

**Report and recommendations of the
Independent Representation Review Panel
on Hutt City Council's Initial Representation
Proposal**

June 2024

Foreword

Waiho i te toipoto, kaula i te toiroa

(This whakatauki/proverb speaks to the importance of keeping connected, of maintaining relationships and dialogue so that we can keep moving forward together.)

Hutt City Council, like all councils, is required to review its representation arrangements at least every six years. For this review, Hutt City Council decided, for the first time, to appoint an independent panel to recommend an initial representation proposal for the purpose of consultation with the community.

We believe our recommended proposal, set out in this report, meets the requirements of the Local Electoral Act for fair and effective representation for individuals and communities. This relates to the number of councillors there should be and how they should be to be elected (by wards, at-large or a mix of both). It also relates to the question whether there should continue to be community boards in the City.

In coming to our recommendations, we needed to take into account Hutt City Council's decision to establish at least one Māori ward in the City. We gave this issue careful attention and consulted both manawhenua and mātāwaka when forming our recommendations on this issue.

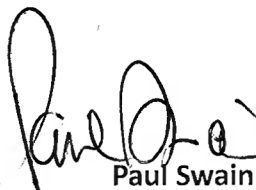
In line with the whakatauki above, the Panel wanted to establish good connections, dialogue and relationships with the community to ensure that we heard as many views as possible on the possible shape of Lower Hutt's representation arrangements into the future.

To achieve this, the Panel adopted a comprehensive engagement plan that involved, Panel members contacting over 150 individuals and groups, and facilitating approximately 30 face-to-face meetings, including with groups who rarely engage with Council on its plans or proposals. This was in addition to an online survey and social media campaign to promote engagement.

The Panel would like to thank the many individuals, community groups and organisations for sharing with us their thoughts and aspirations for the City. Everyone we spoke to felt that Lower Hutt is a great place to live in, and were keen to be involved in shaping its future. We hope we have done justice to their views in this report.

The Panel would also like to thank our advisor, Gavin Beattie, whose knowledge and experience of the representation review process was invaluable; our secretariat Olivia Miller; and Richard Hardie and other Council officers who spent considerable time sharing their knowledge of the City, its communities and Council processes.

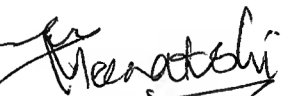
The Panel presents its recommendations in the knowledge that they are based on as thorough and robust a process as possible within the time and resources available to Panel members. We trust that the Council considers them favourably, so that the community has the chance to give their views on the representation arrangements to be put in place for the 2025 local authority elections.



Paul Swain
Chair



Sir John Clarke
Member



Meenakshi Sankar
Member



Ana So'otaga
Member



Matthew Richardson
Member

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1. Independent Representation Review Panel's recommendations

a) Initial representation proposal

The Independent Representation Review Panel recommends:

1. Hutt City Council adopts the following as its initial representation proposal under sections 19H and 19J of the Local Electoral Act 2001:
 - a. Hutt City Council comprise a mayor and 13 councillors
 - b. the councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation, with
 - i. 5 councillors elected at-large across the City
 - ii. 7 councillors elected from five general wards
 - iii. 1 councillor elected from one Māori ward
 - c. the five general wards be as follows:
 - i. Northern Ward covering Stokes Valley, Taita, Naenae and Avalon, electing two councillors
 - ii. Central Ward covering Boulcott, Epuni, Fairfield, Waterloo, Hutt Central, Alicetown, Melling, Woburn and Waiwhetu, electing two councillors
 - iii. Western Ward covering Manor Park, Belmont Park, Kelson, Belmont, Tirohanga, Normandale and Maungaraki, electing one councillor
 - iv. Harbour Ward covering Korokoro, Petone, Moera, Gracefield, Eastern Bays and Eastbourne, electing one councillor
 - v. Wainuiomata Ward electing one councillor
 - d. the Māori ward, covering the area of the City, be called Mana Kairangi ki tai
 - e. there be no community boards in the City and the three existing community boards be abolished.
2. Hutt City Council notes the recommended arrangements change current representation representations as follows:
 - a. the addition of one Māori ward electing one Māori ward councillor, bringing the total number of councillors to 13
 - b. five councillors elected at-large, compared to six councillors elected at-large currently
 - c. seven councillors elected from five general wards, compared to six councillors elected from six wards currently, as:
 - i. five general wards best meets the requirement for effective representation of communities of interest under section 19T of the Local Electoral Act 2001
 - ii. seven councillors elected from these five wards best meets the requirement for fair representation under section 19V of the Local Electoral Act 2001
 - d. Wainuiomata Ward does not meet the requirement for fair representation (the +/-10% rule) and this is necessary to avoid dividing this community of

interest between wards, or uniting within one ward, communities of interest with few commonalities

- e. the current Northern Ward is expanded to also include:
 - i. all of Avalon northwards from Fairway Drive and Daysh Street
 - ii. all of Naenae northwards from that part of Naenae Road between Cambridge Terrace and Waddington Drive, also including the properties on Hamerton Street and between this street and Naenae Road
 - f. the current Central Ward is expanded to also include:
 - i. all of Alicetown and Melling, being all properties within the area between Wakefield Street, Western Hutt Road (SH 2), Melling Link and Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River
 - ii. the area of Woburn south of Whites Line West, being properties on the southern side of this road and also on Richmond Grove, Fuller Grove, Saulbrey Grove and Trevethick Grove
 - iii. the area of Waiwhetu south of Whites Line East, being properties on the southern side of this road and on all roads off Whites Line East to the south, including those off Leighton Avenue, Bell Road and Wainui Road as far as and including Riverside Drive
 - g. the current Eastern Ward is disestablished as a result of the expansion of the Northern and Central wards, with this involving Fairfield and Waterloo also being part of the expanded Central Ward
 - h. the current Harbour Ward is reduced as a result of:
 - i. the area of Woburn south of Whites Line West being part of Central Ward, and
 - ii. the area of Waiwhetu south of Whites Line East being part of Central Ward
 - i. the current Western Ward is reduced by Alicetown and Melling being part of Central Ward.
3. Hutt City Council notes the proposal for there to be no community boards in Lower Hutt and for three current boards to be abolished, reflects the view that formal structures like community boards positioned between the community and the Council is not likely to be effective in the 21st century, based on the changing nature of the community's interests, needs and aspirations, and also the obligation on the Council to inform, consult, represent and make decisions on behalf of those communities.

b) Hutt City Council's community engagement

The Independent Representation Review Panel further recommends:

Hutt City Council considers the recommendations set out in Section 10 of this report 'Building a better bridge to the community', with a view to improving its engagement with the community.

2. Background

All councils are required, under the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA), to review their arrangements for representing the people and communities in their city or district at least every six years. Hutt City Council last reviewed its representation arrangements prior to the 2019 local authority elections. So, under the LEA, it must do another review before the next triennial elections in 2025.

a) 2019 representation review

In its last representation review in 2019, both the Council's initial and final proposals were for the retention of the existing six wards, with each ward electing two councillors. The proposals were also for the retention of the existing three community boards in Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata.

There were two appeals to the Local Government Commission against the Council's final proposal, relating to how councillors were to be elected. In accordance with the LEA, the Commission made a determination on all the representation arrangements that would apply in Lower Hutt for at least the 2019 elections. This was for the introduction of a mixed system of representation, with six councillors elected at-large across the City and six councillors elected from the existing six wards. The three existing community boards were also to be retained.

These arrangements continued in place for the 2022 triennial elections.

b) Appointment of independent panel for 2025 representation review

For its next representation review, the Council resolved, on 30 May 2023, to appoint an independent panel to recommend an initial representation proposal for Lower Hutt.

This decision reflected the Local Government Commission's recommended good practice for councils doing representation reviews, to consider appointing an independent panel to undertake the initial steps in the representation review process. The decision was also made in response to comments by the Commission in its 2019 determination about the Council's review process (the comments are summarised in the next section).

On 11 July 2023, the Council resolved to appoint five members to the Independent Representation Review Panel. The appointed members were seen as providing a good mix of backgrounds, experience and skills relevant for undertaking representation reviews, while also reflecting the diversity of Lower Hutt. Details of the Panel members and the Panel's terms of reference are set out in **Appendix 1**.

The Panel met for the first time on 29 August 2023.

c) Other important Council decisions

Two further decisions by the Council, while not formally part of the representation review process, have important implications for the review process.

Firstly, the Council, in accordance with the LEA, resolved to conduct a poll in conjunction with the 2022 triennial elections, on the electoral system to be used for the following two elections in 2025 and 2028. The two options identified in the LEA are first-past-the post (FPP) and single transferable vote (STV). The outcome of the poll was that FPP will be used in Lower Hutt at least for the 2025 and 2028 elections.

Secondly, the Council resolved on 21 November 2023, again in accordance with the LEA, that at least one Māori ward be established for the 2025 triennial elections. This meant the current representation review needed to include a determination on how many Māori wards there will be for those elections, the number of members for these wards, and ward boundaries and names.

Since the Council's resolution, the Government announced it intended to amend the LEA to reinstate the previous provision that council decisions to establish Māori wards will be subject to any poll demanded by electors. It also announced there will be transitional provisions for those councils that have established Māori wards by way of resolution without a poll having been undertaken, as is the case with Hutt City Council.

The Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill has recently been introduced to Parliament confirming those announcements. The Bill includes transitional provisions for councils that established Māori wards by way of resolution, to either rescind their resolution or to conduct a poll on this issue in conjunction with the 2025 triennial elections. The outcome of such a poll in 2025 will then take effect at the 2028 triennial elections.

The latter option would mean for Lower Hutt, that a Māori ward(s) would still be established in time for the 2025 elections and then be subject to the outcome of the poll held at those elections, as to whether it continued after the 2028 elections.

At the time of preparing this report, Hutt City Council had not resolved that its decision on the establishment of a Māori ward(s) be rescinded. On this basis, the Panel continued with its work to recommend to the Council how many Māori wards it believes there should be in Lower Hutt, the number of members for these wards, and ward boundaries and names.

The Panel's recommendations on these, and all other representation matters, are set out in this report.

3. The recommended approach to representation reviews

Representation reviews are to be guided by the LEA principle of “fair and effective representation for individuals and communities”.

To give effect to this principle, the Local Government Commission recommends a three-step approach for representation reviews of:

1. identifying communities of interest
2. determining effective representation for those communities of interest, which includes the option of community boards
3. determining fair representation for individuals.

It was in relation to this recommended good practice approach that the Local Government Commission had criticisms of the approach taken by Hutt City Council in its last representation review in 2019.

The Commission noted information and data available to the Council showing communities of interest in Lower Hutt were both city-wide and local in nature. However, this was not fully considered by the Council when adopting its initial representation proposal, which was subsequently adopted as the Council’s final proposal, and which then attracted two appeals.

In particular, the Council’s proposal was simply for retention of the existing six-ward structure, reflecting local communities of interest, for the election of all 12 councillors.

After considering the two appeals before it, and other information provided by the Council, the Commission concluded that city-wide communities of interest and the relatively compact nature of Lower Hutt along with its geography, provided “a strong argument for a more city-wide approach to representation”. At the same time, the Commission also made it clear such a city-wide approach was not to be at the expense of representation for local communities of interest which was equally important and needed to be recognised.

The Commission subsequently determined that for the 2019 triennial elections, there would be a mixed system of representation, with six councillors elected at-large and six elected from the existing six wards. The three existing community boards would also be retained.

The Commission saw its determination as applying for the 2019 elections. The Council would then have the opportunity to address the appropriate balance between city-wide and local community representation, including appropriate ward arrangements, for future elections.

No further review was undertaken for the 2022 triennial elections.

In light of this background, the Panel sought to identify the nature of communities of interest currently existing in the City, and the extent to which these may be seen as city-wide or local in nature. We saw this as the most appropriate basis for making our recommendations on what we see as the arrangements that will best reflect the LEA’s guiding principle of “fair and effective representation for individuals and communities”.

In undertaking its work, the Panel adopted the Local Government Commission’s recommended three-step approach. This involved:

1. seeking community views on the City's current communities of interest, including the extent these are seen as city-wide or local in nature, while also undertaking an in-depth community of interest analysis
2. considering all options for effective representation of identified communities of interest, in terms of the total number of councillors there should be, how those councillors should be elected, and also the option of having community boards
3. considering fair representation for individuals in relation to the requirement for each councillor to represent approximately the same number of people.

Detailed discussion of each of these steps is set out in Sections 7, 8 and 9 of this report.

Before coming to conclusions on these matters, the Panel undertook a comprehensive community engagement programme and this is described, along with our findings from this programme, in Sections 5 and 6.

As described in more detail in Section 7, one dimension for defining communities of interest relates to the area residents most closely identify with or have a sense of belonging to. The best way to find this out is to ask residents directly. Accordingly, the Panel included this as a question in its community engagement activities described in Section 5.

Before describing the community engagement programme and the Panel's engagement findings, a brief history of Lower Hutt's representation arrangements is set out in Section 4, along with a comparison of the current arrangements in the national context.

