

Have your
Say!

VOCAL ABOUT LOCAL

INITIAL PROPOSAL

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Contents

	page
What's this all about?	3
What do we have now?.....	4
What's actually proposed to change?	5
Our Initial Proposal - in detail	6
- Council Representation	
- Community Board Representation	
- Methven Community Board	
- Boundary maps	
Why did we decide on this proposal?	12
Early engagement feedback.....	14
The Representation Review process.....	15
What do we have to think about?	16
- Fair representation	
- Effective representation	
- Identifying communities of interest	
How did we get here?	18
Further information	20

This booklet includes details of the Initial Proposal (on pages 6-11) and a separate form for you to have your say, or you can go to

[ItsOurPlace.nz](https://www.itsourplace.nz)



Let us know if we've got the balance right, at [ItsOurPlace.nz](https://www.itsourplace.nz)

What's this all about?

We are required to review our representation arrangements once every six years, and the last time we did this was in 2018.

Representation reviews give the community an opportunity to consider if the existing representation arrangements are fair and effective. This means looking at the number of councillors and how they are elected, the existence of wards (and their boundaries), community boards, and Māori wards.

We are required to develop an Initial Proposal which sets out our preference for representation arrangements. You can find the full details of the Initial Proposal on pages 6-11 of this booklet. We need you to let us know if you think the proposal will provide fair and effective representation for the Ashburton District community today and in the future.



How do you want to be represented?

The easiest way to provide your feedback is online at

ItsOurPlace.nz

Feedback closes Sunday 21 July



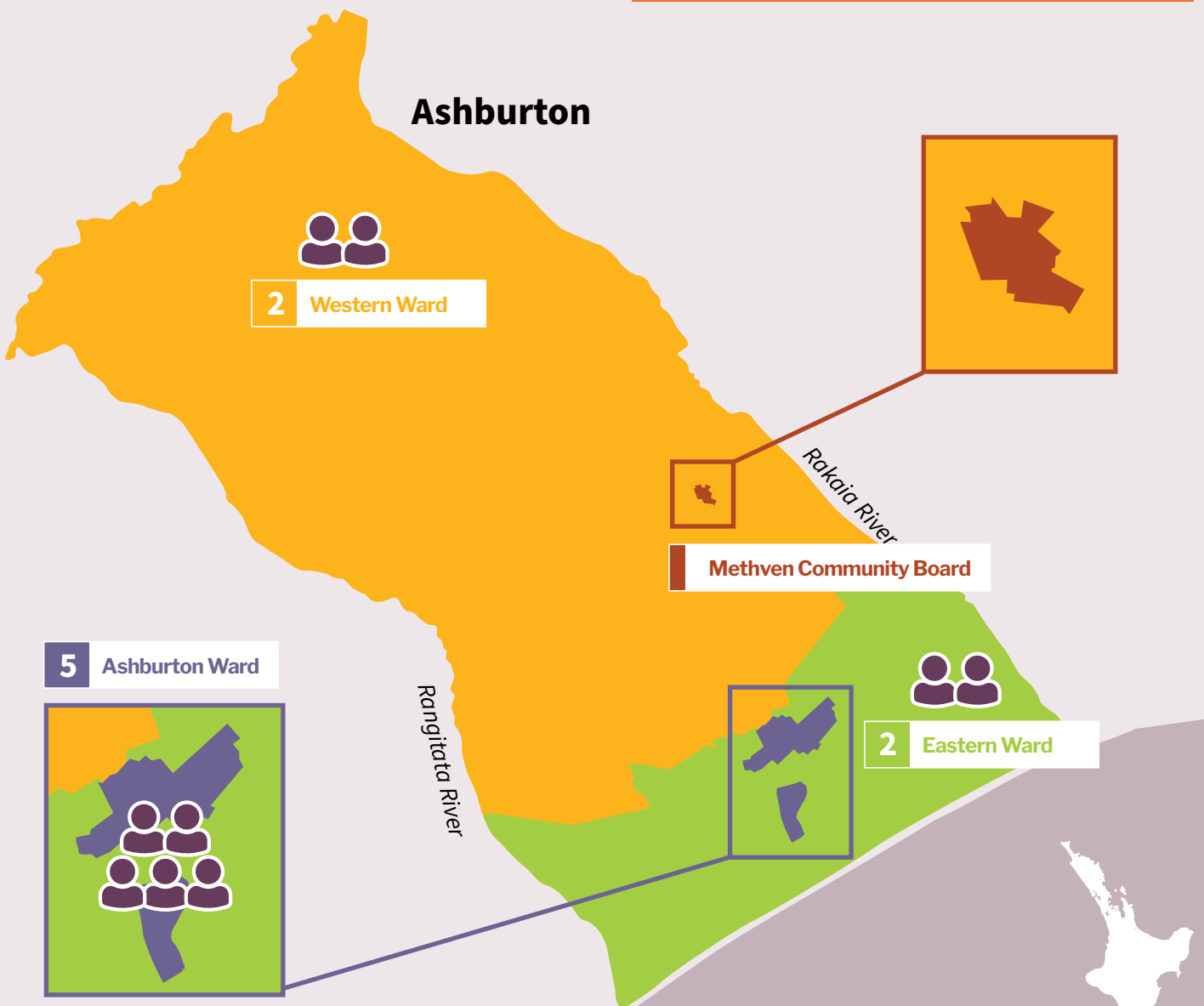
What do we have now?

