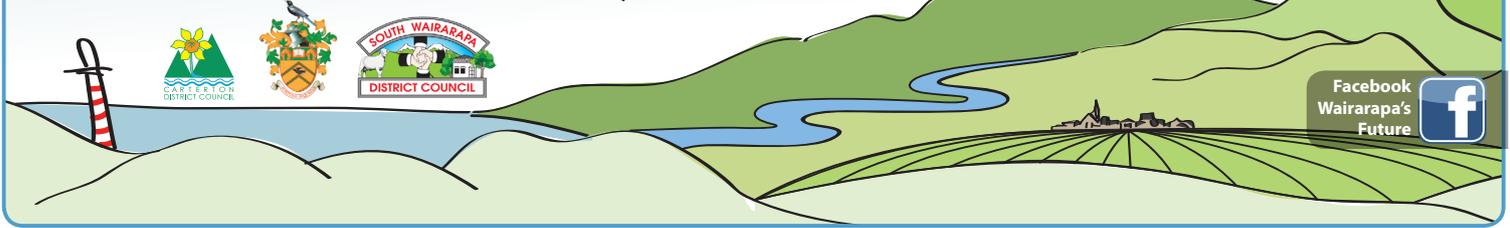


Wairarapa's Future

Local Government Reform



Make your voice heard

Council structures across the wider Wellington region are highly likely to change. Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa district councils have agreed on a preferred option of a single Wairarapa council.

The councils are now jointly consulting Wairarapa residents. You are being asked to take an interest and become informed about one of the most important issues to affect Wairarapa residents in recent years, and the foreseeable future. What will our future look like?

1) Decisions & control within Wairarapa?



...have a single Wairarapa council that is elected by and accountable to Wairarapa ratepayers, with decisions made by Wairarapa people in Wairarapa?

2) Decisions & control in Wellington?



...be part of a super-city style Wellington council where almost all major decisions for Wairarapa would be made by that council, with less than 9% representation from Wairarapa?

Why is this discussion happening now?

Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa district councils have been considering becoming one council for some time. An alternative proposal is for Wairarapa to be part of a single Wellington super city council. New laws passed by Parliament in November 2012 have changed the purpose of local government and how it can be organised. These and more law changes expected in 2013 mean that change is inevitable.

This is your chance to have a say

We need your feedback so you can have an impact on the way decisions for our region are made in future. Usually it's those with strong opinions – either way – that send feedback in these types of consultations. We'd like for that to change, and for all Wairarapa people to have a hand in shaping our region's future. Take this chance to make your views known.

Return your feedback form by 4 February 2013. Ask questions & more info at:

www.wairarapasfuture.govt.nz

OPTION 1

A single Wairarapa council – 3 councils become 1

A single Wairarapa council is the preferred option of Masterton, Carterton & South Wairarapa district councils. This is based on investigations over the past 12 months and feedback we have received from our communities.

The key reason this is the preferred option is that a Wairarapa council would retain the right of residents and ratepayers to self-determination and control over all decisions that affect them.

Wairarapa is made up of mainly rural and provincial communities. It is different from Wellington in both geography and lifestyle; our water catchment and environment are physically independent.

A single Wairarapa council would combine both district and regional council functions. Other councils like this in similar areas of New Zealand with similar populations are in Tasman, Marlborough and Gisborne.

Under both Option 1 and Option 2 the current Greater Wellington Regional Council would no longer exist.

