

## REPORT

**TO:** Representation Review Subcommittee

**FOR:** 23 June 2021

**FROM:** Deputy Electoral Officer

**DATE:** 16 June 2021

**SUBJECT: REPRESENTATION REVIEW: OPTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION**

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## RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Representation Review Subcommittee receive the report;*
- (b) That the Subcommittee confirms the four options, with community board sub-options, as the basis for preliminary consultation with the Selwyn community.*

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the subcommittee with updated scenario options and maps which form the basis of information to take to the Selwyn community for Preliminary Consultation on the representation review process.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The Council last undertook a representation review in 2015 in preparation for the 2016 elections. Councils are required by law to review representation arrangements at least once every six years.

The process for the review is set out in the Local Electoral Act 2001. The Council must provide for effective representation of communities and their interests and fair representation of electors. Some of the factors the Council must consider include:

- Communities of interest
- Effective representation of communities of interest
- Number of elected members
- Fair representation of electors

The population of each ward, divided by the number of members to be elected by their ward, must produce a figure no more than 10% greater or smaller than the population of the district, divided by the total of elected members.

Selwyn's population has been growing rapidly in recent years. However, population growth has not occurred evenly across the district. This means the existing ward boundaries are no longer appropriate as they do not provide effective representation across the district. The current ward boundaries must be reviewed to provide for fair and effective representation.

Table 1 below shows the district population change from the last representation review until 2020 with the current +/-10% rule shown in the last column.

*Table 1: Population increase by Ward*

<b>Existing Wards</b>	<b>Population 2014</b>	<b>Population 2020</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>+/-10% Rule</b>
Ellesmere Ward	7,480	9,620	29%	<b>-24.1%</b>
Malvern Ward	8,460	9,320	10%	<b>-26.4%</b>
Selwyn Central Ward	19,450	30,640	58%	<b>20.9%</b>
Springs Ward	14,050	20,100	30%	5.8%
Total	49,440	69,680	41%	

Each ward is broken down into meshblocks and the Council is required to use the latest population data or estimate from Stats NZ. For this representation review the Council is using Stats NZ estimated meshblock data as at June 2020.

While the individual ward percentage increases have been significant, further complicating matters has been the extreme variation at meshblock level with some meshblocks increasing by 400% while others show minimal growth. The extreme growth has occurred around the district's townships and this makes it difficult to effectively gain compliance with the +/-10% rule without significant boundary changes or changes in representation.

With the changes in population, significant work has been completed to better understand which representation scenario or scenarios best provides for fair representation of electors.

Preliminary analysis has included

- workshops to review scenarios
- discussions with two other councils
- qualitative and quantitative research commissioned to canvass residents views of communities of interest, and fair and effective representation
- a workshop with the Malvern Community Board.

Over the past six months the Subcommittee has reviewed a range of scenarios presenting different mechanisms for meeting the requirements of effective representation and compliance with the +/-10% rule.

These have encompassed the full range of options from no wards (election at large) through to two, three, and four wards; and with the number of councillors ranging from seven to 11.

At its meeting of 9 June 2021, the Subcommittee confirmed it wished to proceed with four main options to take out to the community for preliminary consultation. These were:

- 4-10D – 4 wards, 10 councillors
- 4-7B – 4 wards, 7 councillors
- 3SE-10C – 3 wards (Springs/Ellesmere combined), 10 councillors
- 3SE-9C – 3 wards (Springs/Ellesmere combined), 9 councillors

All these scenarios meet the requirements of the +/- 10% rule, but must also be viewed against the Local Government Commissions points 1 to 3 relating to communities of interest and numbers of elected members.

The Subcommittee also considered a report on the role of community boards, and agreed to include options for the consideration of community boards as part of preliminary consultation.

### **3. PROPOSED CONSULTATION**

It is now proposed to conduct consultation with the Selwyn community to seek residents' views on which of these options best meet their preferences for representation and which they would prefer to see put in place for future elections (2022 and 2025).

Consultation will be undertaken through an informal preliminary consultation phase. Although preliminary consultation is not required as a statutory process, it is encouraged under the Local Government Guidelines (Ch8).

*8.4 Some local authorities undertake preliminary consultation before beginning the formal statutory representation review process, including community surveys or referenda, discussion documents, newspaper advertising, focus groups, email groups of interested citizens, and public workshops and meetings. These activities are often led or facilitated by local councillors, community boards, or other community groups. Targeted consultation may also be appropriate, including with iwi and hapu.*

*8.5 Preliminary consultation may seek views on particular representation options as well as on factors such as current communities of interest. This consultation can assist local authorities to identify issues relevant to the review process and enable them to consider a wider range of representation options when developing their formal proposal.*

Good practice (and OAG guidelines) suggest a period of four weeks is appropriate for this consultation period.

## Consultation activity

Consultation will be carried out through:

- Online engagement through the Council's YourSay platform
- Printed information and feedback forms
- Public meetings (min. one per existing ward)
- Workshop with the Malvern Community Board

Information and awareness will be provided through:

- News media articles
- Council Call articles
- Social media information
- Council website

Preliminary consultation will open on Monday 5 July and close at 5pm on Friday 30 July 2021. This preliminary consultation is non-statutory and no formal hearings are required.

Following this preliminary consultation, the Subcommittee will consider all public feedback before selecting one option as the Initial Proposal, to go out for formal consultation. The Subcommittee's recommendation will go to the full Council to formally adopt the Initial Proposal for consultation, which must be publicly notified no later than 8 September 2021. As outlined in the separate report on the timeline, consultation on the Initial Proposal would occur in September.

Following consultation on the Initial Proposal, the Council will review the public submissions, hold hearings (if required) and deliberations, and make a resolution determining its Final Proposal. This must be publicly notified within six weeks of the close of public submissions.

The Final Proposal is subject to appeal, and the Council must forward any appeals or objections to the Local Government Commission no later than 15 January 2022. The Commission will make its determination by 11 April 2022

Note this is essentially the same timetable and process as was followed in the Council's 2015 Representation Review.



Stephen Hill

**Group Manager Communication and Customers/Deputy Electoral Officer**

Appendix: Draft of Preliminary Consultation document setting out the options on which public feedback is sought.