

23 February 2023

Future for Local Government Review Panel

Submitted via: [Submissions to the Review into the Future for Local Government - Submissions | Review into the Future for Local Government - Citizen Space](#)

Dear Panel Members

Submission from the Manawatū District Council on the Future for Local Government Review draft Report

The Manawatū District Council (MDC or “Council”) thanks the Panel for the opportunity to submit on the Draft Report on the Review into the Future for Local Government.

In April 2022, Elected Members and members of the Executive Leadership Team at MDC presented our thoughts to Panel representatives.

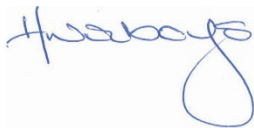
Since the local government elections, MDC has five new elected members, including a Māori Ward Councillor. This submission represents the views of MDC, as expressed by current Elected Members and the Executive Leadership Team, and reflective of the needs of the Manawatū Community that we serve.

The key points in our feedback on the draft report are as follows:

1. MDC believes that the best way to encourage participation and local decision-making is through localising power and empowering communities to make decisions on local matters. MDC’s Community Committees serve as evidence of the success of a localised approach to decision-making.
2. MDC acknowledges that future work is needed to enable authentic engagement and effective decision-making for iwi/Māori. However, there are differing views on how this should be done. Participation for iwi/Māori should be to the extent that they wish to participate and should be funded by central government.
3. MDC requests further guidance on defining the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi from central government. There are differing views on local government’s role and responsibilities in relation to Te Tiriti. The principles of Te Tiriti should be defined and agreed before being incorporated into legislation.
4. Provision of community wellbeing services should be outcome focussed and community-led, not transactional and centrally prescribed.
5. There needs to be an agreed definition of “wellbeing.”
6. Any new roles and responsibilities allocated to local government need to appropriately funded and resourced by central government, i.e. no more unfunded mandates.
7. True partnership is needed between central and local government, based on a high level of commitment and trust.

8. MDC does not support the adoption of Single Transferrable Vote as the voting method for Council elections.
9. MDC has differing views on lowering the voting age to 16. However, if the voting age is to be lowered to 16, this needs to be preceded by civic education and the voting age for central government elections must match that of local government elections.
10. MDC supports a review of elected member remuneration.
11. MDC does not support the proposal to provide for Tiriti and capability-based appointments to supplement elected members due to concerns about democracy and accountability.
12. MDC does not believe that any of the structural examples presented in the report would result in better outcomes for the Manawatū community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Worboys', with a large loop at the end.

Helen Worboys
Mayor, JP

Chapter 2: Revitalising citizen-led democracy

Feedback on **recommendation 1**: *That local government adopts greater use of deliberative and participatory democracy in local decision-making.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

The solutions proposed in relation to recommendations 1 and 2 make big assumptions about the drivers of disengagement. Without clear evidence or information on the panel's findings in relation to the primary drivers of disengagement, it is difficult to quantify how successful the use of deliberative and participatory democracy in local decision-making will be.

LGNZ's discussion document titled "*Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities*" (July 2019) notes that "*the more decentralised a country is, the more citizens are interested in local elections and the more they vote.*" The current reform trend of greater centralisation and narrowing of local authority functions may be a contributing factor to declining voter turnout.

The success of recommendations 1 and 2 is dependent on how much the community actually wants to be involved in decision making, and how local government can best support that involvement.

MDC's Community Committees are an example of how our Council empowers its communities to participate in local decision-making and to choose their own vision and direction. Community Committees were established in 1990 in response to the reorganisation of local government in 1989.

Community Committees are made up of local representatives and have direct connection to Council through liaison councillors and the Community Development Advisor. Council's Community Development Advisor assists the Community Committees to prepare a Community Plan that sets a vision for their community into the future, and support actions to reach that vision. Council allocates funding to Community Committees through its community plan implementation budget for actions arising from community plans. There are 16 active community committees in the Manawatū District, 13 of which have community plans.

In MDC's experience, our community engages well on those matters that are of interest to them. For example, MDC engaged with its community to inform its initial response to the

proposed three waters reform programme in September 2021. MDC received a total of 2540 submissions in response to this engagement.