4. Lower Hutt's current representation arrangements in context

a) History of representation arrangements

A timeline of Lower Hutt's representation arrangements since the City's establishment in 1989, involving the amalgamation of the old Lower Hutt City with the boroughs of Eastbourne and Petone, and also Wainuiomata District, is as follows:

- 1989:
- Establishment of new council comprising a mayor and 15 councillors
 - Councillors elected from five wards (Northern, Eastern and Western wards covering most of old Lower Hutt City; Harbour Ward covering former Eastbourne and Petone boroughs and also a small part of the old Lower Hutt City; and Wainuiomata Ward covering former Wainuiomata District)
 - Establishment of three community boards for areas joining the extended city (Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata)
- 1995:
- A sixth, Central Ward, established covering Lower Hutt central business district and some adjoining areas
 - Total number of councillors reduced to 13
 - Three existing community boards retained
- 1998-2016:
- Six wards retained (with minor boundary alterations to some wards)
 - Total number of councillors set at 11 or 12
 - Three existing community boards retained
- 2019-2022:
- Mixed system of representation, with at-large component and six existing wards
 - Total number of councillors retained at 12
 - Three existing community boards retained

b) National comparisons

Comparisons of Lower Hutt's current representation arrangements with those for the ten largest territorial authorities by population in the country, excluding Auckland, are set out in **Appendix 2**.¹

It can be seen from the national comparisons, there are variations in council representation arrangements around the country. These relate to factors such as the geographical size and nature of the city or district concerned, its population, its history dating back to the 1989 local government reforms, and the relative scale of council operations and responsibilities.

In summary, the representation arrangements for each council are a particular set of arrangements seen as most appropriate for that city or district, in light of its particular circumstances.

¹ Auckland is excluded for comparison purposes as: it has a population far in excess of the next largest city (Christchurch); currently the number of Auckland councillors is statutorily limited to 20 by Auckland-specific legislation; and it is the only council in the country with local boards as distinct from community boards.

c) Residents' satisfaction

To get an indication of the current level of residents' satisfaction with Hutt City Council and, in particular, some of its governance processes, the Panel noted findings from two recent surveys: the Residents' Satisfaction Survey 2023 and the Quality of Life Survey 2022.

Key findings from these surveys are set out in **Appendix 3**. These include:

- a reasonable level of satisfaction that the Council takes community feedback into account when making decisions, but with groups least satisfied on this being: Northern Ward residents, Māori, older residents, and residents with disabilities
- a large majority (70%) agreeing it is important to them that they feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood, with a smaller majority (51%) saying they *did* feel such a sense of community.

5. The Panel's approach to community engagement

a) Community engagement plan

The Panel agreed at the beginning of its work that good engagement with the community on the range of representation issues and options was very important in developing its recommended representation proposal for Lower Hutt. Accordingly, we first prepared a detailed engagement plan to guide our engagement activities.

i. Communication and engagement principles

The Panel's engagement plan included the following communication and engagement principles:

- educate the community on local government by providing clear, consistent and reliable information
- engage with Mana Whenua and Mātāwaka throughout the review
- connect with a wide range of communities of interest and a diverse cross section of residents
- enhance relationships with, and understanding of, communities of interest
- be open and transparent about what the community can and cannot influence and how decisions will be made
- use a variety of methods to communicate and engage
- ensure the community feels their feedback was heard and that they played a part in the democratic process
- take a 'best endeavours' approach to engagement.

Given the time and resources available to it, the Panel needed to apply the 'best endeavours' principle in its community engagement programme.

While bearing this in mind, the Panel still connected with a wide range of communities, groups and interests across the City. It engaged with Mana Whenua and Mātāwaka, with representatives of particular priority groups (identified below), as well as with representatives of recognised bodies, including the business community and the three community boards.

The Panel sought to meet with as many groups as it could face-to-face, but did use other engagement methods as well.

The 'education' principle was important as the Panel found low levels of awareness and understanding about representation issues and about the Council more generally. These particular issues are addressed in some detail below.

ii. 'Equity of voice' in community engagement

The Panel was particularly keen to ensure there was 'equity of voice' in its engagement with communities across the City. As a result, we developed and used a tailored approach to our engagement, including a concerted effort to reach out to communities and groups less engaged, or perhaps in some cases not engaged at all, with the Council and its activities.

The tailored engagement approach was developed using Panel members' own knowledge and insights about the community, analysis of data and other information available to the Panel, and also advice from Council officers. The particular communities and groups identified were: Northern Ward communities, young people (16 to 34 years), Pacific people, ethnic and migrant communities, disabled people and the rainbow community.

In relation to these communities and groups, the Panel noted, for example, that demographic analysis from the 2023 residents' satisfaction survey indicated residents in Northern Ward commonly expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction with Council decision-making, facilities and services, as well as having the lowest levels of direct engagement with the Council. Northern Ward residents, along with Māori, older residents, and residents with disabilities, were also identified in the survey as being the least satisfied that Council takes community feedback into account when making decisions.

iii. Key evaluation questions

The Panel conducted its community engagement between October 2023 and April 2024. Its focus in the engagement was on three key evaluation questions, identified in the engagement plan, relating to:

1. the level of community **awareness** and **understanding** about Hutt City Council, its role and its representation structures
2. **satisfaction** with current representation structures and arrangements in terms of their relevance, inclusiveness and effectiveness for the City's diverse communities
3. **changes and/or improvements** seen to be needed to these representation structures and arrangements, to ensure fair and effective representation for the City's diverse communities.

As previously noted, the Panel also asked another important question in the engagement, about the community that people most closely identify with. This was designed to help us assess the current balance of city-wide communities of interest and local communities of interest in the City.

b) Community engagement activities

The Panel undertook a range of community engagement activities to encourage participation in the review, as well as to gather information necessary for the Panel to respond to the key evaluation questions. This involved using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods and also social media, to support the engagement programme.

i. Encouraging community participation

At the Panel's request, a social media campaign was initiated by Council officers from September to November 2023. This included:

- a page on the Council's website introducing the Panel members and providing information on their background, experience and role in the representation review process
- a page on the 'Kōrero Mai' platform on the website, sharing more detail on the review process and how the community could engage
- promotion of the online community engagement survey (see below) through a link on the 'Kōrero Mai' platform, as well as additional engagement tools for the community to share their feedback and ask questions about the review. This was regularly monitored by Council officers and reported to the Panel
- social media posts to share different ways the community could participate in the survey or in other engagement activities.

Other activities included Council officers arranging for 12,000 postcards to be delivered to addresses in selected areas of the City, encouraging people to have their say in the review process.

In addition, contact was made with the Eastern Bays and Western Hills residents associations inviting their participation in the Panel's community engagement programme.

ii. Online community engagement survey

An online community engagement survey was conducted by Public Voice in November/December 2023. This was distributed via the 'Hutt City Views' research panel and also via the Council's social media team, with a total of 922 responses received. Information about the survey and the detailed findings are set out in **Appendix 4**, with key findings summarised in Section 6.

In relation to the survey, the Panel notes it was targeted, in the first instance, at the already established residents' research panel, which comprises self-selected participants not statistically representative of the City as a whole. Accordingly, we sought to balance the survey responses with feedback from our tailored engagement approach including face-to-face meetings.

iii. Engagements and face-to-face meetings

In line with its 'equity of voice' and tailored engagement approach, the Panel sent emails or made calls to over 150 organisations, groups or individuals. This was to advise them of the review and the opportunity to participate, as well as of the Panel's desire to hold focus groups/hui/wananga/talanoa for communities and groups.

In total, Panel members had nearly 30 face-to-face meetings, or participated in particular events, as part of its engagement programme. Details of the Panel's engagements and the face-to-face meetings are set out in **Appendix 5**.

6. The Panel's community engagement findings

This section summarises the findings and insights gathered by the Panel from its engagements and face-to-face meetings, together with those from the online engagement survey. This is arranged under the key evaluation questions identified above, including the question relating to residents' identification with communities.

a) Awareness and understanding of the Council, its role and its representation structures

In order to get community views about current representation arrangements in Lower Hutt, the Panel first needed to know the level of community awareness about these arrangements and how they operate. This was the basis of our first evaluation question, which also covered awareness and understanding about the Council and its role generally.

While there were exceptions, the meetings with community organisations and groups revealed that the level of awareness and understanding about the Council, its role and its representation structures was extremely low.

In relation to representation arrangements and structures in particular, very few knew the exact number of councillors there currently are, that some councillors are elected at-large across the City and that some are elected by wards. Many were not able to name the ward they resided in.

It was apparent in some of the face-to-face meetings that the language used relating to local government and the representation review in particular, was often not understood and/or was confusing. This included terms such as "wards" and "at-large".

Generally there was low awareness and understanding of community boards. This was well illustrated in a particular meeting where, when asked about community boards, some wondered if they related to the community *information* boards located around the City such as at the entrance to Kelson.

Not surprisingly, the online engagement survey findings painted a rather different picture. The survey respondents were mainly from the residents' research panel. The panel members are self-selected and are frequently approached for their opinions about a range of council-related issues. As a result, they tend to be more motivated and more aware of the Council and its work.

Given this level of awareness and understanding, the online survey did not ask specific questions relating to awareness about the Council and its role more generally. In relation to awareness about current representation arrangements, key findings from the online survey were:

- 50% of respondents knew there were 12 councillors on Hutt City Council, while 17% thought there were 13 or more councillors, and 33% thought there were 11 or fewer councillors
- 76% of respondents said they knew how those councillors were elected, i.e. which voters could vote for which councillors, but with only 23% saying this was by a mix of at-large and ward councillors
- 17% of respondents said they were "very familiar" with the concept of community boards, with 51% saying they were "somewhat familiar", and 32% saying they were "not familiar at all".

More detailed analysis of the online survey responses can be found in Appendix 4. This shows that the highest level of "familiarity with community boards" was, not surprisingly, in Harbour Ward

(30%), which has two community boards, while the highest level of “unfamiliarity with community boards” was in Northern Ward (70%) which has no community boards.

Levels of community awareness and understanding about the Council generally, do not relate directly to the actual representation arrangements needing to be put in place for the 2025 elections. However, they did provide important context for the Panel when conducting its community engagement and in its subsequent deliberations.

Awareness and knowledge levels about the Council generally, relate to a wider and ongoing issue for the Council about its engagement with the community across the range of Council activities. Given the importance of this issue, it is addressed further in Section 10 of this report.

b) Residents’ identification with communities

The Panel was keen to find out the extent to which residents identify primarily with, and have a sense of belonging to, Lower Hutt as a whole, or to a local community such as Stokes Valley, Naenae or Moera. This was on the basis of the need for the Panel to identify specific communities of interest around which effective representation can be built.

In the Panel’s face-to-face meetings, there was a mix of views on the area people identify most closely with. For some groups, such as those representing particular ethnic communities, members are often spread across the City and tend, as a result, to identify with the City as a whole. On the other hand, local geographically-based groups tend to identify with the local area concerned. For particular groups, it is a combination of identifying at both city-wide *and* local levels.

There was a similar mix of views in the online survey. Over half the respondents (56%) said they identify most closely with Lower Hutt as a whole, as distinct from a local area or suburb. Further analysis showed this was strongest in the old Lower Hutt City area (Central Ward 78%) and weakest in the areas joining the City in 1989 (Harbour Ward 21% and Wainuiomata Ward 30%).

Some of the factors that led survey respondents to identify most closely with particular communities included: the people who live in the area, the town centre and its services, and its geography such as hills, rivers or coastlines. (See Appendix 4 for more detail.)

c) Satisfaction and need for change to representation arrangements

The final evaluation questions relate to resident satisfaction with current representation arrangements and any need for change to these arrangements.

While some individuals in the groups the Panel met face-to-face with were relatively more aware and knowledgeable about current representation arrangements, most were not. As a result, the findings from these questions have to be considered in the context of the generally low levels of awareness and understanding of the current representation arrangements.

Given the level of awareness and understanding, Panel members often needed to provide descriptions and explanations of the current representation arrangements in their meetings. This was necessary before inviting feedback on the adequacy, or otherwise, of those arrangements in meeting residents’ need for effective representation. This approach helped Panel members to elicit richer and more meaningful responses.

Putting aside the specific questions about the preferred number of councillors and how those councillors should be elected, the Panel heard strong views expressed at meetings about a desire for clear, accessible and well-promoted structures and arrangements for contacting the Council. This need arose from the collective experience of many of the groups the Panel engaged with, and was

strongly expressed as an inability to have meaningful contact with the Council and its elected members.

In short, there is a sense among many in the community that their voice is not heard by the City's decision-makers.

The Panel sees a strengthening of the connections between the Council and the community as fundamental to addressing the concerns raised. We believe this will also help improve awareness and understanding of the Council and of its current representation arrangements in particular. This will assist future representation reviews.

More details about the Panel's proposals and recommendations on these matters, are set out in Section 10.

