



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.

Wairarapa  
District Council

March 2017

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



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# Foreword

Tēnā koutou

This draft proposal is a major milestone for the Commission and the Wairarapa community. It is the culmination of more than 18 months' work by the Commission, mayors, councillors, council staff and by the generous, active Wairarapa residents who have given us their time and thoughtful feedback.

Since withdrawing the proposal for a single region-wide unitary council in mid-2015, our approach has been to come back to the community and listen directly to what the local people want from their local government. We held a series of public engagement events across the Wairarapa in 2016 to include Wairarapa people at all stages of this work. Most recently we asked what local government should look like – investigating what structures would best promote good local government, meet community interests, and facilitate economic performance.

Community feedback was clear – there is strong support for a combined district council in the Wairarapa. Hence it was one of the key options the Commission investigated in coming to this draft proposal.

We have been working closely with councils at each stage of preparing this draft proposal, building on their original application to the Commission where possible. Our robust relationship with mayors and councillors in the Wairarapa gives us the ability to work constructively together and sometimes, agree to disagree.

If you attended one of our many workshops, or sent us written comments, your feedback has influenced the development of the draft proposal.

We cannot take up everyone's suggestions. There will be some who disagree with the proposal as a whole or aspects of it. However, given the willingness of the Wairarapa to engage constructively with us, I have full confidence that you will let us know your views and we can continue to walk in step with the community overall.

So again, I ask for your feedback both on whether you support the proposal or not, and how the new council could be better designed – if it did go ahead.

Thank you for the support, patience and generosity you have shown the Commission over the past year. I look forward to engaging with you further in the months ahead.

Nāku noa

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**Sir Wira Gardiner**  
**Chair**  
**Local Government Commission**

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# 1 Commission seeks community feedback

1. This is the Local Government Commission's (the Commission's) draft proposal for a Wairarapa District Council. If supported by the community, a Wairarapa District Council would replace the existing South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils.
2. Wairarapa District Council would be a territorial authority. The Greater Wellington Regional Council would remain as the regional council with responsibility for the Wairarapa.
3. The purpose of this document is to provide information on the draft proposal so the Wairarapa community can:
  - make an informed choice about whether you would prefer a Wairarapa District Council, or the status quo and
  - provide the Commission with feedback on the draft proposal.
4. You are invited to make a submission on the draft proposal. Submissions close at 4.00pm on Wednesday 3 May 2017. A submission form is included at the back of this document as Annex 4.
5. You can make a submission by:
  - Filling in the form and posting it or emailing it to the Commission.
  - Downloading the form from the Commission's website and returning it by post or email.
  - Writing your own submission and then sending it by post or email.
  - Filling in an online submission form on the Commission's website.
6. If you wish, you can talk to your written submission at the Commission's hearings in late May 2017. Please call 0800 816 400 before 4pm on Wednesday 3 May 2017 to make a time.
7. Details on how to make a submission and schedule a hearing time are included on the submission form.
8. The full legal description of the proposal is included in Annex 1 of this document. There are also background reports on our website at [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz). A list of these can be found in Annex 3.

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# 2 Journey to this point

9. This process began in May and June 2013 when the Commission received two applications for changes to the structure of Wellington local authorities. These were:
  - An application from South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils for a single unitary council for the whole of the Wairarapa (a unitary council being responsible for the roles and functions of both a territorial authority – the district councils in this case – and a regional council).
  - An application from Greater Wellington Regional Council for a unitary council for the whole of the Wellington region, including the Wairarapa.
10. Both applications affected the whole of the Wellington region, and the Commission decided to consider them in a single process.
11. In December 2014, after undertaking a series of investigations and public consultation, the Commission publicly notified a draft proposal for a single region-wide unitary council and invited public submissions.
12. A total of 9142 submissions were received and hearings were held throughout the region. A large majority opposed the draft proposal, while more than 40 per cent of submitters proposed some change in local government arrangements, including combinations of merging councils and more sharing of services among councils.
13. In June 2015, the Commission considered the clear opposition expressed through this consultation process and then decided to withdraw the proposal for a single region-wide unitary council. However, in light of the number of submissions in favour of some change, the Commission decided to continue the reorganisation process to see if there was a new preferred option that would have widespread community support.
14. We embarked on a collaborative process to identify possible options for how local government in the region might respond to the challenges it faces.
15. During 2016, the Commission, the three Wairarapa district councils and the regional council together developed a range of governance options for the Wairarapa and sought community input. These options were tested through public meetings, drop-in centres, written feedback, and public opinion polling. This engagement showed that an option involving a merger of the three current Wairarapa district councils had a high level of community support.
16. A questionnaire asked people to indicate which option from a range of six governance options they preferred and why. We received 1534 responses. Respondents indicated a clear preference for a combined Wairarapa District Council at 42 per cent of all responses. The preference for a combined Wairarapa District Council of some sort (including committees with the regional council) was 65 per cent of all responses. The status quo was preferred by 23 per cent of respondents.
17. The Commission also arranged a telephone survey of 500 Wairarapa residents in the week of 4 July 2016. This reached 230 residents in Masterton and 135 in each of Carterton and South Wairarapa. This survey provided the views of a demographically representative sample of the Wairarapa community to consider alongside the questionnaire responses. Some 52 per cent of telephone survey respondents preferred combining the three district councils, 34 per cent preferred no change and 12 per cent supported a unitary council, while two per cent were unsure.

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

18. The Commission is required by the law to consider specific tests to identify its preferred option. After looking at a range of options, the Commission considered two in more depth: the existing local government arrangements (no change) and a Wairarapa District Council.

19. The Wairarapa community lives and works across three council administrative areas. The three councils already work together, collaborating to provide some council services including contract tendering for 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.