Feedback on **recommendation 2**: *That local government, supported by central government, review the legislative provisions relating to engagement, consultation and decision-making to ensure they provide a comprehensive, meaningful, and flexible platform for revitalising community participation and engagement.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

Refer to feedback on recommendation 1.

MDC generally supports recommendation 2 but recommends that the review of legislative provisions by local and central government be carried out in consultation with communities. It is only by understanding why, when and how our communities wish to be engaged that we will be able to develop (and legislate) meaningful engagement, consultation and decision-making processes.

Feedback on **recommendation 3**: *That central government leads a comprehensive review of requirements for engaging with Māori across local government-related legislation, considering opportunities to streamline or align those requirements.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC considers that recommendations 3, 4 and 5 should be included as the bare minimum of what is required to achieve a genuine partnership between local government and iwi/Māori. Further work is needed to enable authentic engagement and effective decision-making for iwi/Māori.

Feedback on **recommendation 4**: *That councils develop and invest in their internal systems for managing and promoting good quality engagement with Māori.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

[Refer to feedback on recommendation 3.](#)

Feedback on **recommendation 5**: *That central government provides a statutory obligation for councils to give due consideration to an agreed, local expression of tikanga whakahaere in their standing orders and engagement practices, and for chief executives to be required to promote the incorporation of tikanga in organisational systems.*

MDC strongly supports the incorporation of tikanga in council organisation systems, to the extent that local iwi agree with. However, there are differing views within MDC as to whether this requirement should be legislated as a statutory requirement. MDC is working with local Māori and hapū to build a trusted relationship. MDC wants to ensure that the expression of tikanga whakahaere in our organisation systems is done in a way that nurtures those relationships, rather than this being forced out of obligation to meet statutory requirements. Consideration must also be given to the capability and capacity of council staff and local Māori/Iwi to support this change.

MDC seeks some guidance on how to incorporate tikanga in council's organisational systems, as tikanga may be expressed in different ways in different communities.

Question: What might we do more of to increase community understanding about the role of local government, and therefore lead to greater civic participation?

Local government needs to be part of civic education in schools.

MDC thinks there is too much focus on a lack of civic participation. MDC considers that local authorities should be responsible for making engagement as easy as possible, but cannot be responsible for the proportion of citizens that choose to engage. Elected members are democratically elected and are trusted to make decisions that are in the best interest of their communities. A lack of civic participation does not necessarily mean that people are disinterested.

Any further feedback on Chapter 2?

MDC recommends that the heading of this chapter be changed as it does not reflect what these recommendations are looking to achieve. MDC considers that this chapter of the report should be centred on community wellbeing.

MDC challenges the panel to think more broadly in relation to those barriers that exist around delivering wellbeing outcomes. Strengthening local democracy would be an easier task if we

looked to simplify the myriad of agencies, processes and systems that exist around delivering outcomes. The complex environment in which local democracy operates, including accessing services within the system but also in seeking to contribute to governance (from voting in central and local elections, to participating in governance or community) contributes to frustration, complacency and disengagement.

Some Councillors at MDC hold the view that the focus on engaging with Māori is too narrow and that more consideration needs to be given to the needs and wellbeing of communities as a whole. To achieve greater participation, MDC considers that more work is required around fair representation, driven by inclusive practices and attitudes. MDC seeks to ensure that all members of a community are able to have their voices heard.

Chapter 3: A Tiriti-based partnership between Māori and local government

Feedback on **recommendation 6**: *That central government leads an inclusive process to develop a new legislative framework for Tiriti-related provisions in the Local Government Act 2002 that drives a genuine partnership in the exercise of kāwanatanga and rangatiratanga in a local context and explicitly recognises te ao Māori values and conceptions of wellbeing.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC has differing views on this recommendation.

However, there are some concerns at MDC that any new legislative framework for Tiriti-related provisions may be too prescriptive. Instead, MDC requests that a suite of options be developed within a legislative framework. This would be useful as it clarifies the options for everyone, including Māori. Like Council, some iwi members have different expectations about what partnership means.