In Ashburton District, our current arrangements are nine councillors elected by ward, and a Mayor elected to represent the entire district. Our three wards are called Ashburton, Eastern and Western. There are five Councillors representing the Ashburton Ward, two for Eastern and two for Western. We also have defined the Methven community as a specific 'community of interest' and they are represented by the Council and the Methven Community Board.

These arrangements have been in place since 2019. You can view our current ward boundary maps below.

Number of Councillors representing each ward

5	Ashburton Ward
2	Eastern Ward
2	Western Ward
9	Total elected councillors



You can view our current ward boundary maps in an interactive map online, by scanning the QR code.



Ashburton District

What's actually proposed to change?

There are three changes to the status quo included in this Initial Proposal. These are described below. Read the full proposal on page 7-12.

Ashburton Ward boundary (Trevors Road area)

There has been growth and development around this area. We are proposing

CHANGE 1 

to include this area in the Ashburton Ward because we believe residents in this area have a stronger community of interest with the Ashburton Ward than the Eastern Ward, and therefore should be voting for Ashburton Ward representation.

The properties in this area receive similar services and are rated in a similar way to properties in the Ashburton Ward. ***This boundary change can be seen in the maps on page 11.***

Methven Community board Boundary

The boundary for the Methven Community Board is proposed to be extended to include properties on

CHANGE 2 

the periphery of the current Methven Community Board Boundary. These properties are considered to be part of the board's community of interest and receive a benefit from the Methven Community Board. Therefore, electors within the area should have the right to be represented by the board and vote for their membership. ***This boundary change can be seen in the map on page 10.***

Methven Community Board membership

We propose to reduce the total number of Methven Community Board members from seven to six.

CHANGE 3 

The two Ashburton District Councillors who represent the Western ward would be appointed to the board, but only four members will be elected instead of five. This is because a total membership of six (including two appointed members) is considered to be fair and effective representation for a community of this size, and will promote contested elections.



Learn more and share your thoughts at

ItsOurPlace.nz

Our Initial Proposal - in detail

As part of the review process, we are required by law to adopt an Initial Proposal which sets out our preference for representation arrangements.

Our Initial Proposal contains some changes to the status quo to ensure we continue to provide effective representation for our community today and in the future. Whether you agree or do not agree, we are interested in your views on this proposal!



The easiest way to provide your feedback is online.

ItsOurPlace.nz




Initial Proposal for representation arrangements for the 2025 local elections

On 5 June 2024 the Ashburton District Council reviewed its representation arrangements, and resolved that the following proposal will apply for the Council and its community board for the elections to be held on 11 October 2025.

Council Representation

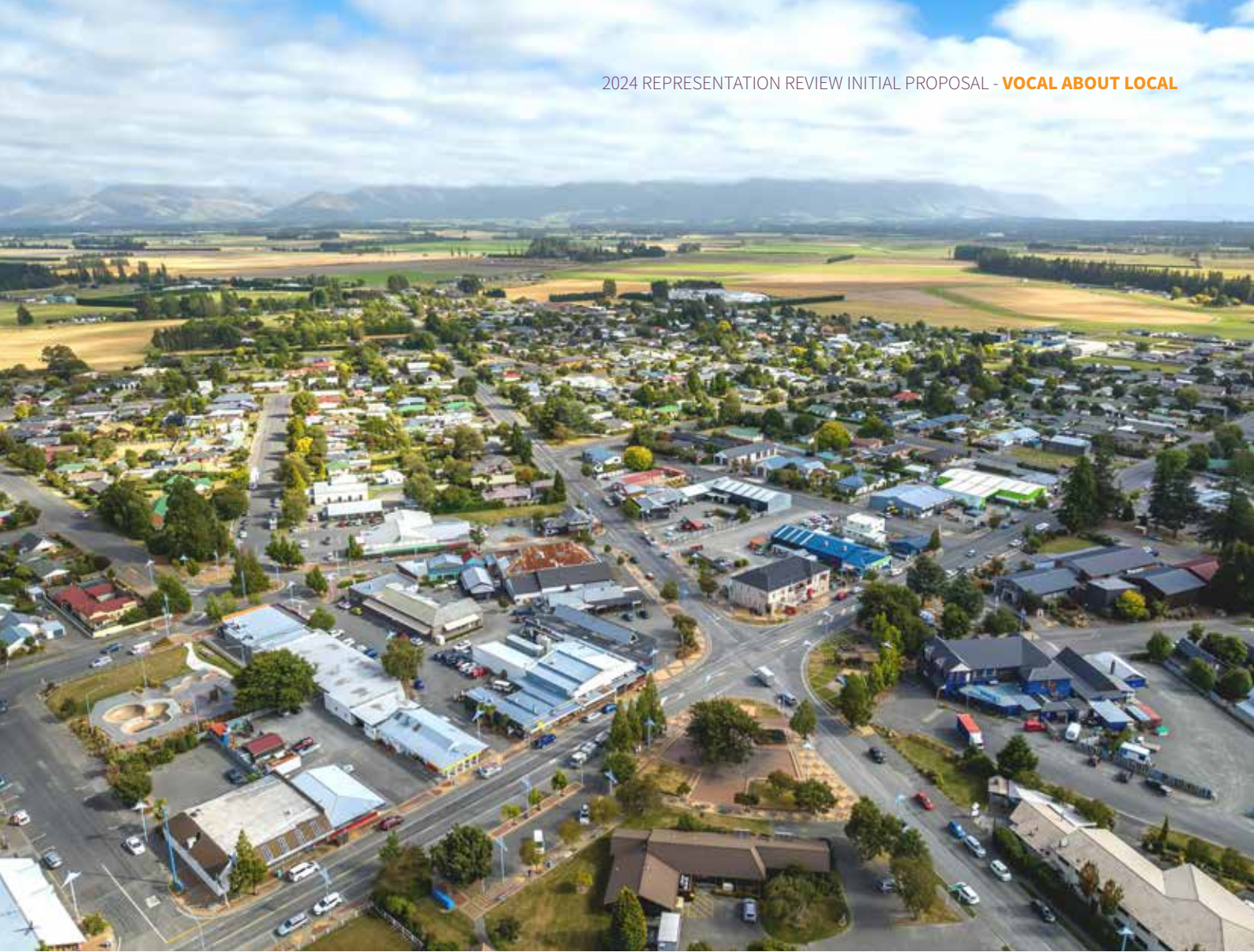
It is proposed that the Council comprise nine members elected from three wards, and the Mayor. The three wards reflect the following identified communities of interest:

