

Date: Tuesday 12 October 2021 at 2.00PM
Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

To hear and consider submissions to the Representation Review Proposal

Present

The Deputy Mayor A L Jamieson (the Chairman), the District Mayor N C Volzke, Councillors G W Boyde, P S Dalziel, J M S Erwood, R W Coplestone, A K Harris, V R Jones, M McKay, W J Sandford and G M Webby.

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director Assets – Mrs V Araba (*via audio visual link*) the Director Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, two members of the media (Stratford Press, Taranaki Daily News) and three members of the public (*one via audio visual link*).

1. Welcome

The Deputy Mayor welcomed the Chief Executive, Councillors, staff, and the media.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted from the Director – Community Services – Ms K Whareaitu and submitter 7 (Rachael Rae – Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Ruanui Trust).

3. Announcements

The Director – Corporate Services noted that submission 9 – Richard Stieller had been withdrawn on Monday 4 October but the withdrawal was taken back on Friday 8 October 2021. The total submissions were now 17.

The Chairman welcomes everyone to the Policy & Services Committee meeting. It was reinforced to Councillors that the purpose of this meeting is to hear submissions on the Representation Review Proposal. Councillors were asked to hear all submissions with an open mind and restrict their question time to the submitters to points of clarification or issues pertaining to subject matter. Councillors were requested not to get into direct dialogue with submitters. Councillors may take notes whilst submitters are speaking.

1. Declarations of members interest

Elected members to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda.

2. Attendance Schedule

Attendance schedule for Policy and Services Committee meetings, including Hearings.

3. Acknowledgement of Submissions

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17 submissions were received.

Recommendations

1. THAT the submissions to the Representation Review proposal be received.
HARRIS/VOLZKE
Carried
P&S/21/150
2. THAT the submitted be advised of the outcome of their submission and notified that the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting, and subsequent meetings, are available on Council's website.
McKAY/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/21/151

Recommended Reason

So that each submission is formally received and the submitter provided with information on decisions made.

4. Submitters To Be Heard

Three submitters requested to be heard in support of their submission. Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Ruanui had submitted an apology for the meeting.

Submitters were given 5 minutes to speak and five minutes to answer questions from Elected Members.

Submission #	Name	Org	Page Number	Time
6	Mark Hooper	Taranaki Federated Farmers	27	2.05pm
<p>Points noted in the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On behalf of the organisation's farming members its focus is on encouraging strong rural representation.• Federated Farmers have been submitting on representation reviews across the country and the general concern has been the gradual eroding of rural representation with representation being focused on population which is not ideal for rural areas and the establishment of māori wards have often come at the expense of rural representation.• Farmers are presently facing regional and national compliance problems with multiple layers of consenting requirements, therefore it is important to have sufficient rural representation at a district level that will understand the complexities of these.• Federated Farmers are very happy with where Stratford District Council has landed with the preferred option retaining urban, rural and māori wards as opposed to an at large system.• Federated Farmers does not support community boards as a rural ward based approach provides better mechanisms, however if an at large system was adopted then would support community boards if it was felt the eastern community was under represented.• The only change they would like council to consider would be a 5/5 split for Urban and Rural seats. This is consistent with the objectives of encouraging a strong rural representation but understands it would breach the plus/minus 10% rule.• The land areas, rates paid and overall contribution to the district's GDP remain the same, if not greater, in the rural areas, the need for infrastructure and the large geographic spread across this district all support the need for greater rural representation, either currently or in the future.				

Questions/Points of clarification:

- Mr Hooper clarified that referencing the geographic spread was not necessarily to result in an even spread of representation or placement but would recognise the scale of the rural ward and an extra councillor would help cover this area.

