



Local Government  
Commission  
Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

# Wairarapa Local Government Arrangements

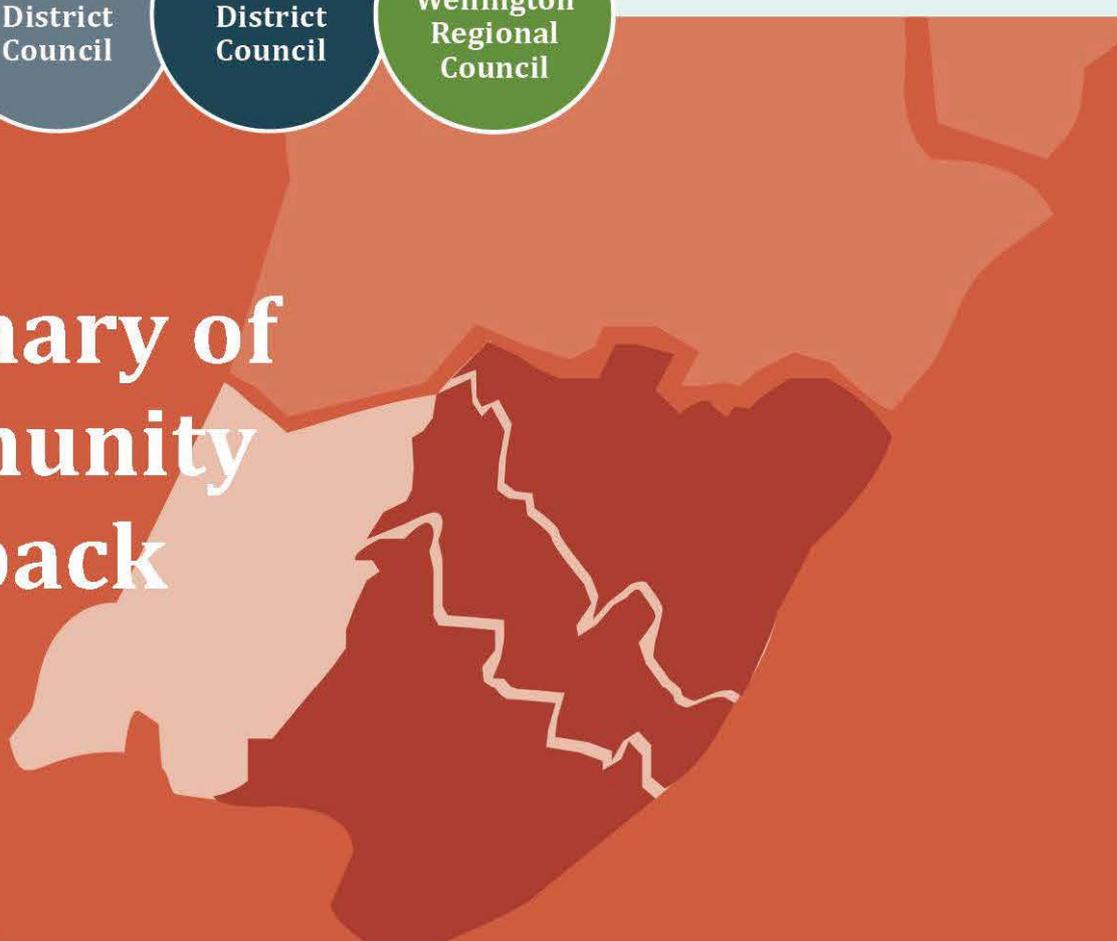
South  
Wairarapa  
District  
Council

Carterton  
District  
Council

Masterton  
District  
Council

Greater  
Wellington  
Regional  
Council

Summary of  
Community  
Feedback



JULY 2016

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# Executive Summary

The Local Government Commission's (the Commission) engagement with the Wairarapa community in mid-2016 is summarised in this report. The purpose of the engagement was to have a community-wide discussion about future local government organisation in the Wairarapa. We wished to identify options the community will support before undertaking more detailed work and formal consultation on the preferred options.

The options under discussion resulted from a collaborative process between the Commission and the Wairarapa's four councils: the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils, and the Greater Wellington Regional Council (the GWRC). The councils and the Commission worked together to obtain an independent assessment of the options. This assessment was the basis for the information to support an extensive community engagement programme in June and early July 2016. We promoted the engagement in local newspapers, on radio, in shop windows and libraries. Councils and community members helped to promote our public meetings and day-time drop-in centres through their social media channels. Over a five-week period we met with more than 320 people to discuss the options' merits and weaknesses in some detail.

We asked the public to complete a questionnaire to indicate which of the six options they preferred and why. We received 1534 responses. Respondents had a clear preference for a combined district council (Option B) at 42 per cent of responses. Options C and D are a combined district council with the additional feature of formal committee relationships with the GWRC. When Option C and D results are added to B, the preference for a combined district is 65 per cent of responses.

The status quo (Option A) was preferred by 23 per cent of respondents. Some 5 per cent of respondents chose each of Options E and F. Option E is a combined district with some regional council functions transferred to it, while Option F is a unitary council for the Wairarapa, combining both regional and district council functions in one council.

We also commissioned a telephone survey of 500 Wairarapa residents in the week of 4 July – 230 residents in Masterton and 135 in each of Carterton and South Wairarapa. This survey provides the views of a representative sample of the community to consider alongside the questionnaire responses.

Some 52 per cent of telephone survey respondents preferred combining the three district councils (Options B to E), 34 per cent preferred no change (Option A), 12 per cent supported a unitary council (Option F) and 2 per cent were unsure. Support was reasonably evenly split across the four combined Wairarapa District Council options (Options B to E).

The Commission is now considering these engagement results before deciding on the next steps. A separate public statement released alongside this document outlines the Commission's considerations and decisions.

# Introduction

In 2013, the Local Government Commission (the Commission) received two applications for local government reorganisation:

- An application from the South Wairarapa, Carterton, and Masterton District Councils for a unitary council for the Wairarapa
- An application from the Greater Wellington Regional Council (the GWRC) for a unitary council for the whole of the Wellington region, including the Wairarapa

Following the prescribed process in the Local Government Act, the Commission called for alternative applications. It publicly notified a proposal in December 2014 for a unitary council for the whole of the Wellington region. This proposal had limited community support. There were 1741 submissions from the Wairarapa.<sup>1</sup> The majority, 1510, were against a region-wide unitary council and 222 supported it (the remainder neither supported nor opposed the proposal). Some 600 people proposed that the Wairarapa councils should merge. The Commission formally withdrew the unitary proposal in June 2015 and this option is now no longer under consideration.

Since then the Commission has been working with the councils and communities in the Wairarapa to develop options to strengthen local government arrangements. The Commission wants to find an option that the community supports.

From submissions on the region-wide unitary proposal, the Commission's engagement with councils, and at public meetings in February 2016, people told the Commission several objectives they wanted to see from their future local government arrangements:

- A stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage
- A more effective, more resilient council now and in the future
- Costs kept down
- More Wairarapa influence on regional council responsibilities
- Environmental standards maintained
- Local identity and representation maintained
- A connection kept with Wellington

The Commission has been working with councillors, mayors and the community to find options that will achieve some of these objectives. The results of this work were six options:

- Option A – no change, the four existing councils remain (the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils, and the GWRC)
- Option B – a single district council for the Wairarapa, combining the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils into one council. Greater Wellington Regional Council's responsibilities remain unchanged

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<sup>1</sup> SWDC 400, 343 against, 54 for; MDC 713, 589 against, 118 for; CDC 628, 578 against, 50 for.

- Option C – a single district council with a formal committee in conjunction with the regional council to develop a joint unitary plan under the Resource Management Act
- Option D – a single district council with two formal committees with the regional council
- Option E – a single district council which takes on major regional council responsibilities
- Option F – a Wairarapa Unitary Council including all the responsibilities of the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils, and the responsibilities of the GWRC in the Wairarapa

The Commission and the four councils worked jointly to procure an independent assessment of these six options. The aim was to provide the community with one source of information about the benefits, risks, and costs of each of the options. The Commission and the councils agreed on the terms of reference for the assessment, decided together on the provider, agreed on all of the assumptions the report would be based on, and checked the draft report for accuracy. The result was the Morrison Low report *Wairarapa local government: assessment of options June 2016*. This report was the basis for the Commission's engagement programme in June and early July 2016.

## Engagement programme

The six options were discussed with the community over a five-week period through a comprehensive engagement programme. This was launched on 6 June. A key feature of the programme was face-to-face engagement with more than 320 members of the community.

The face-to-face engagement included five drop-in centres during June in Carterton (21<sup>st</sup>), Greytown (22<sup>nd</sup>), Martinborough (23<sup>rd</sup>), Featherston (28<sup>th</sup>), and Masterton (30<sup>th</sup>). These centres ran from 10am to 4pm. Commission staff were available to answer questions and listen to feedback on the options. More than 70 people came to the drop-in centres. Many people who attended were seeking clarification of some of the details of the options, some wished to discuss one or more of the options before filling in a questionnaire, and others took the opportunity to have the booklet summarising the options explained to them.

The Commission also held six community meetings in June. Five of these were in the same towns on the same dates as the drop-in centres above. A lunchtime meeting was held in central Wellington on 16 June to cater for Wairarapa commuters. Approximately 220 people attended these meetings. The discussion at the Wellington lunchtime meeting focused on representation and affordability. At all of the Wairarapa meetings attendees asked detailed questions about the options. In Carterton, people focused on the comparative evaluation between the options and Wairarapa representation on the regional council. In Greytown, conversations centred on the merits of community boards. In Martinborough, other options for change were a focus. Featherston attendees were interested in discussing how community boards could work, as well as the financial impacts on ratepayers. This was also a theme at the Masterton meeting, along with how debt would be managed. More details about the community meetings discussions are included in Appendix A.

Meetings with targeted stakeholder groups were also held. These included meetings with representatives from the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa and Rangitāne o Wairarapa, the Youth Council, Federated Farmers, the Wairarapa Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable Wairarapa, the PSA, and Sport Wairarapa. Each of these groups had varying views about the options and suggestions about their detail. Rather than having formal organisational positions, most were encouraging their members to return individual questionnaires. The Wairarapa Chamber of Commerce's questionnaire response noted they would like to see the three Wairarapa councils amalgamate, however requested more details around Options C and D before commenting on them further.

Attendees at the public meetings, drop-ins and targeted meetings were encouraged to complete a short questionnaire as the main means of providing feedback to the Commission. The questionnaire was available online through a link on the Commission's website ([www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz)). There were also paper copies available that could be returned to the Commission by freepost or in a ballot box provided at the drop-in centres and community meetings.

The drop-in centres, community meetings and the questionnaire were publicised in a variety of ways to try to ensure wide awareness. There were media releases – at the launch and in the last week of the campaign – and an Op-Ed column written by Sir Wira Gardiner, Chair of the Commission, published on 15 June in the Wairarapa News. Radio advertisements ran throughout the engagement period. These included advertising the drop-in centres and community meetings, as well as a variation that aired in the last week of the campaign to remind people to complete the questionnaires. Advertisements were run on More FM, the Breeze, the Sound, and ZM. Public notices were placed in newspapers across the Wellington region: Dominion Post, Wairarapa Times-Age, Wairarapa News, Carterton Crier, Greytown Grapevine, Wellingtonian, Cook Strait News, Independent Herald, Hutt News, Kapi-Mana News, Kāpiti News, Kāpiti Observer, Upper Hutt Leader, and the Wainuiomata News.

Posters (A3 and A4) advertising the drop-in centres and community meetings were displayed in public places throughout Masterton, Carterton, Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough. These included at council offices, public libraries and retail stores. Some were displayed on the Masterton-Wellington commuter train.

