

Local Government Commission
PO Box 5362
Wellington 6140

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Further information

The full draft proposal document can be found at www.lgc.govt.nz

Hard copies have been placed with councils and libraries in the Wairarapa.

If you would like a copy posted to you, email submissions@lgc.govt.nz; or phone 0800 816 400

Public information days

Local Government Commission staff will be in the Wairarapa on Friday 31 March-Sunday 2 April and Friday 7 April-Sunday 9 April to answer queries from the public on the draft proposal. Locations and times will be notified on www.lgc.govt.nz and publicised in local media.

Hearings

The Local Government Commissioners will be hearing from submitters on the draft proposal in late May. Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe proceedings. Dates, venues and times will be publicised closer to the time at www.lgc.govt.nz and in local media.



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The process so far

May 2013

Application for unitary council for the Wairarapa from Wairarapa councils

June 2013

Application for unitary council for the Wellington region from the Greater Wellington Regional Council

December 2014

Commission publishes draft proposal for unitary council for the Wellington region including Wairarapa

June 2015

Commission decides not to proceed with the proposal for a unitary council for the Wellington region, but to return to communities to discuss other options for change

February 2016

Public engagement – Commission holds public meetings to develop six options for local government change in the Wairarapa

June 2016

Wairarapa Councils, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Commission obtain an independent assessment of the six options

June-July 2016

Public engagement in the Wairarapa – drop-in sessions, public meetings and surveys to gauge public views on the six options

July 2016

Publication of summary of public feedback – a majority of people prefer a combined Wairarapa District Council

August 2016-March 2017

Further work on detail of possible combined Wairarapa District Council

15 March 2017

Commission releases draft proposal and calls for submissions

What happens next?

3 May 2017

Closing date for submissions

23 May 2017

Hearings begin (submitters can ask to appear at a hearing)

July – November 2017

Commission makes decision whether or not to release a final proposal. Timing will depend on the number and complexity of submissions. If there is a final proposal electors may petition to require that a poll is held

November 2017 – April 2018

If there is a final proposal and a poll is sought, the poll would be held about three months after the validation of a poll petition

Early 2018, at the earliest

If a poll endorses any such final proposal (or a poll is not called for), a Transition Board would be formed. This would include representatives of the three current Wairarapa councils

October 2018 – October 2019

Election of the new council. If the new council were elected in October 2018, it would have a four-year term to bring it back into line with the three-yearly election cycle

October 2022

Council election as part of the usual three-yearly election cycle

Public poll on a final proposal

If the Commission were to issue a final proposal, the electors of the affected local authorities could call for a poll on the proposal. This is done by presenting the Commission with a petition that is signed by 10 per cent or more of the electors of one of the affected local authorities (South Wairarapa, Carterton or Masterton District Councils) within 60 working days of the public notice of the final proposal.

Local Government
Commission
Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

Draft Proposal for Wairarapa District Council

combining South Wairarapa District Council,
Carterton District Council and Masterton District Council.

www.lgc.govt.nz

Wairarapa
District Council

The draft proposal at a glance

The Local Government Commission is proposing* a combined district council for the Wairarapa to be called the Wairarapa District Council. This would replace the existing Masterton District Council, the Carterton District Council and the South Wairarapa District Council.

The new council would be a territorial authority. The Wairarapa would remain part of the Wellington region with the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) continuing its current roles and responsibilities. There would be a new Wairarapa Committee of the GWRC to strengthen Wairarapa input into regional council issues affecting the district.

If the proposal proceeds, the first elections would be held in October 2018 at the earliest and the new council would come into existence on 1 November 2018 (at the earliest). In this case, the council would have an initial four-year term, realigning with the three-yearly local body elections in 2022.

Mayor, councillors and community boards

The new Wairarapa District Council would have a mayor and 12 councillors. The mayor would be elected by voters from across the new combined district. The councillors would be elected from seven wards. There would also be five community boards, one centred around each Wairarapa town, with a total of 21 elected community board members.

Additional representation

There would be a Māori Standing Committee and a Rural Standing Committee of the district council, and a Wairarapa Committee of the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Area offices

The Wairarapa District Council would retain area offices in Masterton, Carterton and Martinborough for at least five years. It is proposed that the principal public office** of Wairarapa District Council would be in Masterton.

Transition measures

The Commission recommends that current rating arrangements remain in place until the new council and the community have had the opportunity to consider any changes. If there are any rates changes due to the proposed amalgamation, they would be capped at five per cent up or down per year. This cap would not apply to rates changes due to normal council activities, such as changes to services or revised rating valuations. Wastewater rates would be ring-fenced so people only pay for the wastewater scheme they are currently part of. These transition measures would remain in force until 30 June 2024.

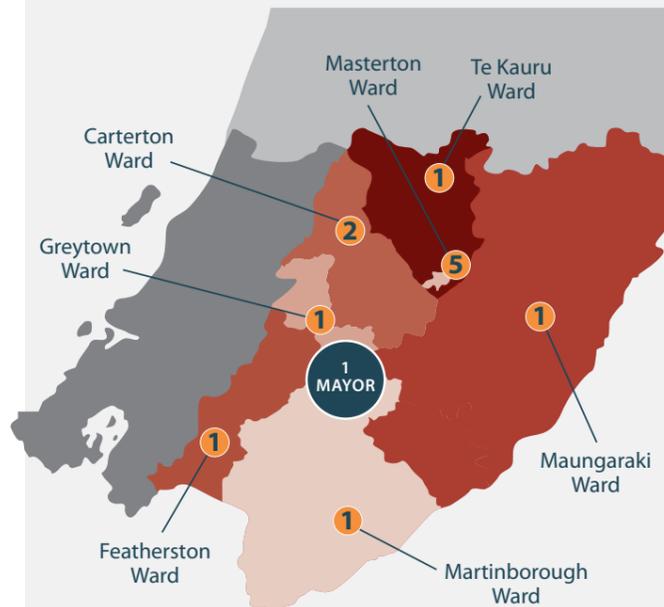
*The full draft proposal can be read at www.lgc.govt.nz; copies are also available at council offices and libraries in the Wairarapa.