8

Christopher James

32

2.25pm

Points noted in the presentation:

- He noted that during his election campaign he had made his views on māori wards clear and was against them. He felt Council had more courage than he did to have made the decision to establish a māori ward.
- At this time he had been concerned about how it would look against other seats and the power, or lack of, that māori would have in this arrangement.
- He noted his concern that if he chose to vote on the māori roll then he would get one vote plus the mayor, if he chose to vote on the general roll then he would have 6 votes plus the mayor. This is not about population or dividing voters between māori and pakeha, it is about our history and about the guidelines from the Treaty of Waitangi.
- He noted that to him the core value of the Treaty was partnership and that we should at the least view everything through a lens of partnership. This is not about a fight for power but as a way or viewing each other as two parts of something greater.
- One seat vs ten is not a partnership. It is not a healthy way to put a partnership into practice. He noted he did not think creating 4 or 6 māori seats would create partnership either and that regardless of the work today both parties have much work to do in the future.
- He suggested that introducing a number of at large seats would be as close to partnership as could be achieved today. New Plymouth has introduced a number of at large seats.
- He noted that he lives in New Plymouth but proudly says he is from Stratford. From the outside it can be viewed as a small little rural town where nothing changes and his generation often cannot wait to leave. He noted he did not feel this way. Stratford and its leaders regularly show a willingness to move forward. He urged council to continue the conversation with iwi regarding the decision made today.
- He noted he had been scared of the conversations himself and saying his truth, but realised he still had decolonising of his own to do. His words have brought him shame every day and he hoped by coming today he had given council food for thought on partnership as leaders of the community. Our home is not our home by chance, there is history here and council is playing its part in ensuring the future is better than the past. Be proud of what you have achieved together.

Questions/Points of clarification:

- Mr James clarified that he saw the addition of new at large seats to come at the expense of rural or urban seats and felt council would be more suited to make the decision on how many at large seats were appropriate than himself.

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

McKAY/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/21/152

- ~~2. THAT the submissions to the Representation Review Initial Proposal 2021 are considered, and to amend, if elected members think appropriate, the initial representation arrangements and make a final resolution on each of the following:~~

- ~~• Whether to retain the Rural Ward, Urban Ward, and Māori Ward (and the proposed names, and number of councillors that will represent each) as per the Initial Proposal.~~
- ~~• Whether the boundaries proposed for the Rural Ward and Urban Wards be updated as per the Initial Proposal.~~
- ~~• Whether or not one or more 'at large' seats are introduced (in response to some submissions supporting this).~~
- ~~• The total number of councillors is increased to 11 plus the Mayor as per the Initial Proposal.~~
- ~~• No community boards be established.~~

- ~~3. THAT public notice of the Final Proposal is made by 31 October 2021, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 19N of the Local Electoral Act 2001.~~

Recommended Reason

To comply with legislative obligations under the Local Electoral Act 2001 for representation arrangements for the 2022 and 2025 local elections.

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- This is the point where the final proposal is made for representation in the next two elections after taking into account the feedback received.
- Once this has been done then the final will be put out to public notice.
- It was noted that nothing new could be added that was not in the initial proposal or was unrelated to a submission as that would give grounds for objections.
- It was noted that 8 of the submissions (including the tabled one) were disagreeing with the establishment of a māori ward.
- The majority of the submissions were in favour of the proposal with slight objections to elements such as three being in favour for at large seats and Federated Farmers suggesting a 5/5 split for the urban/rural ward which would mean Stratford District Council would be in breach of the plus/minus 10% rule.

Whether to retain the Rural Ward, Urban Ward, and Māori Ward (and the proposed names, and number of councillors that will represent each) as per the Initial Proposal.

- Councillor Dalziel noted his view had not changed from the last discussion. Stratford is a small district with one town, three villages and under 10,000 people 80% of which live within 20kms of this building. There is a strong interdependence between the farming community and urban and all councillors work for the benefit of the district. He noted he had not witnessed any divide between urban and rural wards. Most councils in this country don't have a rural/urban split. He noted that first and foremost farming is an industry and that New Plymouth did not have an industrial ward. Inglewood is not dissimilar to us and New Plymouth are proposing that one person will represent that area which will be made up of urban, rural and lifestyle with a community board of four people which would have no decision making ability. He proposed scrapping the wards and having one district plus the māori ward.
- Councillor McKay noted she had not changed her initial views and believed council should be looking at some at large seats. She felt if you could give people more opportunities to vote through either urban, rural, māori and at large seats then it would attract more voters and people have more of a say

on who represents them on the council. We want to attract more voters and this will be a good way to do it. She understood there needed to be a good balance, and that a lot of the community do like the rural and urban split and it had been said if it ain't broke don't fix it, but felt that this wouldn't be fixing it, it would be making it better. She agreed she had not seen any urban/rural split on council.

