



# REPRESENTATION REVIEW: COUNCIL AND COUNCILLORS

## ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

Local councils were established by the government to enable democratic decision-making and action, by and for communities, and to promote social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being.

Elected members, or councillors, are the representatives of the people of our district – led by a Mayor. Our council must have at least five councillors and could have up to 23.

Councils make decisions to deliver what the community needs today and for the future. They help steer their district as it develops and grows, with advice from expert council staff.

## ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

Councillors, like the Mayor, determine the council’s strategic direction for the services it delivers. Councillors work to deliver better outcomes for our community.

Councillors decide on service levels and prioritise new work. They make policies that shape our community by making bylaws, and setting fees and rates.

To make these big decisions, councillors need to understand the challenges and opportunities facing our community – so there’s lots of reading and listening. They need to attend a range of meetings; be available to listen to views of interested people and lobby their fellow councillors and MPs on important decisions.

Even though they might stand in specific wards for election, councillors must serve in the best interest of the entire district – even for those people who didn’t vote for them.

## WHO CAN BE A COUNCILLOR

Anyone over the age of 18 who is a NZ Citizen and who has been nominated by two people on the district electoral rolls. If standing for election for a ward, the two nominees must be eligible to vote for that ward.

## WHAT COUNCILLORS GET PAID

Councillors are paid from a pool of funds that is set each year by a Government agency. The number of councillors who get elected determines how much they each get paid. The table below gives you an idea of what Masterton District councillors will be paid according to the funding pool available. With eight councillors, each would get a base salary of about \$49,000. Here’s how the pay might be split if we have more or fewer councillors:

WHAT DO COUNCILLORS GET PAID?	
Number of councillors	Total pool \$392, 878 (evenly split)
13	\$30,221
10	\$39,288
9	\$43,653
8	\$49,110
7	\$56,125
6	\$65,480
5	\$78,576

What we’re recommending

## COUNCILLORS IN THE MĀORI WARD

Anyone can stand as a councillor in the Māori Ward, but only the people who have registered on the Māori Electoral Roll can vote for people standing in the Māori Ward. Māori Roll electors can also vote for:

- anyone standing as an ‘at large’ councillor
- the Mayor.

Māori electors cannot vote for General Ward candidates.

With 5 to 12 Councillors, we can have one Māori ward Councillor. With 13 or more councillors in total we qualify for two Māori Ward councillors.

## COUNCILLORS IN THE GENERAL WARD

We are proposing one other General Ward that covers the entire district.

Anyone can stand as a councillor for the General Ward, but only the people who have registered on the General Roll can vote for people standing in this ward. General Roll electors can also vote the Mayor.

General Roll electors cannot vote for the Māori Ward candidates.

## ‘AT LARGE’ COUNCILLORS

Candidates can choose to stand for one of the wards if they are nominated by people who are eligible to vote for that ward, or to stand ‘at large’. All electors can vote for ‘at large’ councillors – no matter which electoral roll they are on.

We are proposing four General Ward councillors, one Māori Ward councillor, and three ‘at large’ councillors for the 2022 and 2025 elections.

## WHAT IMPACT CAN THE NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS HAVE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISIONS?

The fewer councillors you have, the more they get paid. This might mean that some councillors can afford to treat their role in council as a fulltime job, or it might mean you get candidates with specialised backgrounds applying for roles because the money better matches their expertise. This could attract greater diversity in candidates standing for the Council.

Equally, more councillors might mean more diversity at the council table – something we’d love to see as part of Masterton District Council. Our community is a diverse one and we’re keen to see all of it represented at the council table.