

Informal Workshop Notes

Regional Council

- Held:** 9:30 am, Tuesday 19 March 2024,
- Venue:** Council Chambers, Regional House, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga and via Zoom (audio visual meeting)
- Chairperson:** Chairman Doug Leeder
- Deputy Chairperson:** Deputy Chairperson Jane Nees
- Present:** Cr Malcolm Campbell
Cr Stuart Crosby
Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti (via Zoom)
Cr Matemoana McDonald
Cr Kat Macmillan
Cr Ron Scott
Cr Ken Shirley
Cr Paula Thompson (via Zoom)
Cr Lyall Thurston
Cr Andrew von Dadelszen
Cr Te Taru White
Cr Kevin Winters (via Zoom)
- In Attendance:** Staff: Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive, Namouta Poutasi – General Manager Strategy & Science, Kataraina O’Brien – General Manager Strategic Engagement (via Zoom), Karen Aspey – General Manager, People & Leadership, Chris Ingle – General Manager Integrated Catchments; Steve Groom – Governance Manager, Claudia Cameron – Committee Advisor; Victoria Fergusson – Geospatial Analyst; Danni Manderson – Community Engagement Advisor (via Zoom); Reuben Gardiner – Senior Advisor Te Amorangi; Merinda Pansegrouw – Committee Advisor.
- Apologies:** Cr Te Taru White (for late arrival)

1. Purpose of the Workshop

Purpose of the workshop was for Councillors to have deliberative discussion and provide guidance to staff to enable the development of a paper for consideration at the 9 May 2024 Council meeting to adopt initial preferred options for both the Māori and General Constituencies which would go out for public consultation in June 2024.

2. Workshop Papers

2.1 Introduction to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Representation Review 2024

Presented by: Steve Groom - Governance Manager and Claudia Cameron - Committee Advisor.

Key Points - staff:

- Provided general introductory/background information regarding the process of conducting the representation review
- Highlighted key aspects/process followed/assessment criteria applied by the Options Development Team (ODT) in developing the shortlisted options
- Pointed out that due to the population distribution of the Bay of Plenty it would be highly likely that Council's final proposal would require determination by the Local Government Commission (LGC); accordingly the reasons for supporting/eliminating options would form an important record of the development of the final proposal
- Within each theme there were variations that could be made to address specific priorities/there were a variety of ways to combine elements of different themes in one option.

2.2 Options Discussion - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Representation Review 2024 (page 13)

Presented by: Steve Groom - Governance Manager; Claudia Cameron - Committee Advisor and Reuben Gardiner - Senior Advisor Te Amorangi.

Guidance Sought from Councillors

- Guidance was sought to identify the preferred options for both the Māori and General Constituencies.

Key Points - Staff:

- Provided background on the legislative basis for a review/the process/methodology followed in developing the shortlisted options.

In response to questions:

- As directed by the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA), the principle of effective representation trumped fair representation
- LEA required Council to identify a preferred option for formal consultation; however, further options could be included in the consultation process.

Consideration of Options: Māori Constituencies

Key Points - Staff:

- Pre-consultation feedback on the existing Māori constituencies (status quo) highlighted the following:
 - Splitting of iwi/hapū of Te Arawa waka
 - Splitting the headwaters and the mouth of the Rangitāiki river
- Shortlisted options presented, were developed based on this feedback:

Option 1 a - Status quo; Option 2 a - Uniting Rangitāiki river and Option 3 b - closer alignment of Te Arawa waka.

Key Points - Members:

- Thanked staff for the thorough/comprehensive report
- Based on the current representation arrangements, all Māori Constituencies were within the +/-10% rule. Since the only feedback received was that some iwi/hapū believed that they belonged somewhere else; therefore supported continuation with the status quo until further substantial feedback had been received
- Expressed the view that the three Māori Councillors should lead the discussion/steer direction regarding the way forward with Māori Constituencies
- Based on recent discussion with Tapuika Iwi Authority/Te Kapu O Waitaha, preference was for maintaining the status quo; mainly based on the ongoing relationships being built since the original designation of the boundaries. Highlighted that, irrespective of territorial authority boundaries possibly changing, tribal boundaries would always remain
- Pre-consultation with iwi/hapū ongoing (Maketū to follow next)
- Pointed out that the close working relationship between Māori Councillors had enabled them to manage matters effectively, across boundaries
- Supported the status quo, but would consider other options if there was a clear directive to identify an alternative preferred option
- In the absence of Cr White (representing Ōkurei), suggested that the Māori Constituency Councillors have further kōrero to consider a preferred option and provide feedback according.

In response to Questions:

- Original identification of the Māori Constituencies based on the principle of following territorial authority boundaries; the current number of Māori Elected Members (three) was in accordance with the formula set out in Section 6 of the BOPRC (Māori Constituency Empowering) Act 2001.