From the online engagement survey and in relation to current representation arrangements particularly:

- a large majority of respondents (71%) said the number of councillors was "about right", while 8% said there should be more councillors, and 21% said there should be fewer councillors
- the most preferred method for electing councillors was: firstly the mixed at-large/wards system (1.39), followed by wards only (2.03) and then at-large only (2.21) (where '1' indicates the respondent's most preferred option, '2' their next preferred option, and so on)
- 67% of respondents thought having a community board in their area or suburb was a good idea, while 33% did not
- 48% of respondents said there should be community boards across the whole City, 25% said there should be no community boards, and 15% said community boards should be limited to the three current areas which have boards.

Again, more detailed analysis of survey responses can be found in Appendix 4. This includes analysis of variations relating to community boards. The Panel notes here, the variations in support for having a community board ranged from 82% "support for having a community board" in Harbour and Wainuiomata wards, the two wards which have community boards, to 57% "opposed to community boards" in Central Ward where there are no community boards.

7. Identifying Lower Hutt's communities of interest

The Local Government Commission's first step in its recommended 3-step approach to representation reviews, is identification of communities of interest.

In line with this, the Panel began its work by getting a good understanding of the nature of the communities of interest currently existing in Lower Hutt. In particular, we sought to identify the extent to which these can be seen as city-wide, or local, in nature. In doing so, we noted that in many cases local communities of interest generally equate to well-recognised suburbs and that a number of these are quite distinct geographically.

A supplementary report, prepared for the Panel, providing an in-depth analysis of the City's current communities of interest, accompanies this report. We used the report as a basis for a number of our recommendations.

The Panel's approach to identifying communities of interest reflects the Local Government Commission's recommended approach using the following three dimensions:

- *perceptual*: a sense of belonging to or identification with a particular area
- *functional*: the services (both council and non-council) available in the area
- *political*: the representation of particular interests in the area and their ability to resolve or influence issues in relation to these interests.

Given the subjective nature of 'perceived communities of interest', the Panel used its online engagement survey, and face-to-face meetings to gather information on residents' sense of belonging to or identification with an area. In particular, whether this is stronger in relation to the City as a whole, or to a local area or suburb such as Eastbourne, Petone or Taita.

Alongside these subjective perceptions, the Panel used a range of demographic and socio-economic data and other information, to help identify current communities of interest from the perspective of the functional and political dimensions.

The detailed analysis of the City's communities of interest is set out in the supplementary report, with key findings identified below.

a) City-wide communities of interest

As already noted, the online engagement survey found a majority of residents (56%) identify with Lower Hutt City as a whole, rather than with a local area or suburb. This, however, varies across the City, with those living in the old Lower Hutt City area more likely to identify with the City as a whole, than those in the areas that joined the City in 1989 (Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata). Of note also, there were variations within the old Lower Hutt City area, with residents in Northern Ward (52%) less likely to identify with the City as a whole than those in Central Ward (78%).

A range of data and other information further reflects the existence of a strong community or communities of interest at the city-wide level, under both the functional and political dimensions.

This evidence includes in relation to 'functional communities of interest':

- *place of work*: the large number of workers travelling from local areas to Hutt Central North and to Petone Central in particular²
- *place of shopping*: assumed large amounts of travel to Hutt Central North and Petone Central, based on similarities with the patterns for place of work
- *place of schooling*: the need for many college-age students to travel across the City for schooling
- *community, cultural and recreation services and facilities*: the range of services and facilities in Lower Hutt, such as the Lower Hutt Events Centre and Town Hall, Dowse Art Museum and Walter Nash Stadium, serving users on a city-wide basis (and in some cases wider areas).

The Māori community is an important part of the political dimension of communities of interest in Lower Hutt, from the perspective of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This community is also likely to become relatively more important in future, given the higher birth rates of Māori compared to New Zealand Europeans, and also the younger age structure for Māori.

In Lower Hutt, Tangata Whenua, or iwi who exercise Mana Whenua (customary authority), have longstanding interests across Lower Hutt. Mana Whenua interests are represented across the City by five iwi organisations and two ancestral marae. The Council has developed Tākai Here (memorandum of partnership) with these organisations and marae recognising these important interests and relationships for the City.

Mātāwaka, defined as “the confederation of all tribes”³ also have five marae in different areas of the City, with interests, at least in some cases, beyond just the local area, such as in the case of Kōkiri marae in Seaview.

The Council has developed Tākai Here (memorandum of partnership) with these organisations and marae recognising these important interests and relationships for the City.

A number of other ‘political communities and interests’ have structures in place to represent and advocate on their behalf. These structures include Hutt Multicultural Council and Pacific Health Services Hutt Valley relating to ethnic communities; Vibe and Youth Inspire relating to services for youth; CCS Disability Action relating to the interests of disabled people; and Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce relating to the business community. These structures generally cover the whole City, or at least a large part of the City, further reinforcing the identity of the City as a whole.

b) Local communities of interest

While the Panel found clearly identifiable communities of interest at the city-wide level, it also found equally identifiable communities of interest at the local level. As noted, these often equate to well-recognised suburbs, such as the likes of Kelson, Woburn and Wainuiomata.

Again, the detailed analysis of these local communities of interest is in the supplementary report. The analysis started with the area of the old Lower Hutt City as it was prior to 1989. This was followed by analysis of the areas that joined the City in 1989, being the historically distinct communities of Petone and Eastbourne, and the most clearly distinct community geographically, namely Wainuiomata.

² ‘Hutt Central North’ and ‘Petone Central’ refer to statistical areas identified by Statistics NZ. These areas are aggregations of meshblocks for the purpose of statistical analysis. More information relating to this categorisation of data can be found in the supplementary report.

³ Te Rūnanga o Ngā Maata Waka Inc.

Here the Panel sets out some key findings relating to these local communities of interest.

i. **Old Lower Hutt City communities**

The centre of the old Lower Hutt City is a long established area, with a history dating back to the constitution of Lower Hutt Borough in 1891. The borough was extended progressively to the north and west during the twentieth century, and declared a city in 1941.

From the perspective of ‘perceived communities of interest’, the Panel noted a large majority of current Central Ward respondents (78%) in the online engagement survey, identified with Lower Hutt City as a whole, as opposed to a more local community. Eastern Ward respondents had the second highest level of identification with Lower Hutt City as a whole, at 69%.

The Panel looked at the core of the central city area, the current central business district, from the perspective of ‘functional communities of interest’. Clearly this is a key commercial/shopping hub for the City. There are also a number of important community facilities and services, serving a large central area of the City. These include the Memorial Library, which also serves as a neighbourhood hub for a wide area of the central City, Hutt Recreation Ground and Huia Pool.

Given the central area is a major destination for both work and shopping, the Panel was particularly interested in its connections to neighbouring and nearby suburbs. We then compared the nature and extent of these connections with the current Central Ward boundaries.

While a number of neighbouring and nearby suburbs are in the current Central Ward, a number are not, or at least only partly so. These include Epuni (with Fairfield, identified as Epuni East for statistical purposes, in the current Eastern Ward), Waterloo (also split between current Central and Eastern wards for statistical purposes) and Waiwhetu.

In the case of Alicetown and Melling, these are in the current Western Ward, split from Central Ward by Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River. Unlike most of the rest of Western Ward, Alicetown and Melling are on the eastern side of SH2, on the valley floor, and have some different demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

The Panel was interested in the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the river being used as a ward boundary, separating Alicetown and Melling from the central area from the perspective of the functional dimension of communities of interest in particular.

This relates especially to the issue of community resilience and the risk of flooding, which will only become more important in future for the promotion of community wellbeing. This in turn highlights the need for arrangements that will help in, or at least not unnecessarily hinder, the promotion of community awareness of the nature of the risk and the need for collective responses to the risk.

One further area the Panel looked at was the small part of Woburn currently in Harbour Ward, being the area south of Whites Line West. The Panel considered this area needed to be reunited with the rest of Woburn from both perceptual and functional perspectives of community of interest.

The current Western Ward primarily comprises the Western Hills suburbs, with the exception of Korokoro, which is connected to and has long been part of the Petone community. From the perspective of ‘functional communities of interest’, most residents of the Western Hills suburbs travel out of the area for work and shopping purposes, and to use a range of community and recreational facilities not available locally.

However, with their hilly geography and, in the main, division from the rest of the City by SH2, these suburbs do have a common identity. They also have similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics. In addition, the Western Hills suburbs have a network of residents/community associations to represent the interests of local residents.

The current Northern Ward comprises Stokes Valley and Taita. Though physically separate, these suburbs have similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics. They also have similar functional connections to the rest of the City, particularly in relation to work, shopping and use of facilities and services.

The Panel noted that the neighbouring areas of Naenae and Avalon have a number of commonalities relating to all the dimensions of communities of interest, with the current Northern Ward. These include similar demographics and socio-economic characteristics, and a number of particular functional connections, including schools and recreational facilities such as Walter Nash Centre, Fraser Park and the Taita netball courts.

In the Panel's online engagement survey, Northern Ward respondents were the most evenly divided of all old Lower Hutt City respondents, between identifying with and having a sense of belonging to "a more local community" (48%), rather than to "Lower Hutt City as a whole" (52%). Demographic analysis from the 2023 residents' satisfaction survey also showed residents in Northern Ward commonly expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction with council decision-making, facilities and services, as well as the lowest levels of direct engagement with the Council.

ii. Harbour communities – Petone and Eastbourne

The current Harbour Ward comprises the communities of Petone and Eastbourne and also a small area of the old Lower Hutt City (Moera, Gracefield and the southern part of Waiwhetu).

Petone has a long and rich history, both prior to and since European settlement, including as its own unit of local government from 1888 to 1989. The present community is reasonably distinct, including Korokoro in the west and across the valley floor, south from a line along Wakefield Street, Whites Line West and Whites Line East.

Petone's history and distinctiveness is likely to be reflected in the number of Harbour Ward respondents (79%) in the online engagement survey, identifying with and having a sense of belonging to "a more local community" than to "Lower Hutt City as a whole". The Panel did note some variations in demographics and socio-economic characteristics in the wider Petone community, particularly between Korokoro and Moera.

From the perspective of both functional and political dimensions, Petone can be seen to be a distinct community of interest. This includes in relation to employment and shopping; the number of primary schools, with some also serving as emergency hubs; location of two neighbourhood hubs, community hall and summer swimming pool. Special interest groups include the Jackson Street Programme and Seaview Business Association.

Eastbourne, including the Eastern Bays south from Point Howard, is also a clearly distinct area geographically and historically, being a separate unit of local government prior to 1989. While Eastbourne respondents are not distinguishable from Petone respondents in the online engagement survey, again we believe the history and clear distinction of Eastbourne is likely to be reflected in the number of Harbour Ward survey respondents (79%) identifying with and having a sense of belonging to "a more local community" than to "Lower Hutt City as a whole".

Eastbourne and the Eastern Bays have very similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics, which also distinguishes them from other areas of the City. Again, there are a range of services and facilities in the area including primary schools, with two also being emergency hubs, neighbourhood hub, community hall and summer swimming pool. The area also has a network of residents associations, representing the interests of Eastern Bays residents.

iii. Wainuiomata community

The Wainuiomata Ward reflects the most clearly distinct local area of the City geographically, separated from the rest of the City by hills. The Panel's analysis shows it can be identified as a distinct community of interest in terms of all three dimensions of community of interest.

The community has similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics across the area. A large majority of Wainuiomata respondents (70%) in the online engagement survey identify with and have a sense of belonging to "a more local community" than to "Lower Hutt City as a whole".

While a large number of residents travel out of the area for work, the area still has a reasonable range of services and facilities for local residents including schools, emergency hubs, shops, community hub, and summer swimming pool.

8. Achieving effective and fair representation at the council level

The first step in the recommended good practice 3-step approach to representation reviews, addressed in Section 7, is to identify communities of interest in the City.

The second step is to determine *effective* representation for the identified communities of interest. This relates to the appropriate number of councillors and how those councillors are to be elected, taking into account factors such as the size and geography of the City, and the size and diversity of the population within the City.

In considering these issues, the Panel also needed to take into account the Council decision for there to be one or more Māori wards and, therefore, there needing to be at least one Māori ward councillor.

The third and final step is to determine *fair* representation arrangements for individuals, being arrangements that result in each councillor representing approximately the same number of people. This is defined in the LEA by a requirement for representation ratios in wards to be within +/-10% of the average representation ratio for the City as a whole. This is referred to as 'the +/-10% rule'.

While the Panel addressed the achievement of effective representation first, it also tested this against the +/-10% fair representation rule, as it considered various ward options in relation to how councillors should be elected.

In this section, the Panel sets out the options it identified for achieving both effective and fair representation at the council level, its assessment of these options and its conclusions and recommendations on these matters.

a) The total number of councillors

Under the LEA, councils may comprise between 5 and 29 councillors. As shown in Appendix 2, Hutt City Council with its current 12 councillors, lies comfortably within the range of representation levels of the 10 largest territorial authorities in the country by population (setting aside Auckland which has its own bespoke representation arrangements).

