



# REPRESENTATION REVIEW

## Pre-consultation

Council is required to review its representation at least once every six years. It is an important process for ensuring electoral arrangements are fair and democratic. It is the community's chance to have a say on representation – i.e. the number of elected members, how they are elected (wards or at large), and for community boards.

Council is reviewing its representation arrangements. Before Council develops the proposal and seeks submissions from the community, it would like to gain comments from the community.

### Current arrangements

The District is currently represented by a Mayor and 11 Councillors. The Councillors are elected from wards as follows: Taihape – 3, Hunterville – 1, Marton – 4, Turakina -1, Bulls – 2.

The salaries paid to the Mayor, Councillors and Community Board members are currently set by the Remuneration Authority. The criteria include fair relativity with comparable positions and the requirements of the job. So, having fewer Councillors may not necessarily mean a similar reduction in their salary costs.

### Ward Structure

Council would like the community's feedback on which of the two options is preferred – maps attached separately.

#### **OPTION 1 – Amended status quo (i.e. wards for Taihape, Hunterville, Marton, Turakina and Bulls)**

When creating wards, Council must ensure that each councillor represents a similar number of residents. This means that the current ward boundaries are not able to stay the same. This option keeps the five existing wards, two of which (Turakina and Hunterville) are represented by a single Councillor, with the following changes:

*Taihape Ward* - The population of Taihape has decreased, therefore, additional areas need to be incorporated into the Taihape Ward.

*Marton, Hunterville and Turakina Wards* - The Marton population has grown, so some areas currently in the Marton Ward need to be moved to the Hunterville Ward and the Turakina Ward.

*Bulls Ward* – Unchanged.

#### **OPTION 2 – 3 ward structure – north, central, south**

Council has developed a second option for the community to consider, which has just three wards and eliminates wards having just one Councillor. This option provides the following:

*North Ward – 3 elected members* - This ward includes the communities of *Taihape, Mataroa, Moawhango*, as well as, surrounding rural areas. Council considers that this area can be effectively represented by three elected members as these communities share similar issues and have similar interests (small settlements that have similar characteristics that relate to the Taihape urban area as well as rural hill country areas)

*Central Ward – 5 elected members* - This ward includes the urban areas of *Hunterville and Marton*, as well as, surrounding rural areas. This area has been chosen as Council considers communities within this area have similar interests and face similar issues (larger communities of Hunterville and Marton, surrounded by productive rural areas which connect with these communities).

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*Southern Ward – 3 elected members* - This ward includes the communities of *Scotts Ferry, Bulls, Koitiata, Turakina, Ratana, Whangaehu and Kauangaroa*, as well as the surrounding rural areas. Council considers that these areas have similar characteristics (small settlements that relate to larger urban areas outside of the District) and could effectively be represented by three elected members.

### **Other options considered**

In preparing the two options outlined above, further options were considered, the key ones outlined below:

- All councillors being elected at-large, from the whole District. This option has not been proposed due to concerns that this option would result in representation being dominated by Marton, which would not be reflective of the size and diversity of the District.
- A ward structure that is based on urban/rural communities. This option has not been proposed as it would segregate the District's urban and rural communities which are highly connected.
- A reduction in the number of elected members. This option has not been proposed as a decrease in numbers could have a negative effect on the representation of small communities, particularly given the size and diversity of the communities within the District.

### **Taihape and Ratana Community Boards**

An entirely separate question is the future of community boards.

Since the Rangitikei District Council was established (in 1989) it has had community boards for Taihape and Ratana. Community boards have statutory provisions set out in the Local Government Act 2002. The provisions set out requirements for their establishment, election, membership, status, role and powers.

The District also has community committees for – Turakina, Bulls, Marton and Hunterville. Community committees are established in accordance with Council's delegations register, which also sets out the procedures for elections. These have a focus on town/village affairs and would not automatically be affected by any change in the ward structure.

The operation of community boards and community committees are very similar, they have very similar delegations and address the same issues. Councillors and staff are assigned to each community board and community committee. The key differences are that community board members are paid (this funding comes from the relevant community rather than all ratepayers), are established through legislation (so cannot be disestablished by Council) and are elected at the same time as the Mayor and Councillors.

- The Taihape Community Board area includes everyone in the Taihape ward and currently costs \$46,074 per year, or \$31.04 per ratepayer in the Taihape Community Board area. This cost is funded 58% by rural ratepayers and 42% by urban ratepayers.
- The Ratana Community Board area is limited to the urban area of Ratana and currently costs \$14,821 per year, or \$157.81 per ratepayer in the Community Board area.

Council needs to consider whether the Taihape and Ratana community boards are still required, or whether the communities could be as effectively represented (or more effectively represented) by community committees.

### **Survey**

To gain an insight into community views on the issues identified above, Council has developed a survey. It would be very valuable for Council in further developing the proposed representation option if you were to complete the survey. It is anonymous and should only take a couple of minutes to complete.

### **Further information**

If you have any questions contact Katrina Gray, Senior Policy Analyst/Planner 0800 422 522.

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