



Local Government
Commission

Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

West Coast Local Government Arrangements

Buller
District
Council

Grey
District
Council

Westland
District
Council

West Coast
Regional
Council

Summary of Community Feedback

WEST COAST

AUGUST 2016

www.lgc.govt.nz

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Executive summary

The Local Government Commission's (the Commission) engagement with the West Coast community in mid-2016 is summarised in this report. The purpose of the engagement was to hear from the community about West Coast local government arrangements in order to determine whether there was any support for change to the way the councils are structured or how services are delivered.

Five key questions

The community engagement was focused around five questions:

1. What are the big challenges and opportunities for the West Coast?
2. What do you like about the current way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered?
3. Is there anything about the way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered, that you would like to change?
4. Are there any council services you think would be better delivered over a wider area as shared services by existing councils?
5. Should some councils be combined?

Community engagement programme

The main elements of the community engagement programme were a questionnaire, daytime drop-in sessions, evening community workshops and stakeholder meetings. The Commission promoted the programme in local newspapers, on radio, in shop windows and libraries. Councils and community members helped to promote the drop-in centres and workshops through their social media channels. Over a five-week period, the Commission met with more than 200 people to listen to their views about local government arrangements.

People were asked to complete a questionnaire to indicate their views on the importance of retaining their current district council and regional council, their satisfaction with the way district council and regional council services are provided, whether there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services over a wider area by existing councils, and whether some councils should be combined.

Questionnaire results

The Commission received 699 responses to its questionnaire and these indicated that the West Coast community wants some change. The change talked about covered a wide spectrum of changes both to the way services are delivered (i.e. non-structural changes) and council reorganisation options in terms of the way the current councils are set up (i.e. structural changes).

The overall West Coast results show that 54 per cent of respondents considered that council services could be better delivered as shared services over all or part of the region. A total of 44 per cent of respondents considered some West Coast councils should be combined. These overall results are made up from the district results set out below:

- A total of 111 respondents in Buller District (50 per cent), 108 in Grey District (60 per cent) and 140 in Westland District (53 per cent) thought some council services would be better delivered as shared services.
- A total of 86 respondents in Buller District (38 per cent), 113 in Grey District (61 per cent) and 101 in Westland District (38 per cent) considered some West Coast councils should be combined.

Commission decisions and next steps

On the basis of all the feedback received, the Commission has decided there is a sufficient level of community support for some change in local government arrangements on the West Coast.

The next step in the process is to invite alternative applications in February 2017. This will allow time for the new councils elected at the October 2016 local authority elections to consider the matter and, if they wish, submit alternative applications following the Christmas/summer holiday break.

The Commission will develop high level options from the feedback it has received during the engagement programme undertaken on the West Coast and through its other work with the West Coast councils. People will be able to comment on these options, if they wish, when they submit their own alternative applications.

Background

Reorganisation application

In August 2015, the Local Government Commission (the Commission) received an application from Anthea Keenan and Peter Salter asking it to look at local government arrangements on the West Coast with a view to making changes. The application was supported by a petition with 367 signatures. Current local government arrangements comprise three district councils (Buller, Grey and Westland) and the West Coast Regional Council.

The application met the legal requirements for assessment as set out in the Local Government Act 2002.

The applicants asked for more efficient and cost-effective local government arrangements. They requested a simplified and unified local government system that would:

- unite communities
- provide an agreed vision to address issues, such as declining populations, economic challenges and the need to maintain infrastructure and services
- provide greater transparency and collaboration
- improve community representation and consultation
- reduce costs
- sustain rates at an affordable level
- standardise policies
- provide administrative efficiencies
- remove duplication, especially in relation to governance and management.

To inform the next steps in the reorganisation application process, the Commission felt that it was important to hear from the West Coast community about its views on the current way their councils are set up and the way services are delivered. To this end, between 30 May and 8 July 2016, the Commission undertook extensive community engagement.

The Commission's role

The Commission is an independent statutory body with two main roles. It makes decisions in relation to how local authorities should be structured in response to applications for change, such as that received from the West Coast. It also determines electoral arrangements for councils where council decisions on these arrangements are appealed to the Commission.

In addition, the Commission has a role in promoting good local government that is efficient, effective and accountable to local communities. It places great emphasis on working collaboratively with communities and councils to come up with local solutions to local government issues.

The Commission's other work with West Coast councils

As well as the community engagement project, the Commission is also working with the West Coast Mayoral Forum on two regional efficiency projects – Resource Management Act planning processes and roading arrangements. These are potentially areas where efficiencies can be made to benefit West Coast residents, ratepayers and businesses.

These initiatives were selected for investigation because they had been identified by the West Coast councils as areas of common interest, and because there is the potential for significant gains to ratepayers from reviewing how these services are delivered.

The Commission and the West Coast councils are collaborating on this work.

Community engagement programme

The Local Government Commission (the Commission) launched the West Coast local government community engagement programme on 30 May 2016. The launch involved a press release, an opinion piece from Commissioner Annear and the release of web material advertising how the West Coast community could engage with the Commission – by attending a drop-in session or community workshop, or by filling in a questionnaire (available in hard copy and online).

Information about the community engagement programme was disseminated in pamphlets and posters, which were widely distributed from Karamea to Haast. Locations included council offices, public libraries, i-SITES, shops, cafes, museums, medical centres, hospitals, businesses, sports facilities, schools, polytechnics and other public spaces. On 8 June, pamphlets were inserted in *The West Coast Messenger*, a free weekly newspaper with a distribution of 15,100 to households and local facilities.

Advertisements ran on two West Coast radio stations and in the West Coast daily and community newspapers. Community engagement information was circulated on council and i-SITE facebook pages and via various West Coast community email databases.

Questionnaire

West Coast residents and ratepayers were invited to fill in a questionnaire that was available in the pamphlet, and which could be returned by freepost, or online via www.lgc.govt.nz.

The deadline for completing the questionnaire was 8 July. A total of 699 questionnaires were returned to the Commission and this report includes a detailed analysis of the responses.

Drop-in sessions, community workshops and other submissions

West Coast residents and ratepayers were invited to share their thoughts about local government arrangements with Commission representatives at evening workshops and daytime drop-in sessions.

The following drop-in sessions and community workshops were held:

Drop-in sessions (12.00pm – 3.30pm)	Community workshops (7pm)
Wed 15 June: Karamea i-SITE	Wed 15 June: Karamea Bowling Club
Thu 16 June: Reefton i-SITE	Thu 16 June: Reefton, St John Meeting Rooms
Mon 20 June: Fox Glacier Emergency Services Centre	Mon 20 June: Franz Josef Medical Centre
Tue 21 June: Haast Hall	Tue 21 June: Haast Hall

Thu 23 June: Hokitika, Westland District Library	Thu 23 June: Hokitika, St John Meeting Rooms
Tue 28 June: Greymouth, Grey District Library	
Wed 29 June: Westport i-SITE	Wed 29 June: Westport Bridge Club
Thu 30 June: Greymouth, Grey District Library	Thu 30 June: Greymouth, Kingsgate Hotel

More than 80 people came to the drop-in sessions to share their views on West Coast local government arrangements, in one-on-one discussions with Commission representatives. Discussion centred on the five key questions. Comments made by these people were recorded by Commission representatives and were used in the analysis in this report.

A similar number of people attended the seven evening workshops. The workshops commenced with short introductions about the process, followed by a group discussion focusing on the five key questions with views invited from those attending. Comments were recorded by Commission representatives and are set out in this report under each district.

A few separate submissions from individuals were received and the comments from these were also taken into account in the analysis in this report.