MDC requests further guidance on defining the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi from central government. There are differing views on local government's role and responsibilities in relation to Te Tiriti. The principles of Te Tiriti should be defined and agreed before being incorporated into legislation.

Feedback on **recommendation 7**: *That councils develop with hapū/iwi and significant Māori organisations within a local authority area, a partnership framework that complements existing co-governance arrangements by ensuring all groups in a council area are involved in local governance in a meaningful way.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation.

Feedback on **recommendation 8**: *That central government introduces a statutory requirement for local government chief executives to develop and maintain the capacity and capability of council staff to grow understanding and knowledge of Te Tiriti, the whakapapa of local government, and te ao Māori values.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation to grow council staff understanding and knowledge of Te Tiriti, the whakapapa of local government and te ao Māori values. However, there are differing views on whether or not this should be a statutory requirement.

Feedback on **recommendation 9**: *That central government explores a stronger statutory requirement on councils to foster Māori capacity to participate in local government.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation. Participation for iwi/Māori should be to the extent that they want to participate. Iwi / Māori must be formally supported and enabled to participate through the availability of financial resources, rather than being expected to expend volunteer energy. Central funding of this participation will ensure that it not subject to local political financial priorities and will offer some consistency across the country.

Feedback on **recommendation 10**: *That local government leads the development of coordinated organisational and workforce development plans to enhance the capability of local government to partner and engage with Māori.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation.

Feedback on **recommendation 11**: *That central government provides a transitional fund to subsidise the cost of building both Māori and council capability and capacity for a Tiriti-based partnership in local governance.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC has differing views on this recommendation. The cost of developing capability and capacity for a Tiriti-based partnership in local governance should not fall on local authorities alone. Otherwise, this would be a significant burden for local authority ratepayers.

Any further feedback on Chapter 3?

Chapter 4: Allocating roles and functions in a way that enhances local wellbeing

Feedback on **recommendation 12**: *That central and local government note that the allocation of the roles and functions is not a binary decision between being delivered centrally or locally.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation in principle. However, if there is to be shared roles and functions, the funding and financing for delivery of such roles and functions also needs to be shared between central and local government.

Feedback on **recommendation 13**: *That local and central government, in a Tiriti-consistent manner, review the future allocations of roles and functions by applying the proposed approach, which includes three core principles:*

a) The concept of 'subsidiarity'

b) Local government's capacity to influence the conditions for wellbeing is recognised and supported

c) Te ao Māori values underpin decision-making

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC strongly supports the concept of subsidiarity. However, the current central government legislative reforms appear to be shifting towards greater centralisation, rather than towards localism. For example, Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) notes in their draft submission on the Resource Management reforms that the new resource management system potentially “erodes local democratic input into planning decisions.”

MDC strongly supports the second core principle, as this aligns with the purpose of local government under section 10(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

If local government is to have an increased role in the provision of community wellbeing services, councils and communities need to have a say in what the desired outcomes are. Provision of community services need to be outcome focussed and community-led, not transactional and centrally prescribed. Also, councils should not have to compete for funding of community wellbeing services.

MDC recommends that the third core principle be amended as follows:

c) *Te ao Māori values, along with the diverse values of the community underpin decision-making.*

MDC requests that central government develop guidance to assist local authorities in understanding what the core Te ao Māori values are, and how they are to be given appropriate consideration in relation to roles and functions of local government. In the absence of legislation that clearly defines these values, there is potential for inconsistent understanding and outcomes.

MDC requests that the panel provide a definition of “wellbeing” as there are different understandings of this term. MDC’s Community Development Strategy uses the Te Whare Tapa Whā framework as a way of viewing community health and wellbeing. This framework seeks to balance physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.

Questions:

What process would need to be created to support and agree on the allocation of roles and functions across central government, local government, and communities?

Evaluation of the financial and resource requirements for any roles and functions would need to form part of the process. Any new roles and responsibilities allocated to local government would need appropriate funding and resourcing by central government, i.e. no unfunded mandates.

LGNZ’s discussion document titled “*Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities*” (July 2019) should be referred for guidance in how to evaluate which services should be devolved to the local level.