Ashburton Ward	Eastern Ward	Western Ward
<p>Communities of Interest</p> <div data-bbox="140 521 416 613" style="border: 1px solid orange; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> CHANGE 1  </div> <p>The Ashburton Ward includes the commercial and urban residential area of Ashburton, as well as the residential Lake Hood area. Lake Hood residents share commonalities with Ashburton urban residents, such as a shared rate for urban amenities. The Ashburton urban area is growing and therefore the area around Trevors Road is now included in this ward to account for recent and planned future development.</p>	<p>Communities of Interest</p> <p>The Eastern Ward includes the townships of Hinds and Rakaia as well as several other rural settlements such as Chertsey and Hakatere. The Eastern Ward borders the coast and coastal areas are likely to face common issues related to services and water supply.</p>	<p>Communities of Interest</p> <p>The Western Ward includes the communities of Methven, Mount Somers and Mayfield as well as smaller rural settlements such as Staveley. These communities share commonalities given their proximity to the Southern Alps, and therefore have a similar climate and suitability for different land use. These communities are likely to face common issues related to services and water supply.</p>

The population that each member will represent is as follows:

COUNCILLORS/WARDS	POPULATION	POPULATION-MEMBER RATIO
5 Ashburton Ward	21,220	4,244
2 Eastern Ward	7,640	3,820
2 Western Ward	7,860	3,930
9 Total elected councillors	36,720	4,080

In accordance with section 19V(2), Local Electoral Act 2001 the population that each member represents must be within the range of 4,080 +/- 10% (3,672 to 4,488), unless particular community of interest considerations justify otherwise. None of the proposed wards fall outside the stipulated range.



Community Board Representation

It is proposed that the following community board be elected:

CHANGE 2

Community board	Area of Community
Methven Community Board	Covering Methven Township

The boundary for the Methven Community Board is proposed to be extended to include properties on the periphery of the current Methven Community Board boundary. These properties are considered to be part of the board’s community of interest and receive a benefit from the Community Board. Therefore, electors within the area should have the right to be represented by the board and vote for their membership.

Methven Community Board

The Methven Community Board will elect four members. It will not be subdivided for electoral purposes. The Board will have two appointed from the Western Ward.

CHANGE 3

The number of members elected to the Methven Community Board is proposed to reduce from five to four. This is because a total membership of six (including two appointed members) is considered to be fair and effective representation for a community of this size, and will promote contested elections.