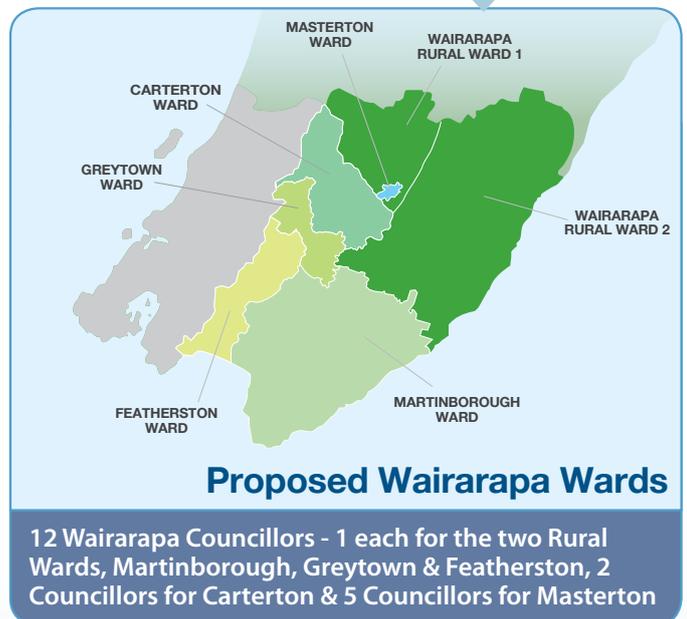
If we simply remove the district council boundary lines within Wairarapa and take on the Regional Council role here we will have failed. The world is in a time of change where we have to do things differently. We have to be smarter, find new ways of working and look at things differently. There will be challenges and a single Wairarapa council would work closely with its communities to meet these.



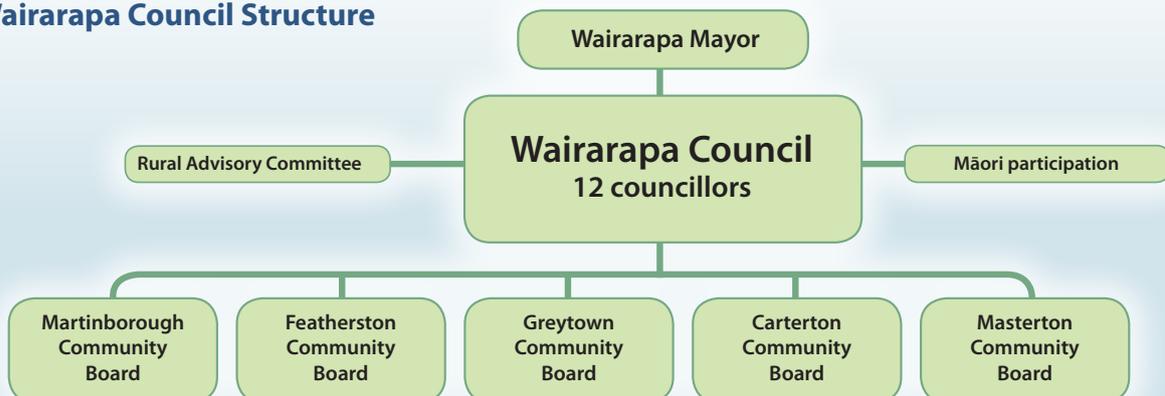
Our vision for Wairarapa... “A strong, friendly, thriving Wairarapa, valuing community and environment”

A single Wairarapa council would:

- be entirely elected by & accountable to Wairarapa people
- unify decision-making & create efficiencies of scale
- make decisions on funding policy & how rates are set
- control expenditure & be accountable for its own assets & staff
- own & manage local assets
- decide appropriate policies interlinked throughout Wairarapa
- allow direct access to a local Mayor & Councillors
- retain the region’s rural voice on environmental & land use policy
- enable direct Māori participation in partnership with Council
- work with 5 Community Boards
- have 1 elected Mayor (reduced from the existing 3)
- have 12 elected Councillors (reduced from the existing 28)
- work with Wellington & other councils to the north on strategic issues for mutual benefit e.g. public transport, economic development
- give Wairarapa further options for the future



Proposed Wairarapa Council Structure



OPTION 2

Wairarapa is part of a Wellington super council - 9 councils become 1

In an alternative option being proposed, Wairarapa would be part of a Wellington super city or 'metro' council that would combine 9 existing councils, including Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council would no longer exist under this option.

New laws passed by Parliament in November 2012 now allow for an Auckland-style metropolitan council in Wellington that includes Wairarapa. This kind of council is defined under the law as a council in a 'predominantly urban area'.

This is different to the Wellington Review Panel's* recommendation of a similar "two-tier" model of a main governing Council and "Local Area Councils" (including one for Wairarapa). The Panel concluded that "the Auckland model cannot be imported into the Wellington region". The new law has now aligned the Wellington model with what is allowed in Auckland. The Panel also suggested that a "custom-built Wellington model" be allowed for under the new law. This has not happened. In short, the new law allows two types of metropolitan structures.