Stakeholder meetings

The Commission met with stakeholder groups during June. These meetings were with representatives from: Federated Farmers (West Coast Province), Reefton Business Association, Westland Milk Products, Enterprise Hokitika, Westroads, Westland Ratepayers and Residents Association, the Department of Conservation (Western South Island), Tourism West Coast, New Coasters, West Coast Young Professionals, Forest and Bird (West Coast), Punakaiki Business Association, Makaawhio and Mawhera Incorporation. In total, 44 people attended stakeholder meetings. Comments at these meetings were noted down by Commission representatives and considered in the preparation of this report.

Questions considered by the community

Drop-in sessions, community workshops and stakeholder meetings

At the eight daytime drop-in sessions, seven evening community workshops and 14 stakeholder meetings the following five key questions were explored:

1. What are the big challenges and opportunities for the West Coast?
2. What do you like about the current way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered?
3. Is there anything about the way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered, that you would like to change?
4. Are there any council services you think would be better delivered over a wider area as shared services by existing councils?
5. Should some councils be combined?

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was the main means of providing feedback to the Commission in a way that could be quantified.

The questionnaire could be completed on paper via the pamphlet *West Coast Local Government – What do you think?* or online via www.lgc.govt.nz

The Commission set up the online questionnaire in Survey Monkey with a restriction that multiple responses could not be sent from the same computer. Efforts were made to ensure that the questionnaire process was fair and limited the opportunity for ‘campaign’ style submissions that might skew responses.

The Commission did a quality control check of a random selection of responses which included a check for obvious multiple responses from the written questionnaires.

The questionnaire questions were:

1. How important is it that your district council is retained?

(not very important) 1 2 3 4 5 (very important)

Please tell us why:

2. How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?
(not very important) 1 2 3 4 5 (very important)

Please tell us why:

3. How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?
(not very satisfied) 1 2 3 4 5 (very satisfied)

Please tell us why:

4. How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?
(not very satisfied) 1 2 3 4 5 (very satisfied)

Please tell us why:

5. Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Yes No I don't know

If yes, please tell us which services should be shared, how and why:

6. Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

The West Coast community is currently represented by the Buller District Council, the Grey District Council and the Westland District Council and by the West Coast Regional Council.

Yes No I don't know

If yes, please tell us which councils should combine:

7. Are you a resident or ratepayer in the West Coast region?

Yes No

8. Can you please tell us where in the region you live?

Buller District Grey District Westland District N/A

We want to make sure that we are getting the views of a wide range of the community. The following questions are optional and any personal information you provide will not be used for other purposes.

9. Which age group do you fall into?

(0 – 24), (25 – 44), (45 – 64), (65+)

Region-wide feedback

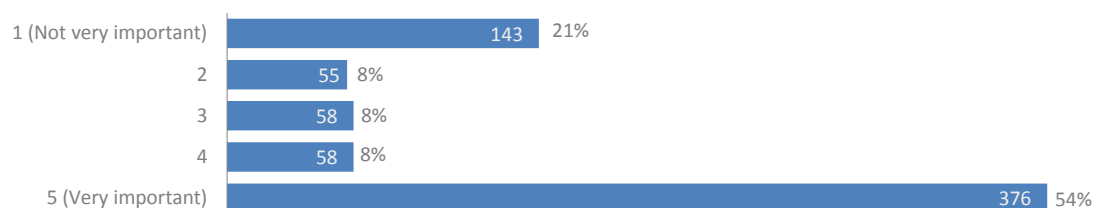
This section provides an overall region-wide summary of the feedback the Local Government Commission (the Commission) received in the three districts. It covers, firstly, the overall questionnaire results and then some common themes identified from the drop-in sessions, community workshops and stakeholder meetings. Later sections provide a breakdown of the feedback by district.

Questionnaire¹

1. How important is it that your district council is retained?

Graph 1 shows that 434 of the 690 West Coast respondents to this question (62%) gave high importance (i.e. either a '4' or '5') to retaining their district council, while 198 (29%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining their district council.

Graph 1



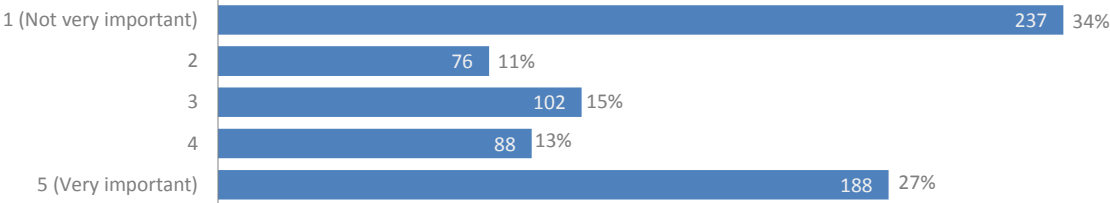
The proportion of people attaching high importance to retaining their district council ranged from 70% in Buller District to 51% in Grey District, while the proportion of people attaching low importance to this ranged from 25% in Buller District to 34% in Grey District.

2. How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Graph 2 shows that 276 of the 691 West Coast respondents to this question (40%) gave high importance (either a '4' or '5') to retaining the regional council, while 313 (45%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining the regional council.

¹ Not all 699 respondents answered all questions in the questionnaire. The number answering each question is noted under the analysis of each individual question.

Graph 2



The proportion of people attaching high importance to retaining the regional council ranged from 45% in Westland District to 36% in Grey District, while those attaching low importance to this ranged from 40% in Westland District to 50% in Buller District.

3. How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Graph 3 shows that 300 of the 691 West Coast respondents to this question (44%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either a '4' or '5') with the services provided by their district council, while 231 (33%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

Graph 3

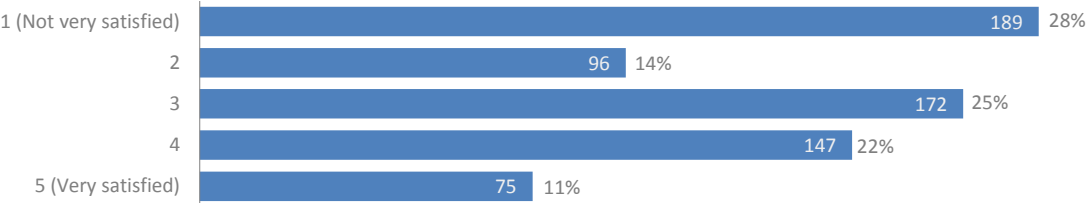


The proportion of people satisfied or very satisfied with the provision of services by their district council ranged from 50% in Buller District to 37% in Westland District, while those not satisfied or not very satisfied ranged from 23% in Buller District to 45% in Westland District.

4. How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Graph 4 shows that 222 of the 679 West Coast respondents to this question (33%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either '4' or '5') with West Coast Regional Council services, while 285 (42%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

Graph 4

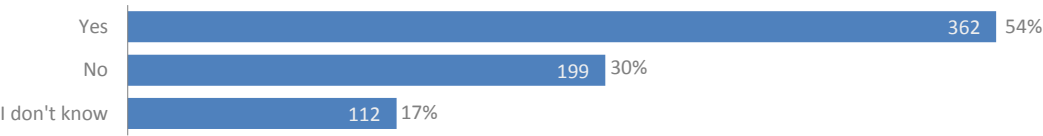


The proportion of people satisfied or very satisfied with the provision of services by the regional council ranged from 37% in Westland District to 24% in Buller District, while those not satisfied or not very satisfied ranged from 36% in Westland District to 51% in Buller District.

5. Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Graph 5 shows that 362 of the 673 West Coast respondents to this question (54%) thought some services would be better delivered as shared services over a wider area, while 199 of the 673 respondents (30%) didn't think any services would be better delivered as shared services.

Graph 5



The proportion of people who thought some services would be better delivered as shared services ranged from 60% in Grey District to 50% in Buller District, while those who did not agree, ranged from 34% in Buller District to 19% in Grey District.