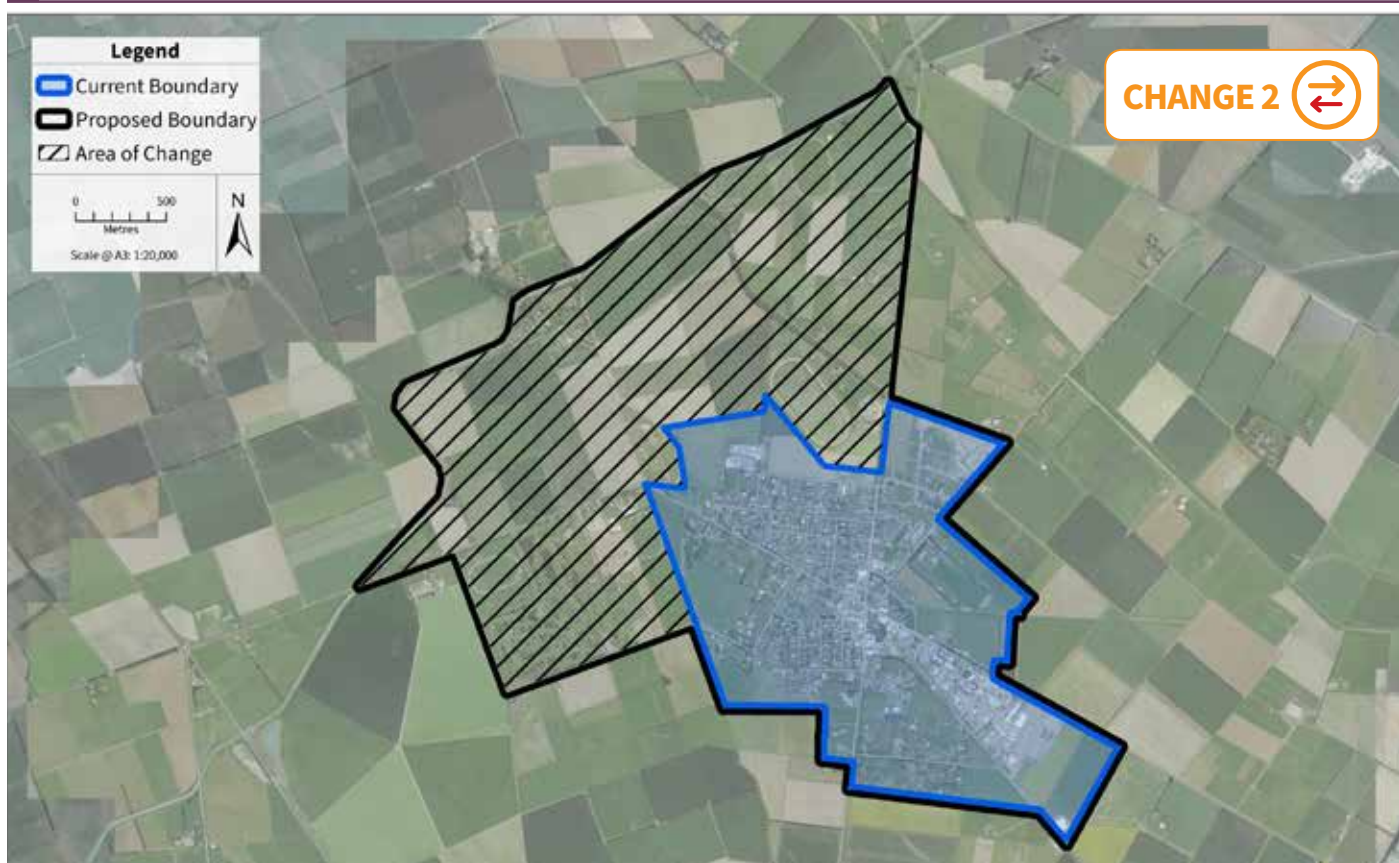
Boundary maps

Below shows maps of our proposed ward and community board boundaries.

Western Ward boundary (no changes proposed)



Methven Community Board (map proposed)



Ashburton Ward boundary (map proposed)



Eastern Ward boundary (map proposed)





Why did we decide on this proposal?

We think what we are proposing is necessary to ensure representation continues to be fair and effective.

Number of Councillors

The number of Councillors was reduced from 12 to nine in the 2018 representation review, and we think this number is working well. A majority of the respondents to our early engagement said they felt well represented by the current number of Councillors. The proposed number of Councillors per ward also still meets the population-to-member ratio requirement in the Local Electoral Act 2001.

Election system

We looked at whether councillors should be elected by ward (the status quo), at-large (where all members are elected by all voters across the district) or a combination of the two systems. We are proposing to maintain the current system where Councillors are elected by ward as we think this is working well, is supported by the community and provides for effective representation of our communities.

The three wards

Through our early engagement survey, some comments were received about the need to maintain representation for our rural areas. We believe continuing with the existing wards of Ashburton, Eastern and Western will help to provide effective representation for both our urban and rural population.

Ward names

We considered changing the names of our three wards but we feel that the current names are simple, easy to understand, and are logical as they reflect the geographical areas within the district.

Ward / Community Board boundaries:

We have identified the following changes to the communities of interest within the district. This has resulted in the following changes to our ward and community board boundaries as below.

AREA	RATIONALE
Methven Community Board	We propose to extend this boundary to include properties on the periphery of the current Methven Community Board Boundary. This is because we consider these properties to be part of the board’s community of interest and receive a benefit from the Community Board. Therefore, electors within the area should have the right to be represented by the board and vote for their membership.
Ashburton Ward - (Trevors Road area)	There has been growth and development around this area. We are proposing to include this area in the Ashburton Ward, because we believe residents in this area have a stronger community of interest with the Ashburton Ward than the Eastern Ward, and therefore should be voting for Ashburton Ward representation. The properties in this area are receiving similar services and being rated in a similar way to properties in the Ashburton Ward.

Community Board

It is proposed that one Community Board will represent the Methven area, and will be representative of the services delivered to residential and commercial areas of Methven. We believe that maintaining a Methven Community Board is appropriate, as Methven community has particular interests such as tourism, infrastructure and town development which require representation.

Because the Methven Community Board members are elected at large (not split up into subdivisions), there is no requirement to meet the population to member ratio.

