

Minutes of a meeting of the Representation Review Advisory Group held in the Council Chambers, 10 Gorge Road, Queenstown on Friday, 26 March 2021 beginning at 10.00am

Present:

Mr Bruce Robertson (Chair), Mr Clive Geddes, Mr John Glover, Mr Ian Hall, Professor Janine Haywood (via Zoom) and Ms Viv Millsom

In attendance:

Ms Jane Robertson (Senior Governance Advisor/Electoral Officer)

Apologies:

Mr Dean Whaanga and Mr Naell Crosby-Roe

1. Revised Timeframe for Representation Review

The Electoral Officer was now managing a by-election for one new Councillor in the Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward and there had been a review of her workload over the coming months. The result was to push the timeframe for the representation review out slightly, although the process was still well within the provisions of the Local Electoral Act. The new timetable was as follows:

1 June 2021	Advisory Group chair to present advisory group recommendation to full Council (workshop)
4 June 2021	Mayor to present advisory group recommendation to Wānaka Community Board (workshop)
30 June 2021	Council meeting: resolution adopting initial proposal
5 July 2021 – 6 August 2021	Consultation period
26 August 2021	Hearing of submissions by full Council
16 September 2021	Council meeting: resolution adopting final proposal

2. Future of Wānaka representation

There was further discussion about whether Wānaka Community Board was needed to achieve fair representation for the Wānaka Ward. Wānaka Councillors were elected to represent Wānaka, but they also had a statutory duty to represent the whole district, and members questioned whether Wānaka would be fairly represented without the Board. At the previous meeting the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Wānaka Community Board had described the way in which the Board was cut out of a number of full Council matters, with a recent example being discussions about the future of Wānaka Airport. Board members had spoken about the value of the Board but also about its inefficiency and lack of Council will to uphold the principles of the Governance Protocol Statement which described Board involvement in most decision-making.

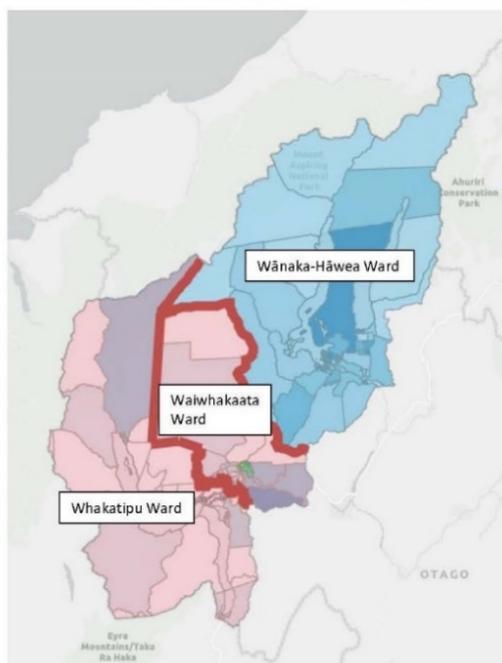
The continuation of the Wānaka Community Board also raised the question of fairness and whether there should be community boards across the district.

3. Proposal for Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward

There was further discussion of a new proposal which had been distributed prior to the meeting:

Existing Name	Suggested Name
Wānaka Ward	Wānaka-Hāwea Ward, recognising the two major lakes to which the communities are connected
Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward	West of the Shotover River: Whakatipu Ward, using Lake Whakatipu as the inspiration
Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward	East of the Shotover River: Waiwhakaata Ward, using Lake Hayes as the naming inspiration; an alternative which more loops in the Gibbston would be Waiwhakaata-Kawarau Ward to include the Kawarau River

Proposed Ward Arrangement



Ward	Population	Members	Population: member ratio	Difference from quota	% difference from quota
Whakatipu Ward	16,674	5	3,335	72	2.2%
Waiwhakaata-Kawarau Ward	9,432	3	3,144	-119	-3.6%
Wānaka-Hāwea Ward	13,044	4	3,261	-2	-0.06%
Total	39,150	12	3,263		

Methodology:

The meshblock populations for the area east of the Shotover River (including the area of the Arrowtown Ward) were assessed and together total 9,432. This was subtracted from the original population total of the ward (22,998), plus the Arrowtown Ward (3,108), giving 16,674. This would be a compliant model.