This range reflects the circumstances of each of those councils in terms of their population, area and range of responsibilities. These circumstances also include whether there are community boards, and the coverage of any boards in the council area.

As noted previously, in the online survey the overwhelming majority of respondents (71%) thought the current 12 councillors was "about right". In our face-to-face meetings, while there were calls for change from some individuals, the Panel did not hear a consistently strong call for either more or fewer councillors than the current 12.

Before identifying its recommended number of councillors, the Panel noted it needed to consider the matter of how those councillors should be elected. This was because, if there are to be wards, the +/-10% rule may require consideration of slightly more or fewer councillors, if this rule is to be complied with. In addition, the Panel needed to consider the matter of how many Māori wards there should be, and therefore how many Māori wards councillors.

b) How councillors are elected

In relation to how Lower Hutt councillors are to be elected in 2025, the Panel noted an important point needing to be observed. With the Council's resolution that there be at least one Māori ward, the previously available option of totally at-large representation, i.e. *all* councillors are elected at-large by *all* voters, was no longer available.

In short, if there is to be at least one Māori ward for electors on the Māori electoral roll, there has to be at least one general ward for electors on the general electoral roll. That is, there will be a minimum of two wards.

To the extent that city-wide communities of interest are identified, there still remains the option of *some* councillors being elected city-wide, with *some* councillors elected by wards, i.e. the mixed system of representation. Under these arrangements, electors on both the Māori electoral roll and those on the general electoral roll, would, in addition to their ward vote, be able to vote for candidates standing at-large across the City.

Even if there was to be no Māori ward, the Panel does not believe totally at-large representation arrangements would be appropriate for Lower Hutt. This is on the basis of its communities of interest analysis, which shows that there are identifiable communities of interest at the local level in the City which should be represented, i.e. representation by way of appropriate ward arrangements.

In addition, the "totally at-large" option was the least preferred option in the online engagement survey. There was also no consistently strong call for the totally at-large representation arrangements in our face-to-face meetings.

i. Mixed system of representation

The most preferred option in the online engagement survey was the current "mixed at-large and wards" option and this option also had a reasonable level of support in our face-to-face meetings, amongst those who had some knowledge of current representation arrangements.

Also in support of the mixed option, the Panel noted the Local Government Commission's finding in its 2019 determination, that there were identifiable communities of interest at both a city-wide level and at the local level in Lower Hutt, which "were equally important and needed to be recognised".

Based on the Panel's community engagement findings, the communities of interest analysis (summarised in Section 7), the Local Government Commission's conclusion and also Panel members' own knowledge of the City and their experience, **the Panel concluded that a mixed system of representation should be retained in Lower Hutt.**

ii. General wards

The Panel then proceeded to identify a range of options for grouping identified local communities of interest into wards, as part of its preferred mixed system of representation.

It first addressed general wards on the basis there was to be at least one Māori ward.

Two options the Panel identified and subsequently agreed not to pursue, were for either one or two general wards covering the whole City, while also having an at-large representation component.

The option of *one* general ward covering the whole City, is effectively fully at-large representation for general roll electors, which the Panel does not support. In addition, we believe having a single ward covering the same area as the at-large component of the recommended mixed system of representation, would be confusing for electors to understand.

The Panel also does not support having *two* general wards, alongside one Māori ward and an at-large component. This option would require a boundary to be drawn somewhere across the valley floor to divide the City in two. We believe identifying an appropriate boundary would be difficult and, in any event, would not appropriately reflect local communities of interest in the City.

As part of its consideration of remaining options, the Panel did consider a *three* general ward option, involving two wards in the old Lower Hutt City area, and a combined Harbour and Wainuiomata Ward. However during its consideration of further options, it subsequently agreed a Western Ward in the old Lower Hutt City area should be retained, alongside a minimum of two other wards in the old Lower Hutt City area. This meant a three-ward option, also including a combined Harbour and Wainuiomata ward, was no longer possible.

The remaining six options for different ward arrangements, involving six, five and four general wards, which the Panel considered carefully, are set out below.

Option 1: 6 general wards with status quo representation arrangements

The Panel does not support retention of the current 6-ward model with no change to existing representation arrangements. This is on the basis of modifications or more significant alterations to current arrangements, as identified in the options following, which the Panel believes need to be considered. In relation to the fair representation +/-10% rule, the Panel also noted the Northern and Harbour wards, under current arrangements, do not comply when there is a Māori ward (see the table below).

Option 2: 6 general wards with a reunited Woburn

This is a modification of the current 6-ward model, involving the area of Woburn south of Whites Line West being moved out of Harbour Ward and into Central Ward.⁴

This small area is clearly part of Woburn, with no direct vehicle access to Harbour Ward. Instead, all vehicles must leave this area through Woburn. Moving this area would mean removal of the current ward boundary down the middle of Whites Line West. Ward boundaries down the middle of a road are generally to be avoided, to assist residents' understanding of electoral arrangements and to remove potential barriers to their participation based on a lack of understanding of these arrangements.

The Panel considered this option had merits and agreed to consider it further.

Option 3: 6 general wards with reunited Woburn and moving of Alicetown and Melling from Western Ward to Central Ward

This option incorporates option 2 and, in addition, moves Alicetown and Melling from Western Ward to Central Ward.

The combined Alicetown and Melling area described here, is the area between the Western Hutt Road (SH2) in the west, Melling Link in the north, Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River in the east and Wakefield Street in the south. Currently it is in Western Ward, but perceptually quite different from most of the rest of that ward, being a flat area on the valley floor and east of SH2.

As noted in Section 7, Alicetown and Melling have close functional connections to central Lower Hutt particularly, but also to a wider City area, in terms of the location of work and shopping, and also residents' use of community and recreational facilities and services. In addition, these areas have a particular connection to central Lower Hutt in relation to Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River, with both sides

⁴ In addition to houses on the south side of Whites Line West, the area includes Richmond Grove, Fuller Grove, part of Saubrey Grove, and Trevethick Grove.

of the river having a common interest in building community resilience against the risk of flooding, rather than the river being used as a ward boundary between the these areas.

The Panel considered this option had merits and agreed to consider it further as part of a wider option (see option 5 below).

Option 4: 5 general wards with a combined Western and Central ward

This option arose as a consequence of option 3, which resulted in neither Western Ward nor Central Ward complying with the +/-10% rule, following the moving of Alicetown and Melling.

While the current Western Ward does have functional connections with Central Ward, in terms of location of work, shopping, secondary schools and the use of facilities and services, the Panel considered the Western Hills suburbs have a common identity, common features and inter-connections which warrants this area being recognised as a separate ward.

Accordingly, the Panel did not pursue this option further.

Option 5: 5 general wards with extended Central and Northern wards

This option involves (see map):

- reuniting of Woburn (option 2)
- moving of Alicetown and Melling from Western Ward to Central Ward (option 3)
- expansion of Central Ward to include Fairfield, all of Waterloo and all of Waiwhetu
- expansion of Northern Ward to include Avalon and Naenae
- the consequential disestablishment of the current Eastern Ward

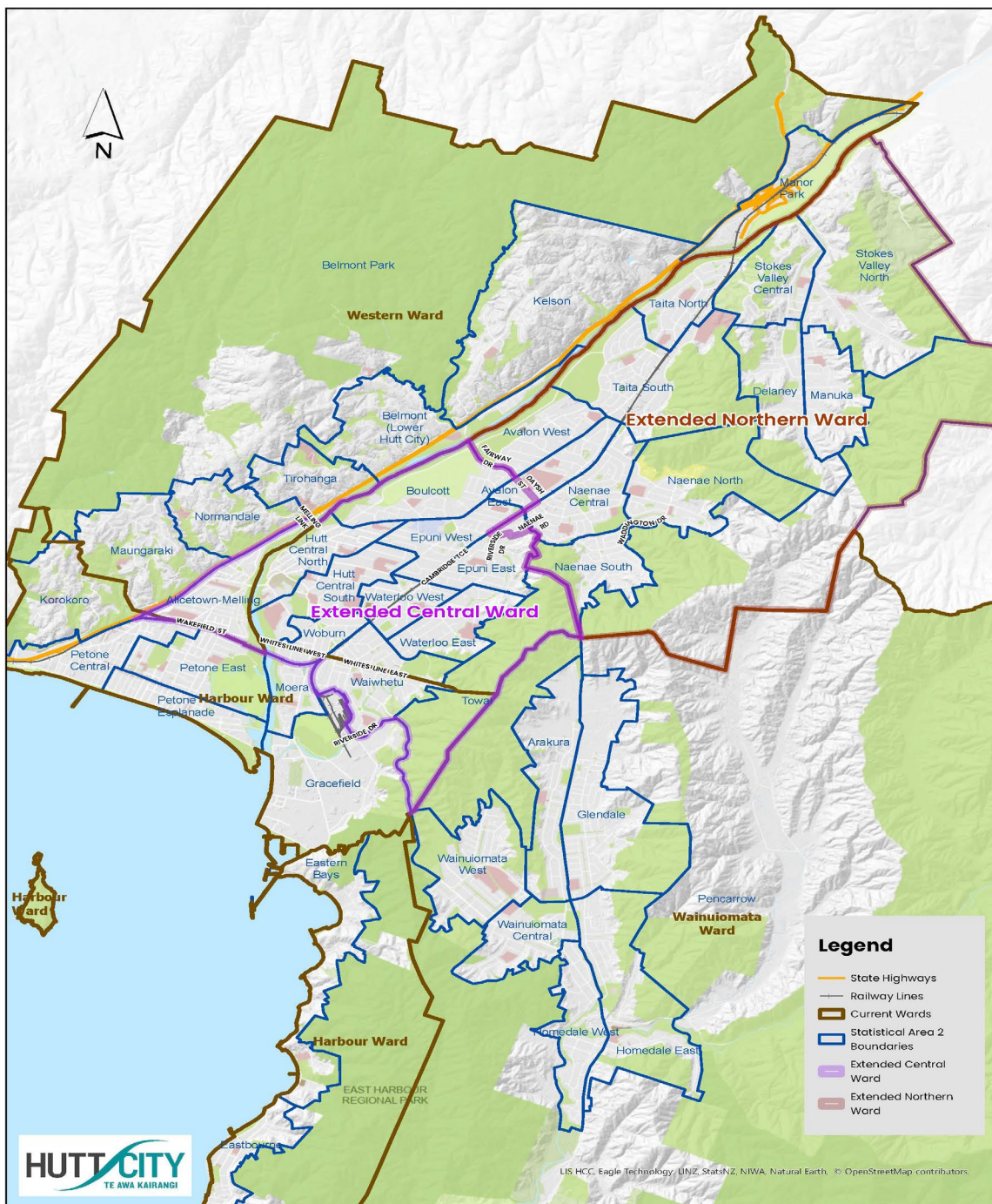
Under this option, both the expanded Central and Northern wards would elect two councillors, resulting in compliance with the +/-10% rule.

In addition to the features of options 2 and 3 identified above, option 5 has features relating to the perspectives of perceived, functional and political communities of interest as follows:

- an expanded Central Ward:
 - recognises residents of a wide central area of the City have a stronger identification with Lower Hutt as a whole, than with a local area
 - ensures Waiwhetu is not split between wards
 - reflects the connections of a wider area with the central business district, in terms of location of work, shopping, secondary schools, recreational and sporting facilities, and also the central library as a community hub (there are no other hubs in this wider central area)
 - ensures both Mana Whenua marae are in the same ward
- an expanded Northern Ward:
 - recognises commonalities in demographics and socio-economic characteristics across a wider northern area of the City
 - recognises interconnections across a wider northern area of the City, including Naenae College and Naenae Intermediate located in Avalon suburb, and residents use of recreation and sports facilities such as Walter Nash Centre, Fraser Park, Taita netball courts and the redeveloped Naenae swimming pool
 - with two councillors, acknowledges and responds to issues in the northern area of the City, identified in various surveys, in terms of lower levels of resident engagement and satisfaction with services provided by the Council
 - provides opportunity for two councillors to build connections with and between the three neighbourhood hubs (Stokes Valley, Taita, Naenae) in the expanded ward

- subject to minor variations in order for ward boundaries to follow meshblocks in accordance with the LEA, this option results in all suburbs being incorporated within one particular ward and not split between wards, as is the case in some instances currently
- two councillors in each of the extended wards allows them to work together, as and when appropriate, for the benefit of their wards, to cover each other in their work and share workloads, and to allow them to 'specialise' to some degree on particular issues, if they wish
- the expanded Central and Northern wards in this option result in a more distinctive ward boundary at Fairway Drive compared to the current ward boundary down the middle of Percy Cameron Street (Fairway Drive also coincides with a Parliamentary boundary).

Recommended Option 5 Map



Option 6: 4 general wards with expanded Central and Northern wards and a combined Wainuiomata/Harbour ward

This option incorporates option 5 and also involves the combining of the current Wainuiomata and Harbour wards.