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

#### Advantages and disadvantages of a Wairarapa District Council

21. A Wairarapa District Council would provide:

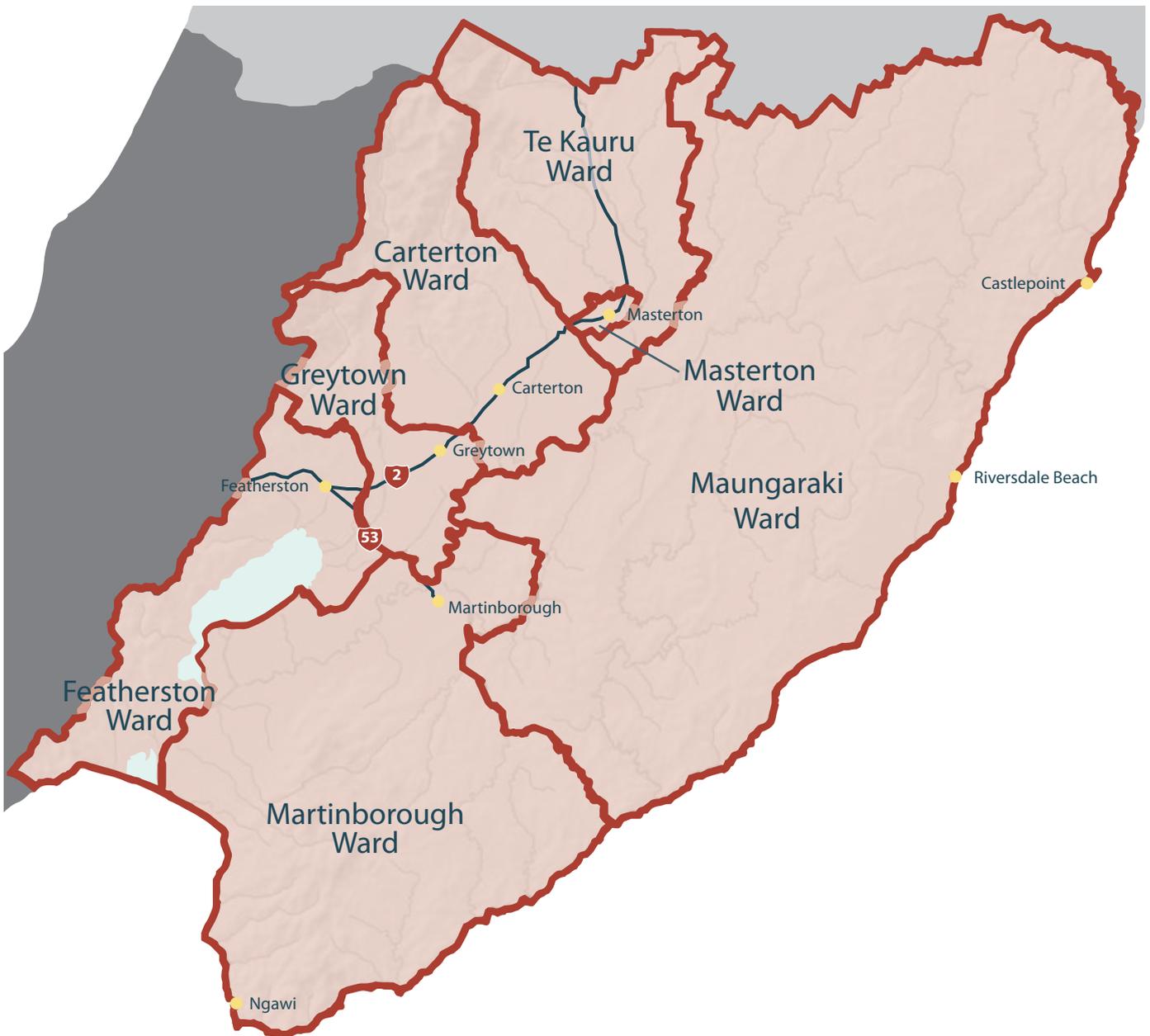
- only one district council in the Wairarapa with the advantages of
  - › advocating more strongly for the Wairarapa community as a whole
  - › one set of council rules, processes and fees
  - › easier and cheaper for companies, and sporting and community groups that work across the Wairarapa to do business
  - › 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 \$31million in savings, less \$21 million in transition costs, resulting in about \$10 million in net savings over 10 years.

22. 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 that have membership on a per council basis (e.g. the Regional Transport Committee)
  - 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 could impact on council productivity.
23. 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 Annex 2 and the Commission's decision paper (available on our website: [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz)).

## 4 What would Wairarapa District Council look like?

Map 1. Wards and boundaries for proposed new Wairarapa District Council



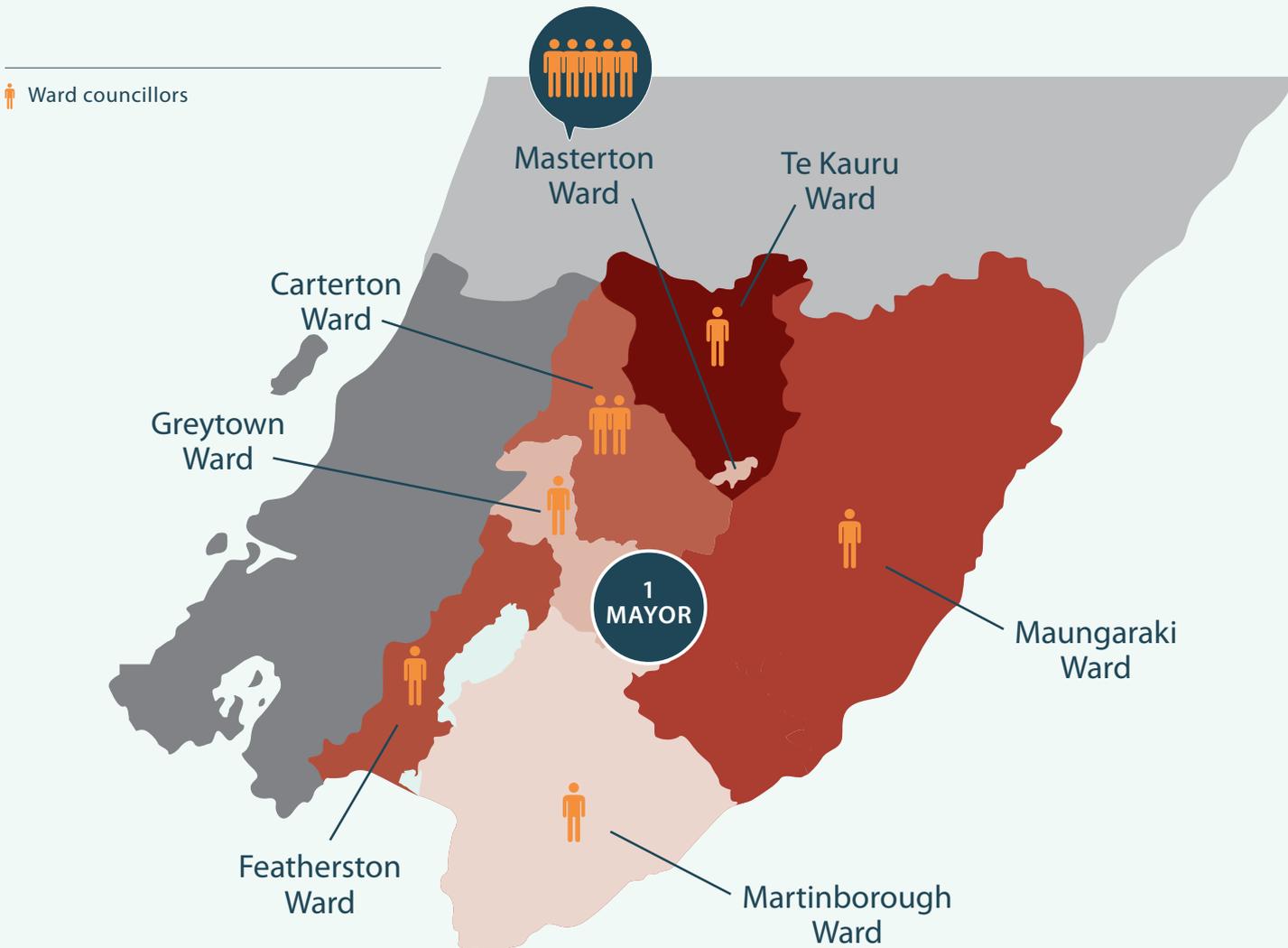
24. Wairarapa District Council would have the same range of responsibilities as the current three councils. The Greater Wellington Regional Council would continue to be the regional council in the Wairarapa. The proposal includes establishment of a Wairarapa Committee of the Greater Wellington Regional Council. The purpose of the Wairarapa Committee would be to strengthen the Wairarapa's ability to influence Greater Wellington Regional Council decisions that affect the district.