We are proposing to reduce the number of members on the Methven Community Board because a total membership of six (including two appointed members) is considered to be fair and effective representation for a community of this size, and will promote contested elections.

Those residing in the area governed by the Methven Community Board are rated accordingly for this service. They are also rated for the democracy activity which applies to the whole district because they also benefit from our District Council.



Early engagement feedback

We received 56 responses in our first talks with the community on representation arrangements. The following shows the general feedback we received on the questions we asked.

72%



of respondents said they feel the community is well represented by the current number of Councillors (9)

53%



said they prefer the ward system for electing councillors (27% said at large, and 20% said a mix of both)



Respondents were generally supportive of retaining the Methven Community Board

78%



said they support the number of councillors representing each ward

82%



said they support the current ward boundaries



Feedback was mixed on the topic of Māori Representation

78%



said they support the current ward names (Ashburton, Eastern and Western)

60%



said they would not support the merging of the Eastern and Western Wards (and maintaining the Ashburton Ward)



The Representation Review process

Representation reviews must follow the process and timelines outlined in the Local Electoral Act.

This Initial Proposal presents the district's proposed representation arrangements for the next six years.

On Wednesday 7 August, submitters will have the opportunity to present their views to Council in person at the hearing, after which Councillors will consider and deliberate on all the submissions received.

Community feedback received during this consultation will be used to decide a Final Proposal. If no submissions are received, this will become our Final Proposal.

The Final Proposal will then be formally advertised for appeals/objections. Anyone who submitted on the Initial Proposal can appeal the Final Proposal. Submitters will be notified of the appeal period in writing following the adoption of the Final Proposal.

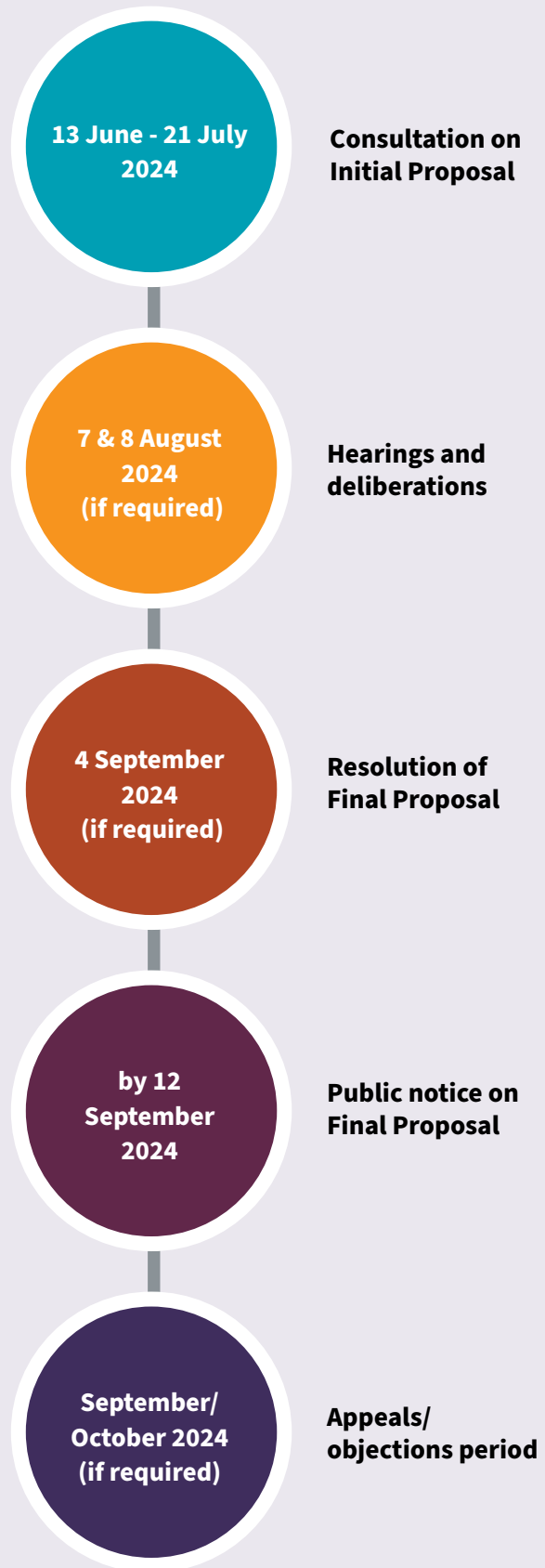
Where the Final Proposal receives no appeals/objections, that proposal will then apply until the next representation review.

If the Final Proposal receives objections or appeals, these will be referred to the Local Government Commission (LGC) and the Council will need to provide evidence for its decisions and of the process it has followed. The LGC then makes a final decision about representation for the district.



The easiest way to provide your feedback is online. Feedback closes Sunday 21 July

ItsOurPlace.nz



What do we have to think about?

We need to review our electoral arrangements in respect to:

- ✓ the number of elected members;
- ✓ whether those members are to be elected at large, or by ward, or by a combination of both;
- ✓ ward boundaries, ward names and the number of elected members for each ward; and
- ✓ whether there should be community board(s) and if so, the nature and structure of the community board(s).

When undertaking a representation review, we are required to consider fair and effective representation.