- Councillor Coplestone questioned if council realised how far east our boundary goes. He noted he knew someone who would stand for council and wouldn't under at large because no one would know who they were. He felt that it would be taking a large proportion of those who spend a lot of money and put a lot of rates back into the community but if they are not known they won't get voted for. Could have some at large seats but he felt that would be a waste. Everyone is entitled to stand for council but it just depends on how well known you are. He clarified that he meant the person he was referring to couldn't stand in at large system because they were not well-known enough but could stand under a rural component. There are a number of people out the back of the district who don't even come to town. He felt there was no advantages with at large seats whatsoever.
- Councillor Boyde noted he had received a lot of phone calls from people not wanting to put a submission in, he also walked the streets to get the views of people. He had not changed his view on the six seats for urban, four for rural and one māori seat, he felt it was fair and an equitable spread which was reiterated by 99% of those who had contacted him. He noted this topic was the most contact he had gotten from people.
- Councillor Sandford favoured the status quo. He felt it was interesting the at large suggestion only came about two or three weeks ago when two people spoke to the Taranaki Daily News, yet he noted those two people did not make a submission. There were only three submitters who wanted at large seats. The ratepayers have told us what they want through this consultation.

Recommendation

THAT council retains the Rural Ward, Urban Ward, and Māori Ward (and the proposed names, and number of councillors that will represent each) as per the Initial Proposal.

SANDFORD/BOYDE
Carried
2 against
P&S/21/153

- The District Mayor moved an amendment to remove the number of councillors from the resolution to allow for further discussion on at large seats as if the number was confirmed at this point an at large seat would be in addition to that and would make it difficult to have a legitimate discussion. *The motion was not seconded and was lost.*
- Councillor Dalziel and McKay voted against the motion.

Whether the boundaries proposed for the Rural Ward and Urban Wards be updated as per the Initial Proposal.

Recommendation

THAT and Māori Ward be added to the boundaries resolution.

VOLZKE/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/21/154

Recommendation

THAT council retains the boundaries proposed for the Rural Ward, Urban Ward and Māori Ward be updated as per the Initial Proposal.

ERWOOD/COPLESTONE
Carried
P&S/21/155

Whether or not one or more ‘at large’ seats are introduced (in response to some submissions supporting this).

- Councillor Dalziel felt there were too many councillors. He felt seven plus the māori seat plus the mayor was appropriate. There were too many members around the table and the governance board was too big. He noted big public companies run with smaller boards than this council. He was certainly in favour of at large and felt that the 40% of voters who do bother to vote would pick the best candidate and he was confident that the people from the rural areas would continue to stand. Seven effective councillors would work well for this district.
- The District Mayor noted if he was creating a design for an electoral system for this district from scratch he would have eight councillors all at large and the STV voting system but from a pragmatic approach this has not been the past or the future and he believed it was not about the personal views it was about looking at the views of the community. In this case the community has historically had a ward system divided into urban and rural, there has not been any wholesale rejection of that and no mandate to change that and add an at large seat. He noted the submission from Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Ruanui Trust requested the addition of just one at large seat and he did not understand the practicality of that as why would a candidate stand where the opportunity was for only one seat? He felt council would need significantly more than one if it was to introduce at large seats. The introduction of at large seats would also add another grouping which would provide four ways that one could be elected to council. There is already a problem in getting good numbers of people to stand in the current groups and if this was increased it could result in lower numbers throughout. He supported the rural, urban and māori wards as proposed and not to introduce at large seats.

Recommendation

THAT council does not introduce one or more ‘at large’ seats.

THAT the total number of councillors is increased to 11 plus the Mayor as per the Initial Proposal.

BOYDE/COPLESTONE
Carried
2 against
P&S/21/156

- Councillor Dalziel and McKay voted against the motion.

Recommendation

THAT no community boards be established.

SANDFORD/ERWOOD
Carried
P&S/21/157

Recommendation

THAT public notice of the Final Proposal is made by 31 October 2021, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 19N of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

BOYDE/DALZIEL
Carried
P&S/21/158

The meeting closed at 2.47pm

A L Jamieson
Chairman

Confirmed this 26th day of October 2021.

N C Volzke
District Mayor