



# *Assessment of options for joint management and service delivery*

## *Summary of Conclusions*

*Excerpted from Final Report*

*15 May 2012*

The study has consisted of a two part investigation of the form and function of local government in the Wairarapa

- ❖ The initial phase of the project involved working closely with the joint working group that represented the three Councils to develop a draft vision, objectives and strategic initiatives for the Wairarapa
- ❖ The second phase consisted of a high level analysis of a range of local government management and service delivery options

### Phase 1 – Strategic Review

- ❖ The joint vision that was developed is:
  - *A strong, friendly, thriving Wairarapa, valuing community and environment*
- ❖ The objectives developed to implement the vision are:
  - Work together for the benefit of Wairarapa now and into the future
  - Ensure Wairarapa has safe, healthy, caring communities in which families can thrive
  - Support relevant, quality life skills and life long learning for everyone
  - Promote and strengthen our distinct communities' culture, heritage, recreation and events
  - Recognise the unique and special relationship that tangata whenua have with Wairarapa
  - Protect and enhance our natural environment and resources
  - Foster and enable economic development and growth
  - Provide appropriate infrastructure and services to enable thriving, connected communities

## Phase 2 – Operational Options Review

- ❖ The local government service delivery options considered were:
  - Enhanced status quo
  - Services delivered by one or more CCOs
  - Wairarapa District Council
  - Wairarapa Unitary Authority
  - Greater Wellington Unitary Authority
- ❖ Each of these options was assessed against a set of agreed criteria developed having taken into account the vision and objectives developed in Phase 1 as well as wider considerations such as the four well-beings, the Local Government Act and Better Local Government
- ❖ The high level analysis concludes that the best local government arrangements for the Wairarapa are likely to be a:
  - Wairarapa Unitary Authority; or
  - Wairarapa District Council
- ❖ There are likely to be significant benefits for the Wairarapa from the coordinated and integrated approach to local government which these options provide. The increase in the size and scale of the organisations would allow for increased technical capacity and capability of staff, processes and systems and more coordinated and consistent management of key networks across the Wairarapa. In our view this is likely to deliver the most efficient and effective local government.
- ❖ Further work is required to consider in detail the costs, benefits and risks of these two options and in particular the cost implications of a Wairarapa Unitary Authority which would need to fund activities currently undertaken by Greater Wellington Regional Council in the Wairarapa and which are currently funded in part by regional rates

- ❖ The inclusion of the Wairarapa within a Greater Wellington Unitary Authority is also considered to potentially be of benefit to the Wairarapa from the increased capability and capacity of that organisation to deliver infrastructure and services, a coordinated and consistent planning framework and efficiencies of size and scale
- ❖ The issue would be the degree to which the Wairarapa has control over the services and activities delivered by the Greater Wellington Unitary Authority in the Wairarapa and the decreased level of representation the Wairarapa would have overall. The needs of the predominantly rural Wairarapa may also differ significantly from the rest of the predominantly urban authority
- ❖ The uncertainty around the form and function of that entity means analysis has been confined to comments based on an assumption that it would be similar to the Auckland model but further work on the inclusion in a Greater Wellington Unitary Authority is also considered appropriate
- ❖ While shared services does offer the opportunity of efficiency gains in certain areas, particularly around the delivery of regional community facilities and shared contracts, the long term uncertainty of shared services, the reliance on the continued goodwill of the Councils and the difficulty in implementing shared services reduces the likelihood that it will deliver the benefits that the Wairarapa seeks
- ❖ In addition the uncertainty around whether the existing two tier structure of local government will continue in Wellington and whether a Greater Wellington Regional Council will exist means the enhanced status quo may not be a realistic option
- ❖ The use of a CCO or CCOs to deliver the shared services improves the certainty of the arrangements and in our view is a more efficient model for delivering key shared services such as infrastructure management and operations. However the CCO model does not in and of itself deliver the same degree of coordination and management across activities and services or the ability to deliver a cohesive planning framework as a Wairarapa District Council or a Wairarapa Unitary Authority would do