

Westland District Council

Representation Review 2018

Introduction

Council must, in accordance with section 19H of the Local Electoral Act 2001 (the Act) determine by resolution:

- 1)** Whether the members of Council are proposed to be elected;
 - By the electors of the District as a whole; or
 - By the electors of 2 or more Wards; or
 - In some cases by the electors of the District as a whole and in the other cases by the electors of each Ward of the District; and
- 2)** The proposed number of members to be elected; and
- 3)** The proposed name and the proposed boundaries of each Ward and the number of members for each Ward.
- 4)** Whether there should be community boards.
- 5)** Should Maori Wards be created.

Public notice of the results of the review must be given by 8 September 2018.

Background

Westland District has traditionally elected its members using the ward system.

In determining the existing ward boundaries and representation, Council took into account the traditional communities of interest, the population, the geographic area, and the rateable values of each ward. No community boards have ever existed in Westland.

Current Representation arrangements

Currently the District comprises of 3 Wards.

Northern Ward	All that part of Westland District north of the Mikonui River but excluding Hokitika and Kaniere.
Hokitika Ward	All that part of Westland including the town of Hokitika, the area north to Three Mile and including the areas to the east known as Blue Spur, Brickfield, Kaniere Township and the extension of Kaniere onto the Lake Kaniere Road.
Southern Ward	All that area of Westland south of the Mikonui River.

Ward names, members, population, and ratio of Councillors to population and variation from the District ratio as follows:

Ward	Population	Members	Cr/Population	Variation
Northern Ward	3130	3	1043	93%
Hokitika Ward	3530	3	1177	105%
Southern Ward	2290	2	1145	102%
Total	8950	8	1119	100%

Table 1: Existing Representation Arrangements used for 2013 Election.

Matters to be considered by Council in undertaking the review.

1) Communities of Interest

Westland District is a long narrow District with a large and diverse area. The population is not evenly dispersed along the length of the District, with a significant concentration in the main District township (Hokitika), and a larger rural population in the north of the District including Kaniere and Blue Spur.

The existing Ward boundaries recognise the urban nature of Hokitika (Hokitika Ward), the rural principally dairy farming and small support townships of the north (Northern ward), and the geographic isolation and tourism dominated nature of the south (Southern Ward).

2) Effective Representation for identified Communities of Interest

Because of the size and diversity of the District, it is considered that effective representation of communities of interest can only be achieved by Councillors being elected on a ward basis. An “at large” system of election is not considered to be in the best interests of the geographically distinctive communities of interest in Westland.

3) Consideration of whether there should be Community Boards

Westland District currently does not have any Community Boards. The District has a network of existing local community organisations, which are recognised by Council, and consulted with on local issues.

Historically, because of the low population of Westland District, the ward basis of elections and the accessibility of and to Councillors, it is considered that Community Boards are not warranted.

The Council need to consider that this approach is still relevant.

Council should consider;

- Do all communities enjoy fair and effective representation?
- Could improved fair and effective representation be achieved through Community Boards?

Should Council resolve to establish Community Boards, then each board must;

- Consist of no fewer than 4 elected members; and
- The number of appointed members is to be less than half the total number of members.

4) Fairness of Representation

The current situation using the estimated current population figures as at 30 June 2017 is demonstrated by the following table:

Ward	Population	Members	Cr/Population	Variation
Northern Ward	2850	3	950	86%
Hokitika Ward	3860	3	1287	117%
Southern Ward	2080	2	1040	95%
Total	8790	8	1099	100%

Table 2.Existing Representation Arrangements with estimated current population figures at 30 June 2017.

The existing wards have provided fair representation, with a spread of members along the length of the District. The Council may therefore opt for the retention of the existing Wards.

However, the Northern and Hokitika Wards do not comply with section 19V (2) of the Act, as they are outside the ratio of +/-10% of the average population per member.

It is necessary to review the representation arrangements for these two wards.

A review would either be in the nature of a change to representation or by a change to Ward boundaries or a combination of both.

A simple change to representation would result in a situation demonstrated by the following table:

Ward	Population	Members	Cr/Population	Variation
Northern Ward	2850	3	950	97%
Hokitika Ward	3860	4	965	99%
Southern Ward	2080	2	1040	106%
Total	8790	9	977	100%

Table 3. Changed Representation and no change to boundaries.

By increasing the representation in the Hokitika Ward from 3 to 4 allows Council to comply with section 19V (2) of the Act, as all wards then meet the ratio of +/- 10% of the average population per member.

Council may not want to change the number of elected members as there would be financial implications on both the Long Term Plan, and individual member salaries.

An option is to look at the Hokitika Ward and the Northern Ward, and move the boundary of the Hokitika Ward to Pine Tree Road along Blue Spur.

Northern Ward	All that part of Westland District north of the Mikonui River but excluding Hokitika Ward.
Hokitika Ward	All that part of Westland including the town of Hokitika, the area north to Three Mile and including the areas to the east known as Blue Spur and Brickfield as far as Pine Tree Road.
Southern Ward	All that area of Westland south of the Mikonui River.

This option results in the situation demonstrated by the following table:

Ward	Population	Members	Cr/Population	Variation
Northern Ward	3210	3	1070	97%
Hokitika Ward	3500	3	1167	106%
Southern Ward	2080	2	1040	95%
Total	8790	8	1099	100%

Table 4. Changed boundary between Hokitika Ward and Northern Ward.

It is necessary to consider the effect of changes on communities of interest.

Effect on Hokitika and Northern Wards

The proposal to change the boundaries of the Hokitika and Northern Ward affects an estimated population of 360, and will not significantly affect the overall communities of interest, and reflects the rural nature of the area from Pine Tree Road.

Effect on the Southern Ward

There is no effect on the Southern Ward.

5) Maori Wards

Under the Local Electoral Amendment Act 2002, a local authority may resolve to establish Maori Wards or Maori Constituencies.

The decision, if made after a triennial election but no later than two years before the next triennial election, takes effect for the next triennial election and the next.

If a decision is made now, it will not take effect for the 2019 triennial election, but the one after.

Council should consider;

- Whether Maori currently have effective representation on Council.
- Would creation of a Maori Ward improve the concept of fair and effective representation?
- Is it reasonable and practicable?

Council can decide;

- To declare a Maori Ward under s19Z of the Act
- To not declare a Maori Ward
- Wait for a poll demand by a specified number of electors, being equal to or greater than 5% of electors that are eligible to vote under s19ZB of the Act.
- Resolve to hold a poll under s19ZD of the Act.

On 28 August 2018, Westland District Council reviewed its representation arrangements, and resolved that the following proposal apply for the Council for the elections to be held on 12 October 2019:

- Council have proposed a small boundary change to move the Hokitika boundary as far as Pine Tree Road with the wider Kaniere Township moving into the Northern Ward.
- There will remain eight councillors elected on a ward basis with the Mayor elected at large
- No community boards will be elected
- There will be no Maori Wards at this time

There will be no change of electoral system for the next election 2019, however Council will review the current electoral system for the following elections in 2022.

Have your say

Timeline

Public notification of consultation	3 July 2018
Consultation period	3 July 2018 – 3 August 2018
Hearings to be held	13 August 2018
Decision	23 August 2018
Public notification of decision	27 August 2018
Objection period	27 August 2018 – 28 September 2018
Forward to LGC	1 October 2018

How to submit

Complete the online submission form at www.westlanddc.govt.nz

Emailing: consult@westlanddc.govt.nz

Filling in the hard copy form and posting to

Representation Review
Westland District Council
Private Bag 704
Hokitika 7842