Suggestions from respondents about the services that could be shared included: in-house functions such as information technology, human resources and finance/rating services; planning and resource management; regulatory functions such as building control; roading and transport; rubbish and recycling; other infrastructure services such as water; civil defence/emergency management; economic development; tourism and promotion; and community facilities.

6. Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

Graph 6 shows that 303 of the 692 West Coast respondents to this question (44%) thought some of the councils should be combined, while 346 (50%) didn't think any of the councils should be combined.

Graph 6



Those who thought some councils should be combined ranged from 61% in Grey District to 38% in both Buller and Westland districts, while those who didn't think any councils should be combined ranged from 32% in Grey District to 57% in both Buller and Westland districts.

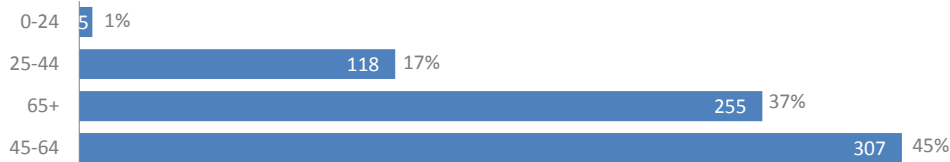
Possible combinations of councils suggested by respondents included: Buller and Nelson/Tasman; Grey and Buller; Grey and Westland; one regional council and one district council for the West Coast; three unitary councils for this area; one unitary council for this area.

7. Which age group do you fall into?

In order to get an indication of whether the engagement had reached a cross-section of the West Coast community, respondents were asked to indicate the age group they fell into.

Graph 7 shows that across the West Coast, the largest age group responding to the questionnaire was the 45-64 age bracket (45%) followed by the 65+ age bracket (37%). Some 14 people skipped this question.

Graph 7



Drop-in sessions, community workshops and stakeholder meetings

A wide range of comments were made by participants in the drop-in sessions, at the community workshops and at the stakeholder meetings in response to the five key questions.

The numbers of people in the drop-in sessions supporting some sharing of services or the combining of some councils are shown on a district by district basis in the following sections of this report. Records of the comments made at the community workshops in response to all five questions are also provided on a district by district basis in the following sections.

There was a good degree of commonality across both the drop-in sessions and the workshops about the challenges and opportunities that the West Coast faces (question one) and these are summarised as follows.

Challenges

Many people identified the fact that the West Coast is a large and geographically challenging area with a small and scattered population. Another frequent comment was that approximately 85% of the area is Crown land/Department of Conservation estate which is non-rateable. This, coupled with the small population, was seen as resulting in the West Coast having a very limited resource base to provide local government services.

People spoke about employment declining with the closure/winding down of extractive industries particularly mining and forestry, and other business closures such as Holcim in Westport recently. Apart from tourism, many felt that few other employment opportunities have arisen to replace these job losses and that many people, particularly the young, are forced to leave the West Coast to find work or for further education opportunities.

A number of people raised what they saw as unreasonable regulatory compliance requirements “imposed by Wellington” which placed significant barriers to development and the creation of new employment opportunities.

Tourism was seen as both a challenge and an opportunity by many people. It provides challenges in terms of the pressure it puts on existing infrastructure, which is exacerbated by the limited resource base for providing required levels of service. Many called on central government to provide funding for the West Coast or at least more tools, such as various forms of tourist levies, to enable councils to meet the demand for services arising from growing numbers of tourists.

Factors such as global warming, flooding and coastal erosion were identified as increasing and urgent challenges. Franz Josef, in particular, was seen as having significant physical challenges affecting the township and its local residents and businesses.

Other challenges discussed were the internet being not yet properly rolled out to the more remote parts of the West Coast, and that there are large areas where there is no mobile phone coverage, particularly in southern Westland.

Opportunities

The West Coast’s unique environment, beauty and physical features (e.g. the glaciers) were identified by many as positive features. As a result, tourism was seen as the main opportunity for the area. But people considered that outside assistance, particularly from central government, was required for its potential to be fully realised.

Agriculture, including dairy farming but also particular horticultural crops in certain areas, was seen by some as having potential for further development. A focus on agriculture was also seen as part of a necessary diversification away from traditional West Coast extractive industries and towards more sustainable long-term options.

Economic development was seen as important for diversification reasons and to create new employment opportunities particularly for young people. There were comments that these opportunities could be encouraged through new technology and interconnectivity.

Some mentioned the lifestyle and “community feel” of the West Coast, and West Coasters being “a unique breed”, as other positives which needed to be protected and promoted.

Buller District feedback

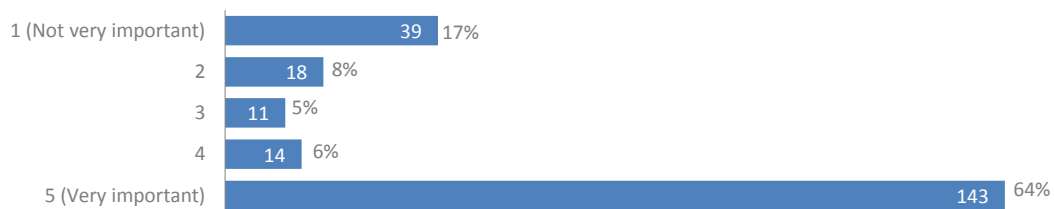
The feedback the Local Government Commission received from Buller District came from the questionnaire, three drop-in sessions and three community workshops (Karamea, Reefton and Westport). This feedback is summarised below.

Questionnaire

1. How important is it that your district council is retained?

Graph 8 shows that 157 of the 225 Buller respondents to this question (70%) gave high importance (i.e. either a '4' or '5') to retaining their district council, while 57 (25%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining their district council.

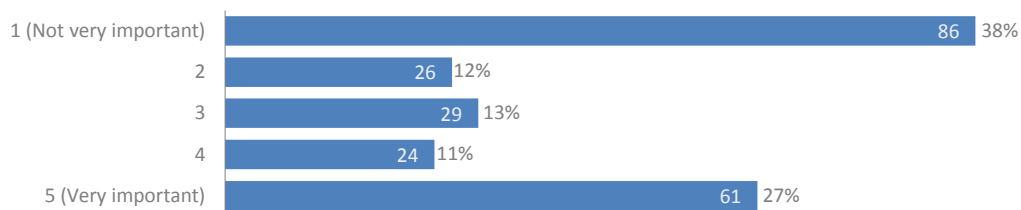
Graph 8



2. How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Graph 9 shows that 85 of the 226 Buller respondents to this question (38%) gave high importance (either a '4' or '5') to retaining the regional council, while 112 (50%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining the regional council.

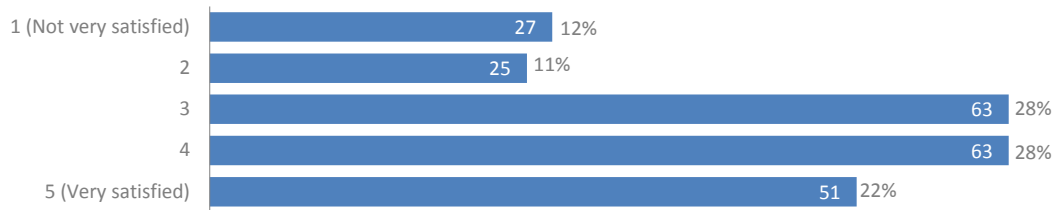
Graph 9



3. How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Graph 10 shows that 114 of the 229 Buller respondents to this question (50%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either '4' or '5') with the services provided by their district council, while 52 (23%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

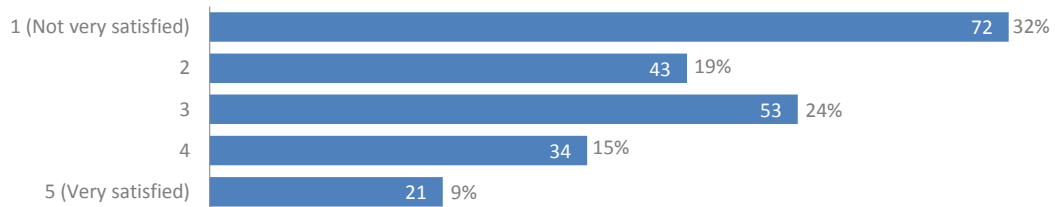
Graph 10



4. How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Graph 11 shows that 55 of the 223 Buller respondents to this question (24%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either '4' or '5') with the services provided by West Coast Regional Council, while 115 (51%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

Graph 11



5. Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Graph 12 shows that 111 of the 220 Buller respondents to this question (50%) thought some services would be better delivered as shared services over a wider area, while 74 (34%) didn't think any services would be better delivered as shared services.