As noted in the discussion document referred to above, New Zealand is one of the most centralised countries in the developed world. The current 88%:12% central to local government funding split is fast becoming 95%:5% as central government reforms lead to further centralisation of local government functions and responsibilities (particularly in relation to the three waters reforms). The “Reinvigorating local democracy” discussion document notes that centralisation can have negative economic and social outcomes. On the contrary, decentralisation of public services is more likely to result in a better match between communities’ needs and preferences and the provision of public services, and therefore better allocative efficiency.

What conditions will need to be in place to ensure the flexibility of the approach proposed does not create confusion or unnecessary uncertainty?

Multi-agencies responsible for shared outcomes lends itself to confusion and complication. A human-centred design approach is necessary.

There needs to be clear delineation of roles and responsibilities between central government, local government and other agencies. These could be agreed through Memorandums of Understanding (MoU’s) that are regularly reviewed to ensure agreed outcomes are being met.

Monitoring and evaluation is critical.

What additional principles, if any, need to be considered?

MDC recommends that the panel consider the following principles/considerations:

- Simplification with a human-centred design approach that puts the customer (ratepayer/taxpayer/client/patient etc) at the centre.
- Recognition of the interdependency of aspects of wellbeing. While the ecology of wellbeing in the section on local government as activator captures the complexity, MDC suggests that it does not give adequate recognition of interdependency.
- The need for a system that rewards cooperation/collaboration, rather than creates competition between service providers, particularly for funding.
- Fair and reasonable funding of local government

Do you have any further feedback on Chapter 4: Allocating roles and functions in a way that enhances local wellbeing?

MDC supports the intent of what these recommendations are trying to achieve. However, MDC is still unclear on how local authorities are to do this. Greater direction is required.

Chapter 5: Local government as a champion and activator of wellbeing

Feedback on **recommendation 14**: *That local government, in partnership with central government, explores funding and resources that enable and encourage councils to:*

1. *Lead, facilitate and support innovation and experimentation in achieving greater social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing outcomes.*
2. *Build relational, partnering, innovation and co-design capability and capacity across their whole organisation.*
3. *Embed social/progressive procurement and supplier diversity as standard practice in local government with nationally supported organisational infrastructure and capability and capacity building.*
4. *Review their levers and assets from an equity and wellbeing perspective and identify opportunities for strategic and transformational initiatives.*
5. *Take on the anchor institution role initially through demonstration initiatives with targeted resources and peer support.*
6. *Share the learning and emerging practice from innovation and experimentation of their enhanced wellbeing role.*

How do you feel about the recommendation that local government, in partnership with central government, explore funding and resources that enables and encourages councils to:

1. Lead, facilitate and support innovation and experimentation in achieving greater social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing outcomes?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree

- Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
2. Build relational, partnering, innovation and co-design capability and capacity across their whole organisation?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
3. Embed social/progressive procurement and supplier diversity as standard practice in local government with nationally supported organisational infrastructure and capability and capacity building?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
4. Review their levers and assets from an equity and wellbeing perspective and identify opportunities for strategic and transformational initiatives?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
5. Take on the anchor institution role initially through demonstration initiatives with targeted resources and peer support?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
6. Share the learning and emerging practice from innovation and experimentation of their enhanced wellbeing role?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Any comments?

MDC supports recommendations 1. to 6.

MDC recognises the need to partner with central government to deliver on shared outcomes such as social housing provision. However, our experience has been a lack of willingness to partner due to funding models and transactional ways of doing things.

Council sought to partner with Kainga Ora to develop larger-scale affordable housing options on Council-owned land. However, this was unsuccessful as Kainga Ora would not partner with Council unless they were the owner. While MDC has good working relationships with local representatives of central government agencies such as Kainga Ora and Waka Kotahi, our ability to deliver on wellbeing-centred projects is limited due to a lack of flexibility at the agency level.

MDC's Procurement Policy 2022 contains five principles for good procurement. Principle 2 (Be fair to all suppliers) includes treating all suppliers equally and making it easy for all suppliers (small to large) to do business with Council. Within principle 4 (Get the best outcome for everyone) is making balanced decisions that consider the social, environmental and economic effects of the outcome.