Fair representation

When reviewing representation, we have to take into account the number of residents each councillor represents. This is called a 'population-member ratio' or the "+/- 10% rule", and helps us to consider whether our proposed representation arrangements provide for fair representation.

To calculate this ratio, we take the total district population and divide it by the number of Councillors (excluding the Mayor). The number of Councillors per ward cannot be 10% higher or lower than this ratio.



MĀORI WARDS

The Local Electoral Act provides a threshold for Māori wards to be established, using a formula that considers the General Electoral and Māori Electoral populations. Currently, the Ashburton District does not meet the threshold for the establishment of a Māori ward.



Effective representation

Effective representation considers the number of councillors in relation to things like the size and geography of the area and the diversity of its people.

This includes the ease of access to your elected members and how well those elected members are able to represent the diverse range of people and interests in their area.

Identifying communities of interest

One of the goals of a representation review is to achieve effective representation, which means that wards should be based on communities of interest – that is areas that people identify with and relate to.

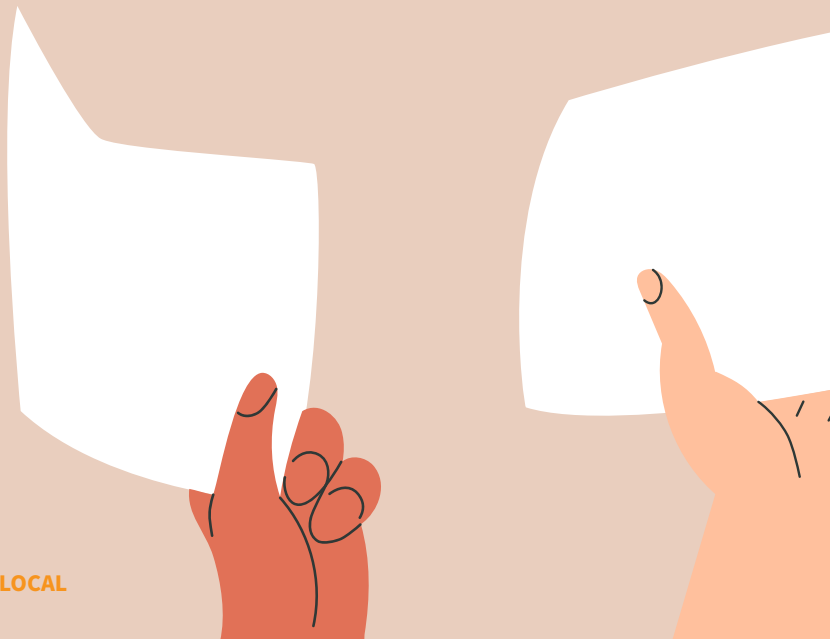
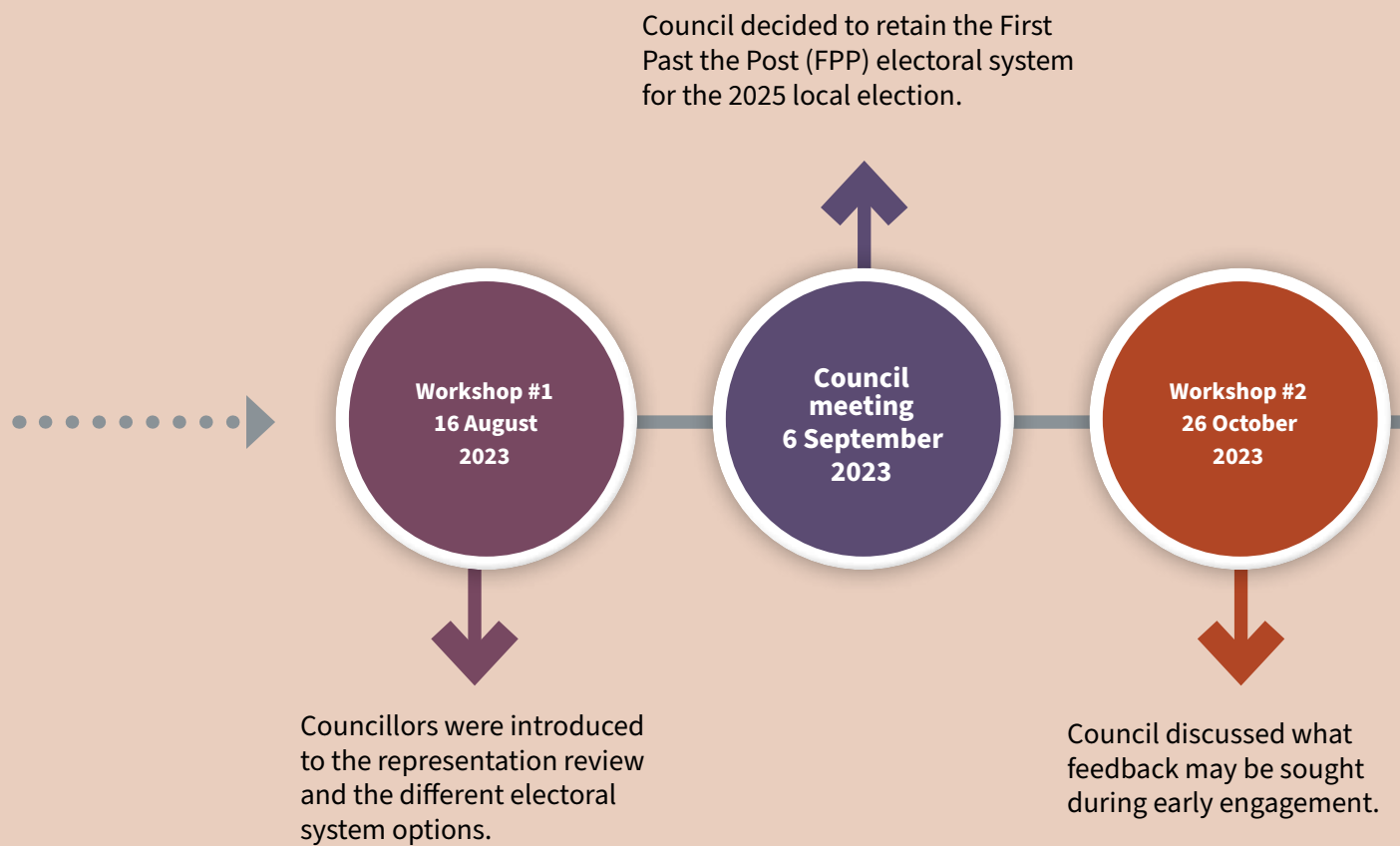
Legislation does not define what a community of interest is, but the concept includes things like:

- ✓ people feeling a collective sense of identity and belonging to the area;
- ✓ people using the same services, like schools, pools, roading networks;
- ✓ councillors being able to effectively represent the interests of the area.

We have identified a few changes to the communities of interest within the district. These changes are reflected in the new ward boundaries we are proposing, and are discussed on **page 13**.

How did we get here?

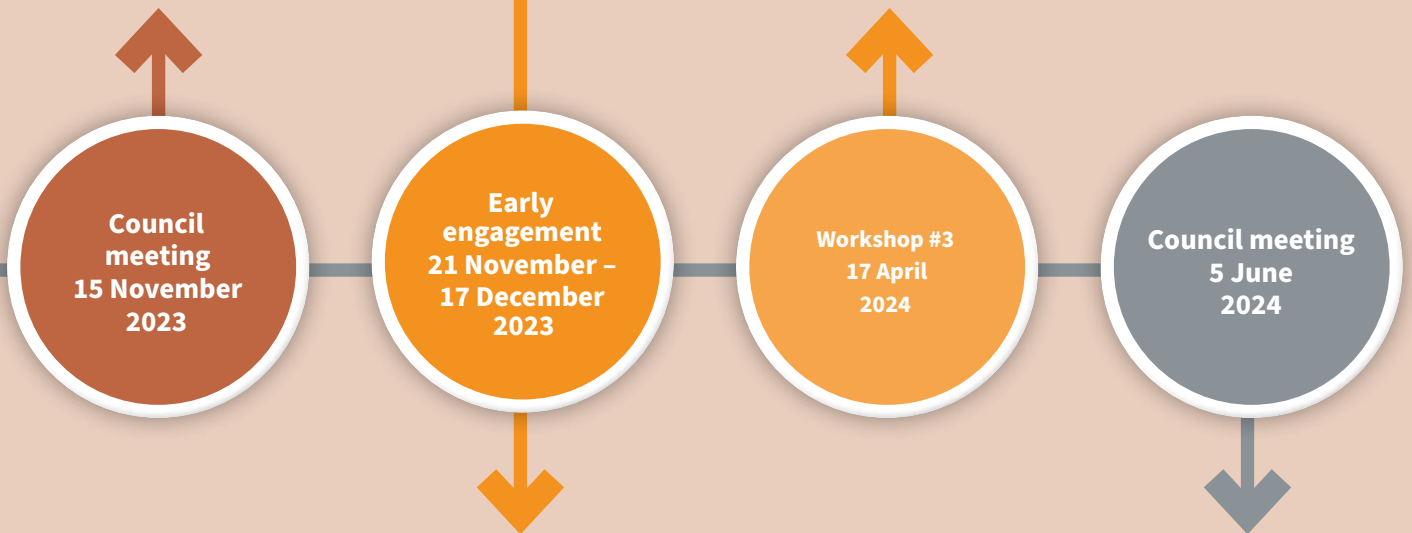
This process so far has included a few different stages, including Council workshops and meetings, and early engagement (which was undertaken in November/December 2023).



This feedback was used to help determine this Initial Proposal.

The early engagement document was approved by Council.

Early engagement feedback was considered at this workshop for inclusion within the Initial Proposal.



We asked you for your feedback on how Council is elected and how you would like to be represented.

Initial Proposal resolved by Council.



Further information

Frequently Asked Questions

What does this all mean? How do I have my say?

Our Initial Proposal is now open for submissions meaning you can have your say on whether you agree or do not agree with what we are proposing.

The easiest way to do that is to fill in the feedback form and, if you would like to, come in to present in person. Council will then consider all the submissions received and determine if any changes need to be made to the proposal.

What happens following the hearing?