25. Wairarapa District Council would have the external boundaries of the three existing districts. There would be no change to the boundary of the Greater Wellington Regional Council. The small part of Tararua District Council that is included in the Wellington region would not be affected by this proposal.

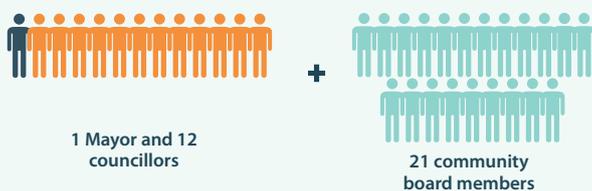
26. These ward arrangements are similar to arrangements proposed by the three Wairarapa district councils in their 2013 reorganisation application. We have proposed slightly different boundaries to reflect the latest census data on the population of the wards. We have also proposed names for the two rural wards: Te Kauru and Maungaraki.

# Representation

Map 2. Proposed councillor representation



- 27. A Wairarapa District Council would have one mayor, 12 councillors and 21 community board members.
- 28. The mayor would be elected by voters from across the Wairarapa District. The councillors would be elected by voters from each of the seven wards.
- 29. Table 1 shows the population, and number of elected members (councillors and community board members) for each ward. It also shows the number of people per elected member by ward.



**Table 1: Comparison of new ward representation by population**

Ward	Population (2016)	Ward councillors	Community board members	Total elected members (not including Mayor)	Population per ward councillor	Population per total elected members (not including Mayor)
Featherston	3276	1	4	5	3276	655
Greytown	3410	1	4	5	3410	682
Martinborough	3275	1	4	5	3275	655
Carterton	7979	2	4	6	3990	1330
Masterton	19,196	5	5	10	3839	1920
Maungaraki*	2862	1	N/A	1	2862	N/A
Te Kauru*	3622	1	N/A	1	3622	N/A

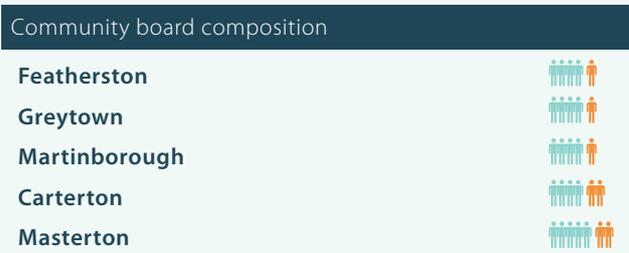
\* The proposed Maungaraki and Te Kauru wards do not have community boards. Instead they are represented by a Rural Standing Committee (see page 10). The proposed Maungaraki ward would have fewer people and therefore a higher population to councillor ratio than the other wards to avoid dividing existing communities of interest in other wards.

## Community boards

30. We propose five community boards. The community boards are a way to ensure each town has its own identity within the wider district and that decisions about local matters, such as streetscapes, parking, street names etc., are made locally. The three existing community boards in Martinborough, Featherston and Greytown would continue, but with four members, as compared with the current five (plus one councillor each). Two new community boards would be centred around the urban areas of Carterton and Masterton with four and five members each respectively (plus two councillors each).

31. We have included a draft set of terms of reference for the community boards in the draft proposal in Annex 1, Schedule A. We have recommended that these terms of reference are discussed with existing councils and community boards, and then revised and finalised with the Transition Body. The Transition Body is described in section 8 on page 16.

32. The draft terms of reference do not include the amount of funding delegated to each community board. Levels of funding for community boards cannot be decided separate from the new council's Annual Plan and Long Term Plan processes. For the transition to the new council, the Transition Body would work with the existing councils and community boards to set the appropriate level of community board funding for the council's first year. Beyond that, normal council processes would take over.



 Elected community board members |  Ward councillors

## Working with Māori

33. We propose setting up a Māori Standing Committee of the Wairarapa District Council. This committee would provide a formal mechanism for marae, hapū, iwi and Māori input into council decision-making. South Wairarapa District Council has had a Māori Standing Committee since the 1980s. Both the council and committee members report it works well.
34. The Māori Standing Committee would provide advice and recommendations to the new council. The proposal does not affect existing arrangements for Māori participation in Greater Wellington Regional Council decision-making. The proposed Māori Standing Committee would be in addition to any arrangements that might be agreed through Treaty Settlement processes, and does not in any way limit such negotiations.
35. We propose that the Māori Standing Committee includes the Mayor, other councillors (appointed by Wairarapa District Council), and representatives nominated by Rangitāne ō Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, taking into account the views of marae, hapū and iwi.
36. The total membership for the Māori Standing Committee and the terms of reference would be developed by the Transition Body, the Commission, and Rangitāne ō Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, taking into account the views of marae, hapū and iwi.
37. The Commission can only require that committees are set up for a new council's first term. However the council could keep the Māori Standing Committee going beyond the Commission's required minimum.
38. We have not included Māori members with voting rights on other council committees in our proposal, as occurs currently in Masterton. This is an issue for the new council to consider. Once established, we expect that the new council, in consultation with Māori and the Wairarapa community, would identify opportunities in addition to the Māori Standing Committee for Māori to contribute to decision-making. Māori representation is also part of councils' six yearly representation review process.

## Working with the rural community

39. We propose setting up a Rural Standing Committee of the Wairarapa District Council. A Rural Standing Committee would be a channel for rural and coastal issues to be raised with the Wairarapa District Council. This committee would reflect that while the major towns in the Wairarapa are represented by community boards, much of the rural areas fall outside community board boundaries. The committee would provide advice and recommendations to the new council.
40. We propose the Rural Standing Committee includes the rural ward councillors, the Martinborough ward councillor (Martinborough ward also contains a large rural and coastal area), the Mayor, and representatives of rural industries and rural communities (appointed by Wairarapa District Council).
41. The total membership for the Rural Standing Committee and details of the terms of reference would be developed by the Transition Body, the Commission, and the rural community. The committee's terms of reference would be legally binding on the new council for its first term (until 2022). However the council could keep the Rural Standing Committee going beyond the Commission's required minimum.

## Area offices, principal public office, and service centres

42. An area office provides at least a core of council customer services, such as paying rates and fees. It also provides face-to-face advice to council customers and is an office and/or depot for council staff and equipment.
43. The principal public office is the formal address for service for the new council. It is not necessarily where council meetings are held. A council can change the location of its principal public office.

