

## Council Briefing Agenda

**Date:** 1 June, 2021

**Time:** 9:00 am

**Location:** Council Chamber  
Forum North, Rust Avenue  
Whangarei

**Elected Members:** Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai  
(Chairperson)

Cr Gavin Benney  
Cr Vince Cocurullo  
Cr Nicholas Connop  
Cr Ken Couper  
Cr Tricia Cutforth  
Cr Shelley Deeming  
Cr Jayne Golightly  
Cr Phil Halse  
Cr Greg Innes  
Cr Greg Martin  
Cr Anna Murphy  
Cr Carol Peters  
Cr Simon Reid

For any queries regarding this meeting please contact  
the Whangarei District Council on (09) 430-4200.

**1. Apologies**

**2. Reports**

2.1. Representation Review 2021 - Preferred Option

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**3. Closure of Meeting**

## 2.1 Representation Review 2021 – Preferred Option for Initial Proposal

<b>Meeting:</b>	Council Briefing
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	1 June 2021
<b>Reporting officer:</b>	Emily Thompson – Manager Democracy and Assurance Nicolene Pestana – Team Leader, Democracy

### 1 Purpose

To provide representation options based on feedback from the community via the informal survey, Te Kārearea and previous Council briefings and to confirm Council's preferred option for the initial proposal which will go out for public consultation.

### 2 Background

The Local Electoral Act (LEA) 2001 requires local authorities to undertake a review of their representation arrangements at least once every six years. Council last reviewed its representation arrangements in 2018 which took effect for the 2019 and 2022 triennial elections.

On 3 November 2020, Council resolved to establish Māori wards for the 2022 and 2025 triennial elections, necessitating a review of the representation arrangements in 2021, with the outcome to apply for the 2022 and 2025 triennial elections.

This briefing will provide representation options based on community feedback, feedback from Council and Te Kārearea briefings and feedback from Te Kārearea Strategic Partnership Standing Committee.

The objective of this briefing is to seek feedback on preferred options in order to confirm an initial proposal from Council for consideration.

### 3 Discussion

#### 3.1 Representation review process

The process and timeline that councils are required to follow when undertaking a review of representation arrangements is prescribed by the LEA.

Integral to this process is ensuring that communities, hapū and interest groups are informed and engaged throughout the review process and provided with an opportunity to give their views and provide feedback for Council to consider when developing the initial proposal.

#### Steps taken in the process to date

- 4 March 2021 Council and Te Kārearea briefing – overview of process and timelines
- 17 March 2021 Te Kārearea hui – overview of process and timelines

- 1 April 2021 Council briefing – considerations and principles
- April – May Information to interest groups, communications campaign, engagement with Advisory Groups, drop-in sessions in Central Library
- 7 April to 7 May Informal Survey
- 12 May 2021 Council and Te Kārearea Briefing – considering various scenarios
- 19 May 2021 Te Kārearea hui – representation review update

## 3.2 Feedback from engagement

### 3.2.1 Community feedback from informal preliminary consultation

The Local Government Commission (LGC) recommends that Councils undertake informal preliminary public consultation to seek feedback on representation arrangements from the community in order to assist Council in identifying options. From 7 April to 7 May, an informal survey was held to seek community views on our current representation. The results of this survey were presented at the briefing held on 12 May 2021.

In summary, the survey results showed that:

- 38% of survey participants view the whole of the Whangarei District as their community of interest, 32% have a geographical connection to their community and 24% identify with a combination of geographical, historical, tribal affiliations and the whole of the Whangarei District.
- 57% of survey participants feel that the current wards do not reflect their community of interest while 43% feel that they do.
- 60% of survey participants want our district to be divided into wards while 40% think prefer voting without geographic ward boundaries.
- 40% of survey participants want to retain our current ward structure (6 general wards plus Māori wards to be established) while 34% do not think we should have wards.
- 57% of survey participants are happy with the names of our current wards, 43% are not.
- 51% of survey participants want to retain our current number of councillors (13 councillors plus the Mayor), 33% feel we should have fewer councillors.
- 39% of survey participants prefer to elect councillors where they live while 35% prefer to elect councillors district-wide.
- Survey participants was evenly divided on whether to establish Community Boards.

### 3.2.2 Options considered by Council to date

A number of approaches / scenarios were discussed at the briefing on 1 April 2021, summarized as follows:

- Use a clean slate approach as a starting point.
- Reconsideration of the historical Denby/Okara split, consider one urban area.
- Reconsideration of the Hikurangi-Coastal ward. Hikurangi-Coastal ward is a mixture of rural and coastal villages. It is a massive area with two distinct communities of interest who experience different impacts and issues.
- Look at larger wards for those communities that don't identify with one place or would like to vote for elected members outside of their ward.
- Consider 10 general ward councillors plus two Māori ward councillors and the Mayor (Council of 13), the current number of Councillors provides effective representation

considering workload and the ability of elected members to be active and useful in the community.