In addition to the features of option 5, this option recognises some commonalities in demographics and socio-economic characteristics of Wainuiomata with some parts of the Petone community.

Given its location, this option recognises the fact Wainuiomata residents must leave the area either through Petone or central Lower Hutt, for any destination. There are some other functional connections between Wainuiomata and Petone relating to the location of work, shopping and access to particular facilities and services.

This option arose in part as a result of the current Wainuiomata Ward not complying with the +/- 10% rule in option 5 (see table below). However, in order to get reasonably close compliance with the rule for all wards, a further councillor, i.e. a total of 8 ward councillors, would be required.

The Panel did not pursue this option further partly for this reason, but primarily because it considers Wainuiomata is a clearly distinct community of interest, warranting its own designated ward representation.

Conclusion

The Panel agreed that option 2 had merit and noted it was also included in option 5. On this basis and for the reasons set out above, the Panel concluded that **option 5 providing for five general wards, best met the requirement for effective representation for all identified local communities of interest in the City.**

c) The number of Māori wards and number of Māori ward councillors

The Panel met with both Mana Whenua and Mātāwaka to discuss representation arrangements generally in the City, and also the Māori wards issue more specifically. As a result of this engagement, we found there is a preference for *one* Māori ward, rather than dividing the City into two or more Māori wards, reflecting the fact Māori in Lower Hutt are spread across the City.

Mana Whenua proposed that the one Māori ward be called Mana Kairangi ki tai. Given the views received, the Panel agreed **there should be one Māori ward called Mana Kairangi ki tai.**

In relation to the number of councillors that might be elected from one Māori ward, the Panel noted that in terms of the formula set out in Schedule 1A of the LEA, the total number of councillors would have to increase to 14 in order for there to be a second Māori ward councillor, and to 23 in order for there to be a third Māori ward councillor. The application of the LEA formula in Lower Hutt is set out in **Appendix 6.**

Based on the community feedback received and also comparative numbers of councillors elsewhere in the country, the Panel does not recommend increasing the number of councillors to 14 in order to allow for a second Māori ward councillor. This is supported by Mana Whenua.

This led to the Panel concluding that **the current number of councillors of 12 was “about right”, subject to this being tested against the +/-10% fair representation rule.**

d) Fair representation for individuals

As previously noted, fair representation for individuals is determined by applying the +/-10% fair representation rule.

The rule applies between multiple general wards and between multiple Māori wards. It does not apply between general wards and Māori wards taken together. Given the Panel's view there should be only one Māori ward, it only needed to apply the rule between proposed multiple general wards.

The level of compliance with the +/-10% rule, firstly in respect of current ward arrangements in Lower Hutt, is set out in the table below (using the most recent data on the general electoral population for the City provided by Statistics NZ).

The table shows the variance of each ward representation ratio from the average for the City as a whole. The Panel notes that the current Northern and Harbour wards do not comply when there is a Māori ward.

Current ward arrangements

Ward	General electoral population	Crs	Population per councillor	Difference from average	% difference from average
Northern	14,750	1	14,750	-2,133	-12.63%
Central	17,500	1	17,500	+617	+3.65%
Eastern	16,700	1	16,700	-183	-1.08%
Western	16,750	1	16,750	-133	-0.79%
Harbour	19,000	1	19,000	+2,117	+12.54%
Wainuiomata	16,600	1	16,600	-283	-1.68%
TOTAL	101,300	6	16,883		

The Panel then considered compliance with the +/-10% rule against both options 2 and 5 identified above, when allowing for there to be one Māori ward. This is set out in the following two tables.

The Panel notes that, with option 5 providing for two councillors each in expanded Northern and Central wards, the total number of ward councillors increases from the current six to seven. This addresses the non-compliance with the +/-10% rule of the current Northern Ward under current arrangements and also in option 2 taken alone. However, the Panel notes that under option 5, Wainuiomata Ward (+14.71%) does not comply.

Option 2: 6 general wards and reunited Woburn

Ward	General electoral population	Crs	Population per councillor	Difference from average	% difference from average
Northern	14,750	1	14,750	-2,133	-12.63%
Central	17,940	1	17,940	+1,057	+6.26%
Eastern	16,700	1	16,700	-183	-1.08%
Western	16,750	1	16,750	-133	-0.79%
Harbour	18,560	1	18,560	+1,677	+9.93%
Wainuiomata	16,600	1	16,600	-283	-1.68%
TOTAL	101,300	6	16,883		

Option 5: 5 general wards with expanded Central and Northern wards

Ward	General electoral population	Crs	Population per councillor	Difference from average	% difference from average
Northern	27,470	2	13,735	-736	-5.09%
Central	27,520	2	13,760	-711	-4.91%
Western	13,960	1	13,960	-511	-3.53%
Harbour	15,700	1	15,700	+1,229	+8.49%
Wainuiomata	16,600	1	16,600	+2,129	+14.71%
TOTAL	101,300	7	14,471		

The Panel notes non-compliance with the +/-10% rule is permissible, subject to approval by the Local Government Commission. The relevant statutory criteria for non-compliance are based on the requirement for effective representation of communities of interest, with non-compliance permitted:

- in relation to isolated communities
- so as to avoid a need to divide communities of interest between wards
- so as to avoid a need to unite within a ward, communities of interest with few commonalities of interest.

The Panel is firmly of the view that Wainuiomata can be seen as a clearly distinct community of interest, perceptually, functionally and politically. While not likely to be seen by the Local Government Commission as an “isolated community”, the Panel believes a strong case for an exception to the +/-10% rule can be made. This is on the basis any attempt to alter Wainuiomata’s current ward boundaries would result either in dividing this community of interest, or uniting parts of this community with other areas with few commonalities.

e) Conclusion on achieving effective and fair representation for Lower Hutt

Achieving effective representation for the identified communities of interest of Lower Hutt relates to the appropriate number of councillors for the City and its communities of interest, and how those councillors are to be elected. Account also needs to be taken of the Council decision for there to be one or more Māori wards in the City.

At the same time, *effective* representation arrangements need to be considered in light of the requirement for *fair* representation for individuals, i.e. compliance with the +/-10% rule.

As described above, the Panel addressed these matters very carefully and considered a range of options relating to them.

The Panel concluded that the mixed system of representation should be retained for Lower Hutt and that there should be five general wards electing seven councillors, sitting alongside one Māori ward electing one Māori ward councillor.

The Panel raised the matter of having dual English/Māori names for general wards with Mana Whenua in its engagement, and received a positive response. However, in the time available after the Panel had agreed on its recommended five-ward option, it was not possible to consider this further and engage further with Mana Whenua.

As a result, the Panel concluded that the existing “Northern”, “Central”, “Western”, “Harbour” and “Wainuiomata” ward names should be retained for the purposes of the Council’s initial representation proposal. The Panel suggests that the Council engage further with Mana Whenua on this issue, with a view to it considering dual English/Māori general ward names in its final proposal.

This left the number of councillors to be elected at-large. The Panel considered the option of retaining the current six councillors to be elected at-large, in addition to the seven general ward councillors and one Māori ward councillor. This would give a total of 14 councillors.

Based on the points made above in relation to 12 councillors being “about right”, the Panel considered the options of either five or four councillors being elected at-large. The Panel concluded, on balance, that five at-large councillors was appropriate, noting that the one Māori ward councillor was also effectively an at-large councillor.

f) Recommendations

The Panel recommends:

- a) **Hutt City Council comprise a mayor and 13 councillors**
- b) **councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation as follows:**
 - i. **5 councillors elected at-large**
 - ii. **7 councillors elected from five general wards**
 - iii. **1 councillor elected from one Māori ward, with this ward called Mana Kairangi ki tai**
- c) **there be five general wards as follows:**
 - i. **a new expanded “Northern Ward” covering Stokes Valley, Taita, Naenae and Avalon, electing two councillors**
 - ii. **a new expanded “Central Ward” covering Boulcott, Epuni, Fairfield, Waterloo, Hutt Central, Alicetown, Melling, Woburn and Waiwhetu, electing two councillors**
 - iii. **a slightly smaller “Western Ward” covering Manor Park, Belmont Park, Kelson, Belmont, Tirohanga, Normandale and Maungaraki, electing one councillor**
 - iv. **a slightly smaller “Harbour Ward” covering Korokoro, Petone, Moera, Gracefield, Eastern Bays and Eastbourne, electing one councillor**
 - v. **an unchanged “Wainuiomata Ward”, electing one councillor.**

9. Effective and fair representation and the community boards option

In addition to determining effective and fair representation at the council level, the Panel noted the requirement to also consider effective and fair representation in relation to the option of having community boards. This requirement applies whether or not community boards currently exist in the area.

Specifically, the LEA provides that consideration in relation to the community boards option, is required “in light of the principle” in the Act of fair and effective representation for individuals and communities.

Fair representation for individuals, addressed in terms of the +/-10% rule, applies only in respect of subdivisions of community board areas for electoral purposes. It does not apply *between* community boards. That is, community boards can be different sizes, with different numbers of members. In the case of Lower Hutt, Eastbourne Community Board currently has five elected members and the Petone and Wainuiomata boards both currently have six elected members.

Effective representation for communities is closely related to the representation of communities of interest considered at the council level. Reinforcing this connection between effective representation at the council and community levels, the Panel noted that the considerations relating to effective representation, set out in the LEA, include that ward boundaries and community boundaries coincide “as far as practicable”.

To address the community boards option for Lower Hutt, the Panel sets out in this section:

- current community board arrangements in Lower Hutt
- findings in relation to community awareness and understanding of these arrangements
- community board members’ views
- information and discussion relating to the community board role
- options to be considered
- conclusion and recommendation relating to community boards in Lower Hutt.

a) Current community boards arrangements

As described earlier in this report, the Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata community boards were established in 1989 for these three communities, when they were amalgamated with the old Lower Hutt City. Previously these communities had their own councils, and community boards were seen as some compensation for the loss of their independence.

Community boards were a new structure in 1989, to be elected three-yearly, at the same time as their parent council, with a role prescribed by legislation (see below).

As for the elected members of councils, community board members are paid at a level set by the Remuneration Authority, based on population. This cost, along with other community board expenses and any discretionary funding, is funded from budgets agreed by the parent council.

b) Community awareness and views on community boards

As outlined in Section 6, the Panel found from its engagement process that there are widely varying levels of understanding about community boards and their role in the community. Responses to the online survey ranged from little or no understanding, to some level of understanding. Only 17% of

respondents said they were “very familiar” with the concept of community boards, a further 51% said they were “somewhat familiar”, and 32% said they were “not familiar at all”.

On further analysis, the highest level of “familiarity with community boards” was, not surprisingly, in Harbour Ward (30%), which has two community boards, while the highest level of “unfamiliarity with community boards” was in Northern Ward (70%) which has no community boards.

When the issue of community boards was raised in the Panel’s face-to-face meetings, the focus was often necessarily on explaining the role of community boards, their history and why there were community boards in some areas of the City and not in others. In line with the online survey findings, the level of understanding of community boards and their role varied according to whether people had any actual experience with community boards in their area.

Conceptually, people the Panel engaged with liked the idea of community boards, as it sounded like a mechanism that could enhance local democracy. However, when informed about the actual powers of community boards, as outlined in their “Functions and delegations 2022-2025” document, it became apparent that there was something of a mismatch between what community boards in Lower Hutt actually do, and what the community may think they do.

Equally importantly, the Panel’s engagement raised frequent questions about the equity of the current arrangements, namely there being two community boards in one ward (Petone and Eastbourne boards in Harbour Ward), one in another ward (Wainuiomata) and none in any of the other four wards.

c) Community board members’ views

Panel members met with the three community boards and received a range of responses from board members on various issues relating to current community board arrangements.

A number of board members considered that narrow delegations limited their work, and that the Council should consider this issue specifically. However, others argued that, if there were greater delegations, this would require a greater level of commitment and potentially increased workload for board members, and they believed this needed to be matched by higher levels of remuneration.

Some board members said, while they did not want greater delegations of formal decision-making responsibilities, they believed the Council should make greater use of the boards on other matters. These included, in particular, use of the boards in Council community engagement processes. They believed the Council could better facilitate community discussion, on both local and city-wide issues, by using the boards to engage with their local communities.

In summary, there was a range of views from board members as to whether the community boards should have greater responsibilities and, if so, in what areas. A number felt these responsibilities needed to be addressed and agreed between the Council and the boards. This would also help the community better understand what the community boards actually do in their community.

d) The respective roles of community boards and ward councillors

The Panel learnt from its engagement that there is also confusion between the roles of community boards and ward councillors. The latter are seen to have a clear mandate to represent the views and aspirations of their communities and residents, and to take part in the decision-making process at Council. While community boards do have a prescribed representation and advocacy role, they are seen as having less visibility, and with limited decision-making powers vis-à-vis councillors.

The Panel noted that the respective ward councillors are appointed as members of the three community boards. We were advised in relation to this, that there are varying levels of ward councillor attendance at community board meetings. This was probably a reflection of their range of commitments.