### Area offices

44. We propose that Wairarapa District Council would maintain area offices in Martinborough, Carterton and Masterton for at least five years.
45. The three recommended area offices would be in the locations of the current councils' offices. By maintaining an area office in Martinborough, Carterton and Masterton the community would continue to have similar levels of access to council services for at least the first five years of a Wairarapa District Council.
46. This time period would give Wairarapa District Council time to consult with the community if it considered any changes to office location were needed.
47. As well as area offices, the new council can have service centres. There are currently service centres in Greytown and Featherston libraries. We expect these service centres would continue to operate, however it would be for the new council to decide.

### Principal public office

48. We propose that the principal public office for Wairarapa District Council be located in Masterton because it would be the economic centre of the new district. Wairarapa District Council would be able to change the location of the principal public office.

49. The location of the principal public office does not determine staff numbers or council services. Decisions on details such as numbers of staff and functions at particular locations are better made on the advice of the Transition Body.

### Location of staff

50. In our 2016 community consultation, we had said that the Commission would consider setting the head office for the new council. A head office implies an office where most council staff work. We have decided against proposing a single head office. We have chosen to instead propose the area offices and the principal public office, without specifying staff numbers at each office.
51. The exact number of staff roles at each office would be better decided on the advice of the Transition Body and subsequently by the new council rather than the Commission. Deciding staff numbers and functions at particular locations, determining the life span of offices and leases etc., is a level of detail beyond that appropriate for the Commission at this time. Beyond the core customer services required by an area office, the Transition Body could take several different approaches to staffing. One possible configuration is that each office becomes a centre for particular council functions – for example, parks and reserves, or infrastructure. Other approaches could equally be appropriate.
52. In feedback to us, councillors were concerned about the location of staff roles and the potential impact on the economic activity in the existing districts' main towns. The three recommended area offices would allow continued access to council services across the new broader district and some certainty for the community. These centres would be in the location of each of the current councils' offices. The five-year time period would give the new council plenty of time to consult with the community if it considered any changes to office location were needed, in conjunction with its overall service delivery programme.

## Rates, debt and assets of a new Wairarapa District Council

### Rates

53. While it is not explicitly required by the law, the Commission is including information in this document on the proposed treatment of rates and debt so the community can make an informed response to the draft proposal.
54. We propose that the 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. These transition measures would remain in force until 30 June 2024.

### Wastewater rates and debt

55. While within the guidelines for prudent levels of debt, the Masterton District has a higher debt than the other districts (\$38.6 million as compared with \$6 million for South Wairarapa and \$2 million for Carterton). This is primarily due to the cost of the Homebush wastewater treatment system, reflecting that Masterton is at a different point in its asset cycle than the other councils. This debt is currently being repaid by a targeted rate on serviced properties, meaning, in effect, that the debt is ring-fenced to those benefiting from the scheme. Debt associated with similar infrastructure in the other districts is also repaid mainly from targeted rates.

56. We propose provisions to ring-fence the rates for wastewater services, at least until 2024. This means that rate-payers would continue to pay only for the scheme they are connected to and not for other schemes. During our 2016 consultation, some people were concerned about the potential inequity of contributing to paying off the debt for a service that they did not receive direct benefits from, when they were not part of the consultation or decision to take on that debt. The proposed ring-fencing would remove this potential inequity.

**Additional new debt**

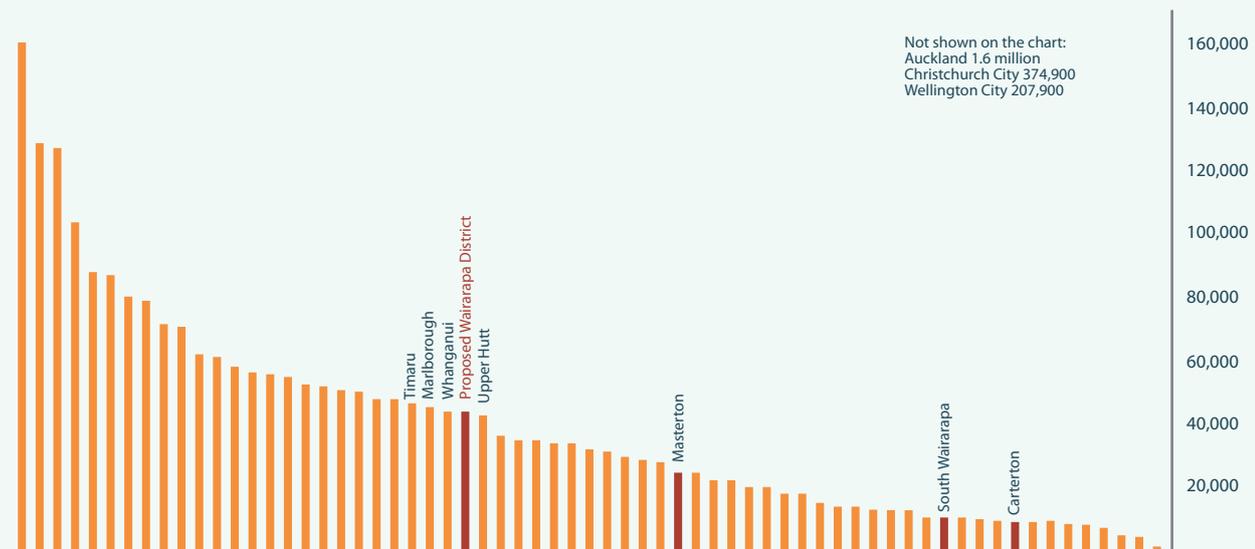
57. If any of the three existing councils enters into any additional debt commitments before a new Wairarapa District Council was to be formed the Commission could consider further ring-fencing of targeted rates for particular projects.

## 5 Wairarapa District Council in context

58. Wairarapa District Council would be comparable to other medium-sized territorial authorities in New Zealand. With a land area of 5936 square kilometres, the new district would be similar in size to Hastings, Taupō and Clutha.

59. With a population of approximately 43,600<sup>1</sup> Wairarapa District Council would be similar to Timaru, Marlborough, Whanganui and Upper Hutt. Chart 1 shows territorial authorities by population and Table 2 compares representation by population for similar-sized councils.

**Chart 1. Territorial authorities by population**



<sup>1</sup> | NZ Stats 2016 Population Estimates, released January 2017.