Graph 12



6. Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

Graph 13 shows that 86 of the 226 Buller respondents to this question (38%) thought some of the councils should be combined, while 127 (57%) didn't think any of the councils should be combined.

Graph 13



Drop-in sessions

Three drop-in sessions were held in Buller District, in: Karamea, Reefton and Westport.

Table 1 shows the responses at the drop-in sessions to the question ‘Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?’

Table 1

Location	Yes	No	Don’t know/unclear/ did not respond
Karamea	3	-	2
Reefton	-	2	2
Westport	5	1	5

There were a range of suggestions made for services that could be shared between the existing councils. These included: roading, building inspections, libraries, civil defence, planning, and a number of in-house administrative functions including chief executives. It was also suggested by some that all services could potentially be looked at as possible candidates for shared arrangements. On the other hand, some people did not support the sharing of services and considered that councils should just “stick to their own patches”.

Table 2 shows the responses at the drop-in sessions to the question ‘Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?’

Table 2

Location	Yes	No	Don’t know/unclear/ did not respond
Karamea	1	2	2
Reefton	2	2	-
Westport	3	8	-

Options suggested for the combining of councils included: one council for the West Coast, or the removal of the regional council and for its services to be allocated to the three district councils. Others considered that the regional council and district councils had different and quite distinct roles. The option of Buller combining with Tasman/Nelson districts was also identified, and also Grey and Westland districts combining. Some people questioned whether fewer councils would work better, or whether this would reduce costs, given the size of West Coast.

Community workshops

Three community workshops were held in Buller District. Seven people attended in Karamea, 13 in Reefton and 17 in Westport. The responses to the five key questions, as expressed by those who attended and as recorded by the Commission’s representatives, are set out below.

1. What are the big challenges and opportunities for the West Coast?

Karamea	Reefton	Westport
<p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low population/population levels • 40% of population shifts out of Karamea • Young people sent out of region for schooling • Low school rolls (e.g. 9 secondary school students) • Retaining schools and other services • Access to health services • Good health services important • Parochialism • % of DOC land non-rateable • Lack of economic growth • Unemployment • Ability to find staff if new business created • Pressure on infrastructure from tourism • Facilities for tourists e.g. rubbish disposal • Balancing tourists numbers and ‘feel of isolation’ • Roading • Water supply to particular areas • Internet not properly rolled out to ends of valleys • More internet, broadband and cellphone coverage needed • Power reticulation to Karamea • Potential electricity price increases <p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength is the West Coast lifestyle and community feel • Extra 40 families in Karamea would make a big difference • Increasing tourist visitors • Attracting people from lower North Island to region/district for biking (airport) • More people doing Heaphy track, but not staying long enough • Understanding why people want to visit in the first place • Diversifying economy away from mining/economic growth • Focus on smaller businesses as well as big projects 	<p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance • Small population • Representation given the area/population • 85% of area locked up under DOC/pays no rates • NZ should pay for cost of locking up land • Rating base too small to offset tourism pressures • Tourist numbers – they should pay for facilities • Young can’t get jobs • Regulations in relation to coal burning, given reliance on it for heating • Cyclical nature of mining etc., impact of overseas markets e.g. mining, cement • Green issues squash good ideas • West Coast dictated to by outsiders/locals have no say • Hydro-electricity potential prevented by objectors <p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A carbon tax recognising native bush areas • Generating employment from area now locked up 	<p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change/sea level rise (1 metre in next 50-80 years) • Length of West Coast/remoteness • Number and location of people • Lack of cohesive identity for West Coast • Ageing population, lack of public transport • Loss of young people (all towns) for careers elsewhere • Lack of opportunities for young people e.g. apprenticeship training • Ongoing economic decline, loss of industry, employment/wages (Stockton, harbours, Holcim = 1,000 jobs/\$70m. income) • Dairying fluctuations • Numbers of casual and part-time workers/limited hours • Other costs from closure of Holcim e.g. impact on cost of power • Lack of rateable land/87% DOC land • Lack of investment in infrastructure • Demands of tourism • Cost of consents/approvals • Regulations for business e.g. health and safety • Different issues of West Coast with its small remote communities, compared to metropolitan issues of Auckland, Wellington etc, but same rules still imposed here • Second rate internet services <p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism, the outdoor nature and activities, coastline, beauty of area • Land for growth • New industry • Climatic differences e.g. horticulture opportunities • Investigation of land-use potential • Dairying without irrigation (not upper Grey Valley) • Commercial fishing school (30 at any time) • Friendly, safe community accommodating to newcomers • Need for central government assistance/investment

2. What do you like about the current way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered?

Karamea	Reefton	Westport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice is heard with a local council • Local proximity of council is important • Local representation important/ local representatives know local issues/understand local context and history • Unusual for council not to adopt recommendations • Local library services • Good when councils collaborate • Good when councils save money by working together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You get to know who the mayor and councillors are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils based on communities of interest, 'local colour' • Provides representation for each area/meets local needs/well understood by community • Able to come to Westport to use council services/easy to contact • Local staff/localised attention • Tailored services to individual district • Local library • Westreef of great benefit to council

3. Is there anything about the way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered, that you would like to change?

Karamea	Reefton	Westport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want councillors for each of the main areas within the wards • Mayor should have more powers • More communication between councils • More collaboration • Everyone on septic tanks, so no community systems • Better rubbish systems/no door-to-door collection/bins no good for rural areas • Rural people not getting same services as urban people • Westreef, harbour and airport companies: sell them if not turning a profit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More use of council staff rather than contractors • Reefton losing out as staff have to come from Westport • CCOs should be responsible for state highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cost effective delivery of services, including by central government • Balance of general rates and targeted rates • Westreef structure: perception it delivers 95% of council services, other services are not relevant should be able to provide for oneself • Potential for savings

4. Are there any council services you think would be better delivered over a wider area as shared services by existing councils?

Karamea	Reefton	Westport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic view for shared services needed, but keep local management • Regional things: vision and commonalities of West Coast, develop strategy for districts • Removal of duplication of roles of four councils • Role of regional council to oversee shared things • Districts retain district services • RMA planning/combined think tank on town planning • Joint planning while keeping geographic differences • Economic development and tourism e.g. freedom camping areas • Civil defence collaboration while keeping local presence • Keeping local knowledge e.g. bridges with the same issues known over a long period • Tendering of road grading across region • Rates collections (one centre) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool expertise across West Coast for better utilisation of resources • Planning • Roading • Coordinated public transport • Refuse collection • One chief executive for West Coast • Merge top level management while retaining local workforce/organise staff across West Coast • Administrative functions/IT/HR/finance/office functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for rationalising/cost reductions across three councils • Four councils for 32,000 people seems excessive, must be duplication leading to higher rates • Technology provides opportunity to share services • Give priority to functions most ratepayers use • Civil defence planning and implementation • Planning e.g. district plan • Economic development • Tourism and marketing • Water supply • Rubbish collection and disposal • Libraries • Pools • Compliance functions • Building consents • Insurance procurement • Rating system for West Coast • One CEO • Expertise should be shared by councils/ speak same language • One person gets 'ticket' for a particular service, trains/mentors others/shares expertise with other councils • Needs sensitivity re individuals' jobs • Need to carefully check projected savings