There were some different views among board members about the value of the boards having appointed members, and on the role appointed members should have on the board concerned. Some board members argued it was helpful to have a councillor present to provide updates on Council activities, while others argued that the presence of the ward councillor limited the discussion on particular local issues, given this might not reflect Council policy or even be at odds with it.

e) The community board role and how it is being performed

Section 52 of the Local Government Act 2002 sets out the role of community boards. This role can be divided into two distinct categories as follows:

- a) representing and advocating for their community; reporting to council on matters referred to them or on their own initiative; overseeing council services provided in their community; preparing an annual submission to council for expenditure in their community; communicating with organisations and special interest groups in their community
- b) undertaking other responsibilities delegated to them by council.

Community boards are able, under the Act, to carry out any of the activities in a) above, with or without direction or approval by their parent council. The responsibilities in b), however, are totally at the discretion of their parent council.

The Panel was advised that there is a widespread lack of understanding about this distinction across the country. This is at the heart of much of the confusion about the community board role and the debate about the value, or otherwise, community boards provide.

Promoting a good understanding of the community board role and encouraging and facilitating community boards in carrying out their role, sits largely with the council concerned. It is the acceptance, or otherwise, of this responsibility, that appears to be a big determinant of whether, across New Zealand, community boards are seen as effective or not.

With some notable exceptions, councils around the country appear to have made limited efforts to fully inform their community boards about their actual prescribed role, and to encourage and support them in carrying this out. Neither have many councils, again with some exceptions, resolved to delegate significant decision-making responsibilities to their community boards.

The Panel was advised that the extent of delegations of decision-making responsibilities made by Hutt City Council to its three community boards, is within the common range of quite limited delegations made by most councils across the country. These delegations include such things as the making of grants to community groups; naming rights in respect of local roads, parks and reserves; removal and planting of street trees; and the granting of leases, licences and rights-of-way relating to council property, land and reserves.

f) Options for community boards in Lower Hutt

In deciding on the appropriate options for consideration, the Panel identified both advantages and disadvantages of having community boards.

The Panel identified the following benefits of retaining community boards, while noting a number of these are *potential* benefits, subject to better understanding of the community board role and commitment by both the Council and the boards to giving full effect to that role:

- community boards can undertake delegated decision-making on particular matters closer to the people most affected
- decision-making close to the people affected, and undertaking other agreed responsibilities, may encourage greater community participation
- greater participation is also likely, given community boards generally conduct their business in a slightly less formal setting than councils
- election to a community board can provide a springboard for aspiring councillors
- a community board can provide support for the local ward councillor.

The Panel then noted that, in the absence of strong, ongoing support for community boards to give full effect to their role, community boards can be seen as:

- adding an unnecessary layer in decision-making processes, resulting in less efficient and less effective decision-making
- raising false community expectations about what the community board can do
- likely to cause confusion between the ward councillor role and the community board role
- in the case of Lower Hutt's three existing community boards, no longer necessary or justified 35 years after local government reform
- costly.

In light of the above, the Panel carefully considered the following options for community boards in Lower Hutt:

- retaining the existing three community boards in Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata
- having community boards in more wards
- having community boards in all wards.

To assess these options, the Panel considered the responses it received in its community engagement programme, together with other information and advice it received about community boards, including experience with community boards around the country.

i. Option 1: Retaining the existing three community boards

The Panel first turned its attention to the three existing community boards in Lower Hutt.

While it needs to be acknowledged that the community boards have progressed important local issues over the years, the Panel believes that the historical reasons for establishing the current boards are much less valid today.

Lower Hutt has become a more cosmopolitan city with changing demographics. Residents now have greater mobility, which results in more movement of people across the previously more fixed urban boundaries, for work, housing, recreation and leisure activities.

The political imperative in 1989 for establishing community boards reflected a great upheaval in the local government sector which no longer exists today. In addition, the Panel questions whether a community board type structure, positioned between the community and its parent council, that may have been appropriate 35 years ago, is the best approach in the 21st century.

Today, communities seek a more focused, targeted, flexible and responsive approach to addressing their concerns and aspirations. One particular example of this is the Pacific community in Lower Hutt. In its community engagement, the Panel was advised that structures such as community boards or community panels, failed to respond adequately to the specific needs and aspirations of the Pacific community.

As set out above, it appears that community boards, in both Lower Hutt and more generally across the country, have not been as effective as they could have been. This is in large measure, a result of actions, or lack of action, by parent councils over the years. This has seen, for example, very limited delegations of decision-making responsibilities to community boards, and an absence of creative uses of boards in areas such as community engagement.

The Panel does not see the current limited approaches to community board responsibilities changing in the foreseeable future.

In the Panel's view it will be difficult to resolve the current confusion of roles and responsibilities between community board members and councillors. This is on the basis that councillors, and particularly ward councillors, are likely to continue to have a more accepted mandate to represent the people in their wards, to make decisions on their behalf, and to be held accountable for their actions every three years.

Finally, notwithstanding the reasons for establishing community boards in 1989, the Panel noted the feedback it received during its community engagement programme, that it is not equitable to retain two community boards in one ward, one board in another ward, and to have no community boards in the other four wards.

The Panel was advised that successive Councils have tried alternative structures in 'non-community board' wards to address this equity issue. These have included community committees (2010-2013), community panels (2017-2019) and community funding panels (2020-2023). Members were appointed to these structures by the Council. The Panel notes that appointment by Council is seen by some as a way to ensure more diverse representation, than that which results from the traditional voting process. While to others, it may be seen as unlikely to provide an independent voice to the Council from the community, when this is necessary.

The Panel understands these structures have had mixed reviews over the years, and that they no longer exist. This may be due to factors such as the appointment process, lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, or questions about the Council's commitment to these structures.

ii. [Option 2: Establishing community boards in more wards](#)

The Panel considered the option of having community boards in more wards, beyond the current two wards, in part to address the equity issue.

In relation to the two wards currently having community boards under this option, the Panel also noted a further option of a combined community board for one of those wards, i.e. Harbour Ward, in part to address perceptions about equity relating to the location of community boards.

The Panel also noted further options of having community boards in the proposed expanded Central and Northern wards identified in this report.

While a community board could be considered for the proposed expanded Central Ward, the Panel noted that Central Ward respondents in the online engagement survey were the least supportive of having a community board for their local area. The Panel also noted advice it received that in some

areas around the country, community boards are established across the whole area *apart from* in the central city area. This reflects the close proximity of the council headquarters and its range of services for residents in the central area. In these cases a community board is seen as an unnecessary duplication.

Also in relation to its proposed five-ward model, the Panel noted the established network of residents' associations in the Western Hills suburbs. It considered this needed to be given particular consideration in relation to the option of having a community board for the proposed Western Ward.

The Panel did give some consideration to the option of a community board in its proposed expanded Northern Ward identified in this report. This was in light of the current low levels of engagement and satisfaction with council services in this area of the City. It noted there also was higher support for having a community board amongst Northern Ward respondents than in some other areas of the City, in the online engagement survey.

However, the Panel was not convinced that the case for a community board for the expanded Northern Ward in particular, or any of the other wards in its proposed five-ward model, was strong enough to outweigh the arguments, identified above under option 1, against having community boards.

iii. Option 3: Establishing community boards in all wards

Similarly, the Panel was of the view that arguments for having community boards in all five wards under its five-ward model, were not strong enough to outweigh the arguments against having community boards set out in option 1.

g) Conclusion in relation to community boards in Lower Hutt

At one level, there is a degree of support for community boards in the City. In relation to the three options identified for its community engagement, 48% of online survey respondents thought there should be community boards across the City, 25% thought there should be no community boards, and 16% thought community boards should be limited to the current three areas (Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata).

These findings need to be considered, however, in the context of the generally poor understanding of both the formal role of community boards, and also what they currently do.

The Panel also reflected on a view that establishing formal structures like community boards positioned between the community and the Council is not likely to be effective in the 21st century. This is on the basis of the changing nature of the community's interests, needs and aspirations, and also the clear obligation on the Council to inform, consult, represent and make decisions on behalf of those communities.

The Panel carefully considered the arguments for and against retention of the current community boards, including the possible expansion of these boards, and their related advantages and disadvantages. It concluded, on balance, there should be no community boards in Lower Hutt.

h) Recommendation

The Panel recommends that **there be no community boards in Lower Hutt and the three existing community boards be disestablished.**

10. 'Building a better bridge to the community'

a) Reflections from the Panel's community engagement

The Panel used a range of community engagement strategies to ensure its analysis and recommendations were informed by the diversity of voices and experiences of Lower Hutt residents.

As noted in Section 5, the Panel first adopted a set of principles to guide its community engagement and it identified particular communities and groups in its tailored engagement programme. A Panel member, with personal experience of, or close association with, a particular community, was given primary responsibility for initiating contact with that community or group. Other Panel members supported and contributed to the planned engagement, by attending and actively participating in the discussions.

The Panel's engagements revealed that certain communities face significant challenges in having their voices heard by the City's decision-makers. Many do not know who their councillors are, and there is a lack of awareness of councillor roles and responsibilities. Also, many people advised that there does not appear to be a clear, visible pathway for communities to approach and engage with the Council on matters that are of interest or importance to them.

Unlike Members of Parliament who have offices in the community, councillors were described as being "less visible". The vast majority of members of the communities the Panel engaged with had no idea how to reach and connect with councillors, and were generally not aware of the issues the Council sought feedback on through its consultation.

The Panel heard suggestions that the ward councillor could have a base in the local neighbourhood hub. This reflected the strong community support the Panel heard for these hubs in its engagement. It was further suggested the hubs could be used to better promote the work of Council and the elected members more generally.

Given the changing demographics of Lower Hutt, the Panel sees it as very important to recognise the diversity of the City's communities and their aspirations for 'having a voice' on decisions that matter to those communities.

As a result of its engagements, the Panel considers there is an urgent need to build familiarity and understanding of the work of the Council and of the elected members within these communities. This can be achieved through a refreshing of the Council's community engagement approach. This will result in, among other things, greater awareness of the City's representation arrangements and more assurance for the Council that in future representation reviews, those arrangements are providing fair and effective representation.

The Panel acknowledges that the Council spends considerable resources on engaging with communities in order to get feedback on issues critical to the City. This engagement often takes the form of surveys, consultation documents, use of social media, invitations to consultation meetings and so on. The Panel heard that while such engagement channels may work for some, they do not necessarily suit all. Improved community engagement will become increasingly important in future, given the changing face of the Lower Hutt community, and will need to take into account those who find it difficult to engage using current traditional channels.

These issues often mean the Council is not able to fully access or tap into the potential and experience that exists in these communities to assist the Council meet its responsibilities. In turn,

this often results in misalignment between community needs and the Council's plans. Over time this can lead to disenchantment and disillusionment with the Council and local government more generally, and to a sense that 'we don't count'.

The Panel is of the view that a more targeted approach to engaging with communities that traditionally have not engaged with the Council, will lead to better understanding of the Council's roles, functions and duties, along with councillor responsibilities. It will also help to create two-way communication that will benefit both the Council and the communities it represents. In addition, it would make representation issues more meaningful for those communities which have had limited engagement on such issues in the past.

b) Recommendations for a focused approach to engagement

The Panel concludes that a more focused approach to community engagement by Hutt City Council is needed to take into account the changing face of Lower Hutt and the growing diversity, expectations and needs of its communities, many of which have traditionally been under-represented.

Drawing on its experiences in undertaking this review, the Panel has identified a set of principles that it believes will better connect the Council with local communities:

- **negotiating** access to communities through those with 'lived experience' of that community
- **engaging** at 'their place', resulting in an increased level of comfort and safety, and at a time that best suits the community
- **ensuring** discussions are facilitated jointly with a local community member, to allow for a wider range of community participation
- **communicating** information from the Council to communities in their own language, if appropriate, so as to improve reach and access. (Most of the ethnic and migrant communities have regular newsletters or social media contact with their communities, and they have offered to translate summaries of Council information into their own language when necessary.)

The advantage that such an approach offers is that it builds genuine engagement channels and trust between the Council and the community, and it identifies gaps or misalignments between Council aspirations and community needs.

From Panel members' experience, engagement is not always suited to a '9am to 5pm Monday-Friday' approach, and that 'information overload' through passive social media platforms, is not particularly effective. The Panel considers a more proactive approach is needed.

The Panel believes it would be timely for the Council to consider building a stronger, more fit-for-purpose 'bridge', as a way to better engage with communities whose voices are often not heard at Council. Engaging with these communities requires a different approach, and the Panel recommends the Council considers the following initiatives:

i. Identifying community agents

The Panel found that there are a number of community leaders who are willing to act as 'agents' of their community, to help facilitate dialogue and discussions with the Council as needed. These agents could also serve as 'knowledge hubs' to assist the Council with its work such as in its long-term plan discussions. They could also provide a two-way channel, taking information to the community and bringing information back to Council decision-makers.

ii. Introducing portfolio responsibilities for councillors

In order to ensure that the new approach is effective, the Council could consider adopting a portfolio approach to engagement with identified communities. A councillor with a particular portfolio responsibility would lift the status of the engagement with that community, and would be seen as the contact person for the community concerned. The portfolio holder could oversee an engagement plan developed by Council officers, establish relationships with the community agents, meet with that community, say on a 6-monthly basis, and report to the Council on emerging issues.

