



Local Government Commission

Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

Guidelines for local authorities undertaking representation reviews

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Chapter One: Introduction

These guidelines

1. The next local authority elections will be held in October 2028. These guidelines are provided to assist local authorities carrying out representation reviews prior to those elections.¹
2. The statutory requirements described in these guidelines are binding on both local authorities and the Commission itself in the exercise of its powers on objections, appeals and referrals. The other content in these guidelines describes recommended practice for representation reviews.
3. The guidelines also provide guidance on the processes in [sections 19JA and 19JB, Local Electoral Act 2001](#) that permit local authorities to make minor changes to the boundaries of electoral areas when not undertaking representation reviews.
4. The Commission may provide further technical information relating to representation reviews or representation issues from time to time. This will be sent to local authorities and placed on the Commission's website as it produced.

What are representation reviews?

5. Representation reviews are reviews of the representation arrangements for a local authority. They determine detailed arrangements for electoral areas (if any), their boundaries and names, and the number of members representing them.
6. For territorial authorities, the representation review also includes deciding:
 - the basis of election (at large, wards, or a mix of both), and
 - whether or not there will be community boards.
7. Where a unitary authority has local boards the review:
 - must consider the membership arrangements for each local board, and
 - may make minor alterations to the boundaries of local board areas.
8. Local authorities are required to carry out a representation review at least every six years. They may undertake a review after three years if they choose.

¹ These are the tenth representation review guidelines issued by the Commission in accordance with section 19ZI, *Local Electoral Act 2001*. They replace the guidelines issued in July 2023. *Section 19ZI*, states: The Commission must issue guidelines identifying factors and considerations for territorial authorities or regional councils to take into account in making their determinations under any of the provisions of sections 19H to 19JB and Schedule

What the guidelines cover

9. These guidelines cover:
 - the representation review processes (generally covered in the order they are carried out)
 - decisions about electoral systems and Māori wards/constituencies (covered early in the guidelines, as they must be carried out before the representation review)
 - related processes – minor boundary alterations and Auckland Council requirements.
10. Decisions about electoral systems and whether or not to establish or disestablish Māori wards/constituencies are not formally part of the representation review process and are matters for local discretion with no right of appeal to the Commission. However, both are important in helping to identify appropriate representation arrangements for a district/region and need to be resolved before the detailed ward/constituency arrangements are determined.
11. See Appendix A: Timelines diagram for an overview of the time requirements leading up to a round of local government elections.

The Commission's role

12. The Commission is not involved in developing initial or final local authority representation proposals, other than providing procedural or technical advice, or answering queries regarding representation reviews or other matters raised in these guidelines.
13. The local authority must refer its proposal to the Commission if the final proposal:
 - receives appeals and/or objections, or
 - does not comply with the requirements for achieving fair representation in [s19V\(2\)](#). (known as the +/-10% rule).
14. In these situations the Commission must determine the representation arrangements for the local authority, including for any constituent community boards².
15. However, if the only reason for referral to the Commission is non-compliance with [s19V\(2\)](#), the Commission's role is solely to determine the non-complying arrangements.
16. The Commission's process for determining representation arrangements in these situations is outlined in Chapter 10: Appeals, objections, and referrals.
17. The Commission also has a role in determining whether to uphold minor boundary adjustments made under [ss19JA](#) and [19JB](#). See [Chapter 12](#) Minor boundary alterations.

² [s19R](#).

18. Commission determinations may be:
 - appealed on a point of law
 - are subject to judicial review regarding matters of process.
19. Any queries can be directed to lqc@lqc.govt.nz. Commission officials are available to provide guidance to council staff at all stages of representation review process.

Chapter Two: Preliminary processes

Electoral Systems

20. The choice of electoral system is not formally part of a representation review, and the Commission's role in appeals and objections does not apply. However, the electoral system should be considered as part of the overall review of representation.
21. Decisions on electoral systems:
 - Should take place in conjunctions with decisions to establish Māori wards/constituencies
 - must occur before the representation review.
22. [The Local Electoral Act 2001](#) provides for local authorities and their communities to choose either of the following as their electoral system for local elections:
 - first past the post (FPP) or,
 - single transferable vote (STV).
23. To gain the full benefits of proportional representation under STV, five to seven members is preferable for wards or constituencies using STV (below three members the benefits of proportional representation are not realised).
24. A territorial authority's chosen electoral system also applies to the election of members of any local boards or community boards.
25. A change of electoral system can be achieved by:
 - local authority resolution, or
 - favourable outcome of a poll of electors, which may be:
 - demanded by electors, or
 - the result of a local authority resolution.
26. An electoral system may not be changed if the result of a poll:
 - took effect at the previous election; or
 - takes effect at the next election.³
27. The statutory provisions for changing the electoral system are set out in [sections 27 to 34, Local Electoral Act 2001](#).

³ s32

Key statutory provisions for changing electoral systems

28. The relevant provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001 for changing a local authority's electoral system are:

Who	Provision	Timing	Section
Local authority	May resolve to change the electoral system to take effect for the next two elections	No later than 12 September, two years before election year	s27
Local authority	Must give public notice of the right for electors to demand an electoral system poll, and that notice must include a statement that a poll is required to countermand any local authority resolution made on the electoral system	By 19 September two years before election year	s28

Table 1: relevant provisions of LEA for changing electoral system

29. Also, if either:

- a valid demand for a poll is received by 11 December in the year 2 years before election year⁴, or
- a local authority resolves to hold a poll⁵

then:

- the electoral officer is notified by the local authority's chief executive
- a poll must be held not later than 89 days after the notification, that is not later than 14 March in the year 2 years before election year, and
- the result of the poll takes effect for the next two elections⁶.

30. Section 30 states that when a valid demand for a poll is received after 11 December in the year 2 years before election year:

- the poll must be held after 14 March in the year before election year and
- the result takes effect for the next but one election and the subsequent election.

Further information

31. Further information is available in the following publications:

Graham Bush, "STV and local body elections -- a mission probable?" in J. Drage (ed), *Empowering Communities? Representation and Participation in New Zealand's Local Government*, pp 45-64 (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2002).

⁴ [s29](#)

⁵ [s33](#)

⁶ [s33](#)

Christine Cheyne and Margie Comrie, "Empowerment for Encumbrance? Exercising the STV Options for Local Authority Elections in New Zealand, *Local Government Studies*, 31(2), April 2005: pp 185-204.

Dr Janine Hayward, The Local Government Electoral Option 2023

This document is available to Taituarā members as an appendix to Part 4 of the Code of Good Practice for the Management of Local Authority Elections and Polls on <https://taituara.org.nz/lg-sectorgood-toolkit>

STV Taskforce, Choosing Electoral Systems in Local Government in New Zealand (2002) [http://www.dia.govt.nz/Pubforms.nsf/URL/STV.pdf/\\$file/STV.pdf](http://www.dia.govt.nz/Pubforms.nsf/URL/STV.pdf/$file/STV.pdf)

Jack Vowles, "STV and the 2004 local elections: Disaster or success?", *Public Sector*, 28(3), 2005: 1

Jack Vowles & Janine Hayward (2021) "Ballot structure, district magnitude and descriptive representation: the case of New Zealand local council elections", *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 56:3, 225-244.

Māori wards and constituencies

Introduction

32. A local authority may decide under [section 19Z](#) to establish Māori wards or constituencies. This decision must be made by 12 September in the year 2 years before the election. For the 2028 local elections, this is 12 September 2026.
33. If Māori wards/constituencies are to be established for the next election, the local authority involved must undertake a representation review (whether or not it conducted a review before the previous election).
34. Where Māori wards/constituencies are included in a representation review the process contained in [Schedule 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001](#) applies. In such cases the requirements of [Part 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001](#) (outlining the standard process for a representation review) are subject to the provisions of [Schedule 1A](#). The details of this process are set out in [Chapter 5](#).
35. The Commission's role in respect of Māori wards/constituencies:
 - does not extend to whether or not Māori wards/constituencies are to be established
 - is limited to consideration of the detailed arrangements for such wards/constituencies, i.e. the number of wards/constituencies, their boundaries and names, and number of members.

36. [Bay of Plenty Regional Council \(Māori Constituency Empowering\) Act 2001](#) requires the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to include provision for 1 or more Māori constituencies in representation reviews conducted by it. Sections 19Z and 19ZH, Local Electoral Act 2001 do not, therefore, apply to the Bay of Plenty Region. In carrying out a representation review the Bay of Plenty Regional Council must follow both the processes set out in the Local Electoral Act and in the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Māori Constituency Empowering) Act.
37. The [Canterbury Regional Council \(Ngāi Tahu Representation\) Act 2022](#) provides for Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu to appoint 2 members to the council. The Canterbury Regional Council may however establish Māori constituencies under the Local Electoral Act (in addition to members being appointed under the abovementioned Act).

Deciding whether to establish Māori wards/constituencies

38. [Section 19Z](#) does not include a specific set of criteria which local authorities are required to consider when making their decision. Local authorities should, however, consider those of the principles set out in [Section 4](#) of the Local Electoral Act as are applicable to the matter of specific Māori representation.
39. [Section 19Z](#) does not specify how local authorities should consult on this issue. The type of engagement to be used would therefore be determined by the council's Significance and Engagement Policy maintained under [section 76AA, Local Government Act 2002](#) and take into account the decision-making and consultation requirements of [Part 6, Local Government Act 2002](#).
40. Local authorities should consider [Section 81, Local Government Act 2002](#), which discusses contributions to decision-making processes by Māori.

Disestablishing Māori wards/constituencies

41. A decision by a local authority to disestablish Māori wards/constituencies is subject to the same requirements applying to the establishment of Māori wards/constituencies set out in in this chapter ([see s. 19Z\(2A\)](#)) and to those relating to polls.

Polls

42. The relevant provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001 relating to the establishment of Māori wards/constituencies are:

Section	Provision
s19Z	A local authority may resolve to establish Māori wards/constituencies and, if made by 12 September two years before the next election, the resolution takes effect for the next election

<u>s19ZA</u>	If a local authority makes such a resolution to establish Māori wards/constituencies by 12 September it must give public notice of this fact by 19 September two years before the next election year, including a statement that a poll is required to countermand that resolution
<u>s19ZB</u>	5% of electors may demand a poll at any time on whether a district/region needs to be divided into one or more Māori wards/constituencies
<u>s19ZD</u>	A local authority may resolve at any time to conduct a poll on whether the district/region needs to be divided into Māori wards/constituencies
	If, before 11 December 2 years before election year, either a valid demand for a poll is received (s19ZB) or the local authority resolves to hold a poll (s19ZD) this is notified to the electoral officer and the poll must be held not later than 89 days after the notification, but not later than 28 March in that year, and the result of the poll takes effect for the next two elections (s19ZF)
<u>s19ZC</u>	If a valid demand for a poll is received after 11 December 2 years before the next election, the poll must be held after 28 March in the next year and takes effect for the next but one election and the subsequent election
<u>s19ZE</u>	Sections 19Z to 19ZD do not apply if the result of a previous poll took effect at the previous election or takes effect at the next election

Table 2: Provisions relating to Māori wards

43. If, as a result of a resolution or poll, Māori wards/constituencies are to apply for an election then a representation review must be carried out ([clauses 1 and 3, Schedule 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001](#)). In such cases the requirements of [Part 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001](#) are subject to the provisions of [Schedule 1A](#).
44. Further information about considerations and provisions for Māori wards/constituencies in the representation review process are contained in [Chapter Five: Māori wards and constituencies](#)

Chapter Three: The Statutory Framework for Reviews

Requirement to carry out a review

45. The local authorities that must carry out a representation review before the 2028 elections are those that:
- did not carry out a review leading up to the 2025 elections⁷; or
 - are establishing Māori wards/constituencies for the first time for the 2028 elections ([cl 1\(1\), Schedule 1A](#)). See [Chapter Five: Māori wards and constituencies](#) for more information; or
 - are disestablishing Māori wards/constituencies as a result of a council resolution or a poll.
46. Local authorities that are not required to carry out a review prior to the 2028 elections may still do so if they choose.

What a representation review must include

47. Undertaking a representation review requires local authorities to understand and work within the statutory framework, ensuring they are well prepared and fully aware of the range of decisions they must make, including representation arrangements, and the detailed requirements for how members are elected and areas are defined.

Territorial authorities

48. A representation review for a territorial authority must make specific decisions as outlined below.

Section	Decision
s19H(1)(a)	Whether the members of the local authority are to be elected from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the district as a whole (or 'at large')• from 2 or more wards• from a combination of 'at large' and wards
s19H(1)(b)	Where all the members are to be elected 'at large', the total number of members of the local authority
s19H(1)(c)	Where members are to be elected from a combination of 'at large' and wards: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the number to be elected 'at large'; and• the number to be elected from wards

⁷ [s19H\(2\)](#) and [s19J\(2\)](#)

s19H(1)(d)	Where members are to be elected from wards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name and boundaries of each ward • the number of members to be elected from each ward
----------------------------	--

Table 3: What a TA representation review must include

49. A territorial authority must also consider whether or not community boards are to be established and, if there are to be community boards, what their membership arrangements are to be⁸. This is dealt with in detail in [Chapter 6: Community Boards](#) .
50. Unitary authorities are treated as territorial authorities for the purposes of a representation review and must therefore follow the review requirements for a territorial authority.
51. A unitary authority with local boards must review the membership arrangements of those local boards. This is dealt with in detail in [Chapter Seven: Local Boards](#).