Table 2: Comparison of representation by population for similar-sized councils

Council	Population	Mayor and councillors	Community board members	Total elected members	Population per Mayor & Councillors	Population per total elected members
Timaru	46,700	10	16	26	4670	1796
Marlborough	45,500	14	-	14	3250	3250
Whanganui	43,800	13	7	20	3369	2190
<b>Wairarapa</b>	<b>43,600</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3354</b>	<b>1282</b>
Upper Hutt	42,600	11	-	11	3873	3873
Masterton	24,600	11	-	11	2236	2236
South Wairarapa	10,100	10	12	22	1010	459
Carterton	8900	9	-	9	989	989

## 6 Transition costs

60. The process of joining the three councils together would result in both savings and transition costs. An independent consultant's estimate of potential savings are:

- Savings from natural attrition of staff as staff leave and do not need to be replaced due to economies of scale within the combined council. These are expected to relate largely to corporate services areas. Based on a compound rate of attrition of 1.5 per cent over the first three years this is estimated to produce savings of \$3.6 million over 10 years.
- Efficiencies due to reduced duplication in Tier 1 (Chief Executive) and Tier 2 management positions across the three councils. These have been estimated at \$15.6 million over 10 years.
- Reduction in the number of mayors and councillors from 30 to 13 (after allowing some extra cost for an increase in numbers of community board members). The savings are estimated at \$1.3 million over 10 years.
- Sale of surplus property. Five per cent of the current book value of land and buildings assumed to become surplus and sold over a three-year period, with a sale price of 105 per cent of current value. These are estimated at a saving of \$6.7 million over 10 years.
- Roading and utility savings as a result of collaboration between New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and the council. Total savings were estimated at a total of \$4.8 million over 10 years, with approximately \$2.1 million over 10 years for the council (based on current NZTA subsidy rates).

- Audit costs. Savings of \$1.2 million over 10 years from only having one council rather than three subject to audit.<sup>2</sup>

61. Specific transition costs identified would be:

- Redundancies relating to Tier 1 and Tier 2 management positions at \$1.5 million.
- Costs associated with harmonisation of salaries. The independent consultants assumed that the average salary at the council with the lowest average salary would increase to the average across all councils. This harmonisation cost is estimated at \$8 million over 10 years.
- Information technology transition costs ranging from \$1.15 to \$3.3 million.<sup>3</sup>
- Costs associated with the establishment of a new council covering things like human resources, systems and branding, and the work of the Transition Body over the first two years. This is estimated at \$3.8 million.

62. Table 3 below shows that after meeting the transition costs, modest cost savings accumulate progressively into the future, resulting in \$10.1 million saving over the first 10 years.

Table 3: Estimated net efficiencies due to amalgamating the three Wairarapa district councils

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
<b>\$million</b>											
<b>Efficiencies</b>	2.4	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	31.0
<b>Transition costs</b>	(4.7)	(2.9)	(1.3)	(1.7)	(1.7)	(1.7)	(1.7)	(1.7)	(1.8)	(1.8)	(21.0)
<b>Net efficiencies</b>	<b>(2.3)</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>10.1</b>

The net efficiencies line shows the efficiencies (savings) remaining after the identified transition costs have been met. Numbers are rounded and therefore may not add up.

63. Table 4 shows that the net operating result for the new council would be \$56.9 million over 10 years, including the \$10.1 million in net efficiencies due to amalgamation. The revenue and costs are the sum of the three councils' revenue and costs from their

current Long Term Plans. The net operating result represents the annual increase or decrease in the net worth of the council. This includes change in cash and changes in the value of assets owned and maintained on behalf of the ratepayers.

<sup>2</sup> | Morrison Low (June 2016). Wairarapa Local Government: Assessment of options

<sup>3</sup> | Morrison Low (February 2017), Update to combined Wairarapa District Council costs

Table 4: Net operating result for the proposed Wairarapa District Council

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
<b>\$million</b>											
Revenue	72.8	75.0	77.5	79.0	81.8	84.4	86.9	89.3	91.5	94.6	832.7
Costs	(70.6)	(73.0)	(74.0)	(75.5)	(78.1)	(79.0)	(80.6)	(83.2)	(84.5)	(87.3)	(785.8)
Net Efficiencies	(2.3)	(0.1)	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	10.1
Net Operating Result	(0.2)	1.9	5.2	4.8	5.1	6.9	7.9	7.7	8.7	9.0	56.9

Numbers are rounded and therefore may not add up.

## 7 Relationship between Wairarapa District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council

64. We propose including provisions for a Wairarapa Committee of the Greater Wellington Regional Council as part of the draft proposal.
65. During our engagement with the existing Wairarapa councils over the past two years, we received the strong message that regional council decision-making was very important to the Wairarapa community. Wairarapa councillors, along with Greater Wellington Regional Council, have been concerned that the Wairarapa has only one representative on the regional council and therefore the Wairarapa is not sufficiently represented. Given the Wellington region's population spread, the law governing local government representation does not allow for another Wairarapa regional councillor.
66. We discussed alternative arrangements to make sure the views of Wairarapa people are taken into account by the regional council. We canvassed several options, which we put to the community in June/July 2016. While the community clearly supported a combined Wairarapa district council, there was not clear support for one particular model over the others with respect to the relationship with the regional council. The Wairarapa Committee model proposed here had the most support from councillors and is similar to a committee established following local government reforms in 1989.
67. The purpose of the Wairarapa Committee would be to strengthen the Wairarapa's ability to influence Greater Wellington Regional Council decisions that affect the district. The Committee could consider any issues of relevance to the Wairarapa including (but not limited to) flood control, land management, pest management, biosecurity, biodiversity, public transport, and natural resource management. The Committee would be able to develop strategies, policies, plans and bylaws and recommend those to Greater Wellington Regional Council.
68. The Wairarapa Committee would have 10 members:
- four members from Greater Wellington Regional Council, including the Wairarapa constituency councillor
  - four members nominated by Wairarapa District Council. At least three of these must be elected members of the Council. At least one must have skills and knowledge of rural issues
  - one member nominated by Rangitāne ō Wairarapa
  - one member nominated by Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa.
69. The Commission can only require that committees are set up for a new council's first term. However the council can keep the committee going beyond the Commission's required minimum. The Wairarapa Committee would endure until at least the 2022 local government elections (the first term of Wairarapa District Council).
70. Greater Wellington Regional Council is supportive of a Wairarapa Committee and is currently setting up a pilot committee ahead of any decision the Commission might make.

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## 8 The Transition Body

71. If a final proposal for the Wairarapa District Council gets community support, we propose to set up a Transition Body made up of a transition board and an implementation team. The role of the Transition Body would include preparing and implementing a change management plan and carrying out other activities necessary for transition to the new council.
72. The transition board would include an independent chair, and elected members from the three existing councils. The implementation team would consist of a small team of staff from the existing councils with the roles of providing technical and operational advice to the transition board, and giving effect to decisions.
73. The transition board would provide advice and recommendations to the Commission through the development of the more detailed reorganisation scheme that completes the final proposal, and would exercise powers delegated to it by the Commission. It would also have the key role of appointing an interim chief executive for the Wairarapa District Council. Once the reorganisation scheme is finalised, the Commission would step back from the process. The transition board's role would continue, representing the interests of the community in shaping the transition to the new council and overseeing the work of the implementation team.
74. The decisions made during the transition phase would include the compilation of a first annual plan for the new council (including the starting budgets for community boards), and the exact number of staff roles at each area office.
75. The Transition Body would be set up in early 2018 at the earliest.