Communities that could benefit from a councillor portfolio approach include ethnic and migrant communities, Pacific people, youth, disabled people and the rainbow community. A portfolio approach could also be considered for the business community.

iii. Establishing a work programme

In order to implement this engagement approach, a number of pre-conditions would need to be met, including:

- identifying community agents from across different communities
- creating and maintaining a database of community agents, managed by a Council officer/s
- developing a work programme, overseen by the councillor with portfolio responsibility, and designed to actively engage and enable communication with community agents at key points in the year, which would include face-to-face meetings with the relevant councillor on a regular six-monthly basis
- establishing bases for councillors at the neighbourhood hubs and using these hubs more to promote the activities of Council and the role of elected members
- establishing a reporting arrangement with KPIs to ensure that feedback loops are in place to allow for information flows to the Council and back to the community.

iv. Approach for disabled people

In addition to the approach above, the Panel's meeting with disabled people identified a number of other arrangements that would assist this growing demographic to engage with matters critical to them and their wellbeing.

These other arrangements could include the establishment of a disabled people's reference group to advise on access issues generally across the City, and to identify a Council officer who would be the contact point for disabled people to access Council information and resources.

v. Funding

The Panel recognises that a new engagement approach, similar to that outlined, will require resourcing if it is to be successful. We also are acutely aware that all councils are facing increased cost pressures and are fiscally constrained at the present time. We therefore suggest that some of the funding that is currently allocated to community boards, be re-allocated to implement this engagement approach.

vi. Conclusion

The approach outlined here is focused on engagement with communities who are not engaged with the Council. The approach has not been discussed with the wider population, though we believe the general principles will still apply. Low voter turnout, and low responses to Council surveys and consultation activities, demonstrate that civic participation is low amongst all groups. Given this, the Panel's more focused approach to community engagement is likely to better serve the needs of the Council and to enable it to harness the knowledge and wisdom that rests in the population.

Appendix 1: Independent Panel members and terms of reference

Paul Swain (Panel Chair)

Paul has extensive local and central government experience having served as a Councillor on the Greater Wellington Regional Council, as a Member of Parliament representing the Hutt Valley, and as a Cabinet Minister. He has chaired Government inquiries, reviews, boards and committees. As a former Chief Crown Negotiator for Treaty of Waitangi Settlements, Mr Swain is acutely aware of the importance of providing Mana Whenua with real opportunities to engage meaningfully in the decision-making process.

Ana So'otaga

Ana has a background leading local and national public policy, strategy, systems change, and equity-centred programme design and delivery. She is of Tokelau heritage and along with her family and four children has been born and raised in the Hutt Valley. Ana is well-connected to the Hutt Valley health, sports and Pacific community. She has held leadership roles at the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and Te Awa Kairangi Primary Health Organisation and is now the Strategy and Performance lead with Sport New Zealand.

Sir (Tā) John Clarke

Sir John, of Ngāti Porou and Ngapuhi descent, has over 40 years of management experience in a wide range of public sector environments including education, justice, health, housing, human rights, Crown Law, audit, social welfare, environment and heritage. He has a thorough understanding of Māori issues and wide networks within Māori communities. Sir John has played a major part in Māori-Crown relations and has been the principal cultural adviser to all Ministers of Treaty Settlements.

Meenakshi Sankar

Meenakshi is a highly experienced research and evaluation practitioner, internationally respected for her leadership in analysis and strategic thinking. Over the last 35 years, she has delivered evaluation assignments for a range of government agencies in New Zealand and multilateral agencies including UNESCO HQ and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Large-scale community engagement using participatory principles is central to her research and evaluation practice, and well demonstrated in her work for the Department of Labour, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Matt Richardson

Matt is an accomplished project manager with expertise in delivering large-scale landscape and ecological mitigation projects across New Zealand. He is passionate about Lower Hutt and brings experience in engaging with a diverse mixture of community groups, including iwi representatives, on a range of projects.

Panel adviser

Gavin Beattie was contracted as an adviser to the Panel. Gavin is a former senior adviser to the Local Government Commission and led the policy development for the Local Electoral Act 2001.

Panel's terms of reference: Tasks

- Identify and define communities of interest in the city
- Identify all reasonably practicable options for achieving fair and effective representation arrangements for the communities of interest in the city, including the number of councillors, the basis of election of councillors (at-large, by ward or a mix of both) and the need for community boards
- Conduct such research, enquiries or other work as considered necessary to complete this brief
- Seek preliminary community input as required
- Report to council on the representation options identified, the community feedback received, and the panel's recommended option including the reasons for this option
- Present and explain the panel's conclusions to the community as necessary
- In the event of appeals or objections against the council's final proposal, provide support to the council as appropriate
- Such other tasks as may be identified during the process

Appendix 2: Comparative council representation arrangements

The following table sets out the representation arrangements for the ten largest territorial authorities in the country by population, with the exception of Auckland which has a population far in excess of the next largest council (Christchurch) and was established with its own bespoke representation arrangements in Auckland-specific legislation.

Council	Population (2023 estimates)	No. of councillors	Population per councillor	Area (km ²)	Council size for remuneration purposes [#]	Basis of election	No. of community boards & area coverage
Christchurch	396,230	16	24,764	1,415	1	wards	6, city-wide
Wellington	216,230	15	14,415	290	2	wards*	2, partial
Hamilton	185,300	14	13,236	110	3	wards*	none
Tauranga	161,850	9	17,983	135	5	wards*	none
Dunedin	134,600	14	9,614	3,287	4	at-large	6, partial
Lower Hutt	113,950	12	9,496	376	6	mixed	3, partial
Whangarei	102,060	13	7,850	2,712	7	wards*	none
Palm. North	91,850	15	6,123	395	10	wards*	none
Hastings	91,850	15	6,123	5,226	9	wards*	1, partial
Waikato	90,270	13	6,944	4,405	13	wards*	6, partial

[#] For the purpose of determining the remuneration pool for the payment of councillors, the Remuneration Authority determines the relative size of each council and its associated responsibilities, in terms of: population, total council operating expenditure, total council assets and positioning on the social deprivation index.

* Included one or more Māori wards at the 2022 elections

Appendix 3: Resident surveys

Residents' satisfaction survey 2023

The most recent annual Lower Hutt residents' satisfaction survey, conducted in 2023 with 1,719 responses, showed that 41% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with "the ease with which you can have your say on council activities and proposals", with 21% either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 38% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

A breakdown of survey respondents by ward, showed that Harbour Ward (47%), Eastern Ward (46%) and Western Ward (44%) respondents had the highest levels of satisfaction.

Forty percent of respondents agreed that "council takes community feedback into account when making decisions, with 37% disagreeing, and 24% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Among the groups least satisfied on this last issue, were residents from Northern Ward (32%), Māori (34%), residents aged 55-64 (28%) and residents with disabilities (38%).

Quality of life survey 2022

Hutt City Council is one of nine councils that participates in the biennial Quality of Life survey conducted by NielsenIQ.⁵ Some key findings for Lower Hutt from the last survey conducted in 2022, are set out here relating to the satisfaction of residents (18 years and over) with their quality of life, including perceptions about Hutt City Council and the role it plays for their community.

The vast majority of Lower Hutt respondents (88% of the total 580 respondents) felt positively about their quality of life generally, slightly above the average for all respondents in all council areas in the survey.

In line with all respondents in all council areas, 70% of Lower Hutt respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to them that they feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood. Along with this, 51% of Lower Hutt respondents said they *did* experience a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood.

Thirty-four percent of Lower Hutt respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that their council makes decisions in the best interests of their city, with 26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that this was the case. This compares to 27% and 41% respectively, for all respondents in all council areas.

In relation to perceptions about the public's influence on council decision-making, 36% of Lower Hutt respondents saw the public as having large influence or some influence. This compares to 28% for all respondents in all council areas. On the other hand, 17% of Lower Hutt respondents saw the public as having no influence on council decision-making, compared to 27% for all respondents in all council areas.

⁵ The nine councils are: Auckland Council, Hamilton City Council, Tauranga City Council, Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, Wellington City Council, Christchurch City Council, Dunedin City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Appendix 4: Online community engagement survey

Survey details

The online survey was conducted by Public Voice in November/December 2023. It was distributed via the 'Hutt City Views' research panel and via Hutt City Council's social media team. As a result, respondents can be seen as self-selected and therefore the survey is not statistically representative of Lower Hutt City. A total of 922 responses were received with 639 (69%) from Hutt City Views and with 281 (31%) non-panel responses.

Response rates by ward were:

- Northern Ward: 69 (10%)
- Central Ward: 133 (20%)
- Eastern Ward: 122 (18%)
- Western Ward: 129 (19%)
- Harbour Ward: 133 (20%)
- Wainuiomata Ward: 92 (14%)

Response rates by gender were:

- Female: 384 (53%)
- Male: 332 (46%)

Response rates by ethnicity were:

- NZ European/European: 599 (81%)
- Maori: 82 (11%)
- Pasifika: 21 (3%)
- Asian: 31 (4%)
- Other ethnicity: 37 (5%)

Response rates by age were:

- under 18: 3 (0%)
- 18-24 years: 5 (1%)
- 25-34 years: 64 (9%)
- 35-44 years: 128 (18%)
- 45-54 years: 138 (19%)
- 55-64 years: 155 (21%)
- 65-74 years: 142 (20%)
- 75 years & over: 93 (13%)

Response rates by income were:

- \$20,000 or less: 17 (3%)
- \$20,001-\$30,000: 40 (7%)
- \$30,001-\$50,000: 56 (10%)
- \$50,001-\$70,000: 57 (10%)
- \$70,001-\$100,000: 89 (15%)
- \$100,001-\$150,000: 117 (20%)
- More than \$150,000: 206 (35%)

Survey responses

Awareness and understanding of council and its role and structures

Question 1: How many councillors are elected now to represent Lower Hutt?

Responses:

- 0-5 councillors: 10%, n=69
- 6-11 councillors: 23%, n=161
- 12 councillors: 50%, n=345
- 13-15 councillors: 15%, n=104
- 16+ councillors: 2%, n=16

Question 2: Do you know how those councillors are elected, that is, which voters can vote for which councillors?

Responses:

- yes: 76%, n=569
- no: 24%, n=164

Responses broken down by age:

	18-24yrs n=8	25-34yrs n=64	35-44yrs n=128	45-54yrs n=138	55-64yrs n=155	65-74yrs n=139	>75yrs n=92
Yes	38%	56%	71%	77%	75%	88%	91%
No	63%	44%	29%	23%	25%	12%	9%

Responses broken down by ethnicity:

	NZ European n=596	Māori n=82	Asian n=31	Pasifika n=21	Other n=36
Yes	80%	68%	71%	67%	58%
No	20%	32%	29%	33%	42%

Question 3: Please briefly describe your understanding of how councillors are elected.

Responses:

The three most common descriptions provided were:

- elections/voting (non-specific): 223, 24%
- a mix of at-large and ward: 212, 23%
- ward only: 146, 16%

Question 4: How familiar are you with the concept and role of community boards?

Responses:

- very familiar: 17%, n=130
- somewhat familiar: 51%, n=386
- not familiar at all: 32%, n=243

Responses broken down by wards:

	Northern n=68	Central n=132	Eastern n=122	Western n=129	Harbour n=68	Wainuiomata n=91
Very familiar	9%	13%	16%	16%	30%	21%
Somewhat familiar	41%	57%	48%	50%	54%	52%
Not familiar at all	50%	30%	37%	34%	16%	27%

Responses broken down by age:

	<18-34yrs n=72	35-44yrs n=127	45-54yrs n=138	55-64yrs n=154	65-74yrs n=141	>75yrs n=93
Very familiar	14%	16%	14%	19%	20%	22%
Somewhat familiar	31%	48%	59%	46%	61%	52%
Not familiar at all	56%	35%	27%	34%	19%	27%

Responses broken down by gender:

	Male n=330	Female n=383
Very familiar	25%	11%
Somewhat familiar	49%	52%
Not familiar at all	26%	37%

Residents' identification with communities

Question 5: What community do you most closely identify with?