1. The same two-tier model as Auckland with a main governing Council and Local Boards OR
2. A 'one-tier' governing Council with local Community Boards

The two different suggestions make it difficult to be specific about Option 2 now. However, based on new law there are some things we do know.

Allowed in a 'metro' council	Not allowed in a 'metro' council
A 'metro' council in predominantly urban areas with more than 400,000 residents with a main governing Council for the whole area	The 'Local Area Councils' proposed by the Wellington Review Panel*. Instead they would be Local Boards**
Local Boards on the same basis as in Auckland whose powers & functions are set by the main governing Council	Local Boards and Community Boards under the same local body structure
'Local Boards' with between 4 & 9 elected members including the chairperson	A local Mayor – instead there would be a Board chairperson
A manager for a local board who is appointed from Wellington by the main governing council	Employment of staff by a Local Board
	Ownership or disposal of assets or property by a Local Board

*The Wellington Review Panel report was sponsored by Greater Wellington Regional Council and Porirua City Council (October 2012)

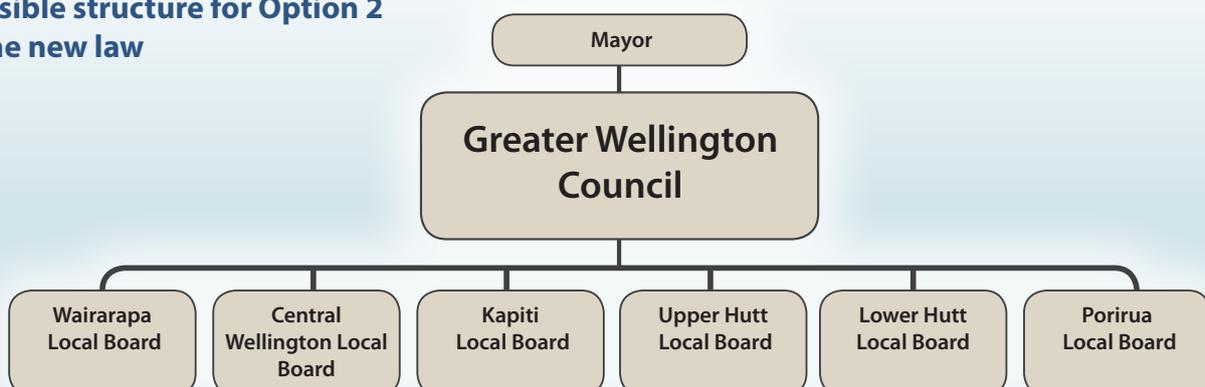
What does the new law mean for Wairarapa under Option 2

- Based on population, it would have less than 9% representation (and vote) on a main governing metro Council – 1 in 10 or perhaps 2 in 20 councillor/s
- Decisions on its **funding policies, rates, budgets and ownership of assets** would be made by this main Council
- Wairarapa could have a Local Board with up to 9 elected members - this is not a Council
- Wairarapa would not have its own mayor

****The role of a Local Board is very different to that of a Council. In summary a Local Board:**

- Has much more limited powers than a Council but a more formal role than a Community Board
- Does not decide on policy, funding, rates or budgets. It does not own assets or employ staff
- Can be delegated functions by the main Council
- Has formal agreements with the main Council & has input into planning

One possible structure for Option 2 under the new law



CURRENT SITUATION

Currently there are nine councils in the greater Wellington region – eight local councils (city and district councils) and the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Wairarapa is served by three district councils – Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa - and the Regional Council. South Wairarapa also has three community boards that advocate on behalf of their local communities.

District councils and the regional council have different responsibilities

In Wairarapa local district councils are responsible for positioning their communities for a prosperous future and for services such as:

- Setting and collecting rates
- Planning and consenting (rules for what can be built and where, issuing resource and building consents)
- Roads and footpaths
- Water supply, waste water, storm water, water races
- Parks, swimming pools, community centres, libraries, cemeteries
- Supporting events, tourism promotion and economic development
- Visitor attractions e.g. museums
- Rubbish collection
- Dog control, liquor licences and food premises.