5. Should some councils be combined?

Karamea	Reefton	Westport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No to amalgamation of the four councils/leave as they are • Outlying areas will be disadvantaged • Area/distance too big for combining • Keep existing councils with more shared services • Buller doesn't have enough people to function properly/ warrant new wastewater systems etc • Merge Grey and Westland districts • Link with Tasman rather than West Coast • Partner with others but keep separate identity • Amalgamate everything around Westport • What would combining councils mean for local Karamea services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of local identity/Karamea to Haast has little in common • Get rid of regional council/ duplicates services • Buller links to Nelson sometimes • People often travel to Greymouth • One mayor for West Coast would be a big job • Combine all four councils • All the same phone code now • What would be the total number of councillors? Compared to Auckland? Link to level of savings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present cost of providing infrastructure to 32,000 people • Expertise the key issue, small regional councils struggle, bigger unitary would have more expertise in-house • One council with local representation recognising special local characteristics • Distances politicians would have to travel under one council • Dynamic range of geographical features – leave regional council in place • Combine regional and district functions in the three areas • Consider existing communities of interest, traffic flows, commuting, location of shopping and services (e.g. Haast-Wanaka), emergency services etc • 90% of people live within 110km of Greymouth e.g. people in Punakaiki and Reefton shop in Greymouth • Buller losing Reefton would endanger the viability of Buller District • One unitary council for Grey and Westland with invitation for Punakaiki and Reefton to join, ask Westport what it wants to do • One council for Grey and Buller, one for Westland and entire West Coast • Impact of a Grey-Hokitika unitary structure would impact on Westport – become a unitary authority also? • Buller unitary authority would open up option of becoming part of Tasman reflecting Buller River catchment • Possible combining of Grey and Hokitika is their business (not ours) • Example of Auckland unitary authority is relevant

Grey District feedback

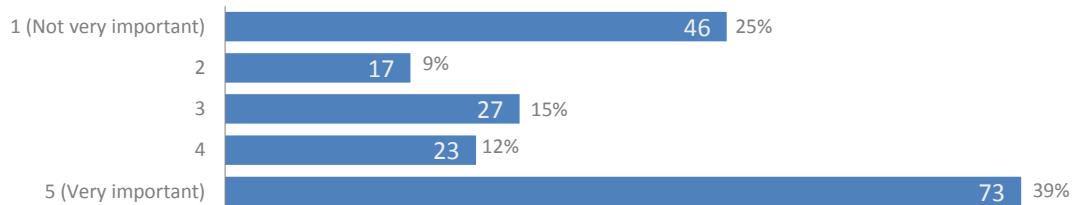
The feedback the Local Government Commission received from Grey District came from the questionnaire, two drop-in sessions and one community workshop (all held in Greymouth). This feedback is summarised below.

Questionnaire

1. How important is it that your district council is retained?

Graph 14 shows that 96 of the 186 Grey respondents to this question (51%) gave high importance (i.e. either a '4' or '5') to retaining their district council, while 63 (34%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining their district council.

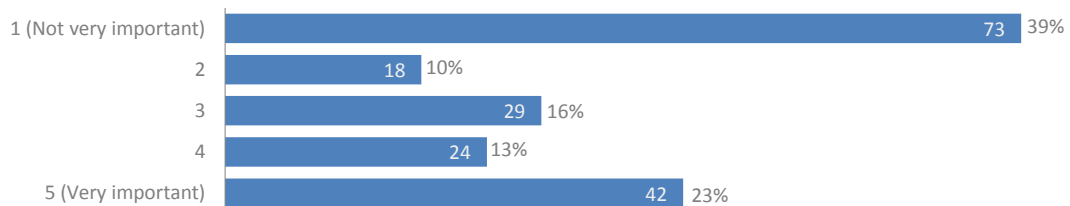
Graph 14



2. How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Graph 15 shows that 66 of the 186 Grey respondents to this question (36%) gave high importance (either a '4' or '5') to retaining the regional council, while 91 (49%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining the regional council.

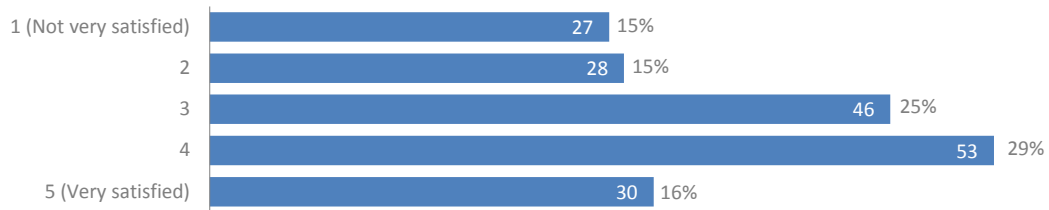
Graph 15



3. How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Graph 16 shows that 83 of the 184 Grey respondents to this question (45%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either '4' or '5') with the services provided by their district council, while 55 (30%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

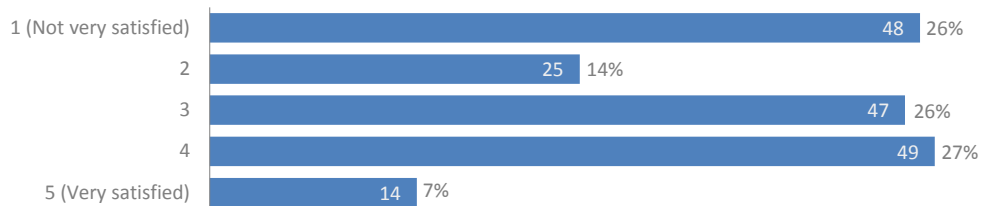
Graph 16



4. How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Graph 17 shows that 63 of the 183 Grey respondents to this question (34%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either '4' or '5') with the services provided by West Coast Regional Council, while 73 (40%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

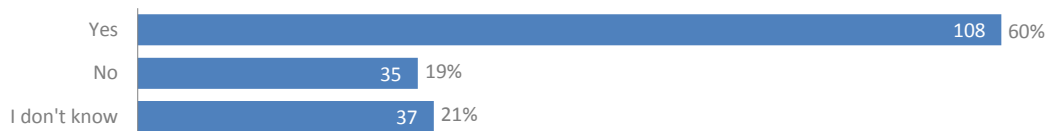
Graph 17



5. Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Graph 18 shows that 108 of the 180 Grey respondents to this question (60%) thought some services would be better delivered as shared services over a wider area, while 35 (19%) didn't think any services would be better delivered as shared services.

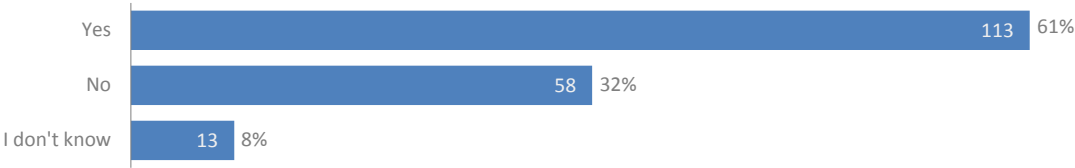
Graph 18



6. Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

Graph 19 shows that 113 of the 184 Grey respondents to this question (61%) thought some of the councils should be combined, while 58 (32%) didn't think any of the councils should be combined.

Graph 19



Drop-in sessions

Two drop-in sessions were held in Grey District, both in Greymouth.

Table 3 shows the responses at the drop-in sessions to the question ‘Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?’

Table 3

Location	Yes	No	Don’t know/unclear/ did not respond
Greymouth	13	1	4

Suggestions for services that could be shared between the existing councils included: rating services, information technology and other administrative functions; engineering; resource management planning; libraries; museums; roading and other infrastructure. The view was also expressed by a few people that the sharing of a lot of services could become “a default for a unitary authority”. Others questioned the savings that would result from sharing of services.

