

Western Bay of Plenty District Council

Final proposal for representation arrangements for the 2025 local elections

On 20 November 2024 the Western Bay of Plenty District Council resolved its final proposal for representation arrangements for the elections to be held on 11 October 2025. This amended the initial proposal following consultation, pursuant to section 19N(1) of the Local Electoral Act 2001 ('the Act').

Council considered the 550 submissions received. Council decided, in relation to the matters in section 19H of the Act, to continue with the arrangements set out in its initial proposal. This relates to Council representation. The District-wide Māori ward will be known as Waka Kai Uru, which replaces the temporary name in the initial proposal.

Council amended its initial proposal in relation to the matters set out in section 19J of the Act, which relates to community board arrangements. Further detail is set out below.

Community Board representation

It is proposed that Council disestablishes its current five Community Boards, being Waihi Beach, Katikati, Ōmokoroa, Te Puke and Maketu Community Boards and establishes three new Community Boards, each to cover one of the three wards. To be known as the Maketu-Te Puke Community Board, Kaimai Community Board and Katikati-Waihi Beach Community Board. Each to comprise of six elected members and two councillors appointed from the respective ward, with subdivisions as set out in the table below and shown on the map below.

	Population	Members	Population- member ratio	Difference from quota
Maketu-Te Puke Ward Community Board (*see Note 1 below)				
Te Puke	13,000	3	4,333	15.04%
Maketu	2,740	1	2,740	-27.26%
Eastern	6,860	2	3,430	-8.94%
	22,600	6		
Kaimai Ward Community Board				
Ōmokoroa	7,480	2	3,740	1.45%
Kaimai West	7,300	2	3,650	-0.99%
Kaimai East	7,340	2	3,670	-0.45%
	22,120	6		
Katikati-Waihī Beach Ward Community Board (*see Note 2 below)				
Waihī Beach	4,100	3	1,367	-48.65%
Katikati	11,870	3	3,957	48.65%
	15,970	6		

***Note 1**

Rationale for Maketu-Te Puke Ward Community Board proposed subdivision arrangements

The proposed subdivision arrangements for the Maketu-Te Puke Ward Community Board do not comply with the $\pm 10\%$ rule for fair representation. This is considered appropriate given the nature of the ward and the communities within it. The three subdivisions represent three distinct areas within the ward – Te Puke, Maketu, and then the broader eastern area including the communities of Pukehina, Pongakawa and Paengaroa. These areas are connected for schooling, shopping, recreational, employment and social activities at a ward level. Given the distribution of the communities and electoral population, it is considered that there are few options for electoral subdivision boundaries that comply with the $\pm 10\%$ fair representation requirement, while also appropriately reflecting communities within the ward.

Council considers that aligning the community board area with the ward boundary will achieve an area that is appropriate for the efficient and effective performance of its role. This is because all areas within the ward will be equitably represented by a community board, rather than continuing to have large areas in the eastern part of the ward that are currently not part of a community board area. This includes the communities of Pukehina, Pongakawa and Paengaroa that are not currently represented by a community board (albeit with some active ratepayer/community associations). The universality of coverage lends to greater delegation and function of the community board, and potential for increased funding given that all properties in the ward would contribute through future rates. This could lead to enhanced localism. There is also the potential for a reduced rates burden for the Maketu Community.

The Maketu-Te Puke ward is well understood by the community, having been in effect since 2013 (albeit with some minor boundary adjustments to maintain fair representation requirements as between wards). Prior to this, Maketu and Te Puke were separate wards, originally being formed out of the 1989 local government reorganisation arrangements. As a result, there is strong familiarity and identity with the ward – both from outside the ward area and from those communities within it. The former Maketu ward covered Maketu and also Pukehina.

- It was considered that splitting the Te Puke area between separate electoral subdivisions would not effectively reflect that community, which is the largest urban centre in the ward. We also heard through submissions that reducing the area to just the urban limits does not accurately reflect the community of Te Puke, which includes the townships of Waitangi and Manoeka. This is also generally reflective of the spatial extent identified through the Te Puke Spatial Plan process that is currently underway.
- Given the long-established community of Maketu and its community board representation, it was considered important that this area is reflected by an electoral subdivision. Following the boundaries

created by State Highway 2 and the coastline creates an easily understood area. The smaller population in Maketu make it challenging to align with the $\pm 10\%$ rule for fair representation, whilst effectively recognising it as a community of interest. There is also some anticipated growth in terms of Papakāinga on Te Arawa Land Holdings land within Maketu village, and a private Plan Change for Arawa Road is currently being determined by an independent panel of RMA hearings commissioners. Over time, these types of developments could address the level of non-compliance with the $\pm 10\%$ rule.

- For the eastern area, it is considered that there are sufficient commonalities between the rural areas and smaller communities of Pukehina, Pongakawa and Paengaroa. This subdivision area is compliant with the $\pm 10\%$ rule. These communities are considered to be distinct from the larger urban settlement of Te Puke and the coastal settlement of Maketu. They have their own schools, some significant employers and local retail offerings. The Paengaroa community has an active community association and its own community plan. The Pukehina community also has an active resident/ratepayer association. It is important to acknowledge future growth anticipated within this area as set out in the Future Development Strategy – namely the new Eastern Town that is currently planned in the long term, but will likely be brought forward to satisfy land supply requirements.

***Note 2**

Rationale for Katikati-Waihī Beach Ward Community Board proposed subdivision arrangements

The proposed subdivision arrangements for Katikati-Waihī Beach Ward Community Board do not comply with the $\pm 10\%$ rule for fair representation. However, this is considered appropriate given the nature of the ward and the communities within it. The two subdivisions represent two distinct areas within the ward – Waihī Beach and Katikati. These areas are

connected for schooling, shopping, recreational, employment and social activities at a ward level.

