

# Kāpiti Coast District's Representation Review – Initial Proposal 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

## Kāpiti Coast District's Representation Review 2024 FAQs

### What is a Representation Review?

A district's representation arrangements determine the boundaries of constituencies (wards), and who can nominate and elect (vote) candidates (individuals) into what vacancy. Every Council in New Zealand must review its representation arrangements (Council governance structure) at least once every six years to ensure the arrangements in place are still fit for purpose, are fair and effective, and meet the community's expectations.

In a representation review Council can consider and change:

- The total number of councillors.
- Whether all councillors will be elected from general wards, at large (elected by all voters in the district), or from a mixture of wards and at large (districtwide).
- The names and boundaries of any wards.
- The number of councillors elected in each ward, and the number elected at large (if any).
- Representation arrangements through community boards.

The process to conduct such a review is determined by the Local Electoral Act 2001.

### Why are we running a representation review now?

Council comprehensively reviewed its representation arrangements in 2021 and is not due for another review until 2027. However, there are circumstances where a review is required earlier, such as when a Council decides to establish a Māori ward.

In November 2023, Kāpiti Coast District Council voted to establish a Māori ward. Due to an amendment in 2021 to the Local Electoral Act 2001, Council was able to make this decision without requiring a poll. The decision to establish a Māori ward means a representation review must take place this year for the new Māori ward to be in place for the 2025 local government election.

### What do the Government's changes to legislation mean for our representation review?

The Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Constituencies) Amendment Bill that reinstates a requirement for councils to hold polls at the 2025 local government elections for any Māori wards established without a poll came into effect on 30 July 2024. The Bill also requires councils to re-affirm or reverse (rescind) their decision to establish Māori wards.

At an extraordinary Council meeting on 6 August 2024, Council re-affirmed their decision to establish a Māori ward. This means continuing with our representation review to determine arrangements, including establishing the new Māori ward, for the 2025 local government elections.

### When will Council hold a poll about the Māori ward?

During the 2025 local government elections, Council will hold a poll to determine whether the Māori ward remains in place for the 2028 and 2031 local government elections. Depending on the outcome of the poll, Council may have to undertake another representation review in 2027.

### What do councillors do?

Collectively, councillors' job is to set the district's overall strategic direction, approve budgets, set rates, make bylaws, policies and plans aimed at meeting community needs.

A key part of their role is to talk to the public before making decisions. The mayor and councillors are supported in their role by five community boards which have four members each.

### What are community boards?

Community board members are elected by voters of the area they live in. Council can appoint a defined number of general ward councillors to back to a community board. Community boards work with ward councillors to represent your interests. They have 'delegated authority' for some things such as awarding local grants, but they can't vote at Council.

### What is a ward?

Wards are a way of geographically dividing the district for elections to enable communities of interest to elect representatives. In Kāpiti, we currently have:

- Four general wards represented by seven elected councillors
- Three districtwide councillors

In total this equates to ten councillors. We also have one mayor and twenty community board members.

### What are Māori wards?

A Māori ward is one way for Māori electoral roll voters, which are a defined community of interest, to be effectively represented under legislation. Instead of grouping electors by geographic location like other wards, all electors who are on the Māori electoral roll would vote in the Māori ward.

The number of Māori wards a Council can set up depends on the number of people enrolled (voters) on the Māori electoral roll in that area compared to the general electoral population of the district.

### How many Māori ward councillors will there be?

The Electoral Act 2001 sets out a formula to determine how many Māori wards may be established based on population size of the territorial authority area. This formula means our district will establish one Māori ward with one Māori ward councillor.

### Will the Māori ward councillor only represent Māori?

No. Like all councillors, Māori ward councillors swear to execute and perform their duties in the best interest of the entire Kāpiti Coast district.

### What are communities of interest?

Having fair and effective representation means removing barriers to participation, and not splitting recognised communities of interest or grouping together those which have few common interests. We also must consider things such as the size of a constituency (ward) and how accessible it is, as well as whether residents can meet with an elected representative easily.