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## 9 Process from here

### 3 May 2017

Closing date for submissions

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### 23 May 2017

Hearings begin

(submitters may ask to appear at a hearing)

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### 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. See below for more information about a poll.

### December 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.

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### Early 2018, at the earliest

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

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### October 2018 at the earliest

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

### Public poll on a final proposal

If the Commission were to issue a final proposal, the electors of the affected territorial authorities can 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 territorial authorities (South Wairarapa, Carterton or Masterton District Councils) within 60 working days of the public notice of the final proposal.

# Annex 1 - Legal description of draft proposal

## Constitution

- 1) There will be a Wairarapa District comprising the area of the existing South Wairarapa District, Carterton District and Masterton District.
- 2) The constitution of Wairarapa District Council will require the dissolution of the following local authorities (referred to in this proposal as the affected authorities):
  - a. South Wairarapa District Council
  - b. Carterton District Council
  - c. Masterton District Council.
- 3) Wairarapa District Council will come into existence on 1 November 2018 at the earliest.
- 4) The boundaries of the Wairarapa District shall be
  - a. the existing boundaries between the Masterton District and the Tararua and Horowhenua Districts
  - b. the existing boundaries between the Carterton District and the Kāpiti Coast District
  - c. the existing boundaries between the South Wairarapa District and the Kāpiti Coast District, and the Upper Hutt and Hutt Cities, and
  - d. the seaas shown on the map on page 7.

## Status

- 5) Wairarapa District Council will be a territorial authority.

## First election

- 6) The first election of Wairarapa District Council will be held on 13 October 2018 at the earliest.
- 7) The first election of Wairarapa District Council will be held using the first past the post electoral system.

## Area offices and principal public office

- 8) Wairarapa District Council must retain area offices in Martinborough, Carterton and Masterton for at least five years.
- 9) The principal public office of Wairarapa District Council will be located in Masterton. The council can change the principal public office in the future.

## Representation

- 10) Wairarapa District will be divided into seven wards.  
The wards are:
  - a. Featherston Ward
  - b. Greytown Ward
  - c. Martinborough Ward
  - d. Carterton Ward
  - e. Masterton Ward
  - f. Maungaraki Ward
  - g. Te Kauru Ward
- 11) A map of the proposed wards is contained on page 7.
- 12) Wairarapa District Council will comprise a mayor and 12 councillors.

- 13) The mayor will be elected at large and the councillors from wards, as follows:
  - a. one councillor elected by Featherston Ward
  - b. one councillor elected by Greytown Ward
  - c. one councillor elected by Martinborough Ward
  - d. two councillors elected by Carterton Ward
  - e. five councillors elected by Masterton Ward
  - f. one councillor elected by Maungaraki Ward
  - g. one councillor elected by Te Kauru Ward.

## Community boards

- 14) The following community boards will be established:
  - a. Featherston
  - b. Greytown
  - c. Martinborough
  - d. Carterton
  - e. Masterton.
- 15) The boundaries of the community boards will be the same as for the corresponding five wards.
- 16) Each community board will have the membership set out below:
  - a. Featherston – four elected community board members plus one ward councillor
  - b. Greytown – four elected community board members plus one ward councillor
  - c. Martinborough – four elected community board members plus one ward councillor
  - d. Carterton – four elected community board members plus two ward councillors
  - e. Masterton – five elected community board members plus two ward councillors.
- 17) The role of each community board will be to carry out the statutory and delegated responsibilities of a community board.
- 18) For the purposes of this draft reorganisation proposal, a draft terms of reference for the community boards is set out in Schedule A. The final terms of reference will be developed as part of the transition process on advice from the Transition Board. These terms of reference will be binding on the new Wairarapa District Council until 2025 (i.e. two council terms).

## Māori Standing Committee

- 19) Wairarapa District Council must constitute and maintain, until at least the 2022 local government elections, a Māori Standing Committee.
- 20) The membership of the Māori Standing Committee shall comprise:
  - a. the Mayor
  - b. other councillors appointed by the council and
  - c. representatives nominated by Rangitāne ō Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa.
- 21) The role of the committee will be to:
  - a. provide advice to the council on matters of interest to Māori
  - b. provide advice on resource consents and
  - c. monitor a Memorandum of Partnership between the council and iwi.

- 22) The committee will be an advisory body. This does not prevent the council making delegations to the committee in the future.
- 23) This Māori Standing Committee does not limit the council's ability to set up other mechanisms to facilitate its relationship with Māori in the Wairarapa.
- 24) Details of membership and terms of reference will be developed further as part of the transition process, in consultation with Rangitāne ō Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa.

### **Rural Standing Committee**

- 25) Wairarapa District Council must constitute and maintain, until at least the 2022 local government elections, a Rural Standing Committee.
- 26) The membership of the Rural Standing Committee shall comprise:
  - a. Te Kauru, Maungaraki, and Martinborough ward councillors
  - b. the Mayor and
  - c. representatives of rural/land based industries and of rural communities appointed by Wairarapa District Council.
- 27) The role of the committee will be to:
  - a. advise the council in relation to council strategies, policies, plans, and bylaws
  - b. provide a forum for consideration of issues affecting the rural part of the district
  - c. make recommendations on coastal reserves management and
  - d. make recommendations to council.
- 28) The committee will be an advisory body. This does not prevent the council making delegations to the committee in the future.
- 29) Details of membership and terms of reference will be developed further as part of the transition process, in consultation with the rural community.

### **Greater Wellington Regional Council**

- 30) There shall continue to be a Greater Wellington Regional Council which shall be the regional council for the Wellington region as constituted at the time of this draft proposal.
- 31) This proposal does not affect the
  - a. boundaries
  - b. representation arrangements
  - c. areas of interest of iwi and hapū
  - d. statutory obligations
 of the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

### **Wairarapa Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council**

- 32) Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) must constitute and maintain a committee called the Wairarapa Committee until at least the 2022 local government elections.
- 33) The purpose of the Wairarapa Committee is to help ensure Wairarapa community views are taken into account in the exercise by the GWRC of its functions, powers and duties in the Wairarapa District.

- 34) The Wairarapa Committee will comprise 10 members:
  - a. four members from GWRC, including the Wairarapa constituency councillor
  - b. four members appointed on the nomination of the Wairarapa District Council, at least three of whom must be elected members of the Wairarapa District Council, and at least one of whom must have skills and knowledge of rural issues
  - c. one member appointed on the nomination of Rangitāne ō Wairarapa
  - d. one member appointed on the nomination of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa.
- 35) The committee will elect the chair and deputy chair from its members. The chair shall be one of the four members from GWRC and the deputy chair shall be one of the elected members of the Wairarapa District Council.
- 36) The committee can consider any issues relevant to the Wairarapa including but not limited to:
  - a. flood control
  - b. land management
  - c. pest management
  - d. biosecurity
  - e. biodiversity
  - f. public transport
  - g. natural resource management.
- 37) Subject to legislative limitations on council delegations, GWRC may delegate functions, powers or duties to the committee.
- 38) The committee may develop and recommend relevant council strategies, policies, plans, and bylaws.
- 39) GWRC will consider the recommendations and advice of the committee and will provide the committee with a written response as to how these have been considered and dealt with. Where there are any differences between the recommendations of the committee and the decisions of GWRC the reasons for this will be explained.
- 40) GWRC officers will provide administrative and advisory support to the committee. Wairarapa District Council officers may also provide advisory support to the committee.