In Wairarapa the Regional Council provides services that extend across local boundaries. They include:

- regulating use of natural resources - water, air, land
- Wairarapa's rail and bus services
- pest and plant control
- building and maintaining flood protection works



+ Greater Wellington Regional Council covers the whole area

Questions & Answers

- Q: Will the subsidy that Wairarapa currently receives from the Regional Council continue under Option 2?**
- A:** No one can answer this because the Regional Council will no longer exist (under both options). The answer would depend on decisions made by new Council/s that don't presently exist. Under Option 2, the Council would be one new entity after combining 8 councils and the Regional Council. It would make its own decisions on funding and rating, based on the needs of all areas within its control. Wairarapa would have less than 9% of the say in this. See more on the back of this leaflet.

- Q: Will Option 1 mean that Wairarapa is cut off from Wellington?**
- A:** No. Wairarapa would be able to enter into agreements with a Wellington council on matters of mutual interest such as public transport and economic development. It does not have to be in the same governing structure to work with Wellington. A line on a map will not stop Wairarapa working with other councils in Wellington or to the north of Wairarapa.

- Q: Who will make the final decision on the future of Wairarapa local government?**
- A:** There are 2 possibilities. The Local Government Commission, an independent body, will look at all applications for change in an area and advise a final proposal that it thinks will work best. Or, if 10% of electors in just one of the affected districts sign a petition in favour of a public poll, a poll must be held across the entire affected region (in this case, the greater Wellington region). In that case, the Commission's proposal will be accepted if the majority of the votes cast are in favour of it.

Are there other options?

Potentially, yes, but this depends on what happens to proposals being made by Wellington councils. All options currently being proposed by Wairarapa and Wellington councils mean that the regional council will no longer exist. This means Wairarapa would not have a combined district council with a separate regional council. This presently leaves Wairarapa with the two options described here.

The table below shows how representation could look under the two options and the current situation.

Elected Wairarapa people on Councils & Boards

	Option 1	Option 2	Current
Mayor/s	1	0	3
Councillors	12	1/10 or 2/20	28*

Local Board	0	9 max	0
Community Boards	21***	0	12**

*includes 1 councillor on Greater Wellington Regional Council

**Existing community boards for Martinborough, Greytown and Featherston

***For 5 community boards - 3 existing plus 1 each for Carterton and Masterton

HOW WILL CHANGES AFFECT RATES?

An important aspect, but not the only one, is the question of finance, funding and, of course, rates. Rates are like a tax that is used to pay for services. Councils decide how rates are set and distributed amongst the ratepayers in their areas.

One of the challenges when changing council structures is working out how the current differences in ways of funding, rating and service levels across multiple councils can be brought together into a common system under one council.

The Wellington Review Panel* also recognised this when it said:

“Determining how to effectively manage the financial impact and consequences of these decisions at an individual ratepayer level is also very difficult.” (October 2012)

The reality is that no one can say what future rates will be under either Option 1 or 2 because those decisions will be made by entirely new councils, as they are being made in the new combined Auckland Council now.

The same questions and uncertainties apply under each option – a single Wairarapa council and a Wellington super city council.

One question that can be answered is: “Who will make the decisions on these unknowns?”

Option 1: A Wairarapa council & mayor entirely elected by Wairarapa people?

or

Option 2: A largely-metropolitan Wellington council

Here is a summary of some of what we do know and some of the difficult questions that can only be fully answered by new councils.