Table 4 shows the responses at the drop-in sessions to the question ‘Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?’

Table 4

Location	Yes	No	Don’t know/unclear/ did not respond
Greymouth	14	3	1

Options suggested by some for the combining of councils included one council for the West Coast while others thought such a council would not work given the size and geography of the West Coast and each district having its own interests and identities. Other suggestions included the combining of the functions of the regional council with those of the three districts to form three unitary authorities, or combining Grey and Westland districts. Some supported keeping the four existing councils as they are.

Community workshop

One workshop was held in Grey District (in Greymouth) with 11 people attending. The responses to the five key questions, as expressed by those who attended and as recorded by the Commission’s representatives, are set out below.

1. What are the big challenges and opportunities for the West Coast?

Greymouth

Challenges:

- Geographic area and size of population
- Current population profile: young people leave, gap between 18 to 30 year olds, increasing aged population, resulting in range of challenges such as health care
- Need for meaningful jobs for young people, attractions for them to stay
- Loss of population with the centralising of government departments
- Limited number of ratepayers
- 80% of area Crown land
- Is West Coast a sustainable area?
- Tourism at a complex stage – drive through tourists add little value
- Cost of tourist infrastructure shouldn't be cost to ratepayers, other funding mechanisms needed e.g. bed tax
- Now getting less from central government need alternative funding models
- Lack of funding for DOC, also its ongoing restructuring
- National regulatory framework the problem
- Bureaucracy working against local opportunities
- Encouraging entrepreneurs is a challenge
- Not attractive to invest here, need to better define jobs, income, values of area
- Environmental interests are strangling the region

Opportunities:

- Natural environment of West Coast provides opportunities but also need to recognise protected areas
- Turn tourism opportunities into real monetary value
- Brethren community has seeded businesses that do well
- New technology/interconnectivity needs to be encouraged as a counter to centralisation of government services
- Development and growth opportunities e.g. power generation opportunities behind Dobson

2. What do you like about the current way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered?

Greymouth

- Each area has its representative and advocate
- Allows local contact and facilitates talking with local people and solving local problems
- 'Open door' environment at Grey District Council
- Grey District has advantage of being a smaller area with a larger population
- West Coast Regional Council does a good job, easy to deal with, allows development subject to sensible environmental conditions

3. Is there anything about the way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered, that you would like to change?

Greymouth

- Grey District Council doesn't listen to the community e.g. town square
- Issues with town square development, lots of money on plans but only \$1 million for doing work
- Issues with money coming from Development West Coast
- Council minutes not helpful
- CE has too much control, needs to give power back to councillors
- Not good consultation – done by announcing decisions, how does the people's voice get heard?
- Council culture based on compliance not growth opportunities
- Work contracted out as council don't have capacity and expertise, too many consultants
- Staff afraid of stepping outside of established boundaries, policies & practices
- Council needs to think like a business, not treat ratepayers as a bottomless funding pit
- There's no competition for councils – needs unbundling of council services, ability to approach another council for service
- Use local contractors
- Staff performance reviews undertaken by themselves
- Consent processes take too long e.g. for mining
- Approvals/agreement required of other parties e.g. iwi, DOC, Fish & Game, council can't get all the blame for delays
- Interaction with DOC important/but present frustrations, DOC not being obstructive limited by legislation, restructuring
- Civil defence 'a joke', non-existent

4. Are there any council services you think would be better delivered over a wider area as shared services by existing councils?

Greymouth

- There was a proposal for sharing resource consent staff with Westland District Council but this was canned after last election
- West Coast Regional Council could take on some more functions
- One CEO with three deputies to cover the area, similar structure for engineering and other services
- Look at co-location of staff

5. Should some councils be combined?

Greymouth

- If it makes economic sense, then consider this against issues of local identity and representation
- One council would be more efficient with information sharing and joint decision-making
- What the population wants is different in different areas
- Amalgamation doesn't automatically mean savings
- Likely to mean empire building, increases in staff, etc
- Auckland reforms had no savings, costs gone up
- Council culture is important to promote competence, more important than the number of councils
- As long as staff are doing a good job it doesn't matter how many councils there are
- West Coast Regional Council expertise is totally different to district councils – should be retained
- Regional council functions not performed well under unitary authority model – dilutes safeguards
- Integrity of services versus more efficiency
- Gisborne District Council had early concerns about lack of separation of regional and district functions
- Rural/urban split rather than three districts, rural councils wouldn't need to provide urban services
- Different levels of debt of the existing councils, Grey doesn't want to take on the debt of others

Westland District feedback

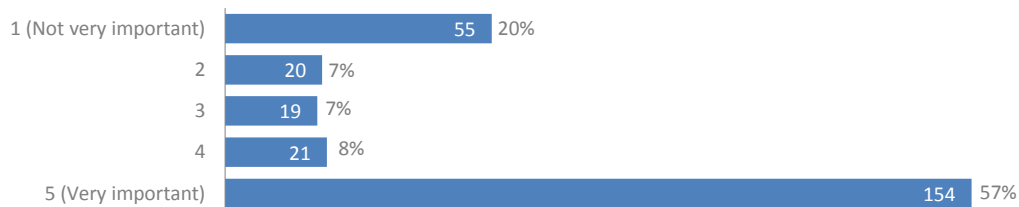
The feedback the Local Government Commission received from Westland District came from the questionnaire, three drop-in sessions (Fox Glacier, Haast and Hokitika) and three community workshops (Franz Josef, Haast and Hokitika). This feedback is summarised below.

Questionnaire

1. How important is it that your district council is retained?

Graph 20 shows that 175 of the 269 Westland respondents to this question (65%) gave high importance (i.e. either a '4' or '5') to retaining their district council, while 75 (27%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining their district council.

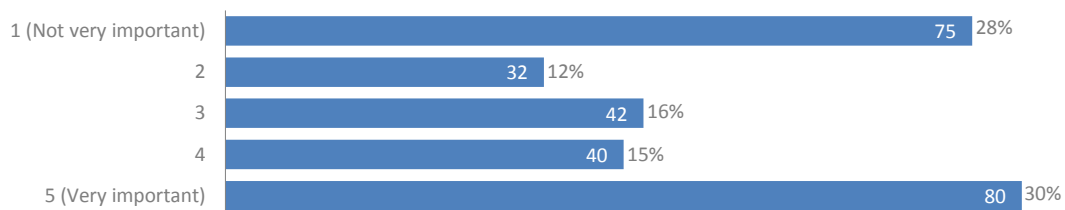
Graph 20



2. How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Graph 21 shows that 120 of the 269 Westland respondents to this question (45%) gave high importance (either a '4' or '5') to retaining the regional council, while 107 (40%) gave low importance (either a '1' or '2') to retaining the regional council.

