

VOCAL ABOUT LOCAL



Have your say on how Council is elected
and how you're represented



Every three years, local elections are held across New Zealand to elect mayors, councillors and community boards.

To ensure our community has fair and effective representation, we're required under the Local Electoral Act 2001 to review the representation arrangements for the Ashburton District every six years.

This includes how many councillors we have, how they are elected and whether we have community boards. You'll find more detail about each of these topics on the following pages.

It's worth noting that there's no requirement to make changes. If our community feels well represented, we can retain our current arrangements for another six years.

We are seeking some early feedback from our community now to help Council make their decision on the draft proposal for the full consultation scheduled for next year.

Each section of this document covers a different aspect of how our community is represented by Council.

We encourage you to read through each topic and answer the questions as you go.

You can answer as many or few questions as you like, you don't have to complete every section.

Once finished, return the whole document to us (*see page 11*).

How do you want to be represented?

The easiest way to provide your feedback is online at

ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

Have your
Say!



1

What size should our council be?

Currently the Ashburton District Council consists of a mayor and nine elected councillors. During the previous Representation Review in 2018, the number of councillors was reduced from 12 to nine.

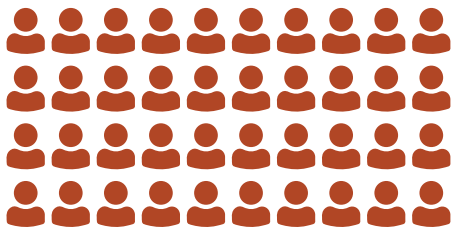
The Local Electoral Act allows councils to consist of any number of councillors between five and 29.

Our current arrangement means there is approximately one councillor for every 4,000 people in the Ashburton District.

Currently in the Ashburton District

1
Councillor

represents



approximately

4,000
people

Do you feel the community is well represented by the current number of councillors (i.e. nine councillors)?

Yes No *Please explain*



Representation and rates

It may be surprising, but the number of councillors does not have a significant impact on rates.

Remuneration for councillors is funded from district rates, however it's based on a fixed pool of funds which is set independently by a government agency, the Remuneration Authority.

This amount does not go up or down in relation to the number of councillors. Instead, the total is divided between the number of elected members. This means if we had a greater number of councillors, each would be paid less and vice versa.

Community boards are funded by a targeted rate paid by residents living within the respective board's area (see page 5). This includes paying for remuneration for Board Members which is set by the Remuneration Authority.

How should councillors be elected?

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

WARDS *(our current system)*

Where you only vote for candidates standing in your ward

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.

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.

What system of electing councillors do you prefer?

- Wards *(our current system)*
- At large *(district wide)*
- Mix of wards and at large

Comments:

3

Māori representation

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.

There are alternative options for councils to have Māori represented at a governance level, like advisory committees or other iwi partnership models. As part of the review, we'll discuss these options with Manawhenua.

Do you have any thoughts on Māori representation in the district?

4

Community boards

The Ashburton District currently has one community board – the Methven Community Board. The board contains five board members that are elected every three years and two appointed members who are the two Western Ward councillors.

The Methven Community Board (MCB) provides a coordinated voice that represents the Methven community's interests in council decision-making. Residents in the Methven Community Board area pay a fixed targeted rate per year, (\$146.20 in 2023), for the community board.

What are your thoughts on community boards in the district?



5

The current system in our district – election of councillors via wards

Our councillors are currently elected via a ward system, with the district divided into three wards as shown on the map to the right.

For communities to be ‘fairly’ represented, legislation specifies that each elected member should represent roughly the same number of people, and meet what is called the +/-10% rule (the ratio of population to elected member within a ward should not vary more than 10% when compared to the average for the whole district).

While reviewing our representation arrangements, it’s important to check that our ward boundaries are still accurate. For example, they could require adjustments to take into account town growth.

Ward boundaries can also be amended to make sure the wards accurately capture ‘communities of interest’ (see sidebar).



What are communities of interest?