Larger scale posters explaining the options and providing blown-up versions of selected pages from the booklet were also displayed in vacant store windows in Masterton and Carterton, as well as in the Greytown Town Centre.

Booklets and questionnaires were distributed to council offices, libraries and other public locations throughout the Wairarapa. Copies of the booklet and questionnaire were inserted into the 15 June edition of the Wairarapa News, which was delivered to 21,000 properties in the Wairarapa.

Council communications channels, including social media, were also utilised for promotion.

# Questionnaire results

The questionnaire contained five questions:

- Question 1: What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer? (choose only one)
- Question 2: Why did you choose this option? Tick as many as apply and/or add your own reasons below
- Question 3: Please tell us anything else you would like us to know
- Question 4: Can you please tell us where in the region you live and/or pay rates?
- Question 5: Which age group do you fall into?

A total of 1534 questionnaires were returned to the Commission and are included in the analysis below.

Efforts were made to ensure the questionnaire process was fair and limited the opportunity for 'campaign'-style submissions that might skew responses.

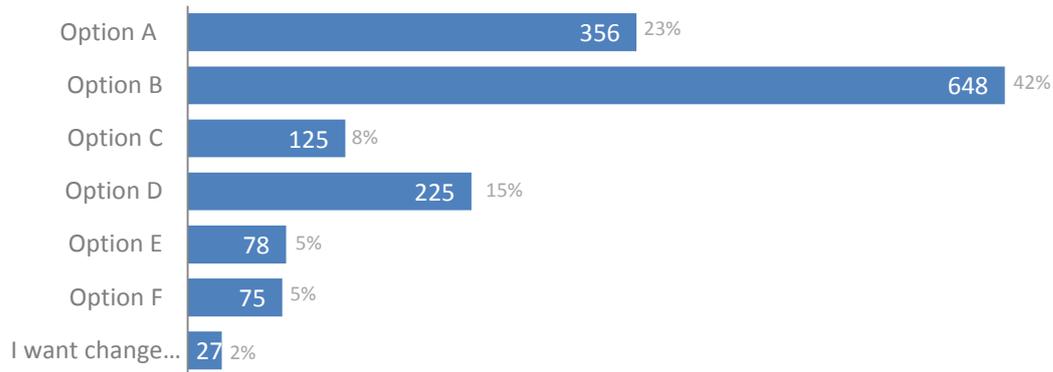
The Commission set up the online questionnaire in Survey Monkey with a restriction that multiple responses could not be sent from the same computer. Despite this, we received 32 responses that came from IP addresses that had already sent at least one response. We have checked all responses where the IP address appeared more than twice to confirm that each was a unique questionnaire response.

We have also undertaken a quality-control check of a random selection of the responses that included a check for obvious multiple responses from the written questionnaires.

## Question one - What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?

The results for question one show a clear preference for Option B, a combined district council at 42 per cent of responses (648). Options C and D are a combined district council with a formal committee relationship with the regional council. When Option C and D results are added to B, the preference for a combined district is 65 per cent of responses (998). Option A, the status quo, was preferred by 23 per cent of respondents (356). Five per cent of respondents chose Options E and F (78 and 75 respectively).

Graph 1: Overall results for question one - What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?



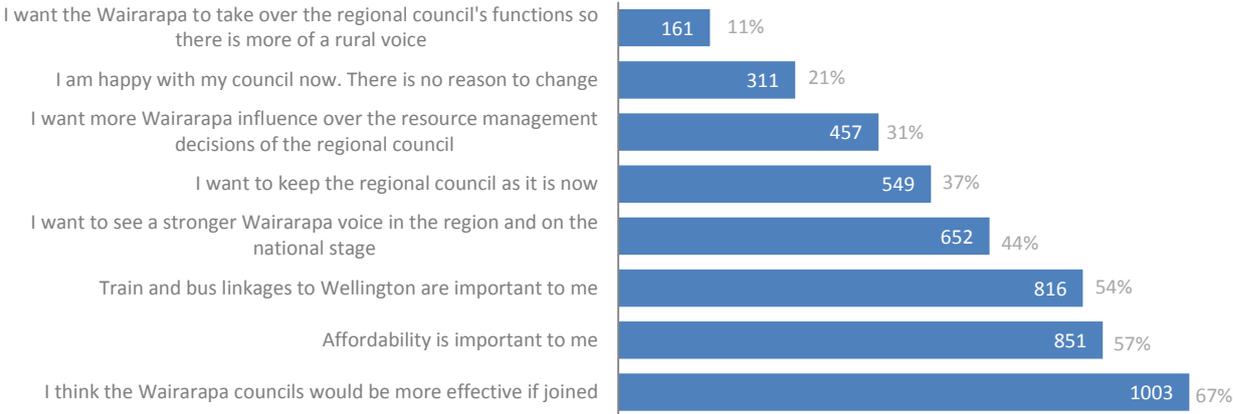
Two per cent of respondents indicated they wanted change but none of the options listed. Briefly, their preferences were:

- Councils should share more services and cooperate better. Activities suggested to be shared included IT, bylaws, administrative services, building inspection, dog control and waste collection
- The previous proposal for a single Wellington Council including the Wairarapa
- The three district councils remain but without the GWRC covering the Wairarapa (effectively making each of the district councils a unitary council)
- Alternative boundary arrangements, including:
  - Two district councils for the Wairarapa, with Carterton combining with one of the other district councils
  - A Wairarapa unitary council including parts of Tararua District
- No community boards under any scenario and fewer community board members
- More empowered community boards
- A reduced number of iwi representatives on the unitary plan committee

## Question two - Why did you choose this option?

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate why they chose the option they did for question one. There was a list of suggestions, and people could also add in their own reasons. Respondents could tick as many of those options as they wished.

Graph 2: Overall results for question two - Why did you choose this option?



The results for question two are consistent with the results for question one. The number of people considering that “the Wairarapa councils would be more effective if joined” was 67 per cent of respondents (1003). The number of people who indicated there was no reason to change, that they were “happy with [their] council now”, was 21 per cent (311), similar to the number of people who indicated preference for Option A (356) in question one.

With respect to the GWRC, 37 per cent (549) indicated they wished to keep it as it is now. In contrast, 31 per cent of respondents (457) indicated they wanted more Wairarapa influence over resource management decisions of the GWRC, and 11 per cent (161) indicated they wanted the Wairarapa to take over its functions so “there is more of a rural voice”.

Affordability was an important consideration in choosing their preferred option for 57 per cent of respondents (851). Train and bus linkages to Wellington were also a key consideration for 54 per cent of respondents (816).

A further 395 responses provided additional comment relating to this question. Responses covered a number of issues. There was some overlap with responses received to question three. Most of the comments reinforced the reasons listed in the questionnaire.

**I am happy with my council now. There is no reason to change**

- My existing council is performing well
- “If it’s not broke don’t fix it”
- The status quo is the most democratic option; cost is not the only determinant of good local government
- Retains rural and different cultural identities
- A larger council would be focused on Masterton
- Concerns about inheriting other councils’ culture, debt and problems
- Different towns have different needs
- Councillors are accessible and accountable
- Smaller councils are less bureaucratic
- Combining councils will increase costs
- The existing councils already have some shared services
- Rates are currently manageable

- Combining councils will change the distribution of rates
- The benefits of change are not obvious and cost savings would not be realised
- Three mayors will provide a more effective lobbying group than one mayor

### **I think the Wairarapa councils would be more effective if joined**

- A combined council would result in savings, be less bureaucratic and less parochial
- A combined district council allows for stronger local leadership but retains the regional council's funding and expertise
- The current system has a lot of duplication, and parts are dysfunctional
- This would lead to greater transparency
- A combined council could improve the overall culture of local government in the Wairarapa by allowing the best from each council to be applied
- A combined council would be better able to afford specialist staff
- The Wairarapa is too small for three councils
- Featherston would be more fairly treated by a larger council
- Support for one council as long as each town and rural area retain an effective voice; this would require an empowered system of community boards

### **I want to see a stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage**

- The Wairarapa needs unity to be more effective on a larger stage
- A combined district council would provide a stronger, more effective voice
- A unitary council could provide a stronger voice

### **Affordability is important to me**

- Three councils create duplication and higher rates
- The regional council undertakes too many capital works
- Rates increases and higher transport costs have a negative impact on senior citizens
- The Wairarapa could not by itself afford to deal with a major natural disaster
- Rates in the Wairarapa seem high
- Reluctance to pay for facilities in Wellington which Wairarapa people rarely use

### **I want more Wairarapa influence over the resource management decisions of the regional council**

- Greater influence for the Wairarapa can be achieved through Option D while still benefitting from region-wide resources
- Regional council funding is important but should be subject to local decision-making
- There is not enough local input into regional council decisions
- Wairarapa should have two members on the regional council

- The regional council has not looked after the quality of the Wairarapa's rivers

#### **I want to keep the regional council as it is now**

- The regional council and the Wellington Region are vital to Wairarapa's well-being
- The regional council is performing well in transport and in land and rivers management
- A regional council is essential to ensure environmental compliance by the district councils
- Regional council has its own set of expertise that would be expensive to duplicate
- The regional council is required to drive the water schemes essential for economic growth
- A unitary council would be unaffordable
- The regional council should be more visible in the community

#### **I want the Wairarapa to take over the regional council's functions so there is more of a rural voice**

- The former Wairarapa catchment and pest destruction boards worked well
- The Wairarapa is different to Wellington
- Wairarapa people better understand the Wairarapa's local issues
- The Wairarapa should be able to make important decisions about matters affecting only the Wairarapa
- The Wairarapa is a discrete catchment
- Regional economic development is too Wellington-focused

#### **Train and bus linkages to Wellington are important to me**

- These provide the transport link with our major city
- The train is important for workers, older people and those without cars
- Access to health facilities in the Wellington urban area is important
- Train fares must be an important consideration in deciding on changes
- There should be one transport agency for the Wellington Region, including responsibility for local roads
- The Rimutaka Range heightens the importance of transport links to Wellington

A small number of respondents raised additional issues. These were:

- This process is the Wairarapa's one big chance to make meaningful change to its governance
- Councils should work more closely together under the current structure, e.g. libraries

- Ratepayers do not understand the detail behind the options
- Wish to see what the South Wairarapa District Council will achieve after the election before making a decision
- There is a need for meaningful Māori representation in decision-making
- Unelected people should not have voting rights on committees

## Question four - Can you please tell us where in the region you live and/or pay rates?

Each district's share of the total Wairarapa population, as estimated by Statistics New Zealand at 30 June 2015, was: the Masterton District 56 per cent, the Carterton District 20 per cent, the South Wairarapa District 23 per cent. Questionnaire returns from the South Wairarapa District and the Carterton District were high compared with their share of the Wairarapa population, at 30 per cent of respondents each. The proportion of questionnaires coming from the Masterton District was low, at 40 per cent.

A small number of respondents live and/or pay rates outside the Wairarapa (38).

Graph 3: Overall results for question four - Can you please tell us where in the region you live and/or pay rates?



## Question five - Which age group do you fall into?

In order to get some indication of whether the engagement had reached a cross-section of Wairarapa people, respondents were asked to indicate the age group they fell into. Some 27 people skipped this question.

The largest group of respondents was in the 65-plus age group, at 53 per cent. The other age groups are much less represented in the responses.

Graph 4: Overall results for question five – Which age group do you fall into?