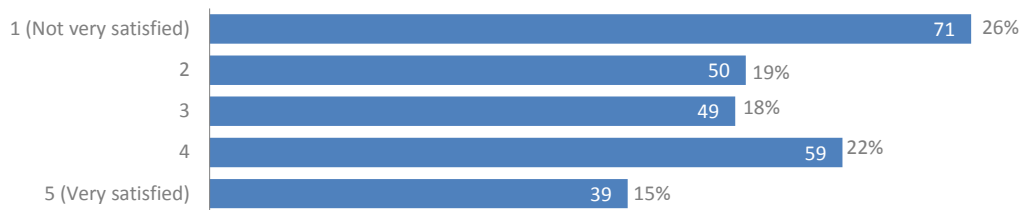
Graph 21



3. How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Graph 22 shows that 98 of the 268 Westland respondents to this question (37%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either '4' or '5') with the services provided by their district council, while 121 (45%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

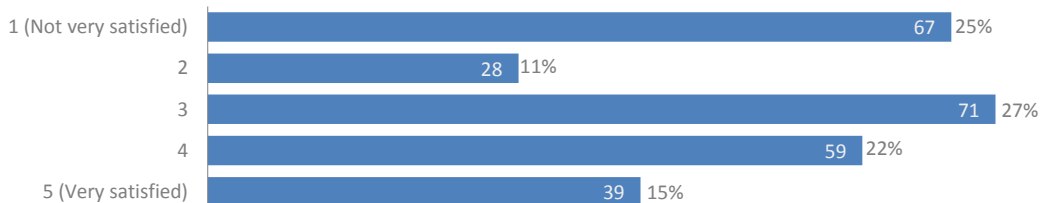
Graph 22



4. How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Graph 23 shows that 98 of the 264 Westland respondents to this question (37%) were satisfied or very satisfied (either '4' or '5') with the services provided by West Coast Regional Council, while 95 (36%) were not satisfied or not very satisfied ('1' or '2').

Graph 23



5. Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Graph 24 shows that 140 of the 263 Westland respondents to this question (53%) thought some services would be better delivered as shared services over a wider area, while 86 (33%) didn't think any services would be better delivered as shared services.

Graph 24



6. Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

Graph 25 shows that 101 of the 269 Westland respondents to this question (38%) thought some of the councils should be combined, while 152 (57%) didn't think any of the councils should be combined.

Graph 25



Drop-in sessions

Three drop-in sessions were held in Westland District, in Fox Glacier, Haast and Hokitika.

Table 5 shows the responses at the drop-in sessions to the question ‘Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?’

Table 5

Location	Yes	No	Don’t know/unclear/ did not respond
Fox Glacier	1	-	-
Haast	5	-	1
Hokitika	18	2	9

Suggestions for services that could be shared between the existing councils included: health and other regulatory functions, building permits, planning, civil defence, roading, tourist promotion, waste management, and in-house services such as information technology, finance, payroll and human resources. Some people doubted the savings that would be achieved and thought standards may slip in the smaller towns.

Table 6 shows the responses at the drop-in sessions to the question ‘Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?’

Table 6

Location	Yes	No	Don’t know/unclear/ did not respond
Fox Glacier	-	-	1
Haast	4	1	1
Hokitika	10	17	2

Options suggested by some for the combining of councils included combining all four councils, combining the three district councils, or the existing district councils taking on regional council functions. Other people thought the distances were too great for one council and that the three districts were too different and should be retained.

Community workshops

Three community workshops were held in Westland District. Nine people attended in Franz Josef, eight in Haast and 19 in Hokitika. The responses to the five key questions, as expressed by those who attended and as recorded by the Commission’s representatives, are set out below.

1. What are the big challenges and opportunities for the West Coast?

Franz Josef	Haast	Hokitika
<p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small population • Distance • Spread out communities • 75% of region is DOC land • Small rating base/not enough ratepayers • Dealing with what's now happening with the glaciers/shrinking • River the main risk to Franz Josef/maintenance issues • Building on faultline since the 1950s • Avoidance zone – businesses stymied/rating policy/council not interested in solutions/lack of a logical plan • Franz Josef would go ahead if given the green light • Hard to attract people to live/work in area/a lack of facilities • Drop in property values • Decline in/lack of investment • Growth dependent on infrastructure paid through rates • Cost of services e.g. local sewage plant (\$1200/pan) • Franz Josef doesn't get fair share of funding • Paying twice – infrastructure and tourism costs • Seasonal fluctuations in tourist numbers a big issue • Number of temporary structures including their aesthetics <p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying economic activities while still taking glaciers into account • Tourism growth (coming out of 5-year growth) 	<p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global warming • Coastal erosion/urgency of work required including planning and consultation • Loss of industry (e.g. timber, fishing), number of houses for sale on West Coast • Less employment • People leaving the coast • Haast has gone backwards/difficult to do anything in Haast • Compensation for loss of logging/what happened to the money? • Tourist facilities paid by rates • Rates base too small • 90% DOC land not rateable, means others' rates higher • World heritage status and its impact on rates • RMA makes it difficult for councils to do things • Wastage from trees blown over/can't be processed • Rest of NZ making decisions for us e.g. forestry, mining • National standards need to recognise local conditions <p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Coasters a 'unique breed' • Tourism 	<p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global warming – effects on coastline and glaciers • Glaciers shrinking – needs planning • Static population • Demographic profile of West Coast including incomes, ageing population, numbers under 20 • School deciles • Unemployment/low rate of employment • Rates affordability • Tough for businesses, rates too high, so moving away • High level of property sales • Return on investment not the same as in Auckland • Need to attract businesses to town • Lack of coordination of key parties • Overlap with DOC services • No strategy for what people do when they move to West Coast • Lack of expertise in promotion, investment, infrastructure • Business needs to diversify • Changes in traditional industries of forestry, fishing, mining, farming and tourism • Mining is of 'boom and bust' nature rather than steady development • Farming now more efficient – requires less labour • Why is dairying downturn a challenge – it is farmers' problem • No more land for dairying • Location of dairy factory in town • Need marketing strategy promoting West Coast including for getting people to stay longer • Tourism reliant on state of overseas economies • Tourism not so 'efficient', needs to be more sustainable • National legislation needs to change to encourage innovation and free up investment money • Loss of West Coast 'can do' attitude • Too much 'green' influence, stopping creation of new industry/business

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many central government legislative and regulatory compliance requirements, needs to swing the other way • Local Government Act and amendments • Councils are policemen for central govt./council debt a result of governmental standards • RMA restrictions on land use • Need either lower standards/do less, or more income • West Coast has same rules that apply to Auckland! • Need central government financial assistance particularly for infrastructure including roading • More local flexibility to fund locally rather than central government funding • Need alternative funding sources/ attract revenue e.g. spread cost of roads on tourists • Need (national park) tourism levy to raise income as population base is static • Need to have united voice to speak to central government including for freeing up of funds <p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No point considering opportunities if there is insufficient income to develop/ support these • Economic development opportunities • Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment growth study • Focus on/limit tourist numbers, different tourist experiences and longer stays (not just driving through) • Value-added industry e.g. logs now sent to Christchurch • DOC estate an asset, generates employment – needs consultation with DOC • Creation of ‘green’ industries particularly in farming and tourism • Dairy downturn will pass and good farmers will survive • People are now more mobile, can operate anywhere with assistance of technology
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2. What do you like about the current way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered?

Franz Josef	Haast	Hokitika
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much! • There are representation positives/do need local community representatives • Approachable 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good current structure, like having own council • Each location different, has own environmental issues • Small enough to know councillors

3. Is there anything about the way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered, that you would like to change?