Rather than competitive funding for local government initiatives or projects that contribute to social, economic, cultural or environmental wellbeing, MDC questions why funding cannot be provided with no strings attached, for local authorities to use as they see fit for their communities.

Questions:

What feedback do you have on the roles councils can play to enhance intergenerational wellbeing?

Local authorities are already well aware of their role in enhancing intergenerational wellbeing. This is at the centre of all decision-making. For example, local authorities use debt as a means of spreading the cost of providing new capital infrastructure across those generations that will benefit from it.

It is local governments role to advocate on behalf of the needs of its community.

Another role that MDC plays in relation to community wellbeing is through civil defence and emergency management. MDC provides coordination of the district's response and

recovery through an emergency event. We provide services and information to reduce risk and increase readiness, response and resilience. During the COVID-19 level four lockdown, MDC staff helped deliver 4,350 prescriptions and made over 1,300 calls to vulnerable people.

What changes would support councils to utilise their existing assets, enablers and levers to generate more local wellbeing?

Better funding and financing of local government would enable us to better meet our own goals and aspirations for community development. MDC also needs to have the funding to have the staff (capacity) to deliver.

True partnership is needed between central and local government, based on a high level of trust. The current reforms, particularly in relation to three waters, is evidence of the current lack of trust that central government has towards local governments to deliver local wellbeing outcomes.

Do you have any further feedback on Chapter 5: Local government as champion and activator of wellbeing?

The reversal of three waters reforms to allow local authorities to retain responsibility for the delivery of three waters services would enable us to better provide for the wellbeing of our residents. Of the 2,540 responses that MDC received to its three waters reform engagement in October 2021, 94% were opposed to three waters reform. The primary given for opposition to the reforms was “I want our three waters services to be owned, managed, built and operated locally, by people who understand our District.”

Chapter 6: A stronger relationship between central and local government

Questions:

Tell us your thoughts on building on current strengths and resources.

To create a collaborative relationship between central and local government that builds on current strengths and resources, what are:

- 1. the conditions for success and the barriers that are preventing strong relationships?***
- 2. the factors in place now that support genuine partnership?***
- 3. the elements that are needed to build and support a new system?***
- 4. the best options to get there?***
- 5. potential pathways to move in that direction and where to start?***
- 6. the opportunities to trial and innovate now?***

Conditions for success:

- mutual trust

- funding and financing that is fair and enables delivery of desired outcomes
- autonomy
- a clear and consistent direction from central government that enables local government to set a clear long-term vision and deliver outcomes that align with what our communities want/need.

Barriers to strong relationship include:

1. A lack of trust of local government by central government
2. Current funding and financing of local government, including unfunded mandates
3. Changes or fluctuations in central government direction due to different political ideologies and priorities.

MDC considers that the partner that is currently not listening is central government. A lack of trust of local government is evident through new draft legislation (such as through the Water Entities Bill and the Ministerial powers of intervention in the new Resource Management legislation) and even in the communication of reform proposals through the media.

MDC considers that the three waters reforms have been particularly damaging to the relationship between central and local government and should serve as an example of what not to do.

Factors already in place to support genuine partnership include:

MDC has retained strong relationships with local representatives of central government departments and agencies, despite overall disagreement with central government policy direction.

Our response to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic serves as an example of how our strong local relationships resulted in outcomes for our community that were better than how the Ministry for Social Development prescribed Council to respond during the second wave of the pandemic.

The Feilding Health Centre operated the first drive-through vaccination clinic in New Zealand at Manfeild Park Stadium.

During the alert level 4 lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, Manawatū District Council staff volunteered their time to freely deliver hundreds of prescriptions every day on behalf of the Feilding Health Centre. This was one way that Council did their part to help keep vulnerable residents safely in their bubbles.

Rapid Antigen Tests were made available free of charge by MidCentral DHB with the support of teams from Ngā Kaitiaki ō Ngāti Kauwhata, Volunteer Central, Manchester House, MDC and Manfeild Stadium.