Discussion

- It was noted that the primary reason for splitting the existing Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward was to achieve population parity with the Wānaka Ward. It was also needed to avoid having a large single ward electing eight Councillors.
- There was further discussion about whether STV was a better option for this sort of proposal. Prof Haywood advised that this new proposal would work under STV or FPP. However, FPP would be a poor proposal if there was one large Queenstown Ward electing eight Councillors.
- Members considered how the population in the proposed Queenstown Wards could have better balance. It was suggested that the boundary of Waiwhakaata-Kawarau Ward be extended to include the communities down the side of the lake which shared a commonality with each other, including Kingston. It would also include Ladies Mile, the population of which was likely to grow in the future.
- The preference was for each Ward to elect four Councillors, increasing the present size of the Council by two.
- Members observed that the proposed model abolished the Arrowtown Ward but gave greater choice to that population with the option of electing four members rather than one (especially as the single member was often elected unopposed).
- Members considered the proposed new names. Members agreed that the names needed to provide a sense of place, be identifiable and understood. Whakatipu east and west would be confusing. The Remarkables were dominant down the lake edge so the name 'Kawarau' was appropriate. Members supported the proposed three Te Reo names, noting however that use of these names needed to be checked with the runanga.

4. Next steps

a. Wānaka Community Board

Members discussed whether the Wānaka community had characteristics and needs and was such a distinct community of interest that it required the additional layer of representation that the Wānaka Community Board provided. Members asserted that one of the local concerns was the lack of executive presence in Wānaka and the fact that the Council's main office was in Queenstown.

It was noted that the Board had extensive delegations but had limited effectiveness, largely because the Council and executive did not facilitate its functioning in accordance with the Governance Protocol Statement.

There was discussion about whether the Board would function better if there were fewer Councillors appointed as Board members. Members also discussed whether the Wānaka community would be better represented (and more effective and accountable) with four Wānaka Ward Councillors and no community board.

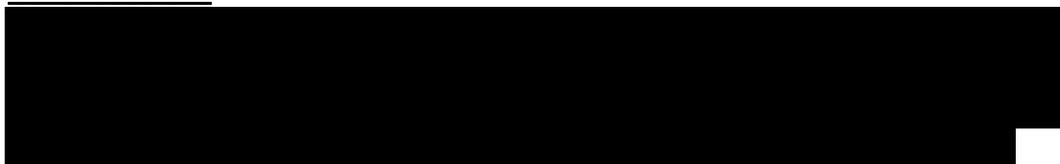
Members were also conscious of the political sensitivity of a recommendation to abolish the board and the climate of dissatisfaction with Council in the Wānaka community at the moment.

Members agreed that there needed to be appropriate levels of administrative support if the Wānaka Community Board was abolished. Members noted that support had improved over the recent year with the appointment of the Upper Clutha Liaison Manager. The purpose of Wānaka Community Board was to advocate for the Upper Clutha area and to handle minor local issues, but much of this was within the duties of the Upper Clutha Liaison Manager.

b. Remuneration Authority

If the proposal resulted in an additional two Councillors, there needed to be sufficient funding allocated to the remuneration pool to cover the additional cost.

c. Other decisions



Because it was so contingent on population and the numbers registered on the Māori Roll, establishing a Maori Roll was not yet a step to take but should be reviewed at the time of the next representation review (and that this should be in three years).

Local government reform could have a significant impact upon the role of local government and this should also be a consideration at the time of the next review. It should also influence the decision to undertake the review within three years.

The Advisory Group would recommend that serious consideration be given to the introduction of STV the next time the question arose.

d. Next meeting

New modelling needed to be prepared that assessed the population in all meshblocks across the full area of the existing Queenstown-Wakatipu Ward.

There needed to be discussion with the Au Kaha and Te Ao Marama to confirm that they were happy with the proposed Te Reo ward names and were comfortable with the current stance on establishing a Māori Ward.

The meeting concluded at 12.00pm.