

Extract from Minutes of the Extraordinary Whakatane District Council meeting held on Wednesday, 30 September 2015:

Representation Review – Submissions to Initial Proposal and Final Proposal Decision continued

RESOLVED:

1. **THAT** the Representation Review – Submissions to Initial Proposal and Final Proposal Decision report be received; and
2. **THAT** pursuant to sections 19N of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the final proposal for the Whakatāne District Council’s representation arrangements review be:
 - 10 Councillors plus the Mayor (being the status quo)
 - 4 wards (being the existing wards):
 - Galatea-Murupara Ward, comprising the area in SO Plan 58062 (Sak) and SO8406 (Gis)
 - Rangitāiki Ward, comprising the area in SO Plan 61546
 - Tāneatua-Waimana Ward, comprising the area in SO Plan 58063 (Sak) and SO8405 (Gis)
 - Whakatāne-Ōhope Ward, comprising the area in SO Plan SO 334315
 - Councillors to be elected as follows (being the status quo):
 - Galatea-Murupara Ward – 1 Councillor
 - Rangitāiki Ward - 3 Councillors
 - Tāneatua Waimana Ward - 1 Councillor
 - Whakatāne-Ōhope Ward – 5 Councillors
 - 4 communities (being the existing communities except for the current Whakatāne and Ōhope Beach communities which are combined):
 - Murupara Community, subdivided into the:
 - Galatea Waiohau Subdivision, comprising the area in SO Plan 334320
 - Murupara Subdivision, comprising the area in SO Plan 334319
 - Te Urewera Subdivision, comprising the area in SO Plan 334321
 - Rangitāiki Community, comprising of the area in SO Plan 61546
 - Tāneatua Community, comprising of the area in SO Plan 33416
 - Whakatāne-Ōhope Community, (being the current Whakatāne and Ōhope Beach Communities combined), comprising of the area in SO Plans 334317 and 334322
 - 24 Community Board Members (a reduction from the current 30 members) being:
 - 6 Members elected from the Murupara Community Board comprising
 - Galatea-Waiohau subdivision, 2 members
 - Murupara subdivision, 3 members
 - Te Urewera Subdivision, 1 member
 - Plus 1 Councillor representing the Galatea-Murupara Ward
 - 6 members elected from the Rangitāiki Community Board
 - Plus 1 Councillor representing the Rangitāiki Ward
 - 6 members elected from the Tāneatua Community Board
 - Plus 1 Councillor representing the Tāneatua-Waimana Ward
 - 6 members elected from the Whakatāne-Ōhope Community Board
 - Plus 1 Councillor representing the Whakatāne-Ōhope Ward

Reasons for Decision:

1. There were no submissions recommending that the ward structure change from the current structure. The current wards are located in identifiable geographical areas that separate the District into natural communities of interest and justify the establishment of wards. They have been established for some time now and are understood by the public.
2. The Council took into consideration the following factors when determining the representation arrangements:
 - The need to avoid arrangements that create barriers to participation;
 - To not split recognised communities of interest, or to group together two or more communities of interest that have few common interests;
 - Accessibility, size, configuration of the area – including the populations reasonable access to the elected member and vice versa, and the elected members ability to effectively represent the views of their area, attend public meetings, and provide opportunities for face to face meetings;
 - Geographic features that tend to separate the District into natural communities of interest.
3. The Council considered that the arrangements provided for a fair representation of electors and met the required population equality per member as follows:

Ward	No of Councillors	Population	Population Ratio
Whakatāne-Ōhope	5	17,850	3,570
Rangitāiki	3	9,690	3,230
Tāneatua-Waimana	1	3,570	3,570
Galatea-Murupara	1	3,170	3,170

Note: In accordance with section 19V(2) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the population that each Councillor represents must be within the population range of 3,428 plus or minus 10% (3,085 to 3,771)

4. The Council considered that the current structure with regards to the subdivisions within the Murupara Community Board remain as they currently are based on the spread of population within these communities of interest:

Subdivision	No of Members	Population	Population Ratio
Galatea-Waiohau	2	960	480
Murupara	3	1740	580
Te Urewera	1	470	470

Note: 528 residents per member gives a +/-10% range of 475 to 581. The Council notes that the Te Urewera Subdivision does not comply with the +/- 10% criteria (-11.04%) and requests the Te Urewera Subdivision of the Murupara Community Board be exempt of population criteria under section 19V (3)(ii) of the Local Electoral Act 2001 as compliance would divide a community of interest between subdivisions.

5. The Council noted that there was a consensus with the rural community boards (Rangitāiki, Tāneatua and Galatea-Murupara) to retain the status quo in regard to their defined boundaries, recognising they represent distinct communities of interest.
6. The Council considered the views put forward by each submitter in regard to the proposal to combine the Whakatāne and Ōhope Community Boards. While taking

those views into account, the Council nonetheless decided there was greater benefit in recognising the shared community of interest between residents in Whakatāne and Ōhope. In particular the Council considered that there was a strong sense of combined community identity and belonging, reinforced by:

- Physical proximity;
 - Economic, cultural and social interrelationships between Whakatāne and Ōhope. This includes interdependency with shared facilities and services – retail areas, schools, recreation and community facilities, transport and communication links;
 - The rohe of Ngāti Awa which extends across both Whakatāne and Ōhope townships (and beyond);
 - The fact that the Ward representation on Council is combined and this would provide alignment between the Ward and Community Board boundaries.
7. The Council did not agree with submissions put forward against the proposal, that the Ōhope community would be disadvantaged or underrepresented if the Ōhope Beach Community Board was amalgamated with the Whakatane Community Board.
 8. The submissions attempted to draw distinctions between Ōhope and Whakatāne based on physical features (beach), and demographic, social and ethnic differences. The Council did not see these factors being determinative of a separate community of interest. Similarly, the manner in which discretionary funds are allocated or how Ōhope is marketed was not considered sufficient grounds to change the proposal.
 9. The Council has regard to the manner in which both townships are connected, and serve each other. Many people live in Ōhope but work or attend high school or tertiary education facilities in Whakatāne. Those residing in Ōhope will tend to shop at the main supermarkets located in Whakatāne. Many Whakatāne residents utilise the beach at Ōhope in summer. Both Whakatāne and Ōhope have beach communities. There is a significant flow of commuter traffic between the two each day.
 10. The Council considered but ultimately rejected the proposal by the Whakatāne Community Board to increase the number of Councillor appointments to the new board to two, and considered that six members plus a Councillor appointed to the Board would provide sufficient representation.
 11. The Council considered that the proposal will bring the Ōhope Beach and Whakatane Community Boards in line with the ward/community board structure in the rural area.
 12. The Council noted the need to hold by-elections for the Ōhope Beach Community Board in the 2004, 2007 and 2013 local elections and considered that the proposal would reduce the risk of needing by-elections.

Pullar/Jarrett
CARRIED