Council considers that aligning the community board area with the ward boundary will achieve an area that is appropriate for the efficient and effective performance of its role. This is because all areas within the ward are equitably represented by a community board (excluding Matakana and Rangiwaia Islands). The existing two community boards (Katikati and Waihi Beach) already cover the ward in its entirety (excluding Matakana and Rangiwaia Islands), when combining their current areas. The areas are well known to the community, and significant support has been demonstrated through the submission process for these to be retained.

The Katikati-Waihi Beach ward boundary is well understood by the community, having been in effect since 2013 (albeit with some minor boundary adjustments to maintain fair representation requirements as between wards). Prior to this, Waihi Beach and Katikati were separate wards, originally being formed out of the 1989 local government reorganisation arrangements. As a result, there is strong familiarity and identity with the ward – both from outside the ward area and from those communities within it.

Given the long-established communities of Waihi Beach and Katikati and their respective community boards, it was considered important that these areas were reflected by electoral subdivisions. This includes considerations for size and location of the areas including access to elected members. It is also noted that Waihi Beach has significant increases in population through the peak summer period, which creates a range of unique issues and potentially increased demand on community board members. Council considers that the electoral populations required to be used for the purposes of the representation review do not adequately reflect peak summer population.

Council's initial proposal sought to reduce the area covered by Katikati Community Board area and leave the Waihi Beach Community Board area as it currently stands. Katikati Community Board supported leaving the

boundaries of the Katikati Community Board as they currently stand, acknowledging that the town and rural surrounds see themselves as sharing a community interest centred around the town. Several submitters from the outlying communities of Ongare Point, Tanners Point and Fairview Estate opposed the proposal to be excluded from the Katikati Community Board area. The Community Board noted that Katikati is a service town to the local rural area and the two have been linked for 150 years. The proposed electoral subdivision area aligns with the current Community Board boundary. Waihī Beach Community Board also submitted in opposition to reducing the Katikati Community Board area.



Submissions and reasons for proposal

Submissions signalled strong support to retain community boards from 346 submitters (74%). It is noted that this feedback was in response to retaining the five existing community boards rather than Council's final proposal specifically. However, a key theme arising from submissions on community board representation highlighted the inequity of coverage of community boards across the District, and the perception that this resulted in unfair representation for those outside of community board areas.

The reason that Council did not retain the five existing community boards (with or without the proposed boundary adjustments set out in the initial proposal), and therefore rejected submissions that sought this outcome, is that:

- It does not respond to the concerns around significant areas of the district having no community board representation. While the proposed boundary changes would have reduced this inequity, there would still be large parts of the district that are not represented by a community board.

46 submitters (10%) opposed the retention of community boards entirely. Council rejected these submissions for the following reasons:

- The majority of the submissions received signalled strong support for the effectiveness of community boards and the importance of local representation.
- Council acknowledged the certainty that the community board model provides in terms of how community boards are elected and operated. It is known and understood by citizens of the District.

The reasons for the decisions in relation to the final proposal for community boards are:

- Use of subdivisions within each board area can reflect the specific communities of interest, particularly those that currently have a community board.
- Responds to feedback relating to the inequitable coverage of community boards in the district, as every property in the District would be included in one of the community boards (excluding Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands – estimated electoral population of 250).
- Addresses feedback from some communities that currently do not have a community board but may have expressed a desire to have one, as well as other suggestions to combine community boards or look to broader ward level coverage.
- Potentially sets the foundation for greater delegation to community boards, given the universality of coverage across the District, leading to enhanced localism.

- Responds to feedback received on the initial proposal about reducing the area for Te Puke and Katikati Community Boards to only cover the urban areas of those communities, and the importance of connection to rural areas.
- It is essentially a hybrid of the community board model and the option to disestablish the five community boards and replace them with three community committees.
- The proposed ward level community boards would be elected and subject to the same requirements for community boards under legislation as those that are currently operating.
- Addresses concerns about the committees being appointed rather than elected, and a perception that Council would only appoint people who would be favourable.
- 389 submitters (86%) supported the current three general ward approach, and feedback generally supports the three ward approach as being a fair and effective way to represent the various communities of interest (both urban and rural) across the District. The three ward model has longevity and familiarity with residents.
- Rating implications to be considered through the Annual Plan process, but likely that some properties currently within community board areas will pay less.

Other submission points on Community Representation

Two submitters encouraged Council to consider alternative means of voice and representation, with one example being the Manawatu District Council's Community Committees Policy and approach. The other submitter sought to re-examine the role and function of community boards relative to the ways that local volunteer groups work to represent the viewpoints in their community.

These submissions were rejected for the following reasons:

- The concept of Community Committees may be unfamiliar to our communities.
- There may be a perception that this model would reduce the ability for local decision-making.

- There may be a potential lack of interest from community leaders/groups in participating in the Community Committee model.
- There is a potential loss of current community board members' knowledge and experience.
- The committees would not be operating within the same legislative context as community boards.
- Members would not be elected, but appointed.

For more information on the submissions received and the options considered by Council in its decisions on the final proposal, please see the Council agenda and minutes for [20 November 2024](#).

Appeals and Objections

Any person who made a submission on the Council's initial proposal may lodge an appeal against the Council's decision. An appeal must relate to the matters raised in that person's submission.

Any person who objects to the final proposal may lodge an objection to the Council's final proposal. Any objection must identify the matters to which the objection relates.

In accordance with sections 19O and 19P of the Local Electoral Act 2001, written appeals/objections can be lodged between **22 November and 13 December 2024** at the Western Bay of Plenty District Council principal office (Barkes Corner – 1484 Cameron Road, Tauranga).

John Holyoake
Chief Executive Officer