Despite our good working relationships with central government agencies, we have not seen those relationships translate into good wellbeing outcomes for the Manawatū

community. MDC wants to see a greater commitment to collaborative partnerships between central and local government.

MDC is concerned that the Minister of Local Government is not seen as a priority political portfolio at Central Government, as evidenced by the frequent turn-over in Ministers in recent years.

How can central and local government explore options that empower and enable a role for hapū/iwi in local governance in partnership with local and central government? These options should recognise the contribution of hapū/iwi rangatiratanga, kaitiakitanga and other roles.

Any further feedback on Chapter 6?

Chapter 7: Replenishing and building on representative democracy

Feedback on **recommendation 15**: *That the Electoral Commission be responsible for overseeing the administration of local body elections.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC has differing views on this recommendation. MDC remains unconvinced that there would be any difference in outcomes if the Electoral Commission was to oversee local government elections.

Feedback on **recommendation 16**: *That central government undertakes a review of the legislation to:*

- 1. adopt Single Transferrable Vote as the voting method in council elections*
- 2. lower the eligible voting age in local body elections to the age of 16*
- 3. provide for a 4-year local electoral term*
- 4. amend the employment provisions of chief executives to match those in the wider public sector, and include mechanisms to assist in managing the employment relationship*

How do you feel about the recommendation that central government undertakes a review of the legislation to:

1. Adopt Single Transferrable Vote as the voting method in council elections?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

2. Lower the eligible voting age in local body elections to the age of 16?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

3. Provide for a 4-year local electoral term?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

4. Amend the employment provisions of chief executives to match those in the wider public sector, and include mechanisms to assist in managing the employment relationship?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Any comments?

MDC is opposed to recommendation 16(1.), being the recommendation to adopt Single Transferrable Vote (STV) as the voting method in council elections but prefer First Past the Post (FPTP). MDC considers FPTP to be a simpler voting system and changing the system will only create confusion.

MDC is also generally opposed to recommendation 16(2.), being the lowering of the voting age to 16. If the voting age is to be lowered, MDC recommends that such a change be preceded by civic education in schools that covers both local and central government. MDC considers that the whole community would benefit from civic education and there is a general lack of understanding of local authority roles and responsibilities.

MDC is strongly of the view, whatever the voting age, this must be consistent for local government and central government elections. That is, MDC would not support a voting age of 16 for local government elections and 18 for central government elections.

MDC supports recommendation 16(3.), being a four-year local electoral term. If the electoral term is increased to four years, MDC considers it would also be beneficial to also change the LTP cycle to align it with local government electoral cycles.

MDC is generally opposed to recommendation 16(4.), being the amendment of the employment provisions of Chief Executives (CE) to match those in the wider public sector. MDC's elected members support the CE role being a fixed term contract, given the importance of a good working relationship between the CE and elected members to the success of the Council in delivering community wellbeing outcomes.

MDC wants the status quo to remain, whereby the Council employs the Chief Executive, rather than them being an employee of government or the public sector.

Feedback on **recommendation 17**: *That central and local government, in conjunction with the Remuneration Authority, review the criteria for setting elected member remuneration to recognise the increasing complexity of the role and enable a more diverse range of people to consider standing for election.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation.

MDC would also support a recommendation that elected members be eligible to receive KiwiSaver. However, MDC would like clarification on whether KiwiSaver would be paid by the ratepayer, or remuneration authority.

Councillors are treated as a self-employed contractor. The costs that come with this, including ACC levies, should be reflected in their remuneration.

MDC also considers that there is disparity in what the Mayor and Councillors get paid. A full time Mayor job should earn more. MDC also questions whether remuneration should be based on population as the workload of elected members does not appear to differ that much between rural/provincial and metropolitan local authorities.

MDC considers that the fact that elected member remuneration is ratepayer funded limits councils' ability to pay appropriately. The current remuneration makes it difficult for people on a salary/wage to be a Councillor, favouring retirees and those with flexible work such as farmers and the self-employed. If elected member remuneration was increased this would likely result in the attraction of more nominees and greater diversity around the council table.