### **Council plans and reports<sup>4</sup>**

- 41) South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils must prepare and adopt their next long term plan by 30 June 2018 in accordance with the normal cycle.
- 42) The 2018-2028 long term plans adopted by the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils will be deemed to meet the requirement for the Wairarapa District Council to have a long term plan for 2018-2028.
- 43) The Transition Body established under clause 54 must compile a draft annual plan for the period 1 November 2018 to 30 June 2019 based on the 2018 long term plans of South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils and submit the plan for adoption by Wairarapa District Council as soon as possible after 1 November 2018.
- 44) The Wairarapa District Council may amend or replace elements of those plans in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 2002.

<sup>4</sup> | Dates in paragraphs 43, 46, and 47 are based on the earliest possible election date of October 2018. If an election is held after October 2018 these dates may be later.

- 45) The Wairarapa District Council shall develop and adopt a new combined long term plan by 30 June 2021.
- 46) The first annual report for Wairarapa District Council shall cover the period 1 November 2018 to 30 June 2019.
- 47) The final annual reports for the existing South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils will cover the period 1 July 2017 to 31 October 2018.

#### **Financial matters**

- 48) The rating policies of the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils will continue to apply until the Wairarapa District Council adopts new rating policies in accordance with the consultation and other requirements in the Local Government Act 2002 and Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.
- 49) Any change in rates due to the adoption of new rating policies as a result of the amalgamation of the three former district councils will be limited to no more than five per cent up or down in any one year. The five per cent limit does not apply where there are changes to services, rating valuations or other normal council activities. This transitional measure expires on 30 June 2024.
- 50) Wairarapa District Council shall maintain existing targeted rates for wastewater services until at least 30 June 2024. The schemes are Homebush, Riversdale, Tinui, Castlepoint, Carterton, and South Wairarapa townships (including Featherston, Greytown, Martinborough and Lake Ferry).
- 51) Wairarapa District Council must use any development contributions (under Part 8 of the Local Government Act 2002) or financial contributions (under the Resource Management Act 1991) held or owed to the affected authorities for the purposes for which they were required by the affected authorities.

#### **Transition Body**

- 52) A Transition Body will be constituted to make arrangements for the establishment of Wairarapa District Council and have the roles and functions set out in the Local Government Act 2002 (Schedule 3, clause 36(1)).
- 53) The Transition Body will comprise:
  - a. a transition board and
  - b. an implementation team.

#### **Transition board**

- 54) A transition board will be established and will comprise seven members as follows:
  - a. an independent chair appointed by the Local Government Commission
  - b. two members nominated by South Wairarapa District Council from amongst its elected members
  - c. two members nominated by Carterton District Council from amongst its elected members
  - d. two members nominated by Masterton District Council from amongst its elected members.
- 55) The role of the transition board will be to:
  - a. make recommendations to the Local Government Commission on matters of policy
  - b. provide advice to the Local Government Commission
  - c. exercise any powers and responsibilities delegated to it by the Local Government Commission
  - d. appoint an interim chief executive for Wairarapa District Council.

#### **Implementation team**

- 56) The Local Government Commission will appoint an implementation team from among the staff of the affected authorities.
- 57) The role of the implementation team will be to:
  - a. give effect to decisions made by the transition board
  - b. provide advice on technical and operational matters to the transition board
  - c. provide support to the interim chief executive.

# Schedule A - Draft Terms of Reference for Wairarapa community boards

## 1. Annual Submission on Expenditure

- a. Authority to prepare a board annual plan for submitting to the Wairarapa District Council (Council) for expenditure within the community, for consideration as part of the annual plan process.

## 2. Community

- a. Authority to communicate with community organisations, local marae and special interest groups within the community (as per section 52 of the Local Government Act 2002).
- b. Authority to listen, articulate, advise, advocate and make recommendations to Council on any matter of interest or concern to the local community.
- c. Authority to work with Council and the community to establish a strategic plan.
- d. Authority to provide a local community perspective on the levels of service as detailed in the long term plan, and on local expenditure, rating impacts and priorities.
- e. Authority to receive information of Council's receipt of all non-notified resource consent applications.
- f. Authority to provide advice to the Council and its committees on any matter of interest or concern to the Community Board in relation to the sale of alcohol.

## 3. Community Grants

- a. Authority to allocate community-based grant funds as approved through the annual plan process or the long term plan process.
- b. Authority to consider, and either approve or reject applications by community groups to establish community gardens, in accordance with the licensing requirements under the Reserves Act 1977 and Council policy.
- c. Authority to allocate any bequests or similar consistent with the terms of the bequest by making resolution for Council ratification.

## 4. Parks and Reserves

- a. Authority to make recommendations to Council after reviewing existing or considering new draft Reserve Management Plans for local public parks and reserves within its area, within current Council policy or management plans and within the annual plan/long term plan budget.
- b. Authority to decide priorities for local public parks and reserves within its area and in accordance with the Reserve Management Plans.
- c. Authority to prepare development and implementation plans for local public parks and reserves within its area and in accordance with the Reserve Management Plans.

## 5. Roading

- a. Authority to make recommendations relating to all traffic control and signage matters, in relation to existing local roads within the community board's area.

- b. Authority to make recommendations on changes to speed restrictions on local roads.
- c. Authority to make recommendations on the need to permanently diminish or stop roads. (i.e. permanently change the size of or permanently close a road)
- d. Authority to assist the Chief Executive (through the Community Board Chairperson) to consider and determine temporary road closure applications where there are objections to the proposed road closure.
- e. Authority to determine priorities for footpath maintenance and priority locations for new footpaths.

## 6. Naming Reserves, Structures and Commemorative Places

- a. Authority to receive requests from the community, or put forward names, regarding specific names of reserves, structures and commemorative places for input to the staff report.
- b. Authority to approve or reject officer recommendations in respect of such names.

## 7. Naming Roads

- a. Authority to make recommendations on the naming for public roads, private roads and rights of way.

## 8. Urban Reserves, Urban Amenities and Town Main Centres

- a. Authority to make recommendations on matters relating to urban reserves, urban amenities and town main streets that meet current Council policy or management plans and fall within the annual plan/long term plan budget.
- b. Authority to decide priorities for urban reserves, amenities and town main streets within its area and that meet current Council policy or management plans and fall within the annual plan/long term plan budget.
- c. Authority to prepare development and implementation plans for urban reserves, urban amenities and town main streets within its area and that meet current Council policy or management plans and fall within the annual plan/long term plan budget.