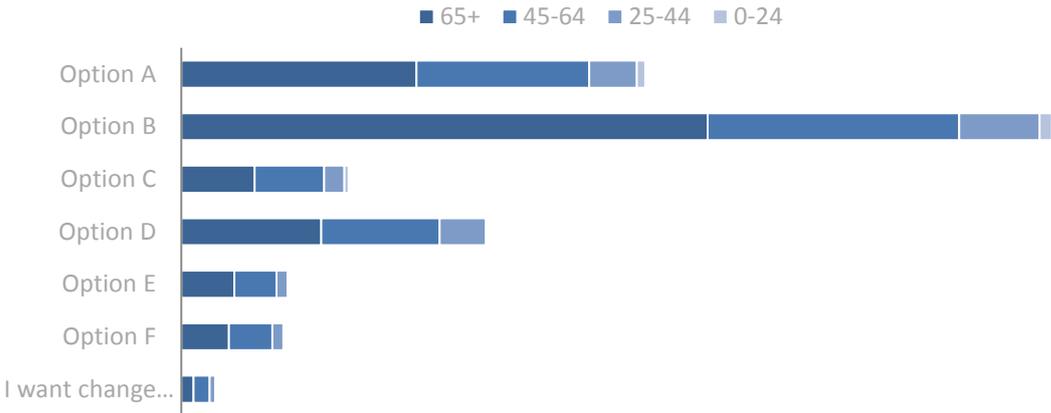


Graphs 5 and 6 below show the responses to question one and two by age group.

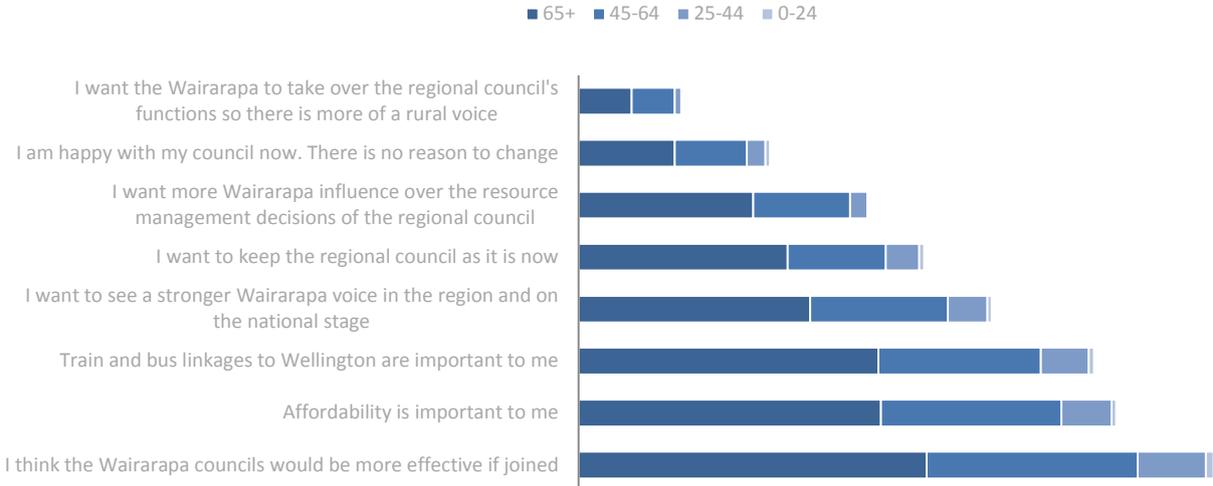
The 65-plus age group was the largest group for each option and each reason, reflecting their largest proportion of respondents.

Each age group had a similar spread of responses to the overall responses, except for two cases: 48 per cent of the 65-plus age group chose Option B. This compares with 36 and 35 per cent for the 25-44 and 45-64 age groups. The 25-44 age group chose Option D, slightly more than the other age groups at 21 per cent. This compares with 13 per cent for the 65-plus age group and 17 per cent for the 45-64 age group.

Graph 5: Question one by age group - What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?



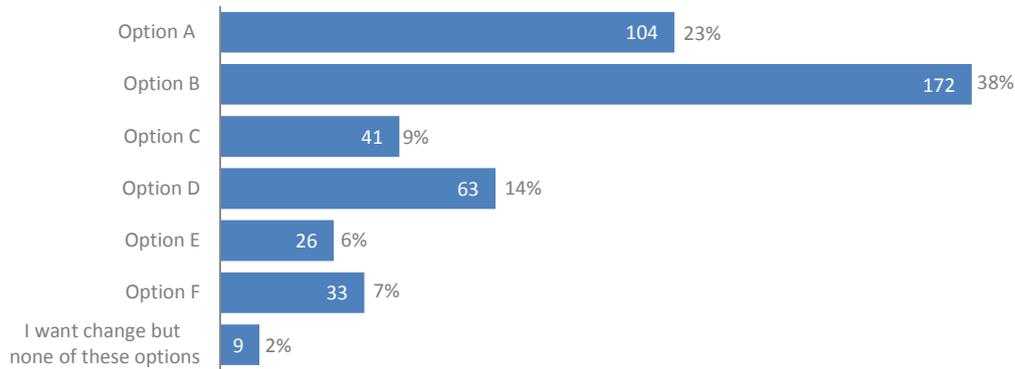
Graph 6: Question two by age group - Why did you choose this option?



### Reponses from the South Wairarapa District

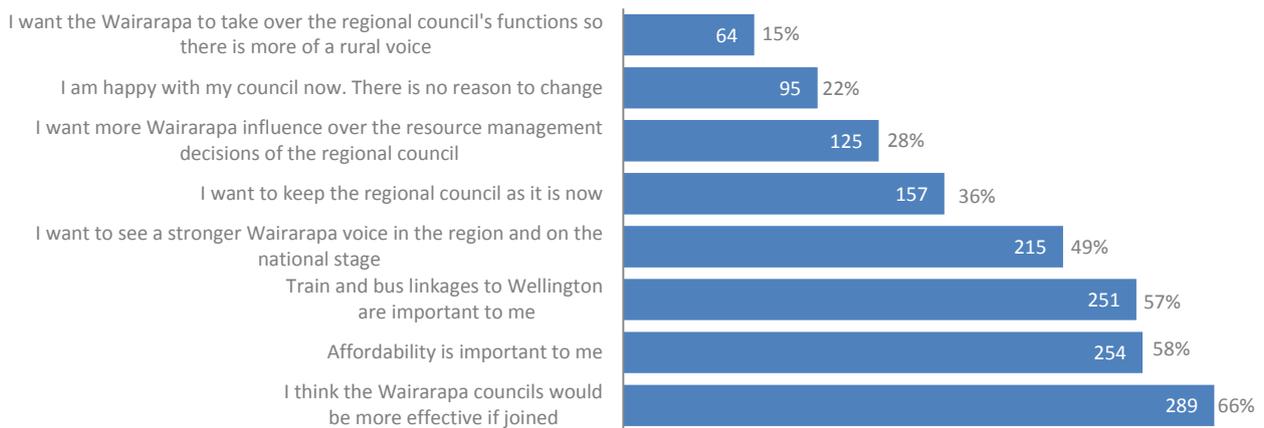
The choice of options for question one in the South Wairarapa District is similar to the overall responses. When Option C and D results are added to Option B, the preference for a combined district is 62 per cent of responses (276).

Graph 7: South Wairarapa District responses to question one - What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?



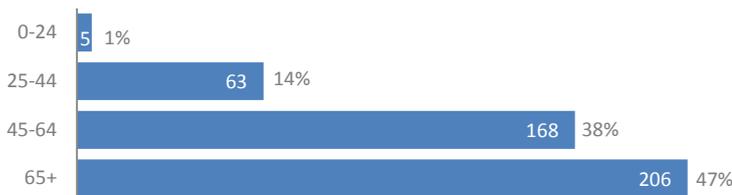
The three highest-ranked reasons for option choices noted for question two are the same as the Wairarapa-wide result.

Graph 8: South Wairarapa District responses to question two - Why did you choose this option?



The proportion of people who responded to the questionnaire aged 65-plus was slightly lower, and proportion of people aged 25-64 slightly higher, in the South Wairarapa District compared with the Wairarapa-wide responses.

Graph 9: South Wairarapa District responses to question five - Which age group do you fall into?

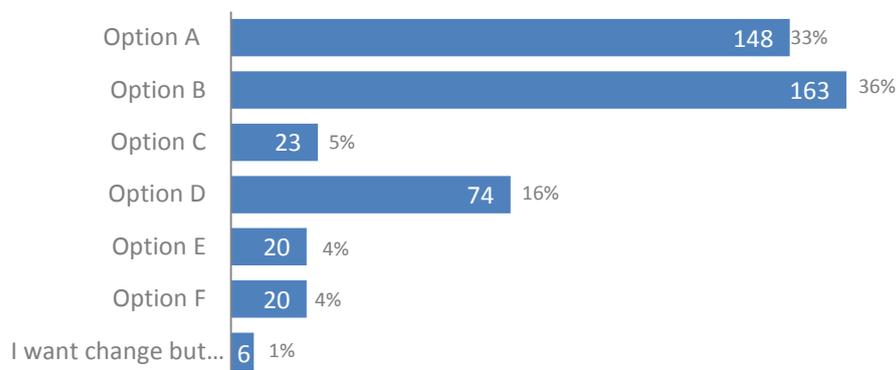


## Reponses from the Carterton District Council

Option B is the highest ranked option for Carterton District residents. When Option C and D results are added to B, the preference for a combined district is 57 per cent of responses (260), lower than the overall result of 65 per cent.

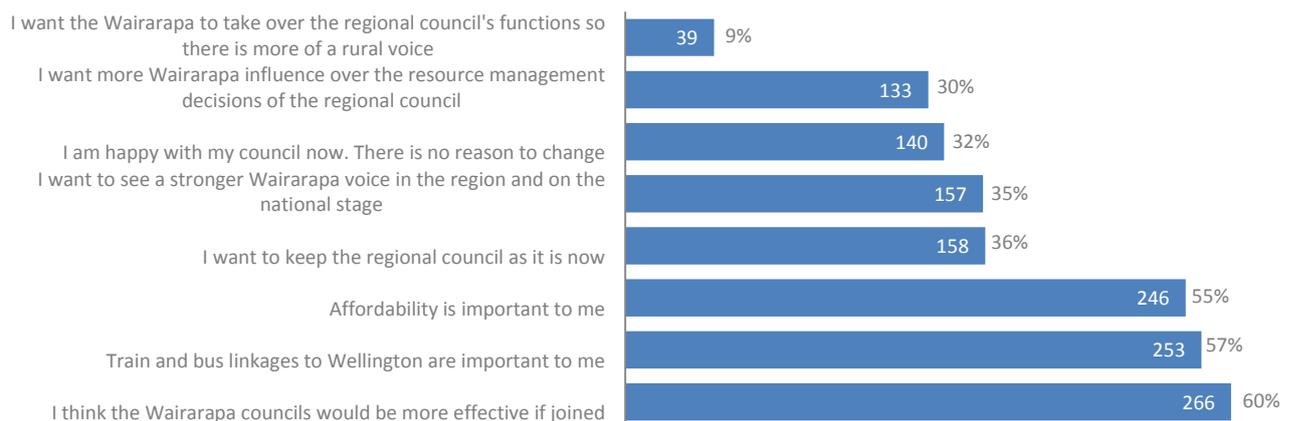
In contrast to the Masterton District and the South Wairarapa District, the margin between Option A the status quo and Option B, the combined district, is small. There is more support for the status quo in Carterton than in the other two districts at 33 per cent compared with 23 per cent for South Wairarapa and 16 per cent for Masterton.

Graph 10: Carterton District responses to question one - What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?



The ranking of reasons in the Carterton District is similar to the overall response and the three highest ranked choices are the same as in the overall result.

Graph 11: Carterton District responses to question two - Why did you choose this option?



The age distribution of respondents in the Carterton District is almost identical to the Wairarapa wide distribution.

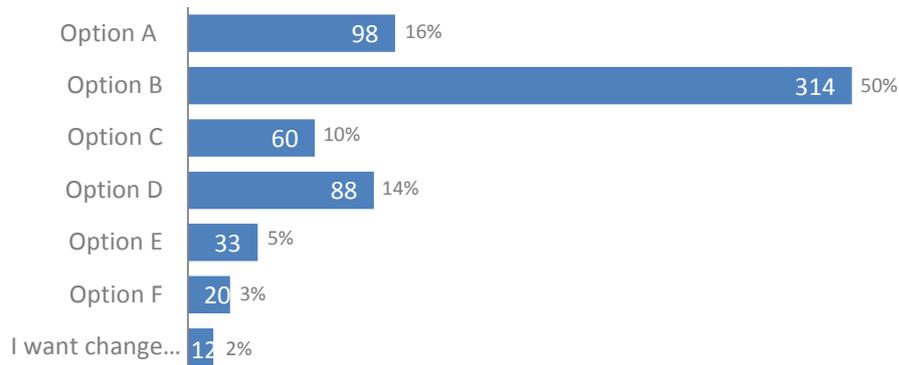
Graph 12: Carterton District responses to question five - Which age group do you fall into?



## Reponses from the Masterton District

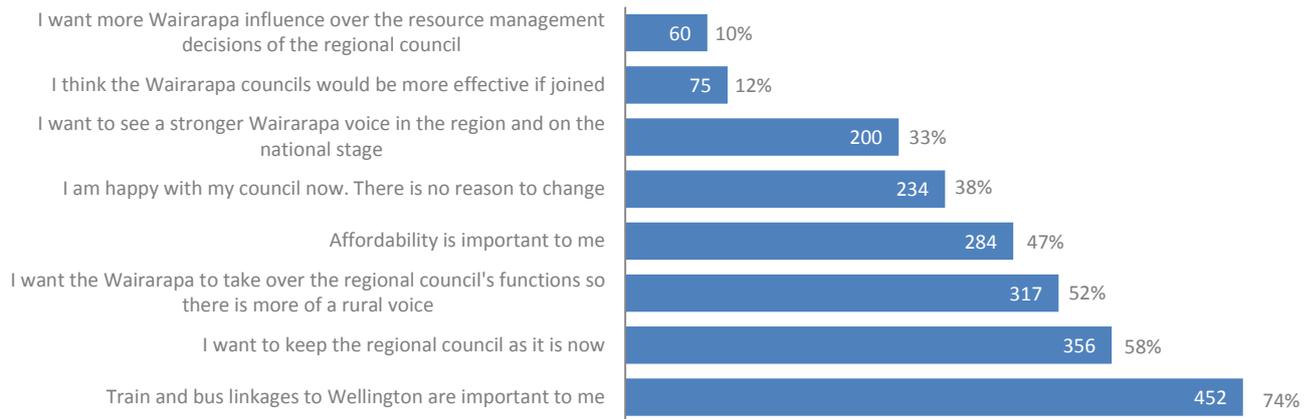
The proportion of responses for Option B was significantly higher in the Masterton District (50 per cent) compared with the overall response (42 per cent), and compared with the Carterton District (36 per cent) and the South Wairarapa District (38 per cent). When Option C and D results are added to B, the preference for a combined district is 74 per cent of responses (462), higher than the Wairarapa wide result of 65 per cent. Masterton respondents had the least support for Option A – the status quo at 16 per cent, compared with 23 per cent overall.

Graph 13: Masterton District results for question one - What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?



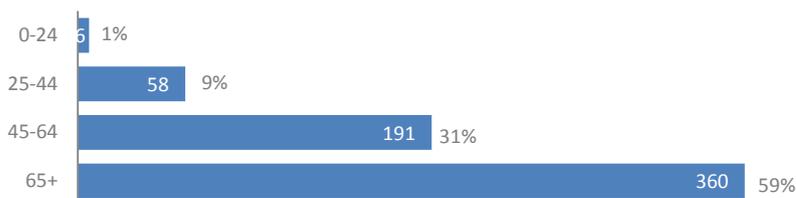
The ranking of choices in the Masterton District differs from the districts. In particular the choice “I want the Wairarapa to take over the regional council’s functions” was much higher at 52 per cent of Masterton respondents, compared with 11 per cent overall.

Graph 14: Masterton District results for question two - Why did you choose this option?



The distribution of age groups in the responses from the Masterton District is broadly similar to the overall distribution, although the 45-64 age group is slightly less represented and the 65-plus age group is slightly more represented.

Graph 15: Masterton responses to question five - Which age group do you fall into?



## Comments in response to question three – Please tell us anything else you would like us to know

There were 317 responses providing additional comment relating to this question. They covered a number of issues summarised below. Most discussed the options raised in question one or related matters, such as implementation of change and the engagement process, and these are summarised below. Others raised issues outside the scope of the Commission’s engagement process, e.g. comment on the frequency and timetabling of trains. These are not included in the summary.

### Support for the status quo (37)

- The current Mayors and councillors are very accessible and this would suffer with a larger council
- The Carterton District Council is performing better than the other two district councils, and Carterton would suffer if combined
- Existing councils are working well
- Local decisions are best locally made
- Amalgamation would lead to loss of identity

- “Bigger is not always better”/ “if it’s not broke don’t fix it”
- Concern about inheriting debt from other councils
- Establishing a new council will be expensive
- Savings from amalgamation are unlikely to be realised
- Existing councils are based on a strong sense of community
- Shared services, greater cooperation and other improvements could be further pursued
- Current problems are unlikely to be solved by amalgamation
- Carterton and South Wairarapa are led by good, common-sense people
- Like easy access to staff who know the area
- It would be harder for individual towns to get funding from a larger council
- Would not want Masterton to be dominant in a new council

### **Support for a single district council (32)**

- Combined councils would be more effective than current three councils
- A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to overhaul governance in the Wairarapa
- Would provide better service and expertise by having critical mass
- A single council would have lower overheads and economies of scale
- Wairarapa is a small area and doesn’t need a complicated local government
- Featherston has lost out under current arrangements and would benefit from a combined council
- A combined council would provide better decision-making
- The existing districts are too small to have separate councils
- Separate councils result in parochialism instead of a united focus

### **Joint committees (7)**

- Like the idea of the GWRC having to work cooperatively with the district council through a committee structure

### **Transferring regional functions to a Wairarapa District Council (7)**

- This is likely to be a costly option
- This would ensure that Wairarapa decisions were being made by Wairarapa people

### **Wairarapa Unitary Council (11)**

- Disbelief at the financial data presented by the Commission on Options E and F
- Wairarapa is different from Wellington
- A separate Wairarapa council could focus on Wairarapa issues
- Wairarapa is capable of standing alone
- Wairarapa is different from Wellington
- A separate Wairarapa council could focus on Wairarapa issues

- Wairarapa is capable of standing alone
- A unitary council would be empire-building by Mayors or would be too costly
- Public transport would cost more under a Wairarapa unitary council

### **GWRC and the Wairarapa region (26)**

Positive comments about the GWRC included:

- Concern that most urban dwellers are ignorant of the good work the GWRC does
- Loss of the GWRC would see a loss of institutional knowledge and a loss of expertise
- Wairarapa's future is bound closely to that of the Wellington Region
- Many Wairarapa residents work in Wellington and therefore have an interest in Wellington issues
- Large number of visitors to the Wairarapa are from Wellington
- The GWRC should continue to be responsible for wastewater consents
- Transport needs to be managed regionally
- Keep regional involvement in transport and economic development
- Favouring separate environmental supervision from the GWRC
- The GWRC has expertise difficult to replicate on a smaller scale in the Wairarapa
- Talk of gold plating by the GWRC is exaggerated; catchment and land management is agreed with local committees
- Wairarapa has benefitted from GWRC funding
- Wairarapa cannot afford to take over GWRC responsibilities
- The GWRC performs well on pest control and flood protection from a rural landowners' point of view
- The GWRC has established good links with the rural community
- Option D provides an opportunity for the Wairarapa and the GWRC to work constructively together

Conversely, others stated that:

- There is a poor relationship between the GWRC and the Wairarapa
- The GWRC's performance on catchment issues is poor
- The GWRC should devolve decision-making for Wairarapa issues
- The GWRC is poorly run and can't keep costs under control
- Transport for the Wellington Region should be run by a board appointed by the councils

### **GWRC representation (8)**

Some responses sought greater representation from the Wairarapa on the GWRC as follows:

- Wairarapa should have two members on the GWRC
- Wairarapa should have more members on the GWRC
- Wairarapa should have at least three members on the GWRC
- 50 per cent of the GWRC's membership should be rural

### **Committee membership (14)**

Some responses commented on the possible composition of committees proposed to be established under Options C and D:

- Oppose appointment to committees based on gender, age or race
- Opposed to over-representation based on ethnicity
- Non-elected members should not have voting rights
- Supports iwi representation but at a lower proportion
- Māori representation is important

### **Implementation (16)**

Several responses included comment on issues to be considered if reorganisation took place. These included:

- The rating system should be structured so the Carterton District is not burdened with the debt of other districts (particularly Masterton's)
- A new council's headquarters should not be based in Masterton; Carterton (or Featherston) is more central
- A strong mayor will be needed to lead a new council
- There should be 14 members and no community boards
- 21 community board members too many
- Community boards are inefficient or there is no need for community boards
- Masterton would have a disproportionate say on a combined council; rather each of the townships should have equal votes
- There should be a greater number of rural representatives
- There should be mechanisms to ensure the rural voice is not overshadowed by urban interests
- The mayoral position should rotate between each current district
- A new council's first term should be four years

### **Process (45)**

There were also a number of responses about the Commission's engagement process, both positive and negative:

- The process was good/far better than the consultation on the earlier "super city" proposal
- The process has been taking too long; action is required
- The Commission should have honoured the work already done by the Wairarapa councils for their original application
- Council members have a conflict of interest in developing reorganisation proposals
- The time allowed for return of questionnaires after the public meetings and drop in sessions was too short

- The case for amalgamation has not been made and a cost-benefit analysis needs to be provided and/or not enough information on costs
- It was an expensive exercise
- Options C and D need to be explained more clearly
- Change in the Wairarapa should not take place before decisions are made on a region-wide transport organisation
- Participants should have been told about how other unitary authorities are doing
- Will reorganisation be re-introduced every year until the Commission gets the answer it wants?
- Will questionnaire feedback count in considerations or is it just PR?

### **Other (38)**

A number of responses made other comments relevant to reorganisation. These included:

- There is a need a strong mayor and councillors to examine what is currently going on with how councils are run
- The Masterton District Council has poor communication and decision-making
- Rates cannot continue to rise; increased rates will affect low-income families and pensioners
- Some good councillors are holding the smaller towns together rather than the councils
- Wairarapa people can be inwards looking, hence concerns about being swallowed up by Wellington
- Existing councils should have been focusing on infrastructure
- Concern about performance of the Auckland Council
- Waterways should be cleaned up
- Water quality in Martinborough needs to be improved
- There is antipathy between Masterton and the rest of the Wairarapa which will require careful change
- Wairarapa needs to go forward with a new vision

## **Additional responses**

In addition to the 1534 responses summarised above, we also received 16 that could not be included in the total. These fell into two categories:

- Seven that did not indicate any preferred option in question 1
- Nine that indicated more than one preferred option in question 1

For those responses where a preference was not indicated the reasons given included:

- Population size needs just one council
- Resource management calls for cooperation with the wider region

- Which option is focused on better transport for those with no car?
- You put unelected people on the council, so who cares
- Democratic elections for everyone. No preferential treatment as Māori through back door

Three of the responses indicated both Options C and D as preferences. The stated reasons were:

- Māori to be represented on all levels of governance
- Rail is important
- Duplication of resources e.g. Events Centre in Carterton and a Town Hall in Masterton
- The Masterton District Council is impotent

Two responses indicated both Options B and E as preferences. The reason stated related to a desire for cheaper rates. One response indicated a preference for either Option A or Option F. “You either go for real change or you do not waste everyone’s time.” Three other combinations of options were also indicated with a variety of reasons given.

# Summary of telephone survey

In order to ensure the Commission had an understanding of all community views, especially those who may not have been aware of the Commission's engagement programme, the Commission contracted UMR Research, an independent market research company, to conduct a telephone survey of Wairarapa residents.

The full UMR Research report is available on the Commission's website [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz) and is briefly summarised here.

## Methodology

The survey took place from 5-9 July 2016, the final week of the Commission's community engagement. The total sample size was 500 people aged 18 years and older randomly selected from residents living in South Wairarapa (135), Carterton (135) and Masterton (230). The margin of error for a 50 per cent figure at the 95 per cent confidence level for a sample size of 500 is  $\pm 4.4$  per cent.

## Results regarding options for future local government organisation

A total of 56 per cent of respondents thought there needs to be a change in the way local government is organised in the Wairarapa.

Respondents were first asked about their levels of support for three general scenarios – all four councils combined into one unitary council, all four councils remain unchanged, the three districts combined into one district council with GWRC remaining separate. These equate to Options F, A, and B-E in the questionnaire. Most (57 per cent) respondents supported a combined district council with a separate regional council. A total of 55 per cent opposed a unitary council. Almost half (46 per cent) opposed the four councils remaining unchanged; with 34 per cent supporting the no-change option.

Respondents were then asked which of the same three general scenarios they would prefer. The majority (52 per cent) preferred a combined district council with a separate regional council. A total of 34 per cent said they would prefer that the four existing councils remain unchanged. Only 12 per cent would prefer a unitary council.

For the 'combined district plus unchanged regional council' option respondents were further asked about four different ways of achieving this:

1. GWRC responsibilities would remain completely unchanged (equates to Option B)
2. Create a joint committee to work on environmental planning between the two councils (equates to Option C)
3. Create two committees to ensure more Wairarapa input into environmental planning and Wairarapa services (equates to Option D)
4. Transfer most of GWRC's responsibilities to a new combined Wairarapa District Council (equates to Option E)

Most respondents supported Options B (55 per cent), C (53 per cent), and D (53 per cent). A total of 45 per cent opposed Option E, while 29 per cent supported it.

When asked which of these four options they preferred, no clear preference emerged, with 24 per cent preferring Option B, 26 per cent Option C, 22 per cent Option D, and 19 per cent Option E.

The main reasoning given by those who preferred the three district councils to combine was not wanting to combine with Wellington because they are too different (35 per cent). Efficiency and cost savings also featured strongly at 20 per cent. The most cited reason given for leaving the councils unchanged was the districts are too different to be combined (30 per cent). It is working well now (19 per cent) was another strong reason. The two driving reasons for those who said they preferred all four councils combining into one was the idea that there would be an increase in efficiency (31 per cent) and that the districts are too small to justify having their own councils (26 per cent).

### **Awareness of the Commission's work and local government in the Wairarapa**

A total of 64 per cent of those surveyed were aware of the Commission's work in the Wairarapa. Most people who had heard of the Commission's work (44 per cent) did so by way of a newspaper article.

Half of all respondents had heard about the options before the telephone survey. The two most common sources of information about the options were a newspaper (31 per cent of respondents who had heard of the options before being contacted for the telephone survey), and the Commission's booklet (30 per cent). Just over half (51 per cent) said a brochure was their preferred way of getting information about local government arrangements, with 66 per cent indicating the booklet was useful or very useful. The most useful information sources were word of mouth (77 per cent), newspaper (74 per cent), Commission posters (74 per cent), and work (71 per cent). (All percentages in this paragraph are of the number of respondents who had heard of the options before the telephone survey).

Knowledge of local government in the Wairarapa was mixed, with 48% declaring they knew 'a lot' or 'a fair amount', and 51 per cent saying they knew 'not that much' or 'hardly anything'. Ratings of the job the local government does in the Wairarapa were mostly neutral. A third (34 per cent) said they did a good job, 12 per cent said a poor job, and 54 per cent were in between or unsure. Carterton respondents gave a higher positive rating at 46 per cent.

Younger respondents (those under 30 years old) were far less likely than older respondents likely to have any knowledge of local government in the Wairarapa, with only 16 per cent saying they knew 'a fair amount' and none saying they knew 'a lot'. Similarly fewer people under 30 (28 per cent) were aware of the Commission's work, than older people.

## **Commission's decisions and next steps**

The Commission has now considered these engagement results before deciding on the next steps. A separate public statement released alongside this document outlines the Commission's considerations and decisions.

# Appendix A - Community meeting summaries

The public meetings provided a mixture of comment and questions about the work of the Local Government Commission (the Commission) and the options under community consideration. Responses to the questions raised at the meetings are provided separately in Appendix B.

## Wellington lunchtime meeting, 16 June 2016

A small group attended the Wellington lunchtime meeting designed to cater for Wairarapa-Wellington commuters. Discussion focused on representation, affordability and the process for moving forward.

**Question:** How is the number of regional councillors (one) for the Wairarapa determined? Could this be reconsidered? Could this be a more cost-effective option? Would legislative change be required?

**Comment:** Regional Council is visible in Riversdale.

**Comment:** Option F is not feasible.

**Comment:** Options A and F are not favoured.

**Comment:** Strengthen Wairarapa – affordability vs importance.

**Comment:** Sewage and water badly handled – single council good starting place but need a formal link to regional council.

**Comment:** Option D with two committees?

**Comment:** Farmers have indicated significant change is needed.

**Comment:** People don't understand how rates are struck. Impact on rates will be implied to people. Unexplained differences in rates between South Wairarapa towns.

**Question:** Does the Commission decide where any new head office should be?

**Question:** Will there be further engagement with the community?

## Carterton Meeting, 21 June 2016

Approximately 80 people attended the Carterton evening community meeting. Discussion focused on detailed questions about the various options, the star system for evaluation options in the information booklet, and Wairarapa representation on the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC).

**Question:** Could experts be appointed to the Option D committees rather than or as well as councillors, because a breadth of knowledge is needed to successfully contribute to these committees?

**Question:** Options E and F have lots of stars whereas Option A does not. How can we be sure of the ratings?

**Question:** What does resilience mean?

**Question:** Are the options with two stars four times more effective than the status quo?

**Question:** What will the structure of Options C and D committees look like 10 years on?

**Question:** Does the real cost of Options E and F include the difference between the forecast shortfalls and the surpluses shown for Options A to D?

**Question:** Option C – of the three elected representatives from Regional Council, would one be the Wairarapa Constituency Regional Councillor?

**Question:** Why was the previous Wairarapa Services Committee dropped?

**Question:** Do we still retain an economic development relationship with Wellington in all options except Option F?

**Question:** The Local Electoral Act formula for calculating the number of regional councillors is not based on land area. Could this be factored into considerations as well?

**Question:** Would the irrigation project and improved rail be under threat with Option F?

**Comment:** Good influence on councillors in Wellington.

**Question:** What are the complications of decision-making under Options C and D?

**Question:** Is anything happening on the western side of the hill that could impact on options for Wairarapa?

**Question:** With Option A we do nothing, but save \$44 million. How?

### ***Carterton: Comments on specific options***

#### **Option A**

- This whole process seems to be based on the unspoken assumption that something is broken/inadequate and needs fixing/improving. Does it? Really?
- What proof is there that Option A will have less influence? The Wairarapa has already proved it can have an influence – no super city as a result
- It is suggested that by reducing duplication etc that there would be improved capability of staff but research shows that reductions in this way result in more staff and greater loss – see Auckland

#### **Option B**

- Get rid of community boards – not effective and not enough clout
- Add extra regional councillor because our land mass is bigger
- Concerned about too much role of community boards – didn't include them as part of proposal. Councillors need to play bigger role and fully interact with communities they represent

## Option F

- Biggest economic development projects – improved rail, irrigation – would be harder to fly with this option

### *Carterton: Other Options*

#### **Status quo and all-of-New Zealand resource management**

- Nothing is broken in the district so nothing needs to be repaired
- Preserve democracy

#### **Disaster, flood management, roads and public transport management.**

##### **We are one New Zealand**

- If anything breaks on a major scale the government should send best experts/fund/give resources to fix it on a case-per-case basis
- Solve extra problems

### **Greytown Meeting, 22 June 2016**

Approximately 25 people attended the Greytown evening community meeting. Discussion focused on community boards, detailed questions about the various options, and other points of clarification.

**Question:** Who has to ratify decisions under Options C and D?

**Question:** How much say would we have in decision-making under Options C and D? Are the committees 'recommend' only?

**Comment:** If Option C, Wairarapa Services Committee did lots of work – shame its council doesn't improve.

**Question:** Is a unitary plan different from a long-term plan?

**Question:** Why is there no comparative information with other unitary authorities?

**Comment:** Regional Council spending is out of control.

**Question:** Under Option F, would there be savings to the GWRC if they no longer have functions in the Wairarapa?

**Question:** Would the new council have a two-year or four-year term?

**Question:** What is the rationale for keeping regional economic development with the GWRC under Option E?

**Question:** Is regional economic development a statutory responsibility for councils?

**Comment:** Transport costs to the Wairarapa should be user pays, not rates.

**Comment:** The two rural wards for Option B need clarification.

**Question:** Powers of community boards very important – are there enough powers in the Local Government Act?

**Question:** What's the purpose of the Rural Advisory Committee under Option B? Are people appointed or elected?

**Question:** What would the transition process be? Will there be a transition committee?

**Comment:** Option F – Wairarapa way of doing things is more practical and cheaper.

### **Martinborough Meeting, 23 June 2016**

Approximately 30 people attended the Martinborough evening community meeting. Discussion focused on detailed questions about the various options, other options for change, and points of clarification.

**Question:** Why isn't retaining existing councils but with more GWRC responsibility included as an option (e.g. creating the same committees as Option D but keeping the three councils separate)?

**Comment:** Another option that should be included is the three existing councils but with Options C and D committees.

**Comment:** Fixing things that aren't broken – keep the status quo. Martinborough doesn't want to be part of Masterton.

**Comment:** The six appointees under Option C is the "death of democracy" – they should be elected.

**Question:** Would Wairarapa have preferred to leave things as is?

**Question:** What are the economic costs to local communities, of inefficiencies in the current system?

**Question:** Will the Option C committee have no teeth?

**Comment:** It is wrong to extrapolate existing GWRC costs.

**Comment:** Into the future it is not efficient to have three councils.

**Comment:** The rail system is the only profitable part of the system.

**Comment:** The Wairarapa has only one vote on the GWRC but has a large land area. We should ask the Government to change this.

### ***Martinborough: Other Options***

Combine the South Wairarapa District and the Carterton District only – lowest-risk option.

### **Featherston Meeting, 28 June 2016**

Approximately 45 people attended the Featherston evening community meeting. Discussion focused on detailed questions about the various options, community boards, and financial impacts on ratepayers.

**Comment:** Some people weren't able to attend drop-in centres.

**Question:** How much money is received from central government to fund rail? Would it be possible to contract rail service delivery back to the GWRC under Option F? Is it possible to lobby government to maintain Wairarapa rail services?

**Question:** Where did the original councils' proposal for amalgamation come from?

**Comment:** There is a huge variation in figures.

**Comment:** Featherston Borough had a sewage system which had been efficient but now it is not. What has gone wrong? We should have faith in the current system.

**Question:** If we get rid of the GWRC could a new Wairarapa Unitary Council compel the GWRC to fund commuter train?

**Question:** Would it be possible for a small part of the Wairarapa to break away from the rest?

**Question:** Why isn't Māori representation included in every option?

**Question:** Is a unitary council without community boards another option?

**Question:** How would the assets and debts of the regional council be apportioned when taken on by a new council?

**Question:** How would voting on a final proposal work? Is it just an absolute numbers basis? Masterton is bigger than the South Wairarapa District Council and could therefore out-vote.

**Question:** Why is there only one Wairarapa regional councillor?

**Question:** Are the extra costs in Option F costs that are demanded by ratepayers?

**Comment:** We don't need the GWRC. Old governance system is out of date.

**Comment:** Councils could be making savings now.

**Comment:** The disparity between the three towns in the South Wairarapa District won't get better under any of the options.

**Question:** If the current councils are only rated half a star now how would they take on new functions?

**Question:** Option A has half a star in every category. Does this mean current councils are rubbish? This kind of rating system appears to be steering people down a certain path.

**Comment:** Commission should be requiring the existing councils to be more effective rather than reorganising the councils.

**Comment:** The council needs to put something back into each South Wairarapa town e.g. a civic town centre in each town. There is no public transport access from Featherston to Martinborough. We need a Masterton head office and another office somewhere else that people can get to by public transport.

**Question:** Who told us we had to change? Is the choice and control ours?

**Question:** Concern that the power of community boards would be at the discretion of a new council. Could the Commission set minimum delegations?

**Question:** Would there be community boards for Masterton and Carterton?

**Question:** What were the boundaries for the financial calculations?

**Comment:** Relationships are key. Councils and community boards will become fractured if relationships are not working. Need some Commission power to put in place.

**Comment:** Rather see extra elected members with no community boards.

**Question:** Does the Commission have the power to define guidelines for community boards in concrete?

**Question:** Could we call community boards something else but they still have the same powers?

**Comment:** Who is the independent representative standing up for us?

**Question:** Why does the current situation with four councils have a weaker Wairarapa voice?

**Comment:** There is no transparency with the current council.

**Question:** Will all these questions and answers be on the website?

## **Masterton Meeting, 30 June 2016**

More than 30 people attended the Masterton evening community meeting. Discussion focused on detailed questions about the various options, the financial impacts on ratepayers, ring-fencing current debts, and other points of clarification.

**Question:** Option B surplus vs Option E shortfall. Is the difference actually \$140 million?

**Question:** How would the shortfall in rates be covered? Is the shortfall on top of the existing planned rates increases of 3–4 per cent? Would a rates increase to address the shortfall be a one-off.

**Question:** Has the projected ratepayer number been based on population increases?

**Question:** Is 8<sup>th</sup> July realistic for responses given it is now 30<sup>th</sup> of June?

**Comment:** Some councillors in Masterton are elected at large; some geographically e.g. rural areas get two votes.

**Question:** What would be the area of the Masterton Community Board?

**Comment:** Better governance and a better environment are important.

**Question:** What happens to existing regional projects, e.g. irrigation scheme?

**Question:** Would Wairarapa pay more for environmental management under Option C?

**Comment:** Some of these options look like ‘cherry-picking’ the easy bits and leaving the hard parts with the GWRC?

**Question:** What would be the impact on ratepayers of a \$100 million shortfall over 22,000 rateable properties?

**Comment:** Government will be putting more environmental responsibility on regional councils in the future, not less. Therefore, the impact on costs is likely to increase.

**Comment:** The consequences for the long term need to be highlighted so we don’t end up like Auckland (super city).

**Question:** Can current debts be fenced-off as a targeted rate?

**Question:** Are financial projections based on population or ratepayers?

**Comment:** A lot of ratepayers are on fixed incomes.

**Question:** How many ratepayers will there be in 10 years? What is the impact on ratepayers for each option?

**Comment:** Concern about shortness of timeframe to comment.

**Question:** What will the rates increase be for those in the rural community if there is a change to the rating system?

**Question:** Is the Government policy to favour a capital value rating system?

**Comment:** Irrigation money funded dollar for dollar.

**Comment:** Short timeframe for any ring-fenced debt favoured so no arguments over debt.

**Question:** Is 21 community board members too many? Could this number be reduced?

**Question:** When the GWRC first established the Wairarapa Services Committee were they originally all Wairarapa people?

**Comment:** Every option from C–F is risky because they start to erode regional council functions.

**Comment:** Parochialism impacts on representation – all looking after their own patch.

**Question:** Does the full report indicate what the dotted lines in Option D mean?

**Question:** How much will ratepayers be impacted? How can we know which option to choose?

**Question:** If debt is ring-fenced, and once this expires is this fair to those who choose to live where there is less debt?

**Comment:** Concern about continued borrowing that will fall on ratepayers. How much can the community borrow before it becomes bankrupt?

**Question:** Whose responsibility is it to change wards in the long term?

**Question:** Are proposals for wards based on current set-up or some future projection?

**Question:** Does Morrison Low report include how savings are calculated?

**Comment:** Maintain and define separate district and regional council functions.

**Comment:** Councils have been working well together and should “stick to their knitting” – Option B.

**Question:** Would community boards be mandatory and fixed by the Commission?

**Question:** Is it possible to give additional powers to community boards like Auckland local boards?

**Comment:** No community development in any of the options.

**Question:** Is it possible to have a 10-year review and give people an option to decide to stay with it or not?

**Question:** Why were community boards picked vs local boards?

**Question:** Do we get an input into implementation?

# Appendix B – Responses to questions raised at community meetings

## Questions and answers

### General

**Question:** Where did the original councils' proposal for amalgamation come from?

**Question:** Who told us we had to change? Is the choice and control ours?

**Answer:** In 2013, the Local Government Commission (the Commission) received two applications. One was from the South Wairarapa, Carterton, and Masterton District Councils for a unitary council for the Wairarapa. The second was from Greater Wellington Regional Council (the GWRC) for a unitary council for the whole of the Wellington region, including the Wairarapa.

The Commission publicly notified a draft proposal for a region-wide unitary council in December 2014, and called for submissions. After considering the submissions the Commission decided to abandon this particular proposal but to continue the process with a view to identifying another draft proposal.

If a new draft proposal is issued there would be a further round of public consultation. The next step after that would be for the Commission to issue a final proposal, and if it does then 10 per cent of electors in any affected district would be able to request a poll on that proposal. If a majority of electors vote against the proposal then it will be abandoned. The Commission can decide to issue a proposal but the affected communities have the power through the poll to decide whether or not it goes ahead.

**Question:** Would the Wairarapa have preferred to leave things as is?

**Answer:** In 2015, some 1714 submissions were received from the Wairarapa. The majority, 1510, were against the region-wide unitary council, while 222 supported it (the remainder neither supported nor opposed the proposal).<sup>2</sup> However, roughly 600 of those submissions proposed that the Wairarapa councils should merge.

**Question:** Do we still retain an economic development relationship with Wellington in all options except Option F?

**Answer:** All options except F would leave the current economic development relationship with Wellington unchanged. Option F would change this. It might be possible for some new relationship to be agreed between Wellington and the Wairarapa under Option F, but there is no guarantee of this.

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<sup>2</sup> SWDC 400, 343 against, 54 for; CDC 628, 578 against, 50 for; MDC 713, 589 against, 118 for.

## Costs of the options

**Question:** Does the real cost of Options E and F include the difference between the forecast shortfalls and the surpluses shown for Options A to D?

**Question:** Option B surplus vs Option E shortfall. Is the difference actually \$140 million?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** With Option A we do nothing but save \$47 million. How?

**Answer:** The figure of \$47 million is not a “saving”. It is the combined net operating result for the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils based on the information in their respective 2015-25 Long Term Plans. In other words, the current 10-year budgets of the three Wairarapa territorial authorities when added together show a planned \$47 million surplus, or an average \$4.7 million a year.

The net operating result represents the annual increase or decrease in the net worth of the councils. This includes changes in cash and also changes in the value of assets owned and maintained on behalf of ratepayers. The Morrison Low report, table 17 on page 39, shows that the total net operating result over 10 years would be roughly \$47 million. The net operating result for the three councils combined varies from \$2.0 million to \$7.3 million in any one year.

**Question:** Why is there no comparative information with other unitary authorities?

**Answer:** Benchmarking with existing unitary councils was not included because comparing apples with apples is not a simple exercise between councils. Each council has its own geographic, population, environmental and socio-economic factors that influence expenditure and priorities.

**Question:** What are the economic costs to local communities, of inefficiencies in the current system?

**Answer:** The Commission has not done an economic analysis of the cost to the local communities of having three councils rather than one.

**Question:** What were the boundaries for the financial calculations?

**Answer:** The existing councils’ Long Term Plans were used as the basis for the financial calculations. This means that the financial calculations reflect the plans for the future that have been developed by the councils concerned after consultation with their communities.

**Question:** Has the projected ratepayer number been based on population increases?

**Question:** Are financial projections based on population or ratepayers?

**Question:** How many ratepayers will there be in 10 years?

**Answer:** The analysis reflects the councils’ Long Term Plans. As a result, they also reflect the expectations of population growth that councils have incorporated into their plans. The growth expectations set out by the councils in their current plans are:

- South Wairarapa District Council’s Long Term Plan states that *“The South Wairarapa district population during the ten years covered by this plan will have minimal growth”*.<sup>3</sup> and *“the resident population in the district is around 9,528 people and is expected to increase to approx. 10,250 by 2043”*.<sup>4</sup>
- Carterton District Council’s Long Term Plan states that *“the population in Carterton District increased by 16 per cent between censuses in 2006 and 2013, about 2.1 per cent per annum. This is significantly higher in percentage terms than anywhere in the country other than those areas around Christchurch City. This level is not likely to continue. Statistics New Zealand has projected increases over the next 30 years of between 0.0 and 1.1 per cent per annum”*.<sup>5</sup> *A district population growth assumption of a constant 0.6 per cent per annum from the June 2014 Estimated Resident Population (8,680) has been used”*.<sup>6</sup>
- Masterton District Council’s Long Term Plan states that *“the population of the district increased slightly during the 1980s, rising from about 22,000 in 1981 to about 22,600 in 1991. The population has been relatively stable since, however the most recent 2013 census data does show an increase to 23,352”*.<sup>7</sup>
- Greater Wellington Regional Council’s Long Term Plan includes the assumption *“that the [regional] population will continue to grow at the medium growth rate as projected by Statistics New Zealand and will reach approximately 538,700 by 2026 and 559,900 by 2046”*.<sup>8</sup>

**Question:** Does the Morrison Low report include how savings are calculated?

**Answer:** Yes. Section 4.9 on pages 50 and 51 provides details of the one-off cost savings expected. These include natural attrition (\$3.6 million over 10 years), reducing duplication of tier 1 and 2 management roles (\$15.6 million over 10 years), reducing the net number of elected members (\$1 million over 10 years), rationalisation of property (\$6.7 million over 10 years), roading and utility savings (\$4.8 million over 10 years), and auditor savings (\$1.2 million over 10 years). Note that these savings are balanced against the transition costs.

## Debt and assets

**Question:** How would the assets and debts of the regional council be apportioned when taken on by a new council?

**Question:** Can current debts be fenced off as a targeted rate?

**Question:** If debt is ring-fenced, and once this expires is this fair to those who choose to live where there is less debt?

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<sup>3</sup> South Wairarapa District Long Term Plan 2015/25 p3.

<sup>4</sup> South Wairarapa District Long Term Plan 2015/25 p12.

<sup>5</sup> Carterton District Council Long Term Plan 2015/25 p53.

<sup>6</sup> Carterton District Council Long Term Plan 2015/25 p98.

<sup>7</sup> Masterton District Council Long Term Plan 2015/25 p26.

<sup>8</sup> Greater Wellington Regional Council Long Term Plan 2015/25 p86.

**Answer:** The assets and debts of the regional council could be apportioned by the Commission in its reorganisation scheme or, if the Commission does not provide for an apportionment, by agreement between the affected local authorities. If the local authorities cannot agree then the Commission will determine how assets and debts are to be apportioned.

The current debts of territorial authorities can be ring-fenced to be repaid through a targeted rate. This could be done as part of any reorganisation scheme.

## Impact on rates

**Question:** How would the shortfall in rates be covered? Is the shortfall on top of the existing planned rates increases of 3-4 per cent? Would a rates increase to address the shortfall be a one-off?

**Answer:** A new council would need to determine with the community how the revenue shortfall would be overcome to achieve a financially sustainable council under Options E and F. There are a number of ways to achieve this, and a combination of all of these may be required to achieve a balanced budget. The options include an increase in general and/or targeted rates, increase in user fees and charges, reduction in levels of service, deferment of capital spending, increase in debt, and organisation or procedural changes aimed at increasing the efficiency of the council.

Yes, the shortfall is on top of currently planned rates increases as indicated in the councils' Long Term Plans.

The need to adjust the level of the councils' income to reflect the increased costs of the wider range of council responsibilities would be a "one-off". However, because the council would have a range of options to address this, the impact would not necessarily flow fully into rates all at one time. There would be scope for the change in rates levels to be phased-in over several years.

**Question:** What would be the impact on ratepayers of a \$100 million shortfall over 22,000 rateable properties?

**Question:** What is the impact on ratepayers for each option?

**Answer:** Options B, C and D would cost about the same as the status quo. The significant shortfall arises only under Options E and F. The new councils would have options for how it met this shortfall. These could include reducing service levels, finding efficiencies, deferring projects or other expenditure, or increasing debt so as to reduce the financial shortfall to a smaller number. However, every \$1 million in funding shortfall that remained after that would require roughly a 1.8 per cent overall increase in rates.

**Question:** What will the rates increase be for those in the rural community if there is a change to the rating system?

**Question:** How much will ratepayers be impacted? How can we know which option to choose?

**Answer:** A change in rating system would be expected to result in some redistribution of shares of rates among ratepayers, with some paying more and others less. Precisely what those impacts would be is not knowable at this stage as it would depend on a range of details of the new rating system and other decisions made in the future by the new council.

**Question:** Is the Government policy to favour a capital value rating system?

**Answer:** No. There is no government policy favouring capital value over land value as the valuation system for council rating systems. In general, it is up to the individual councils to set their rating systems. Where a new council is being created, the Commission has the power to include provisions in the reorganisation scheme determining the valuation base to be used for general rates, and making interim and transitional arrangements for rating.

## Community boards

**Question:** Would there be community boards for Masterton and Carterton?

**Answer:** The current proposal is for a new community board in both Masterton and Carterton.

**Question:** What would be the area of the Masterton Community Board?

**Answer:** The proposed area of the Masterton Community Board was set out in the initial application submitted by the Wairarapa councils. This provided that the board would cover the Masterton urban area. If a proposal was issued for a Wairarapa District Council then the area of the community board would be a matter that submissions could be made on.

**Question:** Powers of community boards very important – are there enough powers in the Local Government Act?

**Question:** Concern that the power of community boards would be at the discretion of a new council. Could the Commission set minimum delegations?

**Question:** Does the Commission have the power to define guidelines for community boards in concrete?

**Question:** Could we call community boards something else but they still have the same powers?

**Question:** Would community boards be mandatory and fixed by the Commission?

**Question:** Is it possible to give additional powers to community boards like Auckland local boards?

**Answer:** The Commission considers that the Local Government Act allows a wide range of functions to be delegated to community boards. There are several examples of community boards in other districts that have significant delegations, e.g. Thames-Coromandel District.

The Commission could set the minimum delegations for community boards for six years.

The term “community board” is the one used in the Local Government Act and no alternative name is provided.

If community boards were established by the Commission they must remain in existence until altered or dis-established through a representation review. Representation reviews are carried out by councils, normally before every second election, and a council’s review may be appealed to the Commission.

Community boards do not have the same powers as a local board, but the Commission considers that they can be given extensive responsibilities for their areas.

The Local Government Act provides for the establishment local boards, like in Auckland, only within a unitary authority. In terms of the options currently under discussion, only Option F would be able to have local boards rather than community boards.

**Question:** Why were community boards picked vs local boards?

**Question:** Is 21 community board members too many? Could this number be reduced?

**Answer:** The community boards, including the number of members, reflects the structure proposed in the original application to the Commission by the South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils. It is possible for this number to reduce. Local boards can only be part of a unitary council.

## Ward boundaries

**Question:** Whose responsibility is it to change wards in the long term?

**Answer:** Wards may be changed through the representation review process. Reviews are carried out by local authorities and must be undertaken at least every six years. Members of the public have the right to appeal against the results of these reviews to the Commission.

**Question:** Are proposals for wards based on current set-up or some future projection?

**Answer:** The wards are based on the original application to the Commission by the South Wairarapa, Carterton, and Masterton District Councils.

## Number of regional councillors

**Question:** How is the number of regional councillors (one) for the Wairarapa determined? Could this be reconsidered? Could this be a more cost-effective option? Would legislative change be required?

**Question:** The Local Electoral Act formula for calculating the number of regional councillors is not based on land area. Could this be factored into considerations as well?

**Question:** Why is there only one Wairarapa regional councillor?

**Answer:** The number of regional councillors is determined through the regional council’s representation review process and must be within the statutory maximum of 14 members.

Members are allocated to constituencies firstly according to the population of each constituency, with the population-to-member ratio for each constituency having to be within a range of +/-10 per cent from the average across the region.

Non-compliance with the +/-10 per cent rule is permitted if considered necessary to ensure the “effective representation of communities of interest”.

Land area cannot be used to calculate the number of regional councillors but, as noted above, the need to provide for “effective representation of communities of interest” can be.

## Māori representation

**Question:** Why isn't Māori representation included in every option?

**Answer:** Māori representation is a feature of all the options. Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa have signed a deed of settlement and agreement in principle respectively with the Crown for their Treaty settlement. Local governance arrangements agreed through the settlement process will have to be implemented by councils in any new council arrangements.

The mandating of Te Upoko Taiao through the Ngāti Kahungunu settlement in particular will impact on the governance of regional plans and regional policy statements under the RMA in the Wairarapa. Te Upoko Taiao is the GWRC's natural resources committee and has been in place since 2009. Any new Wairarapa natural resource management committee will have to have 50/50 elected councillor and iwi-nominated membership to reflect the current governance structure of Te Upoko Taiao.

Under Options A and B, the region's seven iwi have 50/50 representation on the GWRC's natural resources committee, Te Upoko Taiao. Each of the Wairarapa district councils also has Māori representation arrangements. In addition, under Option B, it is proposed there would be a Māori Advisory Committee established as part of the district council.

Under Option C, the Wairarapa Unitary Plan Committee would have half its membership nominated by Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Kahungunu ki Wairarapa.

Under Option D there would also be 50/50 council/iwi membership for the Natural Resources Committee, and one member each from Rangitāne and Kahungunu on the Wairarapa Services Committee.

The 50/50 council/iwi membership would be replicated in Options E and F for a Wairarapa Natural Resources Committee.

Other proposals for Māori representation outside of natural resources committees are a Māori Advisory Committee for the combined district council in Options B, C, D and E, and one nominated member from each of Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Kahungunu ki Wairarapa for the Wairarapa Services Committee in Option D.

## Star chart summary of options

**Question:** Options E and F have lots of stars whereas Option A does not. How can we be sure of the ratings?

**Question:** Are the options with two stars four times more effective than the status quo?

**Question:** If the current councils are only rated half a star now, how would they take on new functions?

**Question:** Option A has half a star in every category. Does this mean current councils are rubbish? This kind of rating system appears to be steering people down a certain path.

**Answer:** The star table page is intended to help guide readers through the information booklet. Focus group feedback on the draft booklet was that it was difficult to understand the differences between the options. The stars are indicative of those differences. The potential improvements to effectiveness are detailed in the Morrison Low report.

**Question:** Why does the current situation with four councils have a weaker Wairarapa voice?

**Answer:** Having one district council (Options B-E) or one unitary council (Option F) would mean the Wairarapa can speak with one voice when dealing with central government, New Zealand Transport Agency, and the regional council.

**Question:** What does resilience mean?

**Answer:** A resilient council is one that has the ability to cope with unexpected change and big challenges. A combined district council under Options B-F would result in a larger organisation. It would also result in a more robust revenue base and potential for increased discretionary spending. A larger combined staff pool would provide increased resource to undertake additional activities and projects.

## Option B

**Question:** What's the purpose of the Rural Advisory Committee under Option B? Are people appointed or elected?

**Answer:** A rural advisory committee comprising councillors and appointed members would provide a formal connection to the council for rural interests and concerns to be addressed.

## Options C and D

**Question:** Who has to ratify decisions under Options C and D?

**Question:** How much say would we have in decision-making under Options C and D? Are the committees 'recommend' only?

**Question:** What are the complications of decision-making under Options C and D?

**Answer:** Under Option C, the Wairarapa Unitary Plan Committee would be responsible for developing a single resource management plan for the Wairarapa, combining both the regional and district RMA activities into a single unitary plan. The unitary plan would have to go to the both the Wairarapa District Council and the GWRC for final approval and adoption. All resource consent decisions and monitoring would remain with their respective district and regional council.

Under Option D, both the Wairarapa Services Committee and the Wairarapa Natural Resources Committee would make recommendations to the regional council for final approval. If the GWRC does not approve the committees' recommendations it must send the issue back to the committees for further consideration.

In addition, the GWRC would be required to have two Natural Resource Plans – one for the Wairarapa and one for the rest of the region, resulting in potentially inconsistent decision-making.

**Question:** What will the structure of Options C and D committees look like 10 years on?

**Answer:** The Commission can set up the committees to last for six years. Beyond that it is at the discretion of a new council.

## Option C

**Question:** Is a unitary plan different from a Long Term Plan?

**Answer:** Yes. A unitary plan is a plan under the Resource Management Act 1991 combining both the regional and district RMA plans into a single planning document.

A Long Term Plan is prepared by each council under the Local Government Act 2002 and describes the activities of a council over a period of at least 10 years, including the costs of these activities.

**Question:** Option C – of the three elected representatives from the GWRC, would one be the Wairarapa Constituency Regional Councillor?

**Answer:** Yes, most likely.

**Question:** Will the Option C committee have no teeth?

**Answer:** Under Option C, the Wairarapa Unitary Plan Committee would be responsible for developing a single resource management plan for the Wairarapa, combining both the regional and district RMA activities into a single unitary plan. The unitary plan would have to go to the both the Wairarapa District Council and the GWRC for final approval and adoption. All resource consent decisions and monitoring would remain with their respective district and regional council.

**Question:** Would the Wairarapa pay more for environmental management under Option C?

**Answer:** No. Responsibility for environmental management would remain with the respective councils.

## Option D

**Question:** Could experts be appointed to the Option D committees rather than or as well as councillors because a breadth of knowledge is needed to successfully contribute to these committees?

**Question:** When the GWRC first established the Wairarapa Services Committee were they originally all Wairarapa people?

**Answer:** The committees under Option D could include appointed experts as well as elected councillors. The previous Wairarapa Services Committee included a mix of elected members and appointed experts.

**Question:** Why was the previous Wairarapa Services Committee dropped?

**Answer:** The previous Wairarapa Services Committee was disestablished by the GWRC in 2007. The Commission is not aware of the specific reasons for its disestablishment.

**Question:** Does the full report indicate what the dotted lines in Option D mean?

**Answer:** Yes. The lines are intended to show that the committees would be standing committees of the GWRC.

## Option E

**Question:** What is the rationale for keeping regional economic development with the GWRC under Option E?

**Answer:** Under Option E, the decision-making and funding responsibility for activities which have a stronger region-wide focus would remain with the GWRC. The activities that are identified for possible transfer are those with a more Wairarapa-specific focus.

**Question:** Is regional economic development a statutory responsibility for councils?

**Answer:** No.

## Option F

**Question:** Would the irrigation project and improved rail be under threat with Option F?

**Question:** What happens to existing regional projects, e.g. irrigation scheme?

**Answer:** The local share of the funding for the irrigation investigations has to date come from the GWRC. It is difficult to see this continuing if the Wairarapa were to no longer be part of the Wellington region. A new Wairarapa Unitary Council under Option F would need to consider whether it had community support to resource the Wairarapa Water Use Project.

A unitary council as proposed under Option F would become responsible for public transport within the Wairarapa. This would require a unitary council to establish its own transport planning and public transport management team in the Wairarapa. It would be necessary for some arrangement to be reached between the two councils about decision-making and funding arrangements for the commuter rail service to operate across the two regions.

**Question:** How much money is received from central government to fund rail? Would it be possible to contract rail service delivery back to the GWRC under Option F? Is it possible to lobby government to maintain Wairarapa rail services?

**Answer:** There is central government funding of passenger rail services. There is funding from government for public transport services through NZTA on a similar basis to the funding provided for roads. The GWRC's estimate of NZTA funding contribution from 2016/17 to 2025/26 (10 years) is \$75.3 million (an average of \$7.53 per annum). The GWRC also has a loan from the Crown of \$21 million to help fund new rolling stock. It would be possible for a Wairarapa Unitary Council to contract the delivery of rail services back to the GWRC, but there would still be the question of the funding of the service.

A Wairarapa Unitary Council would have the option of seeking to lobby the Government to maintain services – a local authority can always lobby the Government.

**Question:** If we get rid of the GWRC could a new Wairarapa Unitary Council compel it to fund commuter trains?

**Answer:** No. The GWRC could not be compelled to fund a commuter train under Option F. A new council could approach the GWRC about contracting functions back to the GWRC, but the question of how the service would be funded would remain.

**Question:** Under Option F, would there be savings to the GWRC if they no longer have functions in the Wairarapa?

**Answer:** Yes. The GWRC would not collect rates or spend money in the Wairarapa. Because the GWRC currently spends more money in the Wairarapa than it collects in rates in the Wairarapa, this would result in savings to the council.

**Question:** Are the extra costs in Option F costs that are demanded by ratepayers?

**Answer:** The financial information for all the options are based on the information in the councils' 2015-25 Long Term Plans. These are the current activities and levels of services of the four existing councils that have been decided upon after consultation with communities. Any new council could make different decisions with their community about what activities are funded and at what levels of service.

## Other possible options

**Question:** Would it be possible for a small part of the Wairarapa to break away from the rest?

**Answer:** The Commission wants to hear if people have other suggestions for change. However, this is not a proposal that has been raised during the process to date.

**Question:** Why isn't retaining existing councils but with more regional council responsibility included as an option (e.g. creating the same committees as Options D but keeping the three councils separate)?

**Answer:** The three Wairarapa councils could pursue the establishment of these sorts of committees with the GWRC. If the community opts for the status quo, then the Commission would have no formal role in this process.

**Question:** Is a unitary council without community boards another option?

**Answer:** Yes, a unitary council without a second tier of governance is another option. Technically unitary councils can have local boards, rather than community boards, but they are not mandatory. However, we have heard many people speak in support of community boards.

## The process from now

**Question:** Does the Commission decide where any new head office should be?

**Answer:** Yes, this something that would be included in the final reorganisation scheme.

**Question:** Will all these questions and answers be on the website?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Is 8<sup>th</sup> July realistic for responses given it is now 30<sup>th</sup> of June?

**Answer:** The engagement campaign commenced on 7 June so people had five weeks to look at the information and provide feedback.

**Question:** Will there be further engagement with the community?

**Answer:** Yes. If the results of this engagement indicate that the community prefers one of the options for change, then the Commission will work up that option in detail for a new draft proposal leading to further consultation.

**Question:** Is anything happening on the western side of the hill that could impact on options for Wairarapa?

**Answer:** There are currently no proposals for amalgamating any of the councils in the rest of the Wellington region. Council-controlled transport organisations are under consideration by the councils. However, these options do not preclude any of the options for the Wairarapa currently under consideration.

**Question:** Would the new council have a two-year or four-year term?

**Answer:** Any new council would be likely to be elected at the end of 2018. These councillors would have an initial four-year term, to bring elections in line with the three-yearly election cycle.

**Question:** What would the transition process be? Will there be a transition committee?

**Question:** Do we get an input into implementation?

**Answer:** If a new council is being created there would be a transition process overseen by a transition board. The transition process would establish the council organisation ready for it to be operational on its first day of existence, including the appointment of an interim chief executive. A transition board comprised

mainly of members of existing councils would be established to oversee the transition.

**Question:** How would voting on a final proposal work? Is it just an absolute numbers basis? Masterton is bigger than the South Wairarapa District Council and could therefore out-vote.

**Answer:** A single poll would be held over the whole of the area affected by the proposal. If a majority of those voters vote against the proposal then it is defeated and that is the end of the process.

**Question:** Is it possible to have a 10-year review and give people an option to decide to stay with it or not?

**Answer:** The costs of change, and then potentially changing back, would probably preclude this approach. However, it would be possible for people in the future to make applications to the Commission to consider further changes.

# Appendix C - Data tables for questionnaire responses

Q 1: What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?

Options	Per cent	Count
Option A	23%	356
Option B	42%	648
Option C	8%	125
Option D	15%	225
Option E	5%	78
Option F	5%	75
I want change but none of these options	2%	27
Answered question		1534
Skipped question		0

Q 2: Why did you choose this option? (Tick as many as apply and/or write your own reasons below)

Options	Per cent*	Count
I am happy with my council now. There is no reason to change	21%	311
I think the Wairarapa councils would be more effective if joined	67%	1003
I want to see a stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage	44%	652
Affordability is important to me	57%	851
I want more Wairarapa influence over the resource management decisions of the regional council	31%	457
I want to keep the regional council as it is now	37%	549
I want the Wairarapa to take over the regional council's functions so there is more of a rural voice	11%	161
Train and bus linkages to Wellington are important to me	54%	816
Number of people who provided additional reasons or comment		395
Answered question		1499
Skipped question		35

\*Percentage based on total number of submissions received (1534).

Q 4: Can you please tell us where in the region you live and/or pay rates?

Options	Per cent	Count
Carterton District	30%	454
Hutt City	<1%	6
Kāpiti Coast District	<1%	2
Masterton District	41%	625
Porirua City	<1%	1
South Wairarapa District	30%	448
Upper Hutt City	<1%	2
Wellington City	1%	21
I do not live in the Greater Wellington region	<1%	6
Answered question		1518
Skipped question		16

Q 5: Which age group do you fall into?

Options	Per cent	Count
0-24	1%	19
25-44	11%	163
45-64	35%	525
65+	53%	800
Answered question		1507
Skipped question		27

Questions 1, 2 separated by age group

Q1: What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?

Answer Options	65+	45-64	25-44	Count
Option A	173	127	35	341
Option B	387	185	59	640
Option C	54	51	15	123
Option D	103	87	34	225
Option E	39	31	8	78
Option F	35	32	8	75
I want change but none of these options	9	12	4	25
Answered question				1507
Skipped question				0

Q1: What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer? (by percentage of each age group)

Answer Options	65+	45-64	25-44	Count
Option A	22%	24%	21%	341
Option B	48%	35%	36%	640
Option C	7%	10%	9%	123
Option D	13%	17%	21%	225
Option E	5%	6%	5%	78
Option F	4%	6%	5%	75
I want change but none of these options	1%	2%	2%	25
Total	100%	100%	100%	
Answered question				1507
Skipped question				0

Q2: Why did you choose this option?

Answer Options	65+	45-64	25-44	0-24
I am happy with my council now. There is no reason to change	151	113	29	7
I think the Wairarapa councils would be more effective if joined	546	331	107	12
I want to see a stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage	363	216	62	7
Affordability is important to me	474	283	79	7
I want more Wairarapa influence over the resource management decisions of the regional council	274	152	27	1
I want to keep the regional council as it is now	328	154	52	8
I want the Wairarapa to take over the regional council's functions so there is more of a rural voice	83	68	10	0
Train and bus linkages to Wellington are important to me	470	255	75	8

South Wairarapa

Q 1: What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
Option A	23%	104
Option B	38%	172
Option C	9%	41
Option D	14%	63
Option E	6%	26
Option F	7%	33
I want change but none of these options	2%	9
Answered question		448
Skipped question		0

Q 2: Why did you choose this option?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
I am happy with my council now. There is no reason to change	22%	95
I think the Wairarapa councils would be more effective if joined	66%	289
I want to see a stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage	49%	215
Affordability is important to me	58%	254
I want more Wairarapa influence over the resource management decisions of the regional council	28%	125
I want to keep the regional council as it is now	36%	157
I want the Wairarapa to take over the regional council's functions so there is more of a rural voice	15%	64
Train and bus linkages to Wellington are important to me	57%	251
Answered question		441
Skipped question		7

Q 5: Which age group do you fall into?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
0-24	1%	5
25-44	14%	63
45-64	38%	168
65+	47%	206
Answered question		442
Skipped question		6

Masterton

Q 1: What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
Option A	16%	98
Option B	50%	314
Option C	10%	60
Option D	14%	88
Option E	5%	33
Option F	3%	20
I want change but none of these options	2%	12
Answered question		625
Skipped question		0

Q 2: Why did you choose this option?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
I am happy with my council now. There is no reason to change	12%	75
I think the Wairarapa councils would be more effective if joined	74%	452
I want to see a stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage	47%	284
Affordability is important to me	58%	356
I want more Wairarapa influence over the resource management decisions of the regional council	33%	200
I want to keep the regional council as it is now	38%	234
I want the Wairarapa to take over the regional council's functions so there is more of a rural voice	10%	60
Train and bus linkages to Wellington are important to me	52%	317
Answered question		611
Skipped question		14

Q 5: Which age group do you fall into?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
0-24	1%	6
25-44	9%	58
45-64	31%	191
65+	59%	360
Answered question		615
Skipped question		10

Carterton

Q 1: What option for council organisation in the Wairarapa do you prefer?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
Option A	33%	148
Option B	36%	163
Option C	5%	23
Option D	16%	74
Option E	4%	20
Option F	4%	20
I want change but none of these options	1%	6
Answered question		454
Skipped question		

Q 2: Why did you choose this option?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
I am happy with my council now. There is no reason to change	32%	140
I think the Wairarapa councils would be more effective if joined	60%	266
I want to see a stronger Wairarapa voice in the region and on the national stage	35%	157
Affordability is important to me	55%	246
I want more Wairarapa influence over the resource management decisions of the regional council	30%	133
I want to keep the regional council as it is now	36%	158
I want the Wairarapa to take over the regional council's functions so there is more of a rural voice	9%	39
Train and bus linkages to Wellington are important to me	57%	253
Answered question		444
Skipped question		10

Q 5: Which age group do you fall into?

Answer Options	Per cent	Count
0-24	2%	7
25-44	9%	39
45-64	38%	168
65+	52%	234
Answered question		448
Skipped question		6