Feedback on **recommendation 18**: *That local government develops a mandatory professional development and support programme for elected members; and local and central government develop a shared executive professional development and secondment programme to achieve greater integration across the two sectors.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation in principle, but questions whether it is reasonable to expect ratepayers to fund the upskilling of elected members. MDC requests that elected member professional development be funded by central government. In addition, it is MDC's preference that the funding be provided directly to the local authority to manage/allocated as required.

MDC is suspicious of shared secondment between central and local government as this may lead to more central government prescription around how local authorities do things.

Feedback on **recommendation 19**: *That central and local government:*

- (a) support and enable councils to undertake regular health checks of their democratic performance*

- (b) develop guidance and mechanisms to support councils resolving complaints under their code of conduct and explore a specific option for local government to refer complaints to an independent investigation process, conducted and led by a national organisation*
- (c) subject to the findings of current relevant ombudsman's investigations, assess whether the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, and how it is being applied, support high standards of openness and transparency.*

How do you feel about the recommendation that central government and local government:

1. Support and enable councils to undertake regular health checks of their democratic performance?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure

2. Develop guidance and mechanisms to support councils resolving complaints under their code of conduct and explore a specific option for local government to refer complaints to an independent investigation process, conducted and led by a national organisation?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure

3. Subject to the findings of current relevant ombudsman's investigations, assess whether the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, and how it is being applied, support high standards of openness and transparency?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure

Any comments?

Feedback on **recommendation 20**: *That central government retain the Māori wards and constituencies mechanism (subject to amendment in current policy processes), but consider additional options that provide for a Tiriti-based partnership at the council table.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC has differing views on this recommendation.

Questions:

How can local government enhance its capability to undertake representation reviews and, in particular, should the Local Government Commission play a more proactive role in leading or advising councils about representation reviews?

To support a differentiated liberal citizenship what are the essential key steps, parameters, and considerations that would enable both Tiriti and capability-based appointments to be made to supplement elected members?

Do you have any further feedback on Chapter 7: Replenishing and building on representative democracy?

MDC does not support appointments as our democratic system does not support appointments. In addition, MDC questions who such appointments would be accountable to, and how a Council would go about removing an appointed member if they do not perform to an appropriate standard.

Chapter 8: Building an equitable, sustainable funding and financing system

Feedback on **recommendation 21**: *That central government expands its regulatory impact statement assessments to include the impacts on local government; and that it undertakes an assessment of regulation currently in force that is likely to have significant future funding impacts for local government and makes funding provision to reflect the national public-good benefits that accrue from those regulations.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC strongly supports this recommendation.

Feedback on **recommendation 22**: *That central and local government agree on arrangements and mechanisms for them to co-invest to meet community wellbeing priorities, and that central government makes funding provisions accordingly.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation.

Feedback on **recommendation 23**: *That central government develops an intergenerational fund for climate change, with the application of the fund requiring appropriate regional and local decision-making input.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports this recommendation in principle but requires more information on how this fund would be administered.

Feedback on **recommendation 24**: *That central government reviews relevant legislation to:*

1. *enable councils to introduce new funding mechanisms*
2. *retain rating as the principal mechanism for funding local government, while redesigning long-term planning and rating provisions to allow a more simplified and streamlined process.*

How do you feel about the recommendation that central government reviews relevant legislation to:

1. Enable councils to introduce new funding mechanisms?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
2. Retain rating as the principal mechanism for funding local government, while simplifying long-term planning and rating provisions to allow a more holistic and responsive process?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure

Feedback on **recommendation 25**: *That central government agencies pay local government rates and charges on all properties.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC generally supports this recommendation. However, some elected members have expressed a concern about who will ultimately fund these rates and charges. If this change means an increase in taxes for our ratepayers to subsidise the payment of rates in other areas with large central government footprints (such as Wellington), then MDC is less supportive. Some modelling or more information would be helpful here.

Questions:

What is the most appropriate basis and process for allocating central government funding to meet community priorities?

Do you have any further feedback on Chapter 8: Building an equitable, sustainable funding and financing system?

MDC does not support competitive funding processes but would prefer that central government funding be allocated by population or need.