The term 'community of interest' is not defined in the Local Electoral Act 2001 and may mean different things to different people. Overall, it is about considering the interests of groups of people within a constituency (ward); for some this is the iwi they belong to, while for others it is where they live, a community they feel part of, or where they shop or work.

### How do you ensure fair representation?

The number of councillors for each ward is based on how many people live in each geographical area and the population of the district.

When deciding ward boundaries, one thing Council needs to consider is electoral populations, calculated by Statistic NZ, to ensure fair representation of electors. To achieve fair representation, each ward councillor should represent around the same number of people within a 10% threshold (the +/- 10% rule). We can be outside this (if the Local Government Commission agrees) provided we can justify our decisions - such as the need to retain communities of interest. Effective representation is also about fair access to councillors and how they can hear from you.

### What is the current Council structure?

The Kāpiti Coast District is currently divided into four general wards, with ten elected councillors and one mayor. Three of the councillors are elected from and represent constituents (residents) across the district and seven are elected from and represent constituents from within their general wards.

- Ōtaki – 1 general ward councillor
- Waikanae – 2 general ward councillors
- Paraparaumu – 3 general ward councillors
- Paekākāriki–Raumati – 1 general ward councillor
- Districtwide – 3 districtwide councillors
- Mayor – 1 districtwide mayor

We also have five community boards, with 20 community board representatives elected from their community board constituencies (areas):

- Paekākāriki – 4 community board members
- Paraparaumu – 4 community board members
- Raumati – 4 community board members
- Waikanae – 4 community board members
- Ōtaki – 4 community board members

There is provision for a defined number of ward councillors to be appointed back to a community board within their ward.

### What is the proposed Council structure?

On 30 July, Council decided that the current structure should be largely retained and proposed the following representation arrangements for the 2025 local body elections:

- Ōtaki – 1 general ward councillor
- Waikanae – 2 general ward councillors
- Paraparaumu – 3 ward councillors
- Paekākāriki–Raumati – 1 ward councillor
- Kāpiti Coast Māori – 1 Māori ward councillor
- Districtwide – 2 districtwide councillors
- Mayor – 1 districtwide mayor

We're also proposing to retain the five community boards, with 20 community board representatives elected from their community board constituencies (areas):

- Paekākāriki – 4 Community Board members
- Paraparaumu – 4 Community Board members
- Raumati – 4 Community Board members
- Waikanae – 4 Community Board members
- Ōtaki – 4 Community Board members

There is provision for a defined number of ward councillors to be appointed back to a community board within their ward.

### What are the proposed boundary changes?

We're proposing some boundary changes which affects the ward and the community board areas some of our residents and ratepayers reside or own properties in. The proposed boundary changes are for:

- the Ōtaki and Waikanae general ward and community board boundaries at Te Horo to move it further south past Te Hapua Road, and
- the Paekākāriki-Raumati and Paraparaumu general ward and the Paekākāriki and Paraparaumu community board boundaries at Emerald Glen and Valley Road.

### What will the Māori ward boundary be?

We're proposing the Māori ward boundary encompasses the entire Kāpiti Coast District, from Ōtaki to Paekākāriki.

### Who can stand for election in a Māori ward?

To be eligible, a candidate must be a New Zealand citizen, enrolled as a Parliamentary elector anywhere in New Zealand, and nominated by two electors whose names are on the roll in the constituency the candidate is standing for.

The candidate does not have to identify as mana whenua or tangata whenua to stand for the Māori ward; however, only those on the Māori electoral roll can nominate that person and vote for the person to be elected.

Candidates cannot stand for a Māori ward and a general ward at the same time. Candidates can stand for a Māori ward and for mayor and a community board vacancy at the same time.

