can object.
- These appeals or objections are forwarded to the Local Government Commission.
- Local Government Commission makes the final decision by April 2025.
- The changes to representation arrangements will come into effect for the 2025 local body elections.

## Which Councillor represents who?

Each councillor is sworn into office to represent the best interests of the entire district. Wards are a way of splitting up the district into smaller areas which have their own unique identity and shared services. By electing councillors from wards, those councillors are able to advocate and represent the needs of that ward in Council.

## What is the role of Community Boards?

As part of the reviewing representation arrangements, all councils must consider whether community boards are required and the number of elected members in each community board, regardless of whether they currently exist within the district.

The Community Boards represents, and acts as an advocate for, the interests of their local community. Specifically, the Board's role is to:

- consider and report on all matters referred to it by the Council, or any matter of interest or concern to the Community Board
- maintain an overview of services provided by the Council within the community
- prepare an annual submission to the territorial authority for expenditure within the community
- communicate with community organisations and special interest groups within the community
- undertake any other responsibilities that are delegated to it by the Council.

This initial proposal retains the status quo for community boards for each general ward for the 2025 local elections.

## Would rates decrease if the number of elected members is reduced?

Remuneration for elected members (Mayor, councillors and community board members) is funded from district rates. However, these amounts are set by a government agency, the Remuneration Authority (RA).

In the case of councillors, the RA set a fixed pool of funds which is divided between the number of elected members, according to a Council decision. This means if we had a greater number of councillors each would be paid less, and vice versa, but the total remuneration would not change, and the cost to your rates would not change.

## In the Initial Proposal, how many people are represented per elected member?

Ward	Population	Members	Population per member	Difference from quota	% difference from quota
Greytown General Ward	3,880	2	1,940	110	6.01%
Featherston General Ward	3,320	2	1,660	-170	-9.29%
Martinborough General Ward	3,780	2	1,890	60	3.28%
<b>Total General Wards</b>	<b>10,980</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,830</b>		
South Wairarapa Māori Ward	900	1	900		
At large	11,880	2			
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,880</b>	<b>9</b>			

## What is the South Wairarapa Māori Ward?

On 22 November 2023 Council resolved to establish a Māori Ward for the 2025 and 2028 local elections. The number of Māori Ward members that can be elected is based on a calculation in the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA), which factors in the number of councillors and population figures issued by Statistics New Zealand. Under this calculation South Wairarapa District is eligible for one Māori Ward member, so there will be one Māori Ward across the whole district.

Anyone can stand to be a candidate in the Māori Ward, you just need to be nominated by two people who are on the Māori electoral roll. Only those on the Māori electoral roll can vote in the Māori ward elections.

On 31 July 2024, the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act 2024 came into force. This Act reintroduces provision for binding polls on the establishment of Māori wards and requires councils which have established Māori Wards since March 2021 to either rescind their decision or hold a binding poll at the 2025 local elections. Council will make a decision on this in September.

The decision to establish a Māori ward is not part of this consultation.

# Have your say: Representation Review

This submission form allows you to provide feedback on the South Wairarapa District Council Representation Review and the Initial Proposal for the 2025 local body elections. Tell us what you think between 5 August and 8 September 2024. There are a number of ways you can share your feedback:

Online - [www.swdc.govt.nz/representation-review/](http://www.swdc.govt.nz/representation-review/)

Paper copy -

- Email it to us at [submissions@swdc.govt.nz](mailto:submissions@swdc.govt.nz)
- Post to PO Box 6, Martinborough 5741
- Hand deliver to Council office or any of the South Wairarapa libraries

## Privacy Statement

Your name and feedback will be in public documents. All other personal details will remain private. The Privacy Act 2020 applies when we collect personal details. Any details that are collected will only be used for the purposes stated. You have the right to access and correct any personal information we hold.

## Your Details

Full name\* .....

Email\* ..... Phone number .....

Which ward do you live in?\*

- Greytown Ward
- Featherston Ward
- Martinborough Ward
- Outside of the District

Are you enrolled on the

- General Electoral roll
- Māori Electoral Roll

Are you making a submission on behalf of an organisation? Yes / No

*If yes, which organisation?*

.....

Do you wish to speak to your submission? Yes / No

*You'll be presenting your submission to Council and the meeting will be livestreamed. If you select yes, please also ensure you provide your phone number above so we can contact you.*



# Submission form: Representation Review

*Continued*

## **Do you support the Initial Proposal in full?**

Yes / No

If you answered no, do you support the current arrangement? Yes / No

## **Do you support the proposal to reduce the number of councillors elected through General Wards?**

This means two councillors would be elected in each of the Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough General Wards (rather than three).

Yes / No

Comments

## **Do you support the proposal to introduce two councillors elected at large (across the whole district)?**

This means everyone gets to vote for two at large (district wide) councillors.

Yes / No

Comments

# Submission form: Representation Review

*Continued*

## Do you support the proposal to retain existing community boards?

Yes / No

Comments

## Are there any other forms of representation you would like to see?

*Note: this is not formally part of the Representation Review, but we would like your feedback about other ways Council can engage with the community.*

Yes / No

Comments

## Final feedback

Do you have any further feedback on the Initial Proposal?