One of the goals of the 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 into one ward.

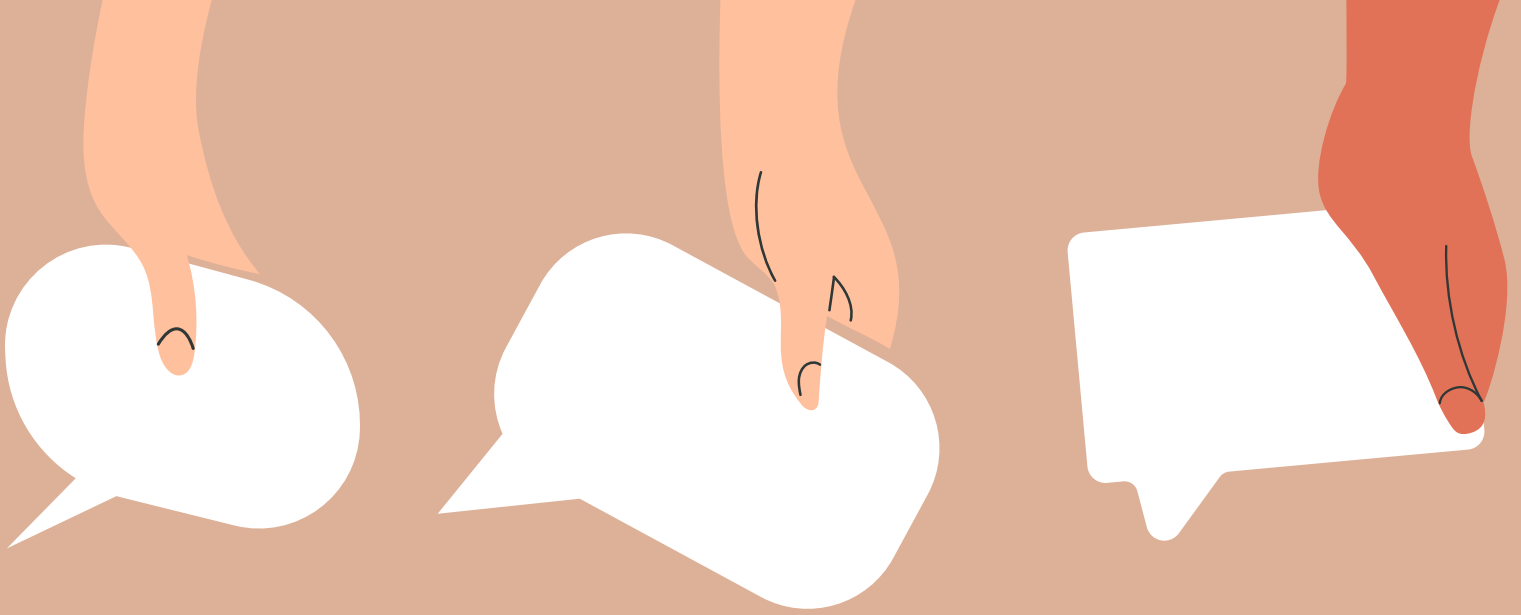
Current wards in the Ashburton District

You can view a detailed map of our current ward boundaries at ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

		Population
5	Ashburton Ward	21,200
2	Eastern Ward	7,660
2	Western Ward	7,860
Total		36,720
9		Councillors



The current distribution of council seats across the district's three wards ensures each elected member represents approximately the same number of people. The Ashburton Ward elects five councillors, while the Eastern and Western wards elect two councillors apiece.