Once the proposal has been updated and finalised (if required) then it will be publicly notified as a Final Proposal. If the Final Proposal does not change, those who submitted on it can appeal. If Council changes the Final Proposal, anyone can object. These appeals or objections are forwarded to the Local Government Commission, who will make the final decision on Council's arrangements.

The changes to representation arrangements will come into effect for the local body elections next year. If there are changes to your ward boundaries, this means you will be voting in line with the new boundaries in the 2025 election.

If we reduce the number of councillors, will that decrease my rates?

It may be surprising, but the number of councillors doesn't have a significant impact on rates.

Remuneration for elected members (Mayor, councillors and community board members) is

funded from district rates. However, these amounts are set by a government agency, the Remuneration Authority (RA).

In the case of Councillors, the RA set a fixed pool of funds which is divided between the number of elected members, according to a Council decision. This means if we had a greater number of councillors each would be paid less, and vice versa, but the total remuneration would not change.

Community boards are funded by a targeted rate paid by residents living within the respective board's area. This includes paying for remuneration for Board Members which is also set by the Remuneration Authority.

If we reduce the number of members on the Methven Community Board, will that decrease my rates?

A Methven Community Board targeted rate funds the Methven Community Pool, activities the board looks after as well as board members' pay. This budget is set through the LTP and reviewed annually, so may vary from year to year.

Unlike the pay for Councillors, the pay for community board members is set by the Remuneration Authority at a rate per member rather than set as a pool of money to be divided by the number of members.

The 2023/24 remuneration for a Methven Community Board member was set by the authority at \$2,888.

Reducing the number of members would mean a slightly lower amount to be rated for. The rate could also reduce if the Methven Community Board boundary is extended, as more people will be contributing to the amount needed.

? Why are you proposing to reduce the number of members on the Methven Community Board when you are also proposing to extend the boundary?

Council thinks that the Methven Community Board boundary needs to be extended to include recent growth and to cover properties that are considered to receive a benefit from the Board's activities. Council considers that the proposed total membership of six alongside the boundary extension still provides for fair and effective representation.

We also consider that a reduced number of elected positions will promote contested elections and good democracy and prevent the potential need for costly by-elections (for example, two of the last four elections have resulted in a by-election due to there not being enough candidates).

? What are the different options for electing councillors?

The Local Electoral Act provides different options for councils to elect their councillors. These include the following:

1. Wards (our current system) – where you only vote for candidates standing in your ward
2. At large (district wide) – meaning councillors are elected across the district, you are able to vote for all candidates and are not restricted to the candidates representing a ward.
3. A mixed system – where some councillors are elected at large and others through the ward system.

The Mayor is always elected through a district wide vote.

? Who represents who?

No matter what system is used to elect a councillor, councillors always represent the entire district.

? Is Council planning to have some kind of Māori representation?

While the Ashburton District does not meet the threshold for establishing a Māori ward, there are alternative options for councils to have Māori represented at a governance level - like advisory committees or other iwi partnership models. We plan to discuss these options with Manawhenua. As no Māori ward has been established, this discussion will be outside of the scope of this representation review.

? What kind of electoral system will be used for the 2025 local body elections?

In September 2023, Council decided to retain the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system for the 2025 local election.

? What do you mean by ‘fair representation’?

Fair representation requires that each elected member represents roughly the same number of people. This helps to ensure that all votes are approximately of equal value.

? What data has been used for calculating the member to population ratio (+/- 10% rule)?

For these calculations, we have used the estimated population for 2023 provided by Statistics NZ. This has been based off the 2018 Census. These were suggested by the Local Government Commission as the best statistics to use for the representation review, as the results from the 2023 Census are not yet fully available.

? What are communities of interest?

One of the goals of a representation review is to achieve ‘effective representation’, which means that wards should be based on communities of interest – that is areas that people identify with and relate to.

Legislation does not define what a community of interest is, but the concept includes things like:

- people feeling a collective sense of identity and belonging to the area;
- people using the same services, like schools, pools, roading networks;
- councillors being able to effectively represent the interests of the area.

When deciding the size of wards and their boundaries, ideally communities of interest should not be split and disparate communities of interest should not be joined together in one ward.

? What do you mean by effective representation?

Effective representation considers the number of councillors in relation to things like the size and geography of the area and the diversity of its people. This includes the ease of access to your elected members and how well those elected members are able to represent the diverse range of people and interests in their area.

? What is a community board?

Community Boards play a role in representing and advocating for the interests of their local area and make decisions on behalf of the communities they represent. They are expected to create community plans feeding in local issues and they need to advocate for the local voice.

They are neither a local authority or a committee, but they can make submissions on Council policies and decisions, and are an important part of providing information from Council back to the community.



Have your Say!

The easiest way to provide
your feedback is online.

ItsOurPlace.nz

*Share your thoughts
on our representation
arrangements for the
Ashburton District.*



Alternatively, complete the feedback form and return it by:



FREEPOST
Ashburton District Council
Freepost 230444
PO Box 94
Ashburton 7740



IN PERSON
Council reception – ground
floor of Te Whare Whakatare,
Ashburton District Council
2 Baring Square East



EMAIL
submissions@adc.govt.nz

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Representation Review 2024

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