What we do know (under Options 1 & 2)	Questions to consider
The current councils will not exist, including the Regional Council. New councils with new cost structures will decide and set rates.	Should Wairarapa’s future rating system be decided by a mostly metropolitan council or one made up of and elected by Wairarapa people?
New councils will be operating under new law which redefines the purpose of local government.	How will the purpose of local government in the new law affect services and therefore costs and the rates that are set?
The 9 existing councils in the greater Wellington region all have different ways of setting rates A new common way of rating & funding including user charges will result in changes for every ratepayer.	What can happen when you bring the different rating systems together? What will be the effect on Wairarapa residents, businesses & farms?
Businesses in commercial areas across Wellington/Wairarapa now pay rates at between 2 & 3.5 times more in each dollar (the ‘differential’) than households. Wairarapa businesses pay 2 times more. Wellington central businesses pay 2.8 times more. This helps subsidise many parts of the region including Wairarapa. The Wairarapa subsidy is said to be \$11 million currently.** In the past it was much lower.	What will a common commercial rating policy in a super city look like? What will the new rate in the dollar be? Can Wairarapa assume that the differentials that help provide the subsidies for regional services continue to come its way under Option 2? Is it sustainable for Wellington city businesses & residents to continue to subsidise other parts of the greater Wellington region?
The Regional Council’s current funding arrangements, including its subsidy of Wairarapa & many other council areas will be reviewed under a new super city council	Will the current Regional Council subsidy to Wairarapa and other areas survive the new (mostly city-focused) council’s funding policies under Option 2?
Some of the current Regional Council funding policies are more generous to Wairarapa than anywhere else in NZ (e.g. flood protection).	How sustainable are these policies? Can they be relied upon in a super city where there will be a much greater range of functions & services competing for funding?
Council assets & liabilities (debts) are likely to be managed in the same way across the whole region	Where will that leave the cost for strengthening earthquake prone buildings, leaking buildings & new trains? What is the risk to Wairarapa of its part in this – under both options?
Other decisions just as important as rates will be made by any new council e.g. decisions that will impact on permitted farming activities. These could have a greater financial impact than rates alone.	Should decisions for Wairarapa be made by councillors who are mostly city people with a metropolitan outlook or by councillors who live in Wairarapa and are familiar with its rural/provincial values & culture?

* In October 2012 the Wellington Review Panel, sponsored by Greater Wellington Regional Council and Porirua City recommended that Wairarapa be part of a single Wellington council.

** This could be reduced to \$8.6m with initial savings expected from combining Wairarapa’s three district councils. Further savings can be expected in the future.

YOUR FEEDBACK

Please use this form or the online form at www.wairarapasfuture.govt.nz.

- Send it to Wairarapa Governance Review Working Party, P O Box 444, Masterton
- Deliver it to a South Wairarapa, Carterton or Masterton District Council office
- Email it to feedback@wairarapasfuture.govt.nz
- Fax it to 06 378 8400

Feedback forms will not be returned so please keep a copy.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Organisation (if you are writing on behalf of an organisation)

1. Do you agree with the vision for Wairarapa – “A strong friendly thriving Wairarapa, valuing community and environment.” Yes No
2. Do you agree with the preferred option of a single Wairarapa council that is responsible for district and regional decisions and activities? Yes No
3. What are the reason/s for your answer in 2?

4. Under Option 1 - do you support the suggested:
 - Ward structure of representation? Yes No
 - Community Boards for each town? Yes No
 - Rural advisory committee? Yes No

5. Do you have any comments or other ideas on the structure of a single Wairarapa council (Option 1)? Yes No

6. Do you wish to discuss your feedback with members of the Wairarapa Governance Review Working Party? Yes No

Continue comments here

Please attach additional comments on a separate sheet

What do I do now?

Please read the information provided, find out more (see below), and tell us what you want, what decision you seek and why?

Send the feedback form and more pages if needed by post, email or letter by 4.00pm on 4 February 2013.

Where can I find more information?

This leaflet gives just a summary of the two options presently being considered for Wairarapa. More information is available through:

www.wairarapasfuture.govt.nz

South Wairarapa, Carterton or Masterton District Council offices and libraries

Public meetings:

(advertised from 29 November)

Carterton Events Centre
Monday 10 December, 7.30pm

Featherston – Anzac Hall
Monday 10 December, 7.00pm

Greytown Town Centre
Tuesday 11 December, 7.00pm

Martinborough Town Hall
Wednesday 12 December, 7.00pm

Masterton Frank Cody Lounge
Thursday 13 December, 7.30pm

You can ask a question at
www.wairarapasfuture.govt.nz

or talk to your local councillor