If our district continues to retain the ward system:

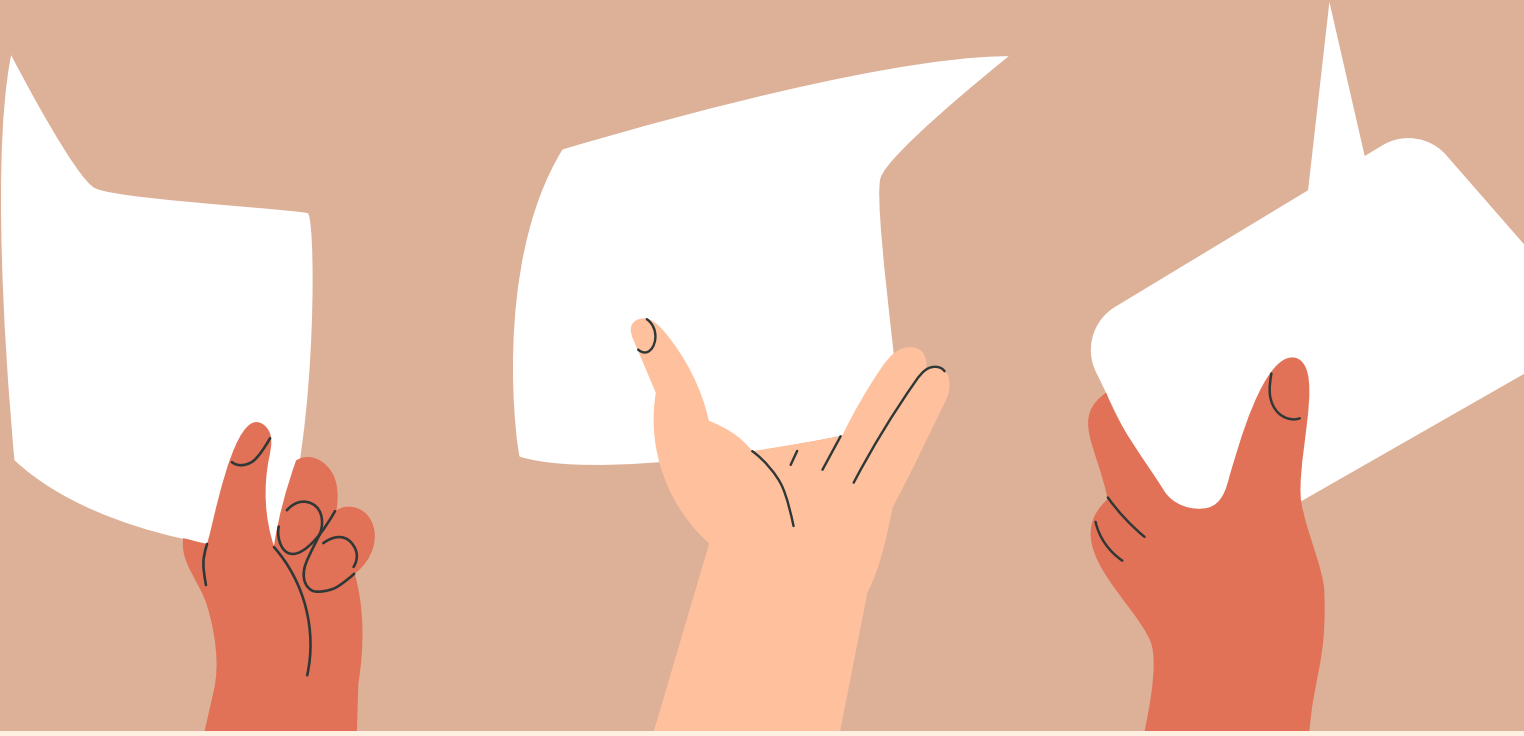
Do you support the number of councillors representing each ward?

Yes No *Please explain*

Do you support the current ward boundaries?

Yes No *Please explain*

Not enough room for your feedback? Feel free to add extra pages to your submission.



Do you support the current ward names (Ashburton, Eastern and Western ward)

Yes No *Please explain*

One option we are exploring for the Ashburton District is to merge the Eastern and Western wards into one ward and keep the Ashburton ward as is. This would mean the new ward would elect four councillors and the Ashburton ward the remaining five councillors.

Do you support merging the Eastern and Western wards and maintaining the current Ashburton ward?