Chapter 9: Designing the local government system to enable the change needed

Feedback on **recommendation 26**: *That central and local government, explore and agree to a new Tiriti-consistent structural and system design that will give effect to the design principles.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC considers that there are additional principles that could be considered here, as follows:

- Impact – particularly environmental impacts as impacts cannot be localised, even when decisions are
- Simplification – the simplest systems with the fewest layers will make it easier (and cheaper) to navigate.

Feedback on **recommendation 27**: *That local government, supported by central government, invests in a programme that identifies and implements the opportunities for greater shared services collaboration.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC supports shared service agreements where these benefit both parties. MDC already has shared service agreements with the Palmerston North City Council and Rangitīkei District Council and is in discussions with other neighbouring councils. However, there is no local appetite for amalgamation.

Feedback on **recommendation 28**: *That local government establishes a Local Government Digital Partnership to develop a digital transformation roadmap for local government.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

MDC would like more information before indicating support or opposition to this recommendation. For example, would participation be voluntary or mandatory? MDC recognises that we have a high proportion of older persons in our population who may not have access or capability to access digital services and information.

Joined up investment in information and communications technology with a comprehensive digital strategy could support simplification, and to this end it is supported.

Questions:

What other design principles, if any, need to be considered?

What feedback have you got on the structural examples presented in the report?

Do you have any further feedback on Chapter 9: Designing the local government system to enable the change we needed?

MDC remains unconvinced that any of the structural examples presented in the draft report would result in better outcomes for the Manawatū Community.

Chapter 10: System stewardship and support

Feedback on **recommendation 29**: *That central and local government considers the best model of stewardship and which entities are best placed to play system stewardship roles in a revised system of local government.*

How do you feel about this recommendation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Do you have any comments?

Questions:

How can system stewardship be reimaged so that it is led across local government, hapū/iwi, and central government?

How do we embed Te Tiriti in local government system stewardship?

How should the roles and responsibilities of 'stewardship' organisations (including the Secretary of Local Government (Department of Internal Affairs), the Local Government Commission, LGNZ and Taituarā) evolve and change?

Do you have any further feedback on Chapter 10: System stewardship and support?

Chapter 11: The pathway forward

Any feedback?

Any final comments?

MDC supports in part the submission by Waimate District Council. Specifically, MDC agrees with the following key submission points:

- The draft report falls short of recognising that the most comprehensive requirement of local government is to enable local democracy.
- That the way the panel has approached the review means that the draft report is largely an outline of proposed legislative initiatives, rather than a programme and action plan for strengthening the role of local government and governance.
- It is critical for the future of local government and local governance to recognise the diversity of different communities, districts and regions, iwi and hapū. The use of a legislative approach to drive change may result in a 'one size fits all' answer, rather than enabling each community to express its own differences and needs.
- The most effective means of promoting greater participation is enabling and empowering self-identifying communities, and devolving to those communities the authority and resources to deal with what are inherently local matters.
- When central government is making decisions on roles and functions, the driving principle should be ensuring that the decision and its implementation reflect the best interests of the affected public, and that obligations are accompanied by appropriate resourcing.
- Rather than giving priority to changing the structure of local government, enabling genuine local governance and adoption of additional revenue sources will go a long way to improving the capability and performance of individual councils.
- There needs to be greater certainty and stability around the purpose of local government. Local government is too often viewed as a political football.

MDC also supports the submission by the Hamilton City Council in part. In particular, MDC supports the following key submission points:

- A formal information campaign should be developed and run nationally by a sector body to educate people on what local government does and the role of elected members.
- There should be an agreed definition of 'wellbeing' to be used by all agencies, including central government, central government agencies and local government.
- Central government agencies that also focus on wellbeing should direct their regional offices to interact with local government to work together to improve the provision of wellbeing services across communities.
- Central government should provide opportunities for the co-design of policy alongside central government (rather than the current process of submission input), especially

if local government is the agency required to deliver central policy to the local community.

- There needs to be vertical alignment of timing of funding rounds between central government agencies and local government (e.g. alignment of the Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency National Land Transport Programme with the local government Long Term Plan cycle).