### Who will I vote for in the 2025 local government elections?

Everybody on the General electoral roll would vote in their general ward instead of the Māori ward. If you are on the General electoral roll you will be able to vote for:

- 1 districtwide mayor
- 2 districtwide councillors
- Your ward councillor/s
- 4 community board members in the area you live in
- 1 Greater Wellington Regional Council representative

Everybody on the Māori electoral roll would vote in the Māori ward instead of a general ward. If you are on the Māori electoral roll you will be able to vote for:

- 1 districtwide mayor
- 2 districtwide councillors
- 1 Māori ward councillors
- 4 community board members in the area you live in
- 1 Greater Wellington Regional Council representative

### Can I change which electoral roll I'm on?

People can change what roll they're on any time before three months prior to a local or national election date. Our next local government elections will be held on 11 October 2025.

Electors can switch between the general electoral roll and Māori easily due to a recent change in electoral legislation. Changing rolls can be done any time up to three months before a local or national election. Our next local government elections will be held on 11 October 2025.

### Does the Māori ward effect community boards?

Community boards act as a conduit between their local community and Council. In addition to the four elected board members, each community board has a determined number of ward councillors appointed back to the community board to ensure an effective relationship between Council and each board.

We believe that every triennium, the newly elected Council should have the ability to consider appointing both the new Māori ward councillor and a specified number of general ward councillors to community boards in a fair and equitable way while considering workload and specific skills. We've proposed to leave the current councillor to community board appointment structure in place and for the new Council to determine whether the Māori ward councillor be appointed to all or just some community boards.

### What is the name of the Māori ward?

In our early engagement, no name for the Māori ward was suggested. For the initial proposal engagement, we've called the ward Kāpiti Coast Māori however we'll be seeking feedback from mana whenua to determine the most appropriate name.

### What does this mean for our Te Whakaminenga partnership?

Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti has been in place since 1994 and is one of the longest lasting partnerships between mana whenua and local government in Aotearoa New Zealand. The relationship is highly valued by Council and mana whenua alike. The new Māori ward does not affect this partnership or how it operates; it simply adds a further dimension to Māori representation in Kāpiti.

Council's governance structure and delegations are a separate matter to Council's elected representation arrangements under the Local Electoral Act 2001 and therefore outside the scope of this representation review. Setting a governance structure and delegating responsibilities to committees and subcommittees is a decision for the Mayor and Council to make under section 41A of the Local Government Act 2002 to ensure it can make decision in an inclusive and efficient manner.

Within Council's current governance structure, mana whenua representatives have been appointed (by Council resolution) to a number of committees and subcommittees with voting rights. Mana whenua representatives represent their respective iwi and are a way of giving effect to Council's memorandum of partnership with mana whenua in Kāpiti. While Council often invites mana whenua to be present at Council meetings and sit at the table, mana whenua representation do not have voting rights at full Council meetings.

### **What will it cost to establish a Māori ward?**

Establishing a Māori ward has few direct or ongoing costs. Councillors' pay comes from a 'pool' set by the Remuneration Authority which Council decides how to distribute between Councillors.

We are proposing to replace one districtwide councillor with the new Māori ward councillor so there is no change to councillors' remuneration. But even if the representation review results in an additional Councillor, the total pool would not change. Any remuneration paid comes from rates. If there is an additional Councillor added to the governance structure following this representation review, there may be additional incidental costs such as mileage.

Community board members' pay is also set by the Remuneration Authority and an additional councillor will not impact the remuneration of community board members.

### **How much will it cost to run a poll to determine if the Māori ward remains in place for 2028 and 2031?**

The poll will cost about 20 cents per elector and would be run at the same time as the 2025 local government elections. Based on these numbers and giving flexibility for up to 45,000 electors we estimate the cost to hold a poll to determine if the Māori ward remains in place for the 2028 and 2031 local government elections to be \$9,000.

### **What is the timeline and process for the Representation Review?**

The process to follow and the milestones we need to meet for a representation review are mandated through the Local Electoral Act. To support councils, the Local Government Commission, the body that oversees representation reviews and makes final decisions if a decision made by Council is appealed or objected to, produces guidelines for councils conducting representation reviews. The timeline for this representation review can be found on our website.