Yes No *Please explain*

The Representation Review process

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

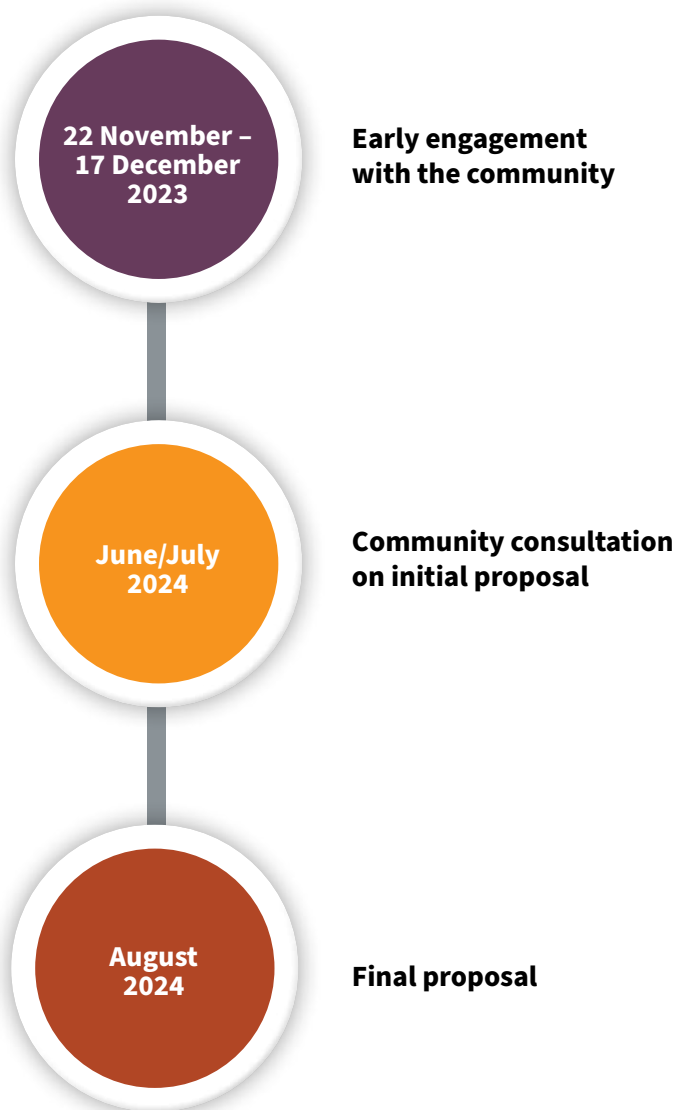
This process includes several stages, including early engagement (this document). Council will use the community's feedback during this stage to help determine an initial (draft) proposal.

The initial proposal will present the district's proposed representation arrangements for the next six years, including any changes. It will be formally consulted on in June/July 2024.

The community feedback from that consultation will be used to decide a final proposal, which is then formally advertised for appeals/objections.

Where the final proposal receives no appeals/objections, this will then apply until the next representation review.

If the final proposal receives objections or appeals, these are 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.



Electoral System

In September 2023, Council decided to retain the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system for the 2025 local election. Electors of Ashburton District Council have the right to demand a poll on the electoral system before 11 December 2023. A public notice was published on 11 September and can be viewed on the Council website.



The easiest way to provide your feedback is online.

Alternatively, provide your feedback on the attached submission form and get it back to us by:



FREEPOST TO

Ashburton District Council
Freepost 230444
PO Box 94
Ashburton 7740



IN PERSON

Dropping it off at:
Ashburton District
Council reception –
5 Baring Square West



ONLINE AT

ashburtondc/haveyoursay



EMAIL TO

submissions@adc.govt.nz

YOUR DETAILS

You have until Sunday 17 December 2023 to provide your feedback.

Name: _____

Organisation (if appropriate): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

I'd like to be emailed when the next stage of consultation opens.

Please note that submissions are public documents and will be made available on Council's website, including names of submitters (but not contact details). Find out more at ashburtondc.govt.nz/privacy

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ashburtondc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