Regional councils

52. A representation review for a regional council must make specific decisions as outlined below

Section	Decision
s19I(1)(a)	The number of constituencies
s19I(1)(b)	The name and boundaries of each constituency
s19I(1)(c)	The number of members to be elected from each constituency

Table 4 – What a regional council representation review must include

Māori wards and constituencies

53. Where a territorial authority or a regional council has or is establishing Māori wards or constituencies then the provisions of Schedule 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001 also apply. These are discussed in Chapter Five.

Statutory provisions

54. A more detailed analysis of the statutory provisions relating to representation reviews is contained in [Appendix C: Statutory Provisions](#) . This includes a discussion about relevant provisions in the Local Government Act and their relationship with the Local Electoral Act.

⁸ The Auckland Council may not establish community boards. See Chapter Thirteen: Auckland Council

What you need to know before starting a representation review

55. The following chapters examine the issues local authorities must consider or take account of when carrying out a representation review. These are:

- The criteria of fair and effective representation
- Māori wards and constituencies
- Communities and community boards
- Local boards
- Technical requirements, including:
 - names of electoral areas
 - meshblocks
 - population data

Chapter Four: Fair and effective representation

Key considerations

56. In reviewing their representation arrangements, local authorities must provide for 'effective representation of communities of interest'⁹ and 'fair representation of electors'¹⁰. Therefore, there are three key factors for local authorities to carefully consider. They are:
- communities of interest
 - effective representation of communities of interest
 - fair representation of electors.
57. These inter-related factors are discussed below. Local authorities should place strong emphasis on clearly articulating their reasoning throughout this process, including what they have identified, the trade-offs made between these interrelated principles, and the rationale for their decisions. A transparent and well-documented explanation is required to demonstrate that these statutory requirements have been properly considered and applied.
58. Additional resources about communities of interest can be found in the resources section of the Commission's website.

Communities of interest

59. The term 'community of interest' is not defined in the Local Electoral Act 2001 and may mean different things to different people. However, defining communities of interest is the starting point of the representation review process and must be carried out before determining how to provide effective representation.
60. The Commission expects that decisions relating to the representation of communities of interest are informed by officers' reports to the local authority that clearly describe a district or regions communities of interest.
61. The Commission further expects that, as part of a review territorial authorities will clearly identify, describe, and determine:
- any identifiable communities of interest below the district level, including the factors specific to those communities that identify them as such
 - whether these communities of interest are located in identifiable geographical areas, justifying the establishment of wards, or are spread across the district.

⁹ [s19T](#) and [s19U](#)

¹⁰ [s19V](#)

Defining communities of interest

62. One definition¹¹ of 'community of interest' describes it as a two-dimensional concept¹²:
- perceptual – a sense of belonging to a clearly defined area or locality
 - functional – the ability to meet with reasonable economy the community's requirements for comprehensive physical and human services
63. The perceptual and functional aspects can be extended to define a community of interest as having:
- a sense of community identity and belonging reinforced by:
 - distinctive physical and topographical features (e.g., mountains, hills, rivers)
 - similarities in economic or social activities carried out in the area
 - similarities in the demographic, socio-economic and/or ethnic characteristics of the residents of a community
 - a distinct, shared local history of the area resulting in a current perception of community of interest
 - the rohe or takiwā of local iwi and hapū
 - dependence on shared facilities and services in an area, including:
 - schools, recreational and cultural facilities
 - retail outlets, transport and communication links.

Identifying communities of interest

64. it is important that local authorities identify their communities of interest clearly, individually and in detail. Local authorities must be able to clearly articulate their communities of interest and how these have been considered and accounted for in the representation review.
65. Communities of interest may alter over time, so local authorities need to make sure they identify and document their current communities of interest when carrying out a representation review.
66. Communities of interest can be considered at different levels. For example, local authorities themselves are distinct and identifiable communities of interest.

¹¹ [*The Concept of Community of Interest*](#) (1989) prepared by Helen Fulcher for the South Australian Department of Local Government.

¹² The Commission's approach to defining communities of interest previously included a third dimension – political. Current thinking is that the political dimension is not a determinant of community of interest, but the ability of the elected body to represent communities of interest is a matter to be considered when effective representation of communities of interest is assessed.

67. Regions are assumed to have a number of distinct identifiable communities of interest and therefore are required to be divided into constituencies.
68. A degree of commonality between regional and district communities of interest can be assumed. This is reflected by the requirement relating to effective representation of communities of interest for regional council constituencies, so far as is practicable, to coincide with territorial authority boundaries or territorial authority ward boundaries.¹³
69. This does not preclude regional constituencies varying from territorial authority/ward boundaries to reflect, for example, communities of interest based around river catchments. However, if this is proposed the regional council should clearly document the case for any such variations.
70. The following prompts may be useful when identifying communities of interest:
 - What information is the council relying on in identifying and defining communities of interest? Is this information sourced from within the council? External to the council, or both?
 - Are communities of interest geographically located? Are they spread across the district/region? Or both?
 - What opportunities are provided for community views on communities of interest to be considered? How will the council ensure that the views of vulnerable or under-represented communities are taken into account?
 - Do good grounds exist to consider establishing, altering or dis-establishing community boards in all or part of the district? (See [Chapter Six: Communities and community boards](#)).

Fair and effective representation

71. Fairness and effectiveness are equally important principles in determining representation. [Section 4\(1\)](#) makes this explicit by requiring fair and effective representation for individuals and communities. Changes to the fair representation requirements enacted in 2013¹⁴ reinforce this approach, with additional permitted exceptions to the +/-10% rule linked to effective representation considerations.
72. In practice, there can be tension between the tests for effective representation and fair representation. The options identified may not always satisfy both requirements perfectly. However, assessment of one requirement helps inform assessment of the other, enabling an appropriate balance to be reached in each case. Local authority decisions about representation models need to be supported by documented analysis of this assessment, and a detailed rationale for how the council has balanced fair and effective representation.
73. The following prompts may be useful when considering fair and effective representation:

¹³ [s19U\(c\)](#)

¹⁴ [s13\(1\)](#)

- What is the basis for the current number of elected members? Do good reasons exist to consider a change to the number of elected members?
- Do good reasons exist for geographic ward-based representation? For at-large representation? For a mixed system with both geographic ward and at-large representation?
- Do any representation models comply with the +/-10% rule? Do such models group communities of interest in a coherent manner? Do they provide reasonable access of residents to elected members and vice-versa?
- If not, how should communities of interest best be grouped to ensure effective representation?
- Are any communities sufficiently isolated to justify departure from the +/- 10% rule? What factors give rise to such isolation?

Effective representation of communities of interest

74. Both territorial authorities¹⁵ and regional councils¹⁶ must ensure effective representation of communities of interest.
75. Achieving effective representation first requires identifying communities of interest that are geographically distinct and, in the case of territorial authorities, those that may be spread across the district.
76. Effective representation of these communities of interest must be achieved within the following statutory limits:
 - between 5 and 29 members (excluding the mayor) for territorial authorities¹⁷
 - between 6 and 14 members for regional councils¹⁸.
77. Other factors to consider include the size, nature, and diversity of the district/region.
78. The basis of election (at large, by ward, or a combination of both) used by a territorial authority is the one determined by the territorial authority (or Commission, if relevant) to provide the most effective representation of the identified communities of interest.
79. As far as practicable, the following further factors need to be considered when determining effective representation for the local authority:
 - accessibility, size, and configuration of an area, including:
 - the population's reasonable access to its elected members and vice versa
 - the elected members' ability to:

¹⁵ [s19T](#)

¹⁶ [s19U](#)

¹⁷ [s19A](#)

¹⁸ [s19D](#)

- effectively represent the views of their electoral area
 - provide reasonably even representation across the area including activities like attending public meetings and opportunities for face-to-face meetings.
 - avoiding arrangements that may create barriers to participation, for example, not recognising residents' familiarity and identity with an area during elections
 - not splitting recognised communities of interest between electoral areas
 - not grouping together two or more communities of interest that have few common interests
80. As far as practicable, different types of electoral area boundaries (for wards, constituencies, community board and local board subdivisions etc.) need to coincide as this:
- supports communities of interest and local electors' identification with their area
 - may encourage participation, such as voting or standing as a candidate.
81. The legislation is neutral on whether a territorial authority needs to be divided into wards. General characteristics of territorial authorities that have opted for elections at large include:
- the district has a relatively compact geographic area, and/or
 - a shared common community of interest at the district level, and/or
 - communities of interest that are spread across the district rather than being geographically distinct.
82. When there are a large number of communities of interest, identify any common interests and consider combining the communities of interest into one or more larger wards/constituencies.
83. Local authorities should consider the relative merits of one and multi-member wards/constituencies:
- single-member wards/constituencies provide a close direct link between local electors and their representative
 - multi-member wards/constituencies can:
 - provide greater choice for voters
 - following the election, provide greater choice for residents on who to approach on local issues
 - allow sharing and specialising in responsibilities between the ward/constituency representatives.
84. The local authority also needs to consider the electoral system used when addressing particular configurations of wards/constituencies (for example wards/constituencies of 5 to 7 members better allow for proportional representation under STV).

85. Members of a territorial authority may also be elected partly by wards and partly at large (a mixed system). This option may be best when there are clear district-wide communities of interest as well as specific geographically based communities of interest.
86. All members, regardless of the area they are elected to represent, make the same declaration on coming into office to act in the best interests of the whole district. In other words, the members elected under a ward or mixed system have the same obligation to the district as the members elected at large. Therefore, there is no functional difference in the decision-making role of members elected at large and members elected by way of a ward system. Ward and at large members do, however, continue to represent the areas they are elected from at the council table.

Fair representation of electors

87. Section 19V, Local Electoral Act 2001 details the factors to be applied in determining the number of members for wards/constituencies/subdivisions in order to achieve fair representation of electors.
88. Under this provision, membership of wards/constituencies/subdivisions is required to provide approximate population equality per member, that is, all votes are of approximately equal value (referred to as the '+/-10% rule') unless there are good (prescribed) reasons to depart from this requirement.
89. [Section 19V\(2\)](#) outlines the specific requirements as follows: *(2) For the purposes of giving effect to subsection (1), the territorial authority or regional council and, where appropriate, the Commission must ensure that the population of each ward or constituency or subdivision, divided by the number of members to be elected by that ward or constituency or subdivision, produces a figure no more than 10% greater or smaller than the population of the district or region or community divided by the total number of elected members (other than members elected by the electors of a territorial authority as a whole, if any, and the mayor, if any).*
90. In respect of territorial authorities, [section 19V\(3\)\(a\)](#) provides four grounds for not complying with the fair representation requirements of [section 19V\(2\)](#).
91. These grounds are:
 - to provide for effective representation of communities of interest within:
 - island communities
 - isolated communities
 - where compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by:
 - dividing a community of interest
 - grouping together communities of interest with few commonalities of interest.

92. In the case of regional councils, constituencies may be defined in such a way that does not comply with [section 19V\(2\)](#) if it is considered that this is required to achieve effective representation of communities of interest¹⁹
93. For the application of the '+/-10% rule' to Māori wards and constituencies see also clause 6, Schedule 1A.
94. A decision by a local authority not to comply with [section 19V\(2\)](#) must be referred to the Commission for determination. Referral to the Commission is required whether or not appeals or objections have been lodged against the local authority's proposal. That referral is treated by the Commission as an appeal under the Local Electoral Act 2001.
95. It is important that all local authorities, including regional councils, clearly identify the grounds for any proposed non-compliance with the '+/-10% rule' of [section 19V\(2\)](#). This is required for the public notices under [section 19M\(2\)\(c\)](#) and [section 19N\(2\)\(bb\)](#) and assists the Commission in its deliberations. The reasons given should be specific to the particular area concerned and explained in enough detail to show why non-compliance is proposed for that area, rather than simply repeating the general provisions of the Act.
96. Examples of the application of the '+/-10% rule', including exceptions, can be found in the Commission's determinations for previous elections, available on the Commission's website www.lgc.govt.nz. Determinations issued prior to 2010 can be found on the Commission's [archived website](#).²⁰
97. In relation to isolated communities, the Local Electoral Act 2001 does not specify the criteria to be met to warrant specific representation by a member or members on a territorial authority, but given the requirements of subsections (1) and (2) of [section 19V](#), it does imply a significant test in this regard.
98. The Commission expects territorial authorities to identify and consider the following factors when determining whether a community or grouping of communities of interest warrants specific representation because of its isolation:
 - isolation needs to relate to the ability of a community to receive appropriate representation by elected members
 - isolation needs to be evidenced by things such as significant distance or travel time, or other physical/practical travel, and/or communications difficulties, or service reliability problems
 - for a community to have enhanced representation on the grounds of isolation, a significant proportion of the population of the area should be physically isolated
 - physical separation alone may not necessarily constitute isolation
 - an area may not be isolated simply because it is rural in nature

¹⁹ [s19V\(3\)\(b\)](#)

²⁰ Note that determinations made between 2004 and 2013 were made under the then-current legislation which provided that exceptions to the '+/-10% rule' could only be made for territorial authorities in relation to island or isolated communities. Determinations made prior to 2004 were required to achieve fair representation but were not subject to the '+/-10% rule'.

99. In addition, a district may have its own particular factors that contribute to an area having a sense of isolation.
100. While [section 19V](#) does not specifically identify grounds for regional councils not to comply with the '+/-10% rule', the grounds for non-compliance set out in [section 19V\(3\)\(a\)](#) relating to territorial authorities, could be used as possible reasons for non-compliance by a regional council.
101. When considering isolation as a factor in determining fair representation for territorial authorities, the Commission considers that isolation is best assessed in the context of the specific local circumstances of a district. As a result, a single generic definition of isolation is not considered practical. Nevertheless, territorial authorities are expected to be guided by the generic characteristics of isolation outlined in paragraph 28. These characteristics are also applied by the Commission when considering appeals, objections, and referrals.
102. Where a territorial authority ward, regional council constituency, or community board subdivision is permitted to depart from compliance with the '+/-10% rule', this affects how the rule is applied across the remainder of the district, region, or community. In such cases, compliance with the '+/-10% rule' may be relaxed for the balance of the area. However, the Commission considers that the remaining wards, constituencies, or subdivisions should still be as close as practicable to the +/-10% range.
103. The '+/-10% rule' itself is calculated once under [section 19V\(2\)](#) for the district, region, or community as a whole. This calculation applies regardless of whether any exceptions to the rule are proposed. The rule is not recalculated for the balance of the area once an exception has been identified.

Chapter Five: Māori wards and constituencies

Introduction

104. As discussed in [Chapter Two: Preliminary processes](#), a local authority may decide under [section 19Z](#) to establish Māori wards or constituencies. This decision must be made by 12 September in the year 2 years before the election. For the 2028 elections, this is 12 September 2026.
105. If a local authority decides to establish Māori wards/constituencies it must carry out a representation review ([clauses 1 and 3, Schedule 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001](#)). In such cases the requirements of Part 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001 (outlining the standard process for a representation review) are subject to the provisions of [Schedule 1A](#).
106. This chapter outlines considerations that local authorities must make following the decision to establish a Māori ward.

Matters to be determined by representation review

107. [Clauses 1 and 3, Schedule 1A](#) provide that the local authority is required to determine:
 - the proposed total number of members of the local authority
 - whether (for territorial authorities only):
 - all members are to be elected from either Māori or general wards, or
 - some members are to be elected from either Māori or general wards, and some are to be elected at large
 - the proposed number of members to be elected from the Māori wards/constituencies and the number from the general wards/constituencies
 - the proposed name and boundaries of each ward/constituency
 - the proposed number of members to be elected from each Māori and general ward/constituency.

Populations

108. The populations to be used in making decisions about Māori wards/constituencies are:
 - the total ordinarily resident population
 - the Māori electoral population (MEP)

- the general electoral population (GEP)²¹
109. The MEP, and the GEP, are calculated by Statistics New Zealand and must be provided on request to a local authority by the Government Statistician. These populations (at the regional and district level) can also be found on the Local Government Commission’s website.
110. More information about how the MEP and GEP are calculated are on the [Statistics New Zealand website](#)²²

Processes

111. Broadly speaking, the process and requirements set out in [Part 1A, Local Electoral Act](#) are to be followed when a representation review includes Māori wards/constituencies. There are, however, some key requirements where [Schedule 1A](#) is to be followed instead of, or in addition, to the requirements of [Part 1A](#). These are discussed below.
112. As is the case with all representation reviews the various steps in the process may need to be repeated several times until a proposal has been identified that best meets all criteria and requirements.

Determining the overall framework

113. For a territorial authority the first step in the process must be to determine whether:
- all members are to be elected from either Māori or general wards, or
 - some members are to be elected from either Māori or general wards, and some are to be elected at large.
114. It is necessary to do this first as the members to be elected at large are not to be included in the calculation to determine the number of members to be elected from Māori wards/constituencies.

²¹ Section 5(1), *Local Electoral Act* contains definitions for “general electoral population” and “Māori electoral population”. Summaries of those definitions are:

- Māori electoral population – a calculation based on the number of electors on the Māori electoral roll and proportions of those of Māori descent not registered and those under 18 years of age.
- general electoral population – the total ordinarily resident population at the last census less the Māori electoral population.

²² Statistics New Zealand, [The mathematics of electorate allocation in New Zealand based on the outcome of the 2023 Census and Māori Electoral Option \(2024\)](#)

Calculating the number of members

115. The next steps in the process are determining the total number of members of the local authority, and then the number of members to be elected from Māori wards/constituencies.
116. It is anticipated that this will also be a consideration when a local authority is considering whether to resolve to establish Māori wards/constituencies under [section 19Z](#). In some cases the general and Māori electoral population requirements described below may mean that either:
- to reach the statistical threshold for Māori wards/constituencies to be able to be established the total number of members of the local authority may need to be increased
 - it is not statistically possible to establish a Māori ward/constituency because the Māori electoral population as a proportion of the total population is too low.
117. Local authorities need to identify their MEP and GEP at the beginning of determining the range of options for Māori and general wards/constituencies to ensure that any debate occurs in the context of what is possible.²³
118. The process for determining the number of members to be elected from both Māori and general wards/constituencies is set out in clauses 2 and 4, Schedule 1A and involves:
- determining the total number of members of the local authority
 - multiplying the total number of members by the ratio of the MEP to the total (Māori and general) electoral population.
119. For territorial authorities, the following formula is applied:

$$\text{nmm} = \frac{\text{mepd}}{\text{mepd} + \text{gepd}} \times \text{nm}$$

where:

- nmm – number of Māori ward members
- mepd – Māori electoral population of the district
- gepd – general electoral population of the district
- nm – proposed number of members of the territorial authority (other than the mayor, and other than members elected from district as a whole²⁴).

²³ Note that the MEP and GEP are different to the number of electors on the Māori and general electoral rolls. The number on the electoral rolls is not to be used when calculating the number of members to represent Māori or general wards/constituencies.

²⁴ See [clause 2\(2\), Schedule 1A](#).

120. For regional councils the following formula is applied:

$$\underline{\underline{nm}} = \frac{\underline{\underline{mepr}}}{\underline{\underline{mepr}} + \underline{\underline{gepr}}} \times nm$$

where:

- nmm – number of Māori constituency members
- mepr – Māori electoral population of the region
- gepr – general electoral population of the region
- nm – proposed number of members of the regional council.

121. In both cases, fractions are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

Number and boundaries of wards/constituencies

122. In determining arrangements for Māori wards/constituencies, [clause 6, Schedule 1A](#) requires local authorities to:

- satisfy sections [19T](#) and [19U](#), which require:
 - that the election of members provides effective representation of communities of interest within the district/region
 - conformity with meshblock boundaries
 - to the extent that is practicable, conformity of ward boundaries with community board boundaries, and conformity of constituency boundaries with the boundaries of territorial authority districts or wards.
- have regard to:
 - the boundaries of existing Māori parliamentary electoral district
 - communities of interest and the rohe of iwi and hapu.

Number of members to be elected by each ward/constituency

123. Clause 6, Schedule 1A sets out particular requirements when determining the number of members to be elected by each Māori ward/constituency (where there are two or more wards/constituencies). The local authority is required to ensure that the ratio of members to MEP in each Māori ward/constituency produces a variance of no more than +/-10% (to the extent that is reasonably practicable and consistent with the above considerations relating to Māori electoral districts, communities of interest, and the rohe of iwi and hapu).

124. This may require a judgment to be made in individual cases as to the relative importance to be given to each of these sets of factors when determining the number of members from each Māori ward/constituency. Local authorities need to record in detail the decisions they reach on this issue.

125. Where Māori wards/constituencies are established, the '+/-10% rule' for general wards/constituencies is calculated separately using the GEP (which excludes the MEP).

General

126. In working through the requirements of [Schedule 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001](#), local authorities need to consider appropriate consultation at an early stage with iwi and hapū over the boundaries of their rohe. This helps determine the appropriate number of Māori wards/constituencies to reflect Māori communities of interest and areas of tribal affiliation. This will also help in identifying appropriate names for Māori wards/constituencies.
127. The legislation does not provide for Māori electoral subdivisions to be constituted for community board or local board areas.

Chapter Six: Communities and community boards

Introduction

- 128. All territorial authorities must consider whether community boards are (or would be) appropriate to provide fair and effective representation for individuals and communities in its district as part of their representation review.²⁵
- 129. The representation review provides a process for a territorial authority to propose the constitution of new boards, alterations to existing boards, or disestablishment of existing boards.
- 130. When carrying out a review, the required decisions are:
 - whether there need to be communities and community boards within the territorial authority’s district
 - if the territorial authority decides that one or more communities needs to be established (or retained):
 - the boundaries of the community and
 - the membership arrangements of the community board.
- 131. [Schedule 6, Local Government Act 2002](#) provides for community boards to be established at any time outside of the representation review process as the result of a proposal from the community concerned. However, boards may only be disestablished, or the boundaries of a community altered, as part of a:
 - representation review under the Local Electoral Act 2001, or
 - local government reorganisation scheme.

Key Statutory Provisions

- 132. The key statutory provisions relating to reviews of community boards are as follows:

Section	Provision
s19F	provides for a minimum of 4 and maximum of 12 community board members (with at least 4 elected members) and the appointment of members by the parent territorial authority (appointees must make up less than half the total number of members).

²⁵ [s19J](#)

s19G	<p>Prescribes that the area of a community board may be subdivided for electoral purposes. This includes provision for the community board members to be elected by wards if the community board area comprises two or more whole wards of a district.</p> <p>The division of a community board area into electoral subdivisions may be appropriate when the community board area is made up of a number of distinct communities of interest and the formation of subdivisions will provide more effective representation of these communities of interest.</p> <p>The issues to consider when deciding whether or not a community board area needs to be subdivided are similar to those which apply to the division of a district into wards discussed in Chapter Four: Fair and effective representation, excluding the mixed system of representation.</p>
s19V	<p>The fair representation requirements of the '+/-10% rule' also apply in respect of subdivisions of communities including the permitted exceptions in section 19V(3)(a).</p>

Table 5: Key Statutory Provisions

133. The following table sets out specific decisions that need to be made in reviews of community boards under [section 19J, Local Electoral Act 2001](#).

Section	Decision
s19J(1)	Whether to have communities and community boards If so, the nature of any community and the community board structure
s19J(2)(a)	Whether to establish 1 or more communities
s19J(2)(b)	Whether to abolish or unite any community
s19J(2)(c)	Whether to alter the boundaries of a community
s19J(2)(d)	Whether to subdivide any community
s19J(2)(e)	Whether to alter the boundaries of a subdivision
s19J(2)(f)	The number of members of a community board
s19J(2)(g)	The number of elected and appointed members of a community board
s19J(2)(h)	Whether the members to be elected need to be elected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • across the whole community • from subdivisions • where the community comprises two or more whole wards, from those wards
s19J(2)(i)	Where members are to be elected from subdivisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name and boundaries of subdivisions • the number of members to be elected from each subdivision (in accordance with the '+/-10% rule' set out in section 19V(2))

Table 6: Specific decisions for reviews of community boards

134. In undertaking its review, the territorial authority is required to consider the criteria that applies to local government reorganisation under the Local Government Act 2002 as the territorial authority considers appropriate.²⁶
135. Key criteria are set out in clauses 10, 12 and 19 of Schedule 3, Local Government Act 2002 see ([Appendix F: Schedule 3, Local Government Act 2002](#)). Applying these criteria for reviews relating to community boards means considering:
- Will the proposal promote good local government of the parent district and the community area concerned?
 - Will the district and the community have the resources necessary to enable them to carry out their respective responsibilities, duties and powers?
 - Will the district and the community have areas that are appropriate for the efficient and effective performance of their role?
 - Will the district and the community contain a sufficiently distinct community of interest or sufficiently distinct communities of interest?

Appointed members

136. As noted above some members of a community board may be appointed from among the elected members of the territorial authority. When providing for this, points to bear in mind are that:
- If the district is divided into wards the members appointed to a community board must represent a ward in which the community board is located
 - Where the district is divided into Māori wards and general wards the appointed members may be from one or other of those wards or both, as long as the member to be appointed represents a ward in which the community board is geographically located
 - If the council is elected partly from wards and partly at large the appointed members may only be selected from those elected from wards
 - Decisions about whether to have appointed members, and how many there are to be, must be made as part of a representation review. They cannot be made at a later date.

Effect of administrative changes

137. As noted above, when deciding community board matters under section 19J, the territorial authority (or Commission, if applicable) needs to consider the criteria for local government reorganisation that they consider appropriate.

²⁶ [s19W\(a\)](#).

138. The High Court has found that previous statutory reorganisation criteria were broad enough that administrative changes resulting from changing existing community board arrangements also fell within the criteria and therefore are matters that the territorial authority and the Commission need to consider when making their decision.²⁷
139. Administrative changes include any allocation of resources and funding, and any delegation of statutory authority to enable a community board to discharge responsibilities referred or delegated to it [under section 52, Local Government Act 2002](#) by the territorial authority.

General

140. All elements of territorial authorities' representation proposals (including the elements relating to community boards) are subject to rights of appeal and/or objection. Therefore, the issues relating to community boards considered under [section 19J](#) need to be as carefully considered as all the other elements of the review.
141. The council is not responsible for setting the functions and delegations of a community board during a representation review and this is outside the Commission's role.

²⁷ Paragraphs 111 to 119 of the judgment in *Ford & Ors v The Local Government Commission & Ors* (16/8/2004, High Court, Christchurch, John Hansen J, CIV-2004-409-948) set out the Court's reasoning on this matter. The judgement is on the Commission's website [here](#).

Chapter Seven: Local Boards

Introduction

142. If a territorial authority that is a unitary authority has local boards, it must consider local board arrangements as part of its representation review.²⁸ Reviews of local board arrangements are more limited in scope than reviews of community boards.
143. The required decisions are:
- the number of members of local boards
 - whether elected members are to be elected from the whole local board area, subdivisions, or wards (if the local board area comprises 2 or more wards)
 - if the basis of election is subdivisions, the names and boundaries of the subdivisions, and the number of members for each subdivision
 - if the basis of election is wards, the number of members to be elected by each ward
 - where appointed members are a requirement, the number of appointed members of local boards
 - the names of local boards.
144. The matters relating to local boards listed below can only be addressed through reorganisation applications under the Local Government Act 2002, not through the representation review process.²⁹
- establishment of local board areas
 - abolition of local board areas
 - alteration of boundaries of local board areas, other than those permitted by [s19JAA](#), Local Electoral Act
 - union of 2 or more local boards.

Key statutory provisions

145. Local boards must comprise a minimum of 5 and maximum of 12 local board members.³⁰
146. Local board members must be elected using one of the following options³¹

²⁸ [s19H\(1\)\(e\)-\(i\)](#)

²⁹ [s24, LGA](#)

³⁰ [s19EA](#), except for Auckland local boards where [section 11, Local Government \(Auckland Council\) Act 2009](#) applies.

³¹ [s19EC](#)

- subdivisions
 - wards, where a local board area comprises two or more whole wards of the council
 - the whole of the local board area.
147. The division of a local board area into electoral subdivisions may be appropriate when the local board area is made up of a number of distinct communities of interest and the formation of subdivisions will provide effective representation of these communities of interest.
148. When deciding whether a local board area should be subdivided, similar issues need to be considered as when dividing a district into wards (see [Chapter Four: Fair and effective representation](#)), except for the mixed system of representation.
149. The fair representation requirements of [section 19V](#) (the ‘+/-10% rule’) also apply in to subdivisions of local board areas including the permitted exceptions in [section 19V\(3\)\(a\)](#).
150. The following table sets out specific decisions that need to be made in reviews of local boards under [section 19H](#).

Section	Decision
19H(1)(e)	The number of members of a local board
19H(1)(f)	Whether the members to be elected need to be elected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from the whole local board area • from subdivisions • where the local board area comprises two or more whole wards, from those wards
19H(1)(g)	Where members are to be elected from subdivisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name and boundaries of subdivisions • the number of members to be elected from each subdivision (in accordance with the ‘+/-10% rule’ set out in section 19V(2))
19H(1)(h)	Where members are to be elected from wards, the number to be elected from each ward
19H(1)(i)	The names of local boards

Table 7: Specific decisions that need to be made in reviews of local boards

Local board area boundaries

151. A territorial authority may also review the boundaries of a local board area as part of a representation review, within the limits set by [section 19JAA](#)
152. Local board area boundaries may be changed under [section 19JAA](#), provided that:
- The population affected by the new proposed boundaries will not exceed the population transfer limit prescribed by regulations
 - The altered boundaries will enable:

- Democratic local decision making by, and on behalf, communities of interest throughout the district
 - Equitable provision to be made for the current and future well-being of all communities within the affected area
 - Boundaries conform with meshblocks
 - So far as is practicable, local board area boundaries must coincide with ward boundaries.
153. The population transfer limit referred to above is as follows:
- For any transfer or transfers of an area or areas between 2 local board areas as a result of proposed boundaries, population equal to the lower of the following:
 - 2.5% of the population of the existing local board area that has the smaller population:
 - 2,000 residents.
 - For any transfer or transfer or transfers of an area or areas into or out of a local board area as a result of proposed boundaries, population equal to one of the following:
 - 2.5% of the population of the existing local board area:
 - 2,000 residents.³²
154. More extensive changes to boundaries would need to be dealt with through a reorganisation initiative under [Schedule 3A of the Local Government Act](#).³³

General

155. All elements of territorial authorities' representation proposals (including the elements relating to local boards) are subject to rights of appeal and/or objection. Therefore, the issues relating to local boards considered under [section 19H](#) need to be as carefully considered as all the other elements of the review.
156. The Commission has no power to determine a local board's allocated responsibilities or delegations as part of a representation determination.

³² More detailed explanation of how the transfer limit works can be found in Regulation 141 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.

³³ See the Commission's Reorganisation Guidelines

Chapter Eight: Technical requirements

Names of electoral areas

157. When establishing an electoral area, a local authority must also determine a name for that area.
158. Appeals and/or objections may be lodged with the Local Government Commission against the names of wards, constituencies communities, and subdivisions.
159. In general, names of electoral areas should:
 - use the most common or predominant existing place or feature name (whether official or recorded³⁴) within the electoral area concerned
 - be distinctive
 - avoid duplication and confusion of names of electoral areas with those in other local authority areas.
160. Electoral areas are sometimes named after a suburb or locality. The names and extent of suburbs and localities throughout New Zealand are available in a dataset in the [LINZ Data Service](#).
161. Local authorities considering new names for any electoral areas may wish to contact the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (NZGB), which has national standards and guidelines on place naming, including their appropriate use and the correct spelling of place names.
162. Information on the NZGB is online at these links:
 - An overview of the NZGB can be found [here](#).
 - Naming criteria for New Zealand place names can be found in the [Standard for New Zealand place names: NZGBS60002](#)
 - Place names can be searched in the [New Zealand Gazetteer](#).
163. The NZGB does not have jurisdiction over the naming of electoral areas, so the statutory process outlined in the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 does not apply.³⁵
164. Enquiries regarding the NZGB and the process for assigning or altering official place names (but not the names of electoral areas) should be directed to NZGBenquiries@linz.govt.nz

³⁴ Recorded names are unofficial names that have been depicted in at least two documents that the NZGB considers to be authoritative, e.g., maps or charts

³⁵ The NZGB does, however, have a role in changing the names of districts and regions when requested to do so by a local authority. See [sections 22 and 23 of the New Zealand Geographic Board \(Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa\) Act 2008](#).

Meshblocks

165. Meshblocks are the smallest geographic areas defined by Stats NZ. They form the building blocks for larger areas defined in the [Statistical Standard for Geographic Areas 2023 \(SSGA23\)](#).
166. A meshblock is a defined geographic area, which can vary in size from part of a city block to a large area of rural land. Each meshblock borders another to form a network covering all New Zealand. The meshblock geography includes water such as inlets and extends to the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). It is digitised to the 12-nautical-mile limit.
167. Meshblocks are added together to form larger geographic areas, such as statistical area 2s (SA2). They are also used to define parliamentary electoral districts, territorial authority districts, and regions.
168. Meshblock boundaries generally follow road centre lines, cadastral property boundaries or topographical features such as rivers. Expanses of water in the form of lakes and inlets are defined separately from land.³⁶
169. All local government electoral areas must align with meshblock boundaries.³⁷
170. If a local authority is considering boundaries that do not align with meshblock boundaries, it must consult Stats NZ to confirm whether changes to meshblock boundaries are possible. In some cases, Stats NZ may be able to split meshblocks or adjust their boundaries to better reflect communities of interest or current property boundaries.
171. If a local authority seeks changes to meshblock boundaries and Stats NZ agrees, that agreement is sufficient for the local authority to make decisions as part of its representation review. The changes do not need to be reflected in the current digital meshblock pattern. In these cases, Stats NZ can provide an interim version of the meshblock pattern for the district to ensure the correct version is used.
172. Meshblock boundaries cannot be changed if they align with a parliamentary electorate boundary or another local government electoral boundary that is not being reviewed in the same representation review cycle. This most often applies where a regional constituency boundary aligns with a ward, community, or subdivision boundary. However, meshblocks may be split in some cases to meet requirements.
173. During a census cycle or when the Representation Commission is reviewing or is about to review Parliamentary electorates Stats NZ will freeze the meshblock pattern and no meshblock nudges or splits can occur until the freeze is lifted.
174. Stats NZ releases new meshblock boundaries annually as at 1 January. When reviewing boundaries local authorities must use the most current meshblock boundaries, which can be found on the [Stats NZ geographic data service](#). Not doing so risks proposing boundaries that cannot be accepted, and delaying the

³⁶ For further information about meshblocks and other geographic units maintained by Stats NZ see [Statistical standard for geographic areas 2023 \(stats.govt.nz\)](#)

³⁷ [ss 19T\(b\), 19U\(b\), and 19W\(c\)](#)

finalisation of boundaries The most current meshblock pattern can be found at - [Stats NZ Geographic Boundary Viewer](#)

175. The Geographic Boundary Viewer is an easy to use, view only web map that contains a range of geographic boundaries all in one application.
176. The [Stats NZ Geographic Data Service](#) allows data to be viewed and downloaded in a variety of spatial and non-spatial formats, for use in a council's own GIS system.
177. Enquiries regarding meshblock alterations should be directed to the Stats NZ Geospatial Team as follows:

Representation review specific enquiries	representationreview@stats.govt.nz
General meshblock-related enquiries, particularly outside the formal representation review period	geography@stats.govt.nz
Contacts:	Rachel Livingston (03) 964 8448 Mark Barnes (03) 964 8420
Post:	Geospatial Team Stats NZ Tauranga Aotearoa Private Bag 4741 Christchurch
Website:	www.stats.govt.nz

Use of population data

178. When carrying out its representation review, the local authority must³⁸ apply the "ordinarily resident population"³⁹ figures derived from either:
- the most recent census, or
 - population estimates prepared by Stats NZ.
179. Population estimates can be requested by contacting Stats NZ at representationreview@stats.govt.nz.
180. The Commission recommends that the most recent population estimates are used, so that each local authority is applying population data that most accurately reflects its current situation. Stats NZ releases sub-national population estimates annually in October each year, as at 30 June in that year.⁴⁰

³⁸ [s19X](#)

³⁹ Stats NZ uses the terminology "usually resident population" (URP).

⁴⁰ The 2026 population estimates will be available in October 2026

181. Local authorities must not use population statistics from more than one source in determining representation arrangements, e.g., population estimates from two different years. To do so would be in breach of section 19X and would result in inaccurate populations.
182. If a new population dataset is released after a local authority has resolved its initial proposal, it should not be used when deciding the final proposal. Using it may require changes to the proposed representation arrangements that submitters did not anticipate. This could limit their ability to provide meaningful input into the process
183. Stats NZ will provide estimates of population for a variety of geographic areas including individual meshblocks, statistical areas (SA1 and SA2) ⁴¹, existing electoral areas, proposed electoral areas (if an appropriate geographic description is provided), and whole districts.
184. Estimates for local authority districts, existing electoral areas and SA2s are published by Stats NZ on [Aotearoa Data Explorer](#).
185. Estimates for MEP and GEP can be provided for SA2s, and other larger groupings of meshblocks. They cannot, however, be provided for individual meshblocks.
186. Stats NZ charges a fee for the preparation of population estimates for areas that are not routinely published on its website. Requests for estimates must follow Stats NZ's [representation review population guideline](#).
187. The most direct source for obtaining each type of statistics is shown in the table below.

Statistics type	Area	Source
2023 census URP	Meshblocks	Stats NZ general email / phone contact: info@stats.govt.nz or 0508 525 525
Annual estimates URP	SA2, Regions, TAs, current electoral areas, and proposed areas	Stats NZ Aotearoa Data Explorer: Society>Population estimates>Subnational population estimates
Annual estimates URP	Meshblocks and customised areas	Stats NZ Representation Review email: representationreview@stats.govt.nz

⁴¹ Statistical areas are groupings of meshblocks devised for the reporting of statistical data for areas larger than individual meshblocks. Statistical area 2's (SA2) replace the former area units and are, generally, about the same size. Statistical area 1's (SA1) cover smaller areas than the SA2's and include either a single meshblock or a small number of meshblocks.

MEP/GEP	2023 census by meshblock	Stats NZ Geographic Data Service: https://datafinder.stats.govt.nz/layer/121975-2023-census-electoral-population-at-meshblock-level-2025-meshblock/
MEP/GEP	Annual estimates for Regions, TAs, current electoral areas, proposed areas and customised areas	Stats NZ Representation Review email: representationreview@stats.govt.nz

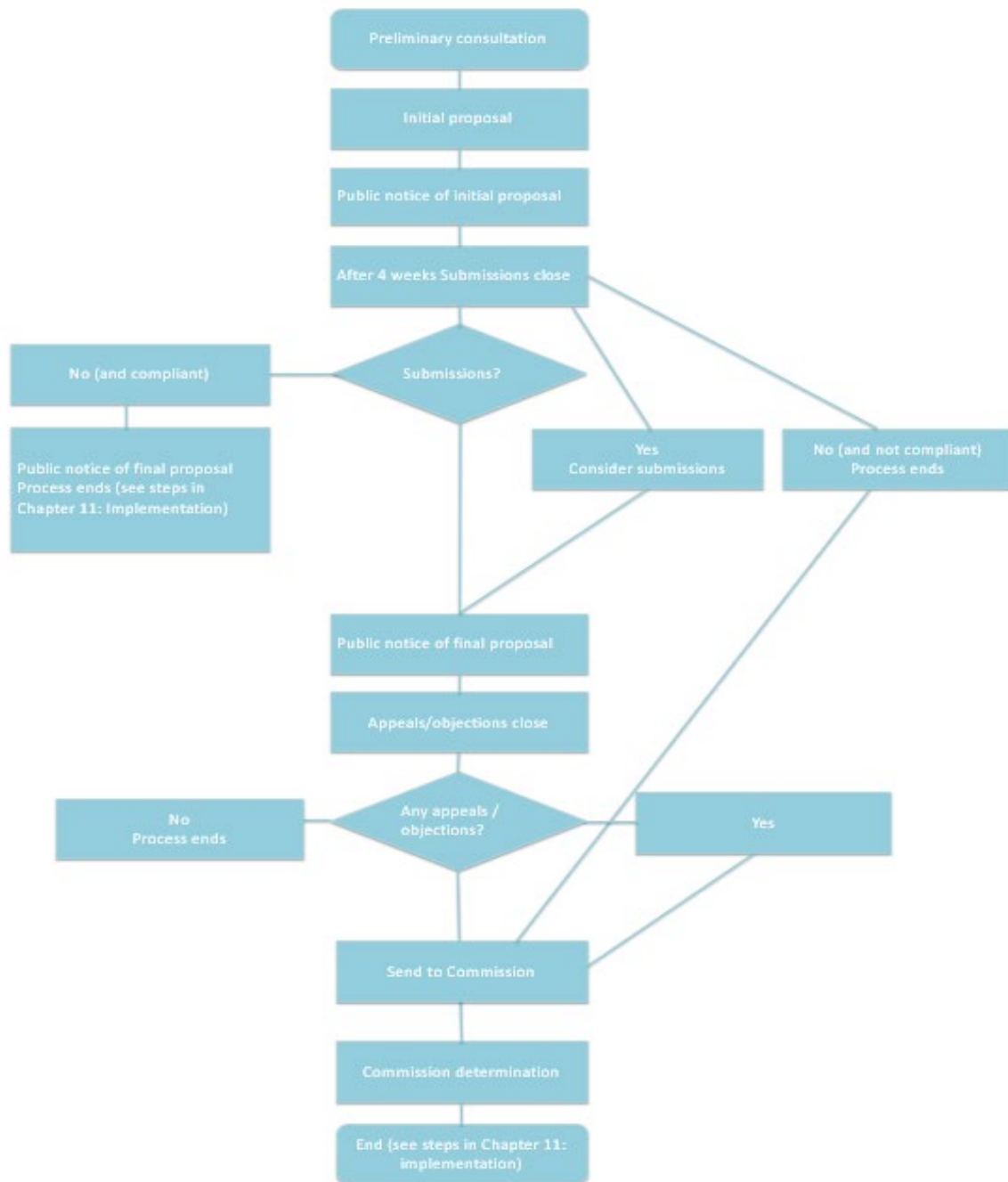
Table 8: Stats NZ population area type and source

188. Enquiries regarding population data for representation reviews should be directed to the Stats NZ Population Insights Team as follows:

Email:	representationreview@stats.govt.nz
Contacts:	Bridget Snodgrass (03) 03 964 8317 Melissa Adams (03) 964 8348
Post:	Population Insights Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa Private Bag 4741 Christchurch
Website:	www.stats.govt.nz

Chapter Nine: Representation review process

189. The representation review process starts off the same for each council but next steps are determined by whether or not the Council's proposal is compliant, receives submissions and receives appeals and/or objections. This is illustrated in the flow chart below



Timelines

190. The Commission encourages local authorities to begin planning for their reviews as early as possible in the relevant triennium and to allow enough time for meaningful early engagement. The Commission also encourages local authorities to set internal deadlines that allows flexibility to respond to issues as they arise, while still meeting statutory deadlines.
191. In the past, some local authorities have worked close to statutory deadlines. This has reduced their ability to respond to unexpected issues and can create challenges later in the process.
192. Regional councils and territorial authorities in a region are encouraged to communicate on the timing and direction of their reviews. This is particularly so given the requirement for regional constituencies, as far as practicable, to coincide with territorial authority or ward boundaries⁴²
193. A local authority must not formally resolve its initial proposal before 20 December, in the year that is two years before the next election⁴³
194. This allows time for demands for polls on electoral systems and Māori wards/constituencies to be taken into account.
195. However, local authorities can begin preliminary consideration, planning, and consultation well before this date.
196. In general, the representation review process involves the following steps:

Procedure	Deadline	Relevant section
Local authority undertakes preliminary consultation to understand communities of interest and to develop potential options for initial proposal	With sufficient time to meet statutory deadlines below	
Local authority resolves proposed representation arrangements	Initial proposals must be made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no earlier than 20 December in the year 2 years before election year by 31 July in the year before election year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s19H (territorial authorities) s19I (regional councils) s19J (community boards) Schedule 1A for Māori wards or constituencies
Local authority gives public notice of "initial" proposal and invites submissions	Within 14 days of resolution, and not later than 8 August in the year before election year	s19M(1)
Submissions close	Not less than one month	s19M(2)(d)

⁴² [s19U](#)

⁴³ [s19K\(1AA\)](#)

Procedure	Deadline	Relevant section
	after public notice	
If no submissions, then proposal becomes final ⁴⁴	Public notice to be given when there are no submissions, but no date fixed for doing this	<u>s19Y(1)</u>
Local authority considers submissions and may make resolution to amend proposal	Within 8 weeks of closing date for submissions	<u>s19N(1)(a)</u>
Local authority gives public notice of its "final" proposal	Within 8 weeks of closing date for submissions	<u>s19N(1)(b)</u>
Appeals and objections close	Must be lodged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not less than 1 month after the date of the public notice issued under section 19N(1)(b) not later than 3 December in the year before election year 	<u>s19O</u> <u>s19P</u>
If no appeals or objections, then proposal automatically becomes final	Public notice to be given when there are no appeals/objections, but no date fixed for doing this	<u>s19Y(1)</u>
Local authority forwards appeals, objections, and other relevant information to the Commission ⁴⁵	As soon as practicable, but not later than 20 December in the year before election year	<u>19sQ</u> <u>s19V(4)</u>
Commission considers resolutions, submissions, appeals and objections and makes determination	Before 11 April in election year	<u>s19R</u>
Determination subject to appeal to High Court on a point of law ⁴⁶	Appeals to be lodged within 1 month of determination	<u>Clause 2,</u> <u>Schedule 5,</u> <u>Local Government Act 2002</u>

⁴⁴ Under *section 19V(4)* proposals that do not comply with the +/-10% fair representation requirement are subject to confirmation by the Commission even if no submissions, appeal or objections have been lodged.

⁴⁵ Includes any proposal that does not comply with the +/-10% fair representation requirement.

⁴⁶ Commission determinations may also be subject to judicial review.

Table 9 – Representation review steps

Initial considerations

197. Local authorities which are required to undertake a review, or are considering whether to undertake a review more than once within a six-year period, may wish to consider whether there is a need to address any of the following matters:
- Were there any matters arising from the previous representation review that suggest a further review in three years' time would be desirable?
 - Does the present number of councillors provide effective representation for communities of interest?
 - Have there been significant changes in population in some areas which impact on fair representation, that is, approximate equality between councillors in the numbers represented?
 - For territorial authorities only:
 - Is the current basis of election (that is, a ward system, an at-large system or a mixed system) appropriate for the local authority?
 - Are current community boards (if any) appropriate? If not, is there a need for the establishment of new boards, or the de-establishment or merger of current boards?
 - Are there any other reasons (current or future considerations) that suggest a review needs to be undertaken at this time?
198. In addition, local authorities have the option of making minor boundary alterations after three years rather than undertaking a full review: see [Chapter Twelve: Minor boundary alterations](#)

Engagement

199. Community engagement is a fundamental component of the representation review process. It provides those who may be affected by proposed changes with meaningful opportunities to share their views, concerns, and aspirations, and helps ensure that representation arrangements reflect how communities live and identify themselves.
200. Effective engagement builds trust, supports transparency, and strengthens the quality and legitimacy of decision-making. Local authorities therefore need a clear, well-articulated plan for engaging with their communities, outlining how community views will be gathered, recorded, and taken into account.
201. While local authorities have discretion in how engagement is undertaken, the process must be robust, inclusive, and demonstrably effective. Clear communication about the engagement process is essential and supports decisions that can be clearly documented within the initial proposal.

202. High-quality engagement includes seeking input from iwi, hapū, and other stakeholders to draw on local and on-the-ground knowledge that can inform both the engagement approach and the final outcomes.
203. Understanding and documenting communities of interest, including the “way people live,” is critical to both shaping and justifying representation arrangements. Although formal consultation occurs later in the statutory process, early pre-engagement is key to success.

Pre-engagement

204. Preliminary engagement can assist local authorities to identify communities of interest, test potential representation options, and surface issues relevant to the review, enabling a broader and more informed range of options to be considered when developing the formal proposal.
205. Pre-engagement activities may include community surveys, discussion documents, public meetings and workshops, focus groups, targeted discussions, newspaper advertising, and engagement with iwi and hapū. Preliminary consultation does not substitute for the statutory steps in the representation review process.
206. For example, while a referendum may indicate overall public sentiment, it should not be relied on as the sole basis for representation decisions. The review must be guided by the statutory principles of fair and effective representation for all individuals and communities of interest, rather than simply reflecting majority preferences on particular aspects of the arrangements.
207. Communities should be presented with a range of options, and those options must be genuinely considered, with clear evidence recorded. The Commission expects local authorities to identify and describe communities of interest within their district or region, explain how they have been assessed, and show how and why they have been grouped to form electoral areas.
208. Initial proposals must clearly explain the chosen approach, including evidence that alternative options were explored where appropriate and why those options were not preferred.

Independent panels

209. Local authorities should consider using independent panels to undertake preliminary consultation and then make recommendations on options for representation arrangements. This avoids potential perceptions of parochialism and self-interest arising from elected members’ involvement at least in the early stages of the review process.
210. When convening an independent panel:
 - select people who have relevant skills, and a good knowledge of the district/region
 - provide clear terms of reference

- fully brief the panel on its task, ensuring it has a good understanding of the statutory requirements for reviews and that its recommendations align to the representation review requirements of the Local Electoral Act.
211. Local authorities should also liaise with other local authorities in the region regarding the timing of representation reviews, including the possibility of carrying out joint consultation activities.

Initial proposal

212. Initial representation proposals must be resolved between 20 December 2026 and 31 July 2027.

What needs to be included

213. In developing the initial proposal for representation arrangements, it is critical to demonstrate that all relevant factors have been thoroughly considered and explicitly worked through. This includes clearly identifying communities of interest across the district or region and assessing a range of potential representation options.
214. The proposal must show evidence that different models (such as at-large elections, wards, mixed systems, council size options, and boundary configurations) have been considered, consulted on or tested, and then either adopted or rejected, with clear reasons provided. The Commission must be able to see that alternatives were genuinely explored and understand why particular options best support fair and effective representation.
215. The proposal therefore needs to “walk through” these guidelines step by step and clearly tick off each requirement. This means spelling out how accessibility, geography, population diversity, governance efficiency, community wellbeing, population-to-member ratios, the ± 10 percent rule, and the role of community boards have all been factored into the final decision.
216. The rationale for each aspect of the local authority’s initial proposal should be transparent and well documented, so the Commission can clearly see that the recommended approach results from a balanced assessment of all required considerations, rather than a predetermined outcome. The required considerations are listed in [Appendix E](#), which can be used to check that the initial proposal clearly explains how and why the council selected its proposed representation arrangements.

Resolving a proposal

217. The initial representation proposal must be formally considered by the council (or delegated committee) and adopted by resolution at a council meeting.

218. The resolution should clearly authorise the proposal and approve the undertaking of public consultation in accordance with statutory requirements. It is important that the resolution is well drafted, unambiguous, and clearly records the decisions made by the council.
219. Local authorities should ensure the resolution aligns with legislative requirements and clearly signals the next steps in the review process. An exemplar resolution is provided for reference and should be used as a guide to ensure all necessary elements are included and expressed clearly.
220. It is important to carefully consider the following issues and to record detailed reasoning for all decisions relating to:
- the identification of communities of interest
 - the basis of election (territorial authorities only)
 - the establishment or retention of community boards (territorial authorities only)
 - the provision of fair and effective representation for electors and communities of interest, and compliance with the '+/-10% rule' in particular
 - where the '+/-10% rule' has not been complied with the specific grounds for not complying and the supporting reasons for that decision
 - consideration by regional councils of the practicality of constituency boundaries coinciding with territorial authority or ward boundaries, and
 - consideration by territorial authorities of ward boundaries coinciding with community boundaries.

Notifying an initial proposal

221. A Council must publicly notify their initial proposal within 14 days of making the proposal.
222. A sample notification can be found in the resources section of our website.
223. A copy of the resolution making the initial proposal must be sent to the organisations listed in Appendix D,

Consultation

224. Representation reviews must meet the requirements set out in Part 1A of the Local Electoral Act 2001, including giving the public an opportunity to make submissions on a local authority's proposals.
225. The following sections of the Local Government Act 2002 apply to local authorities performing functions under all enactments:

Section	Relating to
sections 10, 11, 12(2), and 14	relating to the purpose of local government and the role, status, powers and principles for local authorities

Table 10: Sections of Local Government Act applying to consultation

226. During representation reviews local authorities need to be mindful of the principles set out in [section 14, Local Government Act 2002](#), including:
- being aware of, and regarding the views of all of its communities
 - accounting for the diversity of the community
 - providing opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision-making processes.
227. The statutory consultation requirements for initial and final proposals are detailed under sections [19M](#) (initial) and [19N](#) (final) of the Local Electoral Act 2001 (see Appendix B) based on the special consultative procedure provided for in the Local Government Act 2002.

Submissions

228. If a local authority does not receive any submissions to its initial proposal, and the proposal is compliant, the representation review is complete. The council must issue a final proposal and provide this to the Commission. If boundary changes have been made to electoral areas new plans must be prepared for those areas: see [Chapter Eleven: Implementation](#) for information on the preparation and certification of plans.
229. If a local authority does not receive any submissions to its initial proposal, and the proposal is not compliant, the proposal must be referred to the Commission, to make a determination on the non-compliance.
230. If a council receives submissions to the proposal, even if the submissions are in support of the council's proposal, an opportunity for the submissions to be heard must be made, as set out below.

Hearing

231. After the consultation period, if a local authority receives submissions on its initial proposal, it must consider them in a legally fair way. For instance, if any person exercises the right to be heard under [section 19M\(3\)](#), Local Electoral Act 2001. This generally means that only members who have heard the submissions take part in making decisions on them. However, if an elected member cannot attend oral presentations for a valid reason, they may still take part in decision-making if they take reasonable steps to inform themselves about those submissions.
232. Local authorities must consider all submissions received and be able to show this by giving reasons for accepting or rejecting them. Changes to the final proposal should be in respond to submissions. If changes are made for other reasons, the community may not have had an opportunity to provide feedback, which could lead to appeals or objections.

Final proposal

233. A final proposal is only required if submissions are received on the initial proposal. Local authorities can either confirm or amend the representation arrangements included in their initial proposal in their final proposal.
234. All final representation proposals are required to be made, and publicly notified, within 8 weeks of the closing date for submissions on the initial representation proposal.
235. Any changes made in the final representation proposal should be based on submissions received during the submissions period on the initial representation proposal
236. If a local authority confirms its initial proposal, appeals are limited only to submitters on the initial proposal. However, if a council amends its initial proposal, then appeals can be received from submitters to the initial proposal (relating to the matters raised in their original submission) and objections on any matter can be received from any interested party.
237. Local authorities must give reasons explaining why submissions have been accepted (and changes made to the initial representation proposal) or rejected. These reasons must be included in each council's public notice of the final proposal.
238. Specific reasons should be stated that explain how the matters raised in a submission relate to the effect of the representation proposal on communities of interest or the principles of fair and effective representation. It is not sufficient to quote legislative provisions as the reason for a submission being accepted or rejected; the reason must be specific to the local context of each council.
239. For example, if changes proposed via submissions would result in a constituency, ward or subdivision departing from the +/-10% rule, it would not be sufficient to quote the legislative exceptions for departing from the +/-10% rule. Instead, the reasons would need to explain why the legislative exceptions to the +/-10% rule do or do not apply.

Final notification

240. The local authority's public notice of its final proposal under [section 19N\(2\)](#) is required to state the reasons for amendments and the reasons for any rejection of submissions, so the reasons must be recorded in the local authority's resolution of its final proposal.
241. The same information should be included in the final proposal notifications as is stated above in the initial proposal requirements.
242. Providing full information to the public on representation proposals is good practice and may reduce the potential for appeals and/or objections. For example, consider using:
 - local authority facilities and communications channels such as displays at council offices and libraries
 - council publications, newsletters, and websites

- news media and social media.
243. Ensure that information is easy to understand. For example, identify proposed electoral areas by including suitable maps (or details of where to view them physically or electronically) in public notices.
244. A copy of the final notice must be sent to the organisations listed in [Appendix D](#).

Appeals and objections

245. Once a local authority has decided on its final proposal:
- an appeal may be made by a submitter on the initial proposal about matters related to their original submission⁴⁷
 - an objection may be lodged by any person or organisation if a local authority's final proposal differs from its initial proposal⁴⁸. The objection must identify the matters to which the objection relates.
 - the local authority must refer their final proposal to the Commission if the proposal does not comply with the '+/-10% rule'⁴⁹
246. Any references to appeals in this chapter include any proposals referred under section 19V, as they are treated as appeals.
247. Appeals, objections, and referrals under [section 19V](#) are sent to the Commission.
248. Local authorities must set the closing date for appeals and objections:
- at least one month after the date of the public notice issued under [section 19N\(1\)\(b\)](#)
 - no later than 3 December in the year before election year.
249. There is no provision in the Local Electoral Act 2001 for the acceptance of late appeals or objections.

The role of the Commission

250. When there are appeals, objections or referrals, the Commission must:
- consider the appeals, objections, and other information forwarded to it
 - determine the representation arrangements for the local authority⁵⁰(section 19R)
 - complete its duties before 11 April in election year.
251. In making its determination, the Commission is able to make any enquiries that it considers appropriate and may choose to hold meetings with the parties.

⁴⁷ [s19O](#)

⁴⁸ [s19P](#)

⁴⁹ [s19](#)

⁵⁰ [S19R](#)

252. Determinations of the Commission may be:
- appealed on a point of law, in accordance with [Schedule 5, Local Government Act 2002](#)
 - subject to judicial review under the [Judicial Review Procedure Act 2016](#).
253. One of the Commission's 2004 determinations was subject to judicial review⁵¹. The High Court's judgement confirmed that:
- the Commission's role is to determine the matters required to complete the review of representation arrangements
 - the Commission's role is not merely supervisory of a local authority's decision. This means that the Commission is not restricted to checking that a local authority has followed a correct process and referred to all relevant factors, but that it is also required to form its own view on the matters which are within the scope of the review
 - the Commission is required to take into account the local authority's proposal (amongst other matters), and the weight accorded to the proposal is determined by the Commission
 - it is not mandatory for the Commission to consider the weight of numbers in favour of a particular viewpoint. One compelling submission may provide sufficient material for the Commission to reach a decision.

Information to be provided to the Commission

254. The information required to accompany the appeals and objections forwarded to the Commission is (set out in detail in [section 19Q](#)):
- copies of the resolutions on the initial and final proposals
 - a copy of the public notice of the final proposal
 - all submissions made on the local authority's initial proposal
 - all appeals and objections received
 - information concerning the communities of interest and population of the district, region or community, or any proposed electoral area, as is held by the local authority and is necessary for the Commission's determination of the appeals and objections.
255. In addition, the Commission would normally expect the following information to be provided:
- copies of any public discussion or consultation documents on the review
 - detailed maps showing the existing electoral areas of the local authority or community and the proposed subdivisions

⁵¹ Ford & Ors v The Local Government Commission & Ors (16/8/2004, High Court, Christchurch, John Hansen J, CIV-2004-409-948) on the Commission's website [here](#).

- officer reports to the local authority that provide background information and make recommendations, including the financial impacts of any proposals
- GIS files showing proposed electoral arrangements. These are to be provided in accordance with Stats NZ's [representation review spatial data guidelines](#)

Chapter Ten: Considering appeals, objections, and referrals

Commission consideration

256. When considering appeals or objections to a local authority's final proposal, the Commission's process is set by legislation.
257. The Commission may decide the matter based on written material or hold a hearing where parties can present their views. The Commission may also make any enquiries it considers appropriate.
258. In some cases, the Commission may invite submitters who support a local authority's proposal to speak at a hearing so it can hear a range of views. It may also invite others, such as community board representatives, to ensure additional perspectives are considered. These invitations are made at the Commission's discretion.
259. Where the only appeals received involve relatively minor matters the Commission has, on occasions, reached its decision based on a consideration of the papers. In deciding whether or not to hold a hearing, the appeals and/or objections received will be assessed to determine whether a hearing is justified in a particular case.
260. Refer to [Appendix G: Commission hearings](#) for details of how Commission hearings are conducted.

Commission decisions

261. Commission decisions take into account matters:
 - that come before it through appeals and objections
 - raised in submissions to a local authority's initial proposal, and information gained through any further enquiries the Commission considers appropriate⁵²
262. When considering a proposal, the Commission must address any part of a local authority's proposal that does not comply with statutory requirements, whether or not it has been raised in an appeal or objection. This means the Commission's decision may not always be based on a specific proposal, submission, objection, or appeal.
263. In considering local authority proposals, the Commission must ensure that the provisions of sections [19T](#) or [19U](#) or [19W](#), and section [19V](#) are complied with.

⁵² [s19R](#)

264. If the Commission does not consider that the local authority has established grounds for a departure from the '+/-10% fair representation rule' in [section 19V\(2\)](#), then the Commission is required to ensure that this requirement is met. This is why it is important for local authorities to demonstrate the reasoning behind their proposed representation arrangements in their initial and final proposals.

Determinations

265. After the Commission has made its decision, it will issue a determination setting out its reasons and the detailed representation arrangements for the local authority involved. Determinations may be made no later than 10 April 2027.
266. The Commission will notify the local authority, appellants and objectors, news media and agencies such as Stats NZ, LINZ and the Remuneration Authority. The determination will be placed on the Commission's website.
267. Actions required after a determination is issued are described in [Chapter 11: Implementation](#).

Chapter Eleven: Implementation

Proposals not considered by the Commission

268. If the Commission does not have to determine a local authority's representation review proposal it is the local authority's responsibility to liaise with Stats NZ over changes required by new or altered boundaries and to arrange with a mapping provider for the preparation of new plans.
269. In such cases Commission staff are able to provide technical advice to the local authority and to Stats NZ.
270. Stats NZ's preference is for geographic data provided to it to be in sent in digital form. This is more efficient than hard copy information and will better ensure that the local authority's decisions are accurately reflected in the digital meshblock pattern. This data is to be provided in accordance with Stats NZ's [representation review spatial data guidelines](#).

After the Commission makes a determination

271. After the Commission has made a determination on a local authority's representation arrangements, it:
 - advises the affected local authority and the appellants and objectors
 - advises the news media
 - advises the Surveyor-General, Government Statistician, the Remuneration Authority and the Secretary for Local Government
 - gives public notice of the determination (the cost of which is met by the Commission)
 - where boundaries have been altered or new electoral areas are established, arranges for the preparation of plans defining those boundaries and areas (the cost of which is met by the affected local authority).
272. The Commission advises the Government Statistician of its determination and works with Stats NZ's Geospatial Team to ensure new or updated boundaries are reflected in the digital meshblock pattern. Stats NZ then provides the updated meshblock pattern to the Electoral Commission so that electoral rolls reflect these boundaries.
273. If the Commission has determined a local authority's representation arrangements, the local authority does not need to work with Stats NZ or arrange for the preparation of plans. The Commission manages this process.

Preparation and certification of plans

274. Representation arrangements for the next local authority or community board election do not take effect unless plans of the relevant electoral areas have been:
- forwarded to Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), and
 - certified by the Surveyor-General or his/her delegate.
275. The requirement to have plans prepared for electoral areas includes Māori and General wards and constituencies where they cover a whole district or region.
276. To do this, the local authority (or its mapping provider) must forward plans in PDF format to electoral@linz.govt.nz, with the words 'Plan for certification' and the name of the local authority in the subject line of the email.
277. The Surveyor-General (in conjunction with the Commission) has issued a standard specifying the requirements for plans submitted for certification - [Standard for plans of local authority electoral areas - LINZS5000](#)
278. If the Commission determines a local authority's representation arrangements and new plans are required, the local authority must cover the cost of preparing and certifying those plans. The Commission may invoice the local authority directly or arrange for the provider preparing the plans to invoice the local authority.⁵³
279. The drafting and certification of plans, whether undertaken under instructions from a local authority or the Commission, may take some time to complete. This should be taken into account to ensure plans are completed on time.
280. The time and costs involved will generally reflect the number and complexity of changes to existing representation arrangements.
281. All local authorities need to factor in provision for costs associated with such plans when developing the budgets for their representation reviews.
282. Copies of current plans can be viewed on the Commission's website at www.lgc.govt.nz.

When determinations take effect

283. The Commission's determinations come into force at the upcoming elections. A local authority or electoral officer must act on the content of a determination to prepare for those elections.

⁵³ [s19Y\(5\)](#)

Chapter Twelve: Minor boundary alterations

Introduction

284. Local authorities not undertaking representation reviews may make minor alterations to electoral boundaries where there have been property boundary changes at or near existing electoral boundaries.
285. A local authority decision on a minor boundary alteration must be referred to the Commission for determination.

Key statutory provisions

286. The statutory provisions relating to minor boundary alterations are set out in section [19JA](#) for territorial authorities and section [19JB](#) for regional councils. These provisions set out the following requirements:
 - since the last representation review, there have been changes to allotment boundaries at or near electoral boundaries⁵⁴
 - the proposed electoral boundary alterations are minor
 - the alterations will maintain effective representation of communities of interest
 - as far as practicable, the proposed electoral boundaries will coincide with allotment boundaries
 - as far as practicable, proposed ward boundaries will coincide with community boundaries (if any), and proposed constituency boundaries will coincide with district or ward boundaries.
287. The proposal is not subject to consultation in the way a representation review proposal is, but a local authority's decision must be made in an open meeting ([ss19JA and JB](#)) (subject to the requirements of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987).
288. The local authority must refer a decision on a proposed minor boundary alteration to the Commission no later than 15 January in an election year. It must also forward any information on communities of interest, population, and the proposed electoral areas held by the local authority and necessary for the Commission's determination. The information provided to the Commission needs to focus on the areas directly affected by the proposed minor boundary alteration.

⁵⁴ Allotment is defined by [section 218\(2\), Resource Management Act 1991](#).

289. The Commission can make any inquiries it considers appropriate before making a determination on the proposal. It must make its determination before 11 April in election year.

Commission consideration

290. The Commission sees the normal use of this provision as being situations where a property subdivision has occurred that:

- straddles an electoral boundary, resulting in properties being divided between electoral areas
- leaves properties without direct roading access to the electoral area in which they are situated
- is adjacent to an electoral boundary and leaves a new property subdivision outside the electoral area in which its predominant community of interest is located.

291. The benefits of making minor boundary alterations are seen as:

- better recognising communities of interest
- providing clarity about which electoral area electors should be enrolled in.

Detailed matters for local authorities

292. Minor boundary alterations normally require an alteration to a meshblock boundary. Contact should be made with Statistics New Zealand's Geospatial team to check whether it is able to change a specific boundary. There may be some circumstances where a meshblock boundary is not able to be changed, for example where it is also the boundary of a parliamentary electorate.

293. A local authority considering a minor boundary alteration needs to check whether the proposed new boundary is also:

- another local authority's electoral area's boundary, for example a ward boundary may also be a regional constituency boundary
- a licensing trust district or community trust boundary.⁵⁵

294. Where this is the case the local authority proposing a minor boundary alteration should discuss the matter with the other affected local authority to alert them and to discuss whether they also wish to change boundaries. The existence of a shared boundary and the outcomes of those discussions should be included in the information provided to the Commission.

295. Discussion with the other affected bodies (and in some cases with the Commission) may help clarify how feasible it is to make a minor boundary alteration.

⁵⁵ Sections 300, 304, 337 and 363 of the [Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012](#) enable the Commission to alter the boundaries of licensing trust districts and community trusts so that they conform with meshblock boundaries.

Chapter Thirteen: Auckland Council

296. There are some differences to how the representation review legislation applies to the Auckland Council. This chapter explains those differences.
297. The representation review provisions of the [Local Electoral Act 2001](#) apply to the Auckland Council because it is a territorial authority, subject to the following specific provisions of the [Local Government \(Auckland Council\) Act 2009](#):
- local boards must comprise no fewer than 5 and no more than 12 elected members, and may not include appointed members⁵⁶
 - a prohibition on the establishment of community boards in Auckland⁵⁷
298. The following matters relating to local boards are to be dealt with by way of reorganisation applications under the [Local Government Act 2002](#), and therefore not through the representation review process⁵⁸
- establishment of local board areas
 - abolition of local board areas
 - alteration of boundaries of local board areas, other than those permitted by [section 19JAA](#)
 - union of 2 or more local boards.
299. The following matters relating to local boards must be considered as part of the representation review process⁵⁹
- the number of elected members of local boards
 - whether elected members are to be elected from the whole local board area, subdivisions, or wards (if the local board area comprises 2 or more wards)
 - if a local board area is divided into subdivisions, the names and boundaries of the subdivisions, and the number of members for each subdivision
 - if a local board area is divided into wards, the number of members to be elected to the board by the area of each ward
 - the names of local boards.
300. In addition, the boundaries of local board areas may be reviewed through a representation review within the limitations set out in [section 19JAA](#).
301. A new local board established following a reorganisation application under the [Local Government Act 2002](#) may have:
- a chairperson directly elected by the electors of the local board area

⁵⁶ [s11\(1a\), Local Government \(Auckland Council\) Act 2009](#)

⁵⁷ [Ss102, Local Government \(Auckland Council\) Act 209](#)

⁵⁸ [s24, LGA](#)

⁵⁹ [s19H\(1\)\(e\)-\(i\), LEA](#)

- a mixture of directly elected members and members appointed by the governing body.
302. These options are not available to the local boards established under the [Local Government \(Auckland Council\) Act 2009](#)⁶⁰
303. The provisions in [section 19JA](#), Local Electoral Act which permit minor alterations to the boundaries of territorial authority wards, communities, subdivisions of communities, and local board subdivisions:
- apply to Auckland only in relation to wards and local board subdivisions
 - do not apply to the external boundaries of local board areas as these can only be altered through the process set out in [section 19JAA](#) or the reorganisation process in the [Schedule 3A, Local Government Act 2002](#).

⁶⁰ [s24\(1\)\(h\), Local Government Act 2002](#)

Appendices / Āpitihanga

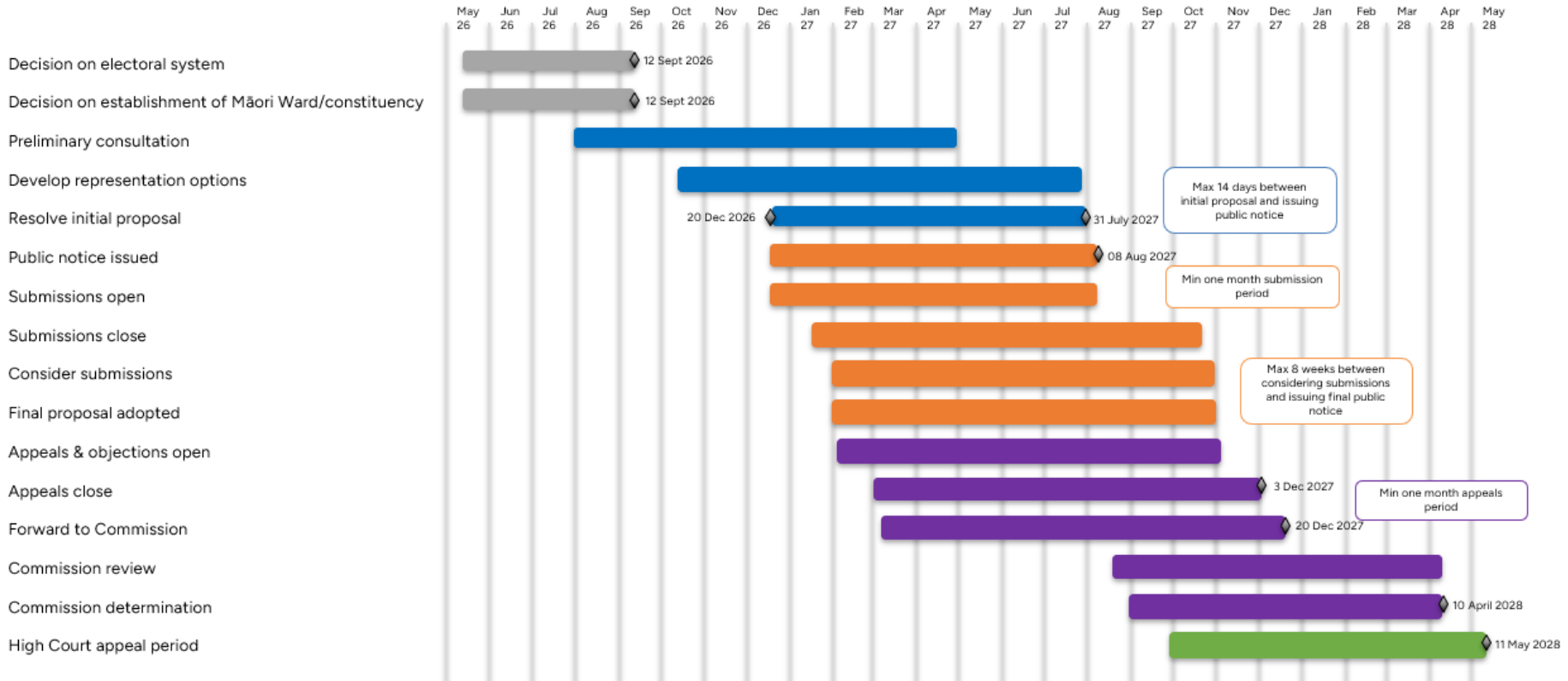
Appendix A: Representation review timeline

REPRESENTATION REVIEW TIMELINE

How to read this timeline

Bars show indicative timeframe for each activity
Diamonds show statutory dates

Key steps in the representation review process and expected timeframes



Max 14 days between initial proposal and issuing public notice

Min one month submission period

Max 8 weeks between considering submissions and issuing final public notice

Min one month appeals period

LEGEND

- Pre-review decisions (Governance)
- Options & engagement
- Consultation & submissions
- Appeals & Commission process
- Legal / implementation
- Statutory date

KEY STATUTORY DATES (DIAMONDS)

- ◆ 12 Sept 2026 Decision on electoral system
- ◆ 12 Sept 2026 Decision on establishment of Māori Ward
- ◆ 20 Dec 2026 Resolve initial proposal (statutory start)
- ◆ 31 July 2027 Resolve initial proposal (statutory end)
- ◆ 8 Aug 2027 Public notice issued (statutory end)
- ◆ 3 Dec 2027 Appeals to Commission deadline
- ◆ 20 Dec 2027 Forward to Commission statutory deadline
- ◆ 10 April 2028 Commission determination
- ◆ 11 May 2028 High Court appeal period (max one month after determination made)

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Timeframes in the bars are indicative, please use the dates in the guidelines to ensure legislative compliance.
- Diamonds show statutory dates.
- Max 14 days between resolving initial proposal and issuing public notice.
- Minimum one month submission period.
- Max 8 weeks between considering submissions and issuing final public notice.
- Minimum one month appeals period.
- High Court appeal period is a maximum of one month after determination is made.

Appendix B: Glossary

Terms used in these guidelines have the following interpretations:

- election – the triennial local authority elections
- election year – the calendar year in which a triennial local authority election takes place
- electoral area – a collective term for part of a district or region over which elections are held, i.e. ward, constituency, community, local board area, or community or local board subdivision
- district – the geographic area of a territorial authority (applies whether it is a city or district council)
- section (abbreviation 's') – legislative sections referred to in these guidelines refer to the Local Electoral Act 2001, unless stated otherwise.

Appendix C: Statutory provisions

Statutory provisions from Part 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001

This section covers the statutory provisions from *Part 1A Representation arrangements for elections of territorial authorities, regional councils, local boards, and community boards*.

The requirements relating to local authorities' representation reviews are contained in *ss19A to 19Y, Part 1A Local Electoral Act 2001*. These cover:

- representation arrangements
- representation reviews
- procedural steps and timelines.

Representation arrangements

The following provisions relate to representation arrangements for territorial authorities, regional councils and community boards:

- *section 19A – membership of territorial authorities*
- *section 19B – basis of election of mayor of territorial authority*
- *section 19C – basis of election of members of territorial authority*
- *section 19D – membership of regional councils*
- *section 19E – basis of election of members of regional council*
- *section 19EA – membership of local boards*
- *section 19EB – basis of election of chairperson of local board in certain circumstances*
- *section 19EC – basis of election of members of local board*
- *section 19F – membership of community boards*
- *section 19G – basis of election of members of community board.*

Review of representation arrangements

The following provisions relate to representation reviews:

- *section 19H – review of representation arrangements for elections of territorial authorities*
- *section 19I – review of representation arrangements for elections of regional councils*
- *section 19J – review of community boards*
- *section 19T – requirement for effective representation and other factors in determination of membership and basis of election of territorial authorities and local boards*
- *section 19U – requirement for effective representation*

and other factors in determination of membership and basis of election of regional council

- *section 19V – requirement for fair representation and other factors in determination of membership for wards, constituencies, and subdivisions*
- *section 19W – factors in determination of matters in relation to community boards.*

If Māori wards/constituencies are to apply to a local authority election, then the provisions of *Schedule 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001* also apply. Those provisions substitute the *Part 1A* provisions as required to provide for the Māori wards/constituencies.

Matters for local authorities to take into account when formulating proposals for Māori wards/constituencies are outlined in [Chapter Four: Māori wards and constituencies](#) on page 18.

Procedural steps

The following provisions set out procedural requirements relating to representation reviews and associated timelines:

- *section 19K – requirements for resolution*
- *section 19L – distribution of copies of resolution*
- *section 19M – public notice of proposals, and responsibilities in relation to submissions*
- *section 19N – response to submissions*
- *section 19O – appeals*
- *section 19P – objections*
- *section 19Q – obligation to forward appeals and objections to Commission*
- *section 19R – Commission to determine appeals and objections*
- *section 19S – determination of Commission*
- *section 19X – certificate of Government Statistician*
- *section 19Y – when determinations take effect.*

Other relevant statutory provisions

In addition to the specific requirements of *Part 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001*, local authorities preparing for and carrying out representation reviews need to bear in mind other relevant provisions of that *Act* and the *Local Government Act 2002*. These are described below.

Local Electoral Act 2001

Section 3(c) provides that the purpose of the *Act* is to allow diversity, through local decision-making, in relation to: (ia) the regular review of representation arrangements for local authorities

Section 4(2) requires local authorities: ... in making decisions under this Act or any other enactment, [to] take into account those principles specified in *subsection (1)* that are applicable (if any), so far as is practicable in the circumstances.

In summary, the principles in *subsection (1)* are:

- representative and substantive electoral participation in local elections and polls
- fair and effective representation for individuals and communities
- reasonable and equal opportunities to:
 - vote
 - nominate, or be nominated as, candidates
- public confidence in, and public understanding of, local electoral processes.

Local Government Act 2002

It is also necessary for local authorities to consider the purpose and principles of local government and the consultation and decision-making requirements set out in the *Local Government Act 2002* when undertaking their review of representation arrangements.

Section 3, Local Government Act 2002 provides that the purpose of this Act is to provide for democratic and effective local government that recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities;

Section 10 (1) provides that the purpose of local government is:

- (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
- (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

Section 13 provides that *sections 10* (Purpose of local government) and *12(2)* (Status and powers): ...apply to a local authority performing a function under another enactment to the extent that the application of those provisions is not inconsistent with the other enactment.

Section 14 (1) sets out principles for local authorities. These include the following provisions that a local authority must act in accordance with when performing its role (which includes performing the duties and exercising the rights conferred on it by any other enactment):

- (b) local authority should make itself aware of, and should have regard to, the views of all of its communities; and
- (c) when making a decision, a local authority should take account of—
 - (i) the diversity of the community, and the community's interests, within its district or region; and

- (ii) the interests of future as well as current communities; and
 - (iii) the likely impact of any decision on each aspect of well-being referred to in *section 10*:
- (d) a local authority should provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to its decision-making processes.

Sections 77, 78 and 81 set out requirements for local authorities when making decisions including contributions to decision-making by Māori, and *section 82* sets out principles of consultation. *Subsection 76(1)* provides that every decision must be in accordance with these sections (that is, *sections 77 to 82*) and *subsection 76(5)* applies these requirements to decisions made under other enactments to the extent they are not inconsistent with the other enactment.

Section 19W, Local Electoral Act 2001 sets out provisions relating to reviews of community boards. It provides that a local authority in undertaking a review under *section 19J*, or the Commission in determining a local authority's community board arrangements, must have regard to the criteria for reorganisation proposals specified in the *Local Government Act 2002*, as considered appropriate in the circumstances.

The general role of community boards is set out in *section 52, Local Government Act 2002*. The role of particular community boards is significantly determined by the matters referred or responsibilities that are delegated to boards by the parent territorial authority under *subsections 52(b) and (f)*.

Relationship of *Local Government Act 2002* with *Local Electoral Act 2001*

The provisions of the *Local Government Act 2002* described above apply to local authorities making decisions under the *Local Electoral Act 2001*, including representation reviews, if they are not inconsistent with the *Local Electoral Act*.

Specific provisions of the *Local Electoral Act 2001* reflect the philosophy of the *Local Government Act 2002*, which recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities. These provisions provide local choice in respect of:

- the electoral system to be used
- the establishment of Māori wards or constituencies
- representation arrangements (subject to appeal/objection/referral to the Local Government Commission), including:
 - the number of members of the elected body (within a prescribed range)
 - and for territorial authorities, the basis of election (at large, wards, or a mix of both), and the establishment of community boards.

In both the *Local Electoral Act 2001* and the *Local Government Act 2002*, the word 'community' is used in two different senses:

- a community constituted under *Schedule 6, Local Government Act 2002* and relating to a community board, or
- a broader community of interest within the district/region.

Section 5, Local Government Act 2002 provides that, with specified exceptions, the term 'community' (and by cross-reference the *Local Electoral Act 2001*) refers to a community board area. However, 'community' is used in the wider sense in the provisions referred to in paragraphs 0 to 5.270 (from *Part 2, Local Government Act 2002*).

Appendix D: Organisations to notify

Chief Executive Officer

Local Government Commission Mana Kāwanatanga ā-Rohe

Email: lgc@lgc.govt.nz

Government Statistician

Tatauranga Aotearoa Statistics New Zealand

PO Box 2922, Wellington 6140

Preferred means of contact – representationreviews@stats.govt.nz

Chair

Te Mana Utu Matua Remuneration Authority

PO Box 10-084, Wellington 6143

Preferred means of contact – info@remauthority@govt.nz

Surveyor-General

Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand

PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145

Preferred means of contact – electoral@linz.govt.nz

Appendix E: Initial proposal considerations

Identify the communities of interest in a district or region

As a first step local authorities need to identify the communities of interest of the district/region applying the issues discussed in [Chapter Four: Fair and effective representation](#).

Determine effective representation for communities of interest

Territorial authorities need to consider whether effective representation for identified communities of interest is best achieved by way of elections held at large, wards, or a mix of both. Considerations will include:

- the accessibility, size, and configuration of the district
- the existence of community boards
- the electoral system
- whether Māori wards have been established
- the number of members in each ward, including whether there are a mix of single-member and multi-member wards
- the wider statutory role of local authorities encompassing overall community well-being, sustainability and the interests of future generations
- the diversity of the population and the geographical location of particular communities of interest

Regional councils are required to have two or more constituencies. Members of a regional council must be elected entirely from constituencies; none may be elected at large.

Local authorities need to consider what council size, or range in membership, would be appropriate to provide effective representation for the district/region as a whole, bearing in mind:

- the diversity of the district/region
- statutory obligations (for example, does it have the responsibilities of a unitary authority)
- the need for efficient and effective governance of the district/region.

Consider whether each identified community of interest needs separate representation in a ward/constituency, or whether some communities of interest can be grouped together to achieve effective representation factoring in the need to:

- facilitate elector and resident participation
- avoid dividing recognised communities of interest between wards/constituencies

- avoid grouping communities of interest with few commonalities
- factor in the accessibility, size, and configuration of the area concerned.

Regarding wards/constituencies, determine:

- the number of wards/constituencies based on communities of interest, or groupings of communities of interest (see previous paragraph)
- the boundaries of wards/constituencies including the requirement, as far as practicable, for constituencies to coincide with territorial authority or ward boundaries, and for ward boundaries to coincide with community boundaries
- the names of the wards/constituencies (see Names of electoral areas on page 39).

Consider fairness of representation for electors of constituencies and wards

In relation to the range of options for the total membership of the local authority:

- identify the ratio of population per member for each proposed ward/constituency
- compare the ward/constituency ratios calculated with the average population per member for the local authority as a whole.

Under any of the options for total membership, do the ward/constituency ratios fall within +/-10% of the average population per member?

- If “yes”, which option would provide the optimum local authority size in terms of
- providing effective and fair representation?
- If “no”, consider altering ward/constituency boundaries or reconfiguring these (to the extent practicable to provide effective representation of communities of interest) so that the ratios fall within +/-10% of the average population per member.

If the alteration or reconfiguration does not achieve the required ratios, consider whether there are sufficient grounds for applying the exceptions to the +/-10% rule, as set out in sections 19V(3)(a) or (b).

If there are sufficient grounds for an exception, these should be identified and documented in appropriate detail.

If there are not sufficient grounds for an exception, return to previous steps and alter/reconfigure boundaries.

Steps 4 and 5 may need to be repeated a number of times until a proposal has been identified that best meets both criteria.

In determining boundaries through these steps ensure that boundaries conform with the boundaries of statistical meshblocks (see meshblocks on page 40).

Consider communities and community boards (for territorial authorities only)

As part of reviewing representation arrangements, all territorial authorities must consider whether communities and community boards are required, whether or not there currently are communities and community boards within the district.

In light of the principle of fair and effective representation for individuals and communities, consider and document:

- whether communities and community boards are required
- the nature of any community and the structure of any community board
- whether community boards should cover all or only parts of the district, and the rationale for the approach taken.

Where community boards are to be established or retained, consider whether effective representation for identified communities of interest is best achieved by way of:

- an at large system
- subdivision of the community, including boundaries and names of subdivisions
- whole territorial authority wards within the community.

Where community boards are to be established, a similar process for territorial authority reviews is to be undertaken to:

- identify the total number of members required (both elected and appointed)
- the number of members per subdivision (if any) to ensure compliance with the '+/-10% rule', or number per ward (if any)
- the number (if any) of members to be appointed by the territorial authority

Appendix F: Schedule 3, Local Government Act 2002

The following is the full text of clauses 10, 12 and 19 of Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act 2002 (as at May 2026).

10. Objectives that the Commission must consider in reorganisation investigation

In assessing the desirability of options for the reorganisation of local government within the affected area, the Commission must take into account how best to achieve—

- (a) better fulfilment of the purpose of local government as specified in section 10; and
- (b) productivity improvements within the affected local authorities; and
- (c) efficiencies and cost savings; and
- (d) assurance that any local authority established or changed has the resources necessary to enable it to effectively perform or exercise its responsibilities, duties, and powers; and
- (e) effective responses to the opportunities, needs, and circumstances of the affected areas; and
- (f) enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of local government services; and
- (g) better support for the ability of local and regional economies to develop and prosper; and
- (h) enhanced ability of local government to meet the changing needs of communities for governance and services into the future; and
- (i) effective provision for any co-governance and co-management arrangements that are established by legislation (including Treaty of Waitangi claim settlement legislation) and that are between local authorities and iwi or Māori organisations.

12. Commission may adopt reorganisation plan

- (3) In deciding whether to adopt a reorganisation plan, the Commission must have regard to—
 - (a) the scale of the potential benefits of the proposed changes in terms of the objectives set out in clause 10 and the likelihood of those benefits being realised; and
 - (b) the financial, disruption, and opportunity costs of implementing the

- proposed changes at the proposed time; and
- (c) the risks and consequences of not implementing the proposed changes at the proposed time; and
 - (d) existing communities of interest and the extent to which the proposed changes will maintain linkages between communities (including iwi and hapū) and sites and resources of significance to them; and
 - (e) the degree and distribution of demonstrable public support for the proposed changes within communities in the affected area; and
 - (f) the degree and distribution of any public opposition to the proposed changes within communities in the affected area.

19. Communities

When preparing a draft proposal or (if clause 14(4) applies) a reorganisation scheme, the Commission may consider whether good local government of any affected district would be best promoted by—

- (a) a system of communities and the responsibilities, duties, and powers of the community boards in the district; or
- (b) an alternative to an existing system of communities; or
- (c) a change in the responsibilities, duties, and powers of the community boards in the district.

Appendix G: Commission hearings

The Commission may decide to hold a hearing to inform its determination.

Preliminary organisation

The Commission will reserve hearing dates for all councils undertaking reviews early in the representation review process. This helps both councils and the Commission plan their meeting schedules well in advance.

As each council progresses through the process, the reserved date will be released if/as soon as it is clear that a hearing is not required - for example, where an initial proposal is compliant and no submissions are received.

Hearings can be held:

- In-person (normally in the local authority's premises)
- Online
- A mixture of the two, e.g., where some parties are unable to attend in-person, and instead participate on-line.

If the need for a hearing is confirmed, the Commission will finalise the hearing date and mode (in-person or online) and notify all parties (the local authority, appellants, and objectors). The Commission will contact appellants and objectors to confirm whether they wish to appear before the Commission.

The Commission will finalise the hearing schedule and advise all parties of the time and venue/online link for their appearance. Ideally each party should plan to be at the hearing venue/online at least 10 minutes before their allocated speaking time.

There is no obligation for appellants and objectors to appear before the Commission. Those who decide not to appear can be assured that the Commission will give their written appeals or objections full consideration.

The Commission's strong expectation is that an elected member takes part in the Council's presentation of its representation proposal at the hearing, as well as the right of reply (whether the mayor, deputy mayor or any another elected member who can appropriately speak on behalf of the Council). It is important for Commissioners to understand why decisions have been made and there are aspects which only the decision-makers themselves can give insight into. The Commissioners may have questions that they would like to put directly to elected members.

The Commission may also decide to invite to the hearing:

- people who made submissions to the local authority in support of its proposal
- other people who might be able to provide relevant information to the Commission, e.g., representatives of iwi/hapū or community boards when they have not lodged an appeal or objection

The hearing

Commission hearings generally follow a standard sequence:

1. Introduction from the Commission Chair.
2. Council outlines of its representation proposal and rationale.
3. Appellants and objectors each have the opportunity to speak to the matters raised in their appeal or objection.
4. Representations from invited parties outlining views on the council's proposal or to answer questions from the Commission.
5. Exercise of right of reply of council to matters raised in the hearing.
6. The Commission reserves its determination.

Commissioners may ask questions of each party during the course of their appearance.

As a general guide, the council is allocated up to 30 minutes to outline its proposal, and appellants and objectors up to 10 minutes to speak to the matters raised in their written appeal or objection. If an appellant or objector considers that more time is needed to speak to their appeal or objection, then a request for additional time needs to be made to the Commission well before the hearing. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If any party wishes to table new material at the hearing, this information must be provided to the Commission at the time that the party appears before the Commission. Material can be provided by email to the Commission and will be shared with the council.

Hearings are generally kept as informal as possible and are open to the public and the news media. Many people appearing before the Commission will not have experience in presenting submissions, and the Commission endeavours to foster an environment in which people can feel comfortable.

Hearings are live-streamed, and the live-streamed footage will be archived to the [Commission's YouTube channel](#).

**Local Government Commission
Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe**

Phone: +64 4 460 2228

Web: www.lgc.govt.nz

Email: lgc@lgc.govt.nz