- Look at a smaller Council with community boards.
- Suggested options included:
  - North Rural and South Rural wards and an at large urban ward;
  - At large urban ward with councillors elected from rural wards;
  - One or two urban wards with a large rural ward, elected at large; and
  - Using SH1 to split the district.
- There were mixed views on community boards.

Council's Electoral Officer, Dale Ofoske and council staff worked through 11 possible options based on feedback from the 1 April briefing.

Six of these 11 options did not fit in terms of legislative requirements for fair representation as outlined in table 1 below:

Five options (aligning with feedback provided at the 1 April briefing) complied with legislative requirements for fair representation. These were presented to councillors and Te Kārearea members for discussion at the briefing on 12 May 2021. These options are outlined in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Options discussed at briefing on 12 May 2021**

	General Councillors	Māori ward Councillors	General Wards	Māori Wards	Ward outline (and councillor numbers)	Outcome
Option 1 10 councillors	8	2	3	1-2	North General (2) South General (2) Urban General (2) Māori (2)	Compliant with +/- 10% rule
Option 2 12 councillors	10	2	5	1-2	Whangarei Urban General (5) Bream Bay General (1) Hikurangi-Coastal General (1) Mangakahia-Maungatapere General (2) Whangarei Heads General (1) Māori (2)	Compliant with +/- 10% rule.
Option 3 12 councillors	10	2	4	1-2	Whangarei Urban General (5) North Coastal General (2) South Coastal General (1) Whangarei Rural General (2) Māori (2)	Compliant with +/- 10% rule
Option 4 13 councillors	11	2	6	1-2	Bream Bay General (2) Denby General (3) Hikurangi-Coastal General (2) Mangakahia-Maungatapere General (1) Okara General (4) Whangarei Heads General (1) Māori (2)	Three of six wards non-compliant. Would need further work/adjustment
Option 5 12 councillors	10	2	1	1	Whangarei General (10) (district-wide) Māori (2) district-wide	District-wide wards do not need to comply with +/- 10% rule

Feedback from elected members and Te Kārearea members present at the briefing indicated preference for the following options:

#### 1. Option 2

- 10 General councillors / 2 Māori ward councillors
- 6 general wards (Maungatapere Ward divided into 2 wards, Rural North and Rural South)
- 1 / 2 Māori wards.

## 2. Option 4

- 11 General councillors / 2 Māori ward councillors
- 6 general wards (Maungatapere Ward divided into 2 wards, Rural North and Rural South)
- 1 / 2 Māori wards.

Councillors and Te Kārearea members present at the briefing were evenly divided on the introduction of community boards.

### 3.2.3 Feedback from Te Kārearea / Te Huinga

An update on the progress of the representation review was provided to Te Kārearea at the hui on 19 May. Feedback and direction was sought on the current options for general wards (Options 2 and 4 above) and the best option for Māori wards. Feedback received is summarized below;

- The formula used to decide on representation of Māori seats is not sound and does not reflect growth from Māori retuning home and Māori currently enrolled on the Māori roll.
- Three Māori ward councillors would provide effective representation in terms of Māori population in the district.
- Establishing one district wide Māori ward to gauge effectiveness of representation is probably the better option.
- A further model was suggested as follows:

#### Option 5

- 6 General councillors / 2 Māori ward councillors
- District wide voting
- Community Boards

The Local Electoral Act 2001 provides that the electoral population estimates as at 30 June 2020 as provided by the Department of Statistics must be used for this process as 2021 estimates will not be available for this process. Council does not have any discretion in this. The electoral population numbers as at 30 June 2020 are as follows:

General electoral population: 79600  
 Maori electoral population: 18730  
 Total electoral population: 98330

Regarding number of Maori and general councillors, the following legislative formula applies:

- 12 Councillors total = 10 + 2
- 13 Councillor council = 11 + 2
- 14 Councillor council = 11 + 3
- 8 Councillor council = 6 + 2

There was discomfort that Te Huinga have not considered the preferred options. Staff are attending the Te Huinga hui on 27 May 2021 and will provide an update at this briefing.

Options 2, 4 and 5 above have been further developed and mapped for discussion at today's briefing.

**Next steps**

- An initial proposal will then be presented to the Council meeting on 24 June 2021 date for consideration. A public notice and submission period will follow.