Responses:

- 56% (n=509) of respondents said Lower Hutt as a whole
- 44% (n=406) of respondents said a more local community

Responses broken down by wards:

	Northern Ward n=69	Central Ward n=133	Eastern Ward n=122	Western Ward n=129	Harbour Ward n=131	Wainuiomata Ward n=91
Lower Hutt as a whole	52%	78%	69%	63%	21%	30%
A more local community	48%	22%	31%	37%	79%	70%

The areas most likely to identify with their local community were:

- Wainuiomata: 20%, n=79
- Petone: 14%, n=55
- Eastbourne: 12%, n=50
- Stokes Valley: 8%, n=34
- Naenae: 5%, n=21

Key themes associated with why respondents identified with particular communities were:

Social Aspects:

- The people who live in the area: 32%, n=299
- Experience with community: 23%, n=216
- Perception of residence as identity: 17%, n=153

Infrastructure and Services:

- The town centre and its services: 24%, n=224
- Access to services/facilities: 22%, n=200
- Access to public transport e.g. rail, bus: 14%, n=130

Geography/Environment:

- Its geography, such as hills, rivers, coastlines: 51%, n=466
- The community and recreational facilities: 18%, n=166
- Access to parks/reserves: 5%, n=48

Need for change to current representation arrangements

Question 6: The number of councillors:

Responses:

- is about right: 71%, n=488
- there should be more councillors: 8%, n=58
- there should be fewer councillors: 21%, n=144

Responses broken down by ethnicity:

	NZ European n=520	Māori n=70	Asian n=28	Pasifika n=18	Other n=31
Number is about right	74%	54%	79%	61%	61%
There should be more	6%	26%	18%	22%	3%
There should be fewer	20%	20%	4%	17%	35%

Responses broken down by age:

	<18-34yrs n=72	35-44yrs n=127	45-54yrs n=138	55-64yrs n=154	65-74yrs n=141	>75yrs n=93
Number is about right	67%	69%	68%	66%	75%	86%
There should be more	20%	10%	11%	7%	5%	1%
There should be fewer	13%	22%	21%	27%	19%	13%

For those who thought there should be more councillors, the main reasons are summarised as follows:

- better representation: 4%, n=39
- diversity and inclusion: 3%, n=25
- increase population/councillor ratio: 1%, n=11

For those who thought there should be fewer councillors, the main reasons are summarised as:

- more efficient: 5%, n=50
- reduce costs: 4%, n=37
- decrease population/councillor ratio: 2%, n=22

Question 7: How councillors are elected:

Responses:

Preferred method (ranked 1 – 3):

- mixed at-large/wards: 1.39
- wards only: 2.03
- at-large only: 2.21

Responses broken down by wards:

	Northern Ward n=40	Central Ward n=67	Eastern Ward n=89	Western Ward n=91	Harbour Ward n=83	Wainuiomata Ward n=63
Mixed	1.37	1.43	1.46	1.31	1.31	1.43
Wards	1.94	2.00	2.21	2.13	1.94	1.81
At-large	2.24	1.91	2.12	2.28	2.41	2.49

Reasons for preference for mixed system:

- balanced/mixed representation: 31%, n=161
- familiarity and satisfaction with current system: 4%, n=19
- accountability and accessibility: 2%, n=8

“Respondents generally appreciate the mixed representation system as it balances local interests and the needs of the city. They believe local representation is important as it allows for a better understanding of specific areas, while city-wide representation ensures decision-making considers the bigger picture. The mix of ward and at-large councillors also prevents domination by certain wards or interest groups and provides voters with more choices.”

Reasons for preference for at-large system:

- councillors should represent all residents: 3%, n=31
- fairness and equity: 3%, n=31
- principles of meritocracy: 2%, n=18

“Respondents believe the at-large system is fairer and allows for a more unified decision-making process. They argue that having councillors represent the entire city ensures that the best and most qualified individuals are elected, eliminates favouritism, and prevents the waste of resources on ward councillors. They also mention that the ward system can lead to a lack of representation and that the community should have a say in the council’s make-up. Overall, respondents believe that the at-large system promotes fairness and equality, along with democratic principles.”

“The respondents believe that having councillors represent all residents without special treatment or preference for certain areas is a fairer and more unified approach. They argue that this allows for a more diverse representation and ensures that councillors’ decisions are in the city’s best interests. The at-large system is seen as simpler, more democratic, and provides equal opportunities to have a voice in their representation.”

“Respondents say that the principle of meritocracy in local council elections should be achieved through a fairer system that represents the whole city, rather than dividing it into wards. They believe this would lead to more unified decision-making, enable the election of the best and most qualified candidates, and ensure that all citizens have a say in the council’s makeup.”

Reasons for preference for ward system

- enhanced local representation: 8%, n=69
- accountability and accessibility: 3%, n=26
- local knowledge and engagement: 2%, n= 23

“Respondents preferred ward-only representation, citing reasons such as better local knowledge, accountability, targeting of specific areas, fairer representation, and the need for councillors to live in and understand the community they represent. They argue that this system allows for better communication, representation of local issues, and a closer connection between councillors and their constituents. Respondents also criticise the at-large system for its lack of accountability, potential for unfair representation, and detachment from local communities.”

“Respondents express the importance of accountability and accessibility in local representation. They believe that councillors should be elected specifically for their local ward, as they would better understand the community’s needs and be more accountable to their constituents. They also highlight the need for fair representation across all wards and believe this system would lead to better communication and effectively address local issues.”

“Respondents believe that having local representatives in specific wards allows for better knowledge and understanding of the community’s core issues. They feel that ward-only representation is more accountable, fairer and ensures all suburbs have a choice in decision-making. This system enables councillors to be more accessible and responsive to the needs of their respective areas.”

Question 8: Do you think having a community board in your area or suburb is a good idea?

Responses:

- yes: 67%, n=403
- no: 33%, n=195

Responses broken down by ward:

	Northern Ward n=53	Central Ward n=98	Eastern Ward n=95	Western Ward n=93	Harbour Ward n=120	Wainuiomata Ward n=79
Yes	75%	43%	62%	62%	82%	82%
No	25%	57%	38%	38%	18%	18%

Question 9: What about having community boards in the city generally?

Responses:

- yes, across the entire city: 48%, n=307
- no community boards in the city: 25%, n=160
- limited to Eastbourne, Petone, Wainuiomata: 15%, n=99
- other: 12%, n=76

Responses broken down by gender:

	Male n=293	Female n=320
Across the entire city	37%	58%
No community boards	32%	18%
Limited to current 3 locations	19%	12%
Other	12%	12%

Responses broken down by ward:

	Northern Ward n=59	Central Ward n=117	Eastern Ward n=105	Western Ward n=110	Harbour Ward n=114	Wainuiomata Ward n=80
Across the entire city	61%	37%	52%	46%	46%	51%
No community boards	22%	41%	23%	26%	17%	16%
Limited to current 3 locations	3%	13%	14%	15%	23%	23%
Other	14%	9%	10%	13%	14%	10%

Reasons for community boards across the entire city

- enhanced local representation: 14%, n=128
- fairness and equitable representation: 9%, n=87
- addressing unique community needs: 2%, n=20

Enhanced local representation: “Respondents generally support the idea of community boards across the city for enhanced local representation. They believe it would ensure fairness and equality of representation, address the specific needs of each area, provide better local knowledge and connection, and allow for more local decision-making. Some respondents also highlighted the importance of grassroots involvement, better communication with council, and equitable representation for all residents. Overall, there is a desire for community boards to be accessible to all areas and cover a diverse range of issues.”

Fairness and equitable representation: “Respondents express the importance of fairness and equitable representation in community boards across the city. They believe that community boards allow local communities to be involved in decision-making and ensure that all areas are represented. Many respondents highlight the need for equal access to community boards and advocate for boards in all areas of the city.”

Addressing unique community needs: “Respondents highlight the importance of community boards in addressing unique community needs and ensuring representation. They emphasise that community boards allow locals to be more engaged with local democracy, make local decisions, and hold ward councillors accountable. Many respondents also express the need for fairness and equality in representation across the city, stating that all areas should have community boards.”

Reasons for no community boards in the city

- concerns regarding costs: 6%, n=56
- questioning effectiveness and utility: 3%, n=31
- redundancy and duplication of efforts: 3%, n=25

Concerns regarding costs: “Respondents expressed concerns about the cost associated with community boards. They view community boards as a waste of money, unnecessary, and a duplication of elected councillors' roles. Some respondents also highlight the inequality in representation, with specific areas having community boards while others do not. Overall, the sentiment is negative towards community boards and their perceived lack of effectiveness and value.”

Questioning effectiveness and utility: “Respondents questioned the effectiveness and utility of community boards, with concerns about limited powers, limited influence, duplication of work, and unequal representation. Some argue that elected councillors should adequately represent their communities without the need for additional boards. Others highlight the need for simplicity, reduced bureaucracy, and financial savings. Overall, there is a sentiment of scepticism and a call to re-evaluate the necessity of community boards.”

Redundancy and duplication of efforts: “Many feel that community boards duplicate the work of elected councillors and do not offer sufficient benefits to justify their existence. Overall, respondents believe that community boards are unnecessary and should be eliminated.”

Reasons for community boards being limited to current 3 locations

- historical context of local governance: 2%, n=22
- satisfied with status quo: 2%, n=22
- recognition of unique needs: 2%, n=20
- size and isolation of suburbs: 2%, n=18

Historical context of local government: “Respondents state that the three suburbs of Wainuiomata, Eastbourne, and Petone should have their community boards due to their distinct identities, special needs, and historical separation from the rest of Lower Hutt. They believe these boards provide fair representation and ensure that local issues are addressed effectively. Additionally, they believe that the current system is working well, and there is no need for additional boards beyond these three areas.”

Satisfied with status quo: “Respondents are satisfied with the status quo of having community boards in the three specific areas of Wainuiomata, Eastbourne, and Petone. These areas are seen as outliers and have unique needs and challenges that require separate representation. The boards are seen as working well and ensuring that the local flavour of each area is upheld.”

Size and isolation of suburbs: “Respondents state that these 3 areas (Wainuiomata, Eastbourne, and Petone) are outliers and have unique needs and characteristics. They believe having separate community boards for these areas is necessary to ensure their voices are heard and their local issues are addressed. The respondents also mention that these areas were previously independent and have historical and geographical separation from the rest of the city, which justifies their separate representation.”

Appendix 5: Community organisations and groups the Panel met

Panel members met with representatives of the following community organisations and groups:

Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce (4 October 2023)

Eastbourne Community Board (16 October 2023)

Jackson Street Programme (16 October 2023)

Seaview Business Association (17 October 2023)

Wainuiomata Community Board (26 October 2023)

Petone Community Board (6 November 2023)

Hutt Multicultural Council (15 November 2023)

Vibe (youth health & social services) (17 November 2023)

(Participation in) Refugee and Migrant Youth Forum (30 November 2023)

Sikh community (10 December)

Pacific Services leaders talanoa, Hutt Fest Trust, Pasifika Heartbeat Trust, Pacific Health Service, Pasifika annual family touch and community festival (26 January)

Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa Waiwhetu – manawhenua hui (8 February 2024)

Nepal community (8 February 2024)

Te Kakakanoa Church marae, Moera – mātāwaka hui (12 February 2024)

Chinese community (25 February 2024)

Tamil community (10 March 2024)

Youth and Changemakers representatives (11 March 2024)

Youth workshop (19 March 2024)

Naenae College Polynesian leadership (22 March)

Sacred Heart College – Big Sister Pasifika programme (22 March)

Taita community (22 March 2024)

Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley – all staff talanoa (25 March)

Stokes Valley community (25 March 2024)

Wainuiomata community (27 March 2024)

Disabled peoples' community (28 March 2024)

Pacific multi-ethnic focus group (10 April)

Te Ngakau Kahukura o Te Awakairangi – Rainbow leaders (29 April)

Appendix 6: Determining the number of Māori ward councillors

Clause 2 of Schedule 1A of the Local Electoral Act 2001 sets out a formula for determining the number of Māori ward councillors. This is determined as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Māori electoral population}}{\text{Māori electoral population} + \text{general electoral population}} \times \text{total no. of councillors}$$

The Māori electoral population (MEP) and the general electoral population (GEP) are defined in the Electoral Act 1993 for the purposes of establishing the Māori electorates for parliamentary elections. They have then been applied by the LEA for establishing Māori wards for council elections.

MEP is a calculation based on both the number of people registered on the Māori electoral roll and the number not registered, together with the proportion of Māori people under the age of 18 years.

GEP is defined as the ordinarily resident population minus the MEP.

The required calculations are done by Statistics NZ and then provided to councils.

The latest calculations for Lower Hutt show:

- MEP of 12,700
- GEP of 101,300
- Total electoral population of 114,000

Using these figures in the above formula gives:

$$\frac{12,700}{114,000} = 0.11$$

This table applies this figure to the full range in the possible number of Lower Hutt councillors.

Total no. of Crs	No. of Māori ward Crs (total no. of Crs multiplied by 0.11)	No. of Māori ward Crs rounded down or up (in accordance with clause 3 of Schedule 1A, LEA)
5	0.55	1
6	0.66	1
7	0.77	1
8	0.88	1
9	0.99	1
10	1.10	1
11	1.21	1
12	1.32	1
13	1.43	1
14	1.54	2
15	1.65	2
16	1.76	2
17	1.87	2
18	1.98	2
19	2.09	2
20	2.22	2
21	2.31	2
22	2.42	2
23	2.53	3
24	2.64	3
25	2.75	3
26	2.86	3
27	2.97	3
28	3.08	3
29	3.19	3