## 9. Submissions

- a. Authority to make submissions to Council on issues within its area.

## 10. Emergency Management

- a. Authority to support the development and promotion of individual and community planning for a civil defence emergency; and after an emergency event, support community response efforts.

## 11. Training and Development

- a. Authority to set priorities for and expend annual funding allocated by Council for the purposes of training and development.

# Schedule B - List of iwi and hapū

The law requires the Commission to list the names and areas of interest of iwi and hapū for each local authority proposed to be established in a draft reorganisation proposal.

The Commission has used information on the website Te Kāhui Mangai ([www.tkm.govt.nz](http://www.tkm.govt.nz)), based on advice from Te Puni Kōkiri for this purpose. Larger maps of rohe and areas of interest are available at Te Kāhui Mangai.

## Iwi groups

- Rangitāne (North Island)
- Ngāti Kahungunu
- Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa - Tāmaki Nui ā Rua

The hapū identified for each are listed below.

### Rangitāne (North Island)

Rangitāne hapū are:

Ngāi Tahu  
Ngāti Hāmua  
Ngāti Matetapu  
Ngāti Mutuahi  
Ngāti Pakapaka  
Ngāti Parakiore  
Ngāti Rangitotohu  
Ngāti Ruatōtara  
Ngāti Te Koro  
Ngāti Te Rangiwahaewa  
Ngāti Whakawehi  
Te Hika a Pāpāuma  
Te Kapuārangi  
Hineteorangi  
Ngāi Tamahau  
Ngāti Hāmua  
Ngāti Hinetauira  
Ngāti Mātangiuru  
Ngāti Meroiti  
Ngāti Moe  
Ngāti Taimahu  
Ngāti Tangatakau  
Ngāti Tauiao  
Ngāti Te Atawhā  
Ngāti Te Hina  
Ngāti Te Noti  
Ngāti Te Raetea  
Ngāti Te Whakamana  
Ngāti Te Whātui  
Ngāti Tūkoko  
Te Hika o Pāpāuma

### Ngāti Kahungunu

Ngāti Kahungunu hapū are:

(Wairarapa)  
Kahukuraawhitia  
Kahukuranui  
Ngāi Rangawhakairi  
Ngāi Tahu  
Ngāi Taneroroa  
Ngāi Tumapuhia-a-Rangi  
Ngāti Hikawera o Kahungunu  
Ngāti Hinewaka  
Ngāti Kahukuranui o Kahungunu Kauiti  
Ngāti Kaparuparu  
Ngāti Meroiti  
Ngāti Moe  
Ngāti Papauma o Kahungunu me Rangitāne  
Ngāti Parera  
Ngāti Rākairangi  
Ngāti Rangitataia  
Ngāti Rangitehewa  
Ngāti Tatuki  
Ngāti Te Ahuahu  
Ngāti Te Hina  
Ngāti Te Tomo o Kahungunu  
Ngāti Tūkoko  
Tahu o Kahungunu  
Tamahau  
Whiunga  
(Tāmaki Nui a Rua)  
Ngā Hau E Whā  
Ngāti Hāmua  
Ngāti Mutuahi  
Ngāti Pakapaka  
Ngāti Te Rangiwahaewa  
Te Hika a Pāpāuma

### Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa - Tāmaki Nui ā Rua

Ngā Hau E Whā  
Ngāti Hāmua  
Ngāti Mutuahi  
Ngāti Pakapaka  
Ngāti Te Rangiwahaewa  
Te Hika a Pāpāuma

# Annex 2 - Advantages and disadvantages of the draft proposal

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 Commission's decision paper (available on our website: [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz)).

## Advantages

- a. There would be a stronger mandate for the mayor and councillors with respect to decisions and advocacy for Wairarapa nationally and regionally.
- b. The governance structure would be simplified, with fewer multi and single council committees, task groups and working parties. The new structure would be
  - more effective
  - more easily understood and transparent, and
  - easier for Wairarapa-wide groups and businesses to engage with.
- c. The staff time required to support political decision-making within the Wairarapa would be reduced.
- d. Spending and funding decisions would be rationalised and prioritised across the district for Wairarapa-wide issues.
- e. Planning, policy and regulatory decision-making for the district would be consistent across the Wairarapa, removing the potential for gaps or inconsistencies created by current council boundaries.
- f. With only one council to work with, there would be potential productivity improvements for the businesses and community groups that work across the Wairarapa. It would be easier and cheaper for them to obtain consents and permits, understand council fees and engage in council processes.
- g. It would be easier for funders and other stakeholders who provide public services such as tourism, sporting and cultural organisations, to coordinate with or partner with the council.
- h. There would be a reduction in Local Government Act plans (annual and long term plans and associated plans and policies) from three sets to one set.
- i. There would be more consistent administration of the Wairarapa Combined District Plan.
- j. Better financial resilience – the new council would be in a better position to cope with unexpected change and big challenges.
- k. Increased scale would mean better ability to provide a diverse portfolio of community facilities across the Wairarapa.
- l. Increased council scale means Wairarapa local government would be better able to respond to current and future changes in regulatory standards or requirements set by central government (e.g. fresh water quality standards impacting on sewage treatment and discharges, health and safety regulation updates, financial accounting updates, NZTA updates to road funding requirements).
- m. Increased resources for improved asset management practices and planning.
- n. Roads would be managed as a single network – consistent with how they are used.
- o. It would be easier to take up the opportunity to consider a roading alliance with NZTA.
- p. Increased council scale would mean increased staff capability and capacity, including more scope for specialist staff and greater staffing resilience.
- q. 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.

## Disadvantages

- a. 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.
- b. Reduced Wairarapa representation on regional committees and forums that have membership on a per council basis (e.g. the Regional Transport Committee)
- c. 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.
- d. The transition costs would outweigh the cost savings from merging for the first two years.
- e. The transition period could impact on council productivity.

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# Annex 3 - List of background documents

**Available on the Local Government Commission website  
[www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz)**

Local Government Commission, May 2016, *What do you want for the Wairarapa?*

Local Government Commission, July 2016, *Strengthening the Wellington Region – Progress Update*

Local Government Commission, July 2016, *Wairarapa Local Government Arrangements – summary of community feedback*

Local Government Commission, March 2017, *Deliberation on Wellington Reorganisation Draft Proposal*

McGredy Winder, December 2016, *Local Authority Assets and Debt – Options for the treatment of council debt and assets in a reorganisation of the Wairarapa district councils*

Morrison Low, May 2016, *Wairarapa Local Government Assessment of Options*

Morrison Low, February 2017, *Update to Combined Wairarapa District Council Costs*

PJ and Associates, December 2016, *Report to the Local Government Commission on the Wairarapa Rating Assessment*

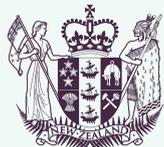
UMR Research, July 2016, *Wairarapa Council Organisation – Local Government Commission Telephone Survey*











**Local Government  
Commission**

Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe