

## Councillors' initial views on the benefits of the potential options

The South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Councils, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Commission held a two joint workshops in November and December 2015. The two tables below are a summary of councillors' initial views from the workshop, with some additions now that the detail of the potential options has been expanded. Councillors' views were not unanimous so some of the comments below are not agreed to by all.

Option A – the Status Quo	Option B – Wairarapa District Council	Option C – WDC and a Wairarapa RMA Unitary Plan Committee	Option D – WDC and joint GWRC- WDC Wairarapa Committees	Option E – WDC including most regional council functions	Option F – Wairarapa Unitary Council (WUC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community understands this option</li> <li>Costs known</li> <li>No cost of change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficiency and effectiveness gains through having one council through economies of scale, common rating system, unified fees and services</li> <li>Consistent and strengthened decision-making; one voice for the Wairarapa</li> <li>Capacity and capability gains – an increase in critical mass, particularly for staff in specialist roles</li> <li>More opportunity for spatial planning</li> <li>More opportunity to influence regional council level of services</li> <li>No loss of regional funding and nor risk associated with assuming regional functions</li> </ul>	<p>As for B plus below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsive, resilient and sustainable option</li> <li>Ensure a rural Wairarapa lens is applied to RMA regional planning, in particular water quality and rural land-use issues</li> <li>Result in fewer RMA plans for Wairarapa residents and businesses to have to work with</li> <li>Establish a strong joint working relationship between the parties, which would likely flow into other areas of cooperation</li> <li>Be relatively straight forward, low cost and low risk to implement</li> <li>Evolutionary process to a Unitary Council</li> </ul>	<p>As for B plus below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This type of model has worked previously but will be enduring and more meaningful with a statutory basis</li> <li>Ensure a rural Wairarapa lens is applied to RMA planning and other council expenditure , in particular water quality and flood management</li> <li>Wairarapa residents still part of the Wellington region so regional rates available to assist in funding Wairarapa regional council services, such as flood management</li> <li>Easier partnership/ service levels</li> </ul>	<p>As for B plus below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More Wairarapa autonomy and local decision-making</li> <li>Possibly better control, certainty over land management, pest control, flood management and contamination</li> <li>Ensure a rural Wairarapa lens is applied to RMA planning and other council expenditure , in particular water quality and flood management</li> <li>Simplify integrated planning and RMA processes for Wairarapa residents and businesses</li> <li>Could re-contract with regional council</li> <li>Does not include the high cost function of public transport, which may be too expensive for the Wairarapa to maintain current service levels without regional funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autonomy for the Wairarapa with one layer of governance: one voice, meeting local decision-making test</li> <li>Easy to understand</li> <li>Efficiency and effectiveness gains through having one council</li> <li>Capacity and capability gains – an increase in critical mass, particularly for staff in specialist roles</li> <li>Simplify planning and RMA processes for Wairarapa residents and businesses</li> </ul>

## Councillors' initial views on the costs and risks of the potential options

Option A – the Status Quo	Option B – Wairarapa District Council	Option C – WDC and a Wairarapa RMA Plan Committee	Option D – WDC and joint GWRC- WDC Wairarapa Committees	Option E – WDC including most regional council functions	Option F – Wairarapa Unitary Council (WUC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an appetite for change</li> <li>• Lost opportunity for innovation and to be more efficient and effective, i.e. no Wairarapa-wide strategy, infrastructure development, multiple policies and bylaws and addressing compliance costs</li> <li>• Continued challenges working together and with regional council</li> <li>• Questions as to the future sustainability and affordability of this option</li> <li>• Lacking economies of scale</li> <li>• Continued concern from Wairarapa residents about the impact of regional council decisions on the district, with limited representation on the regional council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't provide any further input into decision on regional council matters:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relies on goodwill/trust between RC and WDC</li> <li>○ Not enough autonomy for the Wairarapa, e.g. over environmental controls</li> <li>○ Does it provide sufficient financial savings for the change required? i.e. still 3 levels of government</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Could be seen as reduced representation of town and rural voices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although Wairarapa would gain input into regional RMA planning decisions, GWRC would also gain input into WDC district plan decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasonably complex to manage and administer</li> <li>• Still three layers of government</li> <li>• Need to guarantee that committee structure will remain and that it would be truly representational</li> <li>• More committees</li> <li>• Need to be able to influence decisions (due to size of representation)</li> <li>• Could take longer to agree on a position</li> <li>• Needs legislative change to be made durable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial risks and high cost option for Wairarapa residents - may require some changes to levels of service for some council services (e.g. flood management)</li> <li>• Duplication of WDC staff with many GWRC staff, with potentially some capability issues, loss of expertise and or ability to undertake functions</li> <li>• Potential conflict during the change process</li> <li>• Concern that environmental standards would be reduced</li> <li>• Needs legislative change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highest cost option for Wairarapa residents - may require some changes to levels of service for some council services (e.g. flood management)</li> <li>• Potential to compromise service levels</li> <li>• With 'all say', comes the 'all pay and all risk' downside</li> <li>• Duplication of WDC staff with many GWRC staff with potentially some capability issues</li> <li>• Wairarapa residents no longer part of the Wellington region and still small on the national stage</li> <li>• Still a need to contract services from GWRC, e.g. transport</li> <li>• Concern that environmental standards would be reduced</li> </ul>