Guidance Provided:

- Supported that the three Māori councillors, following consultation with their respective constituencies, consider a preferred option and provide feedback
- Staff to present to Council on 9 May 2024 the status quo as preferred option, alongside options addressing Te Arawa waka/Rangitāiki River considerations, for Council to then identify its preferred option, based on ongoing consultation with iwi/hapū.

9:50 am - Cr White **joined** the workshop.

Comments by Cr White regarding Māori Constituencies:

- Supported the status quo/was comfortable with the current boundaries
- Was mindful that people were quite liberal about crossing boundaries/seeking services, but would always come back to the waka/whakapapa
- From an operational point of view, relationships guided support where required/would enact and apply connections with people based on whakapapa.

Consideration of Options: General Constituencies

Key Points - Staff:

- To support consideration of options for the General Constituencies, options were developed based on 'themes', namely:
 - Status quo
 - Focus on fair representation
 - Focus on effective representation
 - Focus on balancing Western Bay of Plenty (WBOP)/Tauranga
 - Focus on making Eastern Bay of Plenty (EBOP) more manageable
 - Focus on uniting WBOP and Tauranga
- Within each theme there were variations that could be made to address specific priorities/there were a variety of ways to combine elements of different themes in one option
- Physical maps of all of the options to be considered, were available for Councillors to view.

Key Points - Members: Consideration of options for the General Constituencies:

- Expressed the view that a matter that could potentially warrant further consideration would be to possibly split the WBOP into an east and west since the two areas were distinctly different
- When applying the criteria of fair representation/effective presentation/alignment with territorial authorities and communities of interest, the preferred option lend strongly towards status quo
- Option 2 e: Was not supportive of Pāpāmoa Ward moving to WBOP on the basis of Pāpāmoa having strong links to Tauranga/there were no community of interest/shared interests with WBOP
- Was not supportive of splitting Tauranga City into smaller constituencies: Tauranga City was the smallest geographically based city in New Zealand. Should not be made smaller
- Acknowledged that the current general constituencies worked well
- In assessing the options based on the maps provided, the vast size of the EBOP was noticeable. Although not meeting the population threshold, Regional Council's functional activities within the area were comprehensive (flood schemes/services to the land): This highlighted the need for a trade-off between functional activity and pure population statistics
- Was not supportive of splitting the WBOP area into two: there was a lot of communality/communities of interest (Te Puke, Katikati Ōmokoroa, all being rural/facing similar issues/transport)
- Option 2 e: Did not support adding Pāpāmoa to the WBOP; community shared more interests/stronger links with Tauranga City/being more urban; needed to protect focus on rural vs focus urban
- Tauriko West: requested confirmation regarding inclusion in either the WBOP or Tauranga City constituency following the recent boundary adjustment
- Since Tauriko West was intended to become an intensified urban area, it would naturally align better with Tauranga City rather than WBOP
- Reiterated the large area the EBOP covered, with sparse population; accordingly supported two councillors to cover the area. Splitting the EBOP into southern/eastern would not be viable based on the serious discrepancies in population numbers, therefore supportive of the status quo. Current arrangement worked well
- Noted that the data from the 2023 Census was not available as yet;

although all Councils in New Zealand undertaking a representation review in 2024 would experience the same challenge, it remained concerning as the Bay of Plenty/Western Bay has been the fastest growing area in the country over the past 6 years; Council was effectively basing its representation review on data that did not reflect reality

- Pointed out that Regional Councils' services were both rural (river and drainage), as well as urban focussed (public transport/air quality)
- Supported the status quo. Reminded that in 1989, the Rotorua constituency had four representatives. However, with population being the chief influencer, representatives were subsequently reduced from four, to three, to two. Expressed concern about the discrepancy in population numbers as Rotorua Lakes Council was estimating the Rotorua population in the region of +60 000
- Option 2 j: In terms of communities of interest, Galatea and Murupara naturally aligned themselves with Rotorua rather than the east (health services/banks/bus services)
- Option 1 a ii: Was not supportive of reducing EBOP representatives to one; the area was too big; would constitute a dereliction of duty/area covered important services/resources.

In response to Questions:

- Was mindful that population estimates were based on 2018 census data, which included adjustments for birth, deaths and migration. Acknowledged the limitations of this data set, however 2023 census data was not available from Stats NZ at the time of this review.
- Discrepancy relating to Rotorua population numbers: Data provided by the LGC for Rotorua constituency excluded Māori electorate voters.

Guidance Provided:

- For the General Constituency, was supportive of the status quo
- Requested staff to develop a paper for 9 May 2024 Council meeting, to include the status quo as the preferred option (with the relevant narrative provided), however to also include alternative options as considered (with the relevant narrative provided) for consultation
- Was not supportive of considering the suggested Ōkurei constituency name change. Noted that Ōkurei was the name of the traditional Pā.

10:15 am - the workshop closed.