**A principal public office is an address for service; it can be changed in future if the community and the new council wish to do so.

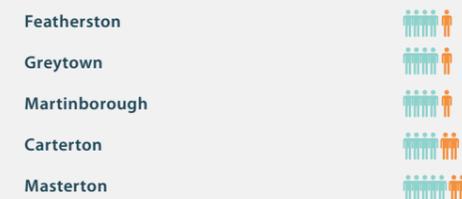
Proposed new ward structure and representation arrangements

Key

● Number of councillors per ward



Community board composition



† Elected community board members | † Ward councillors

Why has the Commission decided on a Wairarapa District Council option?

Options

The Commission is required by the law to consider specific tests to identify its preferred option. After considering a range of options for the Wairarapa, the Commission has settled on two: the existing local government arrangements (no change), and a Wairarapa District Council.

Working together

The Wairarapa community lives and works across three council administrative areas. The three councils already work together, collaborating to provide some council services including roading maintenance and a combined district plan. However, like other rural and provincial districts, the Wairarapa faces a range of future challenges that will put pressure on rates, such as difficulty recruiting and retaining specialist council staff, an increasing proportion of residents on fixed incomes and the need for infrastructure to be upgraded to meet changing requirements.

Good local government

After considering many factors, the Commission concluded that, on balance, the Wairarapa District Council option is the option that best promotes good local government in the area. Merging the three Wairarapa councils would build on the councils' shared services work and create a council more resilient to future challenges. The Commission also has sound evidence of community support in the Wairarapa for a combined Wairarapa District Council.

Advantages and disadvantages of a Wairarapa District Council*

A Wairarapa District Council would provide:

- only one district council in the Wairarapa with the advantages of
 - advocating more strongly for the Wairarapa community as a whole
 - one set of council rules, processes and fees
 - easier and cheaper for companies, and sporting and community groups that work across the Wairarapa to do business
 - simplified council decision-making
- a combined, moderately-sized council that would have
 - better financial resilience to cope with unexpected change and big challenges
 - more effective delivery of infrastructure
 - better ability to manage changes in regulations or requirements set by central government
 - more scope for specialist staff and staff spread less thinly
 - ability to provide a more diverse range of community facilities
- modest financial savings from amalgamating, which are estimated at about \$31 million, less \$21 million in transition costs, resulting in about \$10 million in net savings over 10 years.

However, there are some disadvantages of joining the existing three Wairarapa councils together, including

- fewer councillors per resident than now – although the ratio would be similar to other similar sized councils on a per population and geographic coverage basis
- reduced Wairarapa representation on regional committees and forums (e.g. the Regional Transport Committee) with membership on a per council basis
- the change process could be unsettling for some council staff. Rather than face a period of uncertainty, staff with important local knowledge might seek employment elsewhere
- the transition costs would outweigh the cost savings from merging for the first two years
- the transition period could impact on council productivity

*A full description of advantages and disadvantages of a Wairarapa District Council and how it would promote the purpose of local government is contained in the draft proposal and the Commission's decision paper. Both are available on the Commission's website: www.lgc.govt.nz



Local Government
Commission

Mana Kāvanatanga ā Rohe

Submission form

Draft proposal for a new Wairarapa District Council

The Local Government Commission welcomes your feedback on the draft proposal for a new Wairarapa District Council.

How to make a submission

Fill in this form and post or email it to us

OR Download this form from our website, fill it in, and then post or email it to us

OR Write your own submission, then post or email it to us

OR Fill in our online submission form from our website

Note: Once your submission has been received, it becomes a public document. This means it may be made available on our website and to anyone who requests it. Personal information (address, contact numbers, emails) will be removed before it is released or published.

Do you:

(Please tick only one)

Support the draft proposal Oppose the draft proposal

Support the draft proposal but with some amendments Oppose the draft proposal but want some other form of local government change (please provide details below)

If you support the draft proposal, what are your main reasons for doing so? (Please tick as many as you wish)

There would only be one council to deal with I am happy with my council as it is now

Staff would be spread less thinly and a bigger council will be able to attract more specialist staff There is no reason to change

The new council would have a stronger financial base I think another model would be better (please specify below)

It would create a stronger mandate for the council to advocate for the Wairarapa as a whole There are other ways to improve efficiency under the current model

Other (please provide details below) Other (please provide details below)

Please write any additional comments here:

Post
Local Government Commission
PO Box 5362
Wellington 6140

Email
submissions@lgc.govt.nz

Web
www.lgc.govt.nz

**The closing date for submissions is
Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 4.00pm**

Your name:

Your organisation (if applicable):

Your email address:

Your residential or postal address:

Signed:

Date:

If you wish to speak to your written submission at the Commission's hearings, please call 0800 816 400 before 4pm on Wednesday 3 May 2017 to make a time. The hearings will be held in late May 2017 and will be open to the public.