Franz Josef	Haast	Hokitika
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little value from rates/don't get much back • Lack of services and accountability • Council promises not carried out • Too many executive decisions/council should be run by councillors • Lack of expertise • Lack of council vision/undertakes quick fixes/needs to be more proactive less reactive • Short-term thinking, needs better long-term planning/ allows development (e.g. motels) but doesn't look at infrastructure • Follow rule book when it suits/inconsistent application of rules/break own rules (e.g. sewage ponds) • Can't prosecute for breaches as insufficient funds • Don't process applications for licences in timely manner e.g. liquor • Better council systems for payment of rates/licences etc • Late council audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council decision-making, lack of transparency and consultation e.g. investment in 1080 'poison factory' • Quality and capacity of incumbents, time commitment, local councillor absent most of the time • Lack of strategic planning and consultation • Don't get good level of services • Rates not spent in local area • Westland District Council subdivisions on coast e.g. Okura, Neill's Beach not strategically planned • Approvals of 'Quitchatown'/ shantytown/whitebaiter huts on road reserves etc • Role of Westland District Council property company in above approvals • Better use of local knowledge • Poor local planning/decision-making e.g. location of/access to fire station • Rubbish dumping facilities deficient, contractors' hours, also facilities for tourists • Consenting and approval processes of West Coast Regional Council and DOC • West Coast Regional Council needs to pick up its act • Farmers do own flood protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better council decision-making e.g. promise of no cost to ratepayers for cycle trail, solutions but no costs given • More transparency in decision-making • Need vision for area and people (e.g. like Queenstown) • Council role is not to promote development/should get out of way • Better long-term planning particularly for environmental sustainability • Plain English financial reporting • More consultation, talk to people who know area etc • Improve way council disseminates information, current 'spin doctors' • Too much spent on consultants • Too much control by management • Cost of management/overhead costs/legal costs – impact on rates, needs due diligence exercise • Better access to council and councillors/behind closed doors • Project cost overruns • Multiple charging – rates, fees for inspections, consents, processing, checking • Improved efficiency – current \$150/hr charge out rate • More efficient planning/consenting processes • Learn from other areas with similar problems e.g. waste management • Councils need competition/others able to provide same services/public able to choose another service hub • Administration in Grey District Council is better

4. Are there any council services you think would be better delivered over a wider area as shared services by existing councils?

Franz Josef	Haast	Hokitika
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils need to learn to share better with all paying and getting value back • Generic functions not local specific issues e.g. river control • Building consents (some already outsourced) • Administration, HR, finance • Operational costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain regulatory services e.g. environmental health, dog control, noise (policy made in one place) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be more cooperation generally/share knowledge, each council reinvents wheel • Cooperation across West Coast and also across NZ, use of nation-wide planning and design frameworks • Current councils don't have necessary expertise e.g. cycle trail maintenance • Councils don't have money to fix things • One combined district plan, one regional strategy • Building consents • IT/software • Contract one finance manager (rather than in-house) • Accounting • Administration

5. Should some councils be combined?

Franz Josef	Haast	Hokitika
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four councils for 32,000 people is too many • More clout if unified • Would need local representation • There are pros and cons, would it stop council infighting? • Grey and Westland, Buller and Tasman • West Coast growing, needs representation • Could one council govern an area the size of the West Coast? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't need three councils • Do away with/lack of confidence in West Coast Regional Council • All one parliamentary electorate • Representation concerns/key issue about only one unitary council/how many councillors? • Can make amalgamation work if there is a will • Might be harder to contact bigger organisation/staff • What savings? • Go to Wanaka for some services but still a West Coaster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to be gained from combining • Too big an area/implementation wouldn't work • Own council good • Would lose representation for the different communities • Still need same number of representatives – so where are savings? • Would lose local touch/strong identifies of particular areas • Merged council would still have same problems e.g. 80% DOC land and no rates • Centralisation might increase costs • What about debt levels of existing councils? • Need to consider debt levels compared to assets • Auckland 'a disaster' • Worry about local council so jump to merger option/where is the vision? • At what point is there a cut-off – unitary for all of NZ? • What is the relationship between the 'Better local services' initiatives and reorganisation options? The community does want better services • Would be a better system to manage 32,000 people than four councils • Would address duplication of roles • Flooding a regional council responsibility but there is duplication • Westland has 8,000 people, 5,000 rateable properties – resulting income stream doesn't work for this area

The Commission's decisions and next steps

The Local Government Commission (the Commission) has considered the engagement results set out in this report and decided on next steps in respect of the reorganisation application it has received.

Community support for some change in local government arrangements

In order to continue with the process, the Commission needs to be satisfied there is a sufficient level of community support for local government reorganisation in each of the three districts on the West Coast. The questionnaire results show there is support for some changes in local government arrangements on the West Coast. These include the number of respondents who thought some councils should be combined: 86 of the 226 respondents in Buller District (38%); 113 of the 184 respondents in Grey District (61 per cent); and 101 of the 269 respondents in Westland District (38%). Region-wide, this translates to 44 per cent of respondents supporting the combining of some councils.

There was even stronger support among respondents to the questionnaire, for some council services being better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region. Region-wide, 362 of the 673 respondents (54%) thought some services would be better delivered as shared services.

The Commission has noted these and other results from the questionnaire, and also responses at the community workshops, drop-in sessions and stakeholder meetings. On the basis of all the feedback received, the Commission is satisfied there is a sufficient level of support for some change in local government arrangements on the West Coast.

Next steps

As the Commission has decided there is sufficient community support for some change, the next step is to invite alternative applications. It will invite these in February 2017, allowing time for the new councils elected at the October 2016 local authority elections to consider the matter and, if they wish, submit possible alternative applications following the Christmas/summer holiday break.

The Commission will develop high level options from the feedback it has received from the engagement programme undertaken on the West Coast and through its work with the West Coast councils on the regional efficiency projects. People will be able to comment on these options, if they wish, when they submit their own alternative applications.

The Commission will then identify the reasonably practicable options for consideration. These options are required to include status quo local government structural arrangements. If the Commission's preferred option is not the status quo arrangements, it will develop a draft reorganisation proposal which will be subject to further consultation.

Appendix – Data tables for questionnaire responses

Region-wide tables

Q1 How important is it that your district council is retained?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	376	54%
4	58	8%
3	58	8%
2	55	8%
1 (Not very important)	143	21%
Total	690	100%

Q2 How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	188	27%
4	88	13%
3	102	15%
2	76	11%
1 (Not very important)	237	34%
Total	691	100%

Q3 How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	122	18%
4	178	26%
3	160	23%
2	105	15%
1 (Not very satisfied)	126	18%
Total	691	100%

Q4 How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	75	11%
4	147	22%
3	172	25%
2	96	14%
1 (Not very satisfied)	189	28%
Total	679	100%

Q5 Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	112	17%
No	199	30%
Yes	362	54%
Total	673	100%

Q6 Should some councils be combined?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	43	6%
No	342	50%
Yes	304	44%
Total	689	100%

Q7 Are you a resident or ratepayer in the West Coast region?

Where respondent is resident	Number	Per cent
Westland District	270	38%
Buller District	229	33%
Grey District	187	27%
N/A	8	1%
Skipped question	5	1%

Q9 Which age group do you fall into?

Age group	Number	Per cent
65+	255	37%
45-64	307	45%
25-44	118	17%
0-24	5	1%

Buller District tables

Q1 How important is it that your district council is retained?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	143	64%
4	14	6%
3	11	5%
2	18	8%
1 (Not very important)	39	17%
Total	225	100%

Q2 How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	61	27%
4	24	11%
3	29	13%
2	26	12%
1 (Not very important)	86	38%
Total	226	100%

Q3 How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	51	22%
4	63	28%
3	63	28%
2	25	11%
1 (Not very satisfied)	27	12%
Total	229	100%

Q4 How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	21	9%
4	34	15%
3	53	24%
2	43	19%
1 (Not very satisfied)	72	32%
Total	223	100%

Q5 Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	35	16%
No	74	34%
Yes	111	50%
Total	220	100%

Q6 Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	13	6%
No	127	57%
Yes	86	38%
Total	226	100%

Q9 Which age group do you fall into?

Options	Number	Per cent
65+	108	39%
45-64	86	48%
25-44	29	13%
Total	223	100%

Grey District tables

Q1 How important is it that your district council is retained?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	73	39%
4	23	12%
3	27	15%
2	17	9%
1 (Not very important)	46	25%
Total	186	100%

Q2 How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Answer options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	42	23%
4	24	13%
3	29	16%
2	18	10%
1 (Not very important)	73	39%
Total	186	100%

Q3 How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	30	16%
4	53	29%
3	46	25%
2	28	15%
1 (Not very satisfied)	27	15%
Total	184	100%

Q4 How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	14	8%
4	49	27%
3	47	26%
2	25	14%
1 (Not very satisfied)	48	26%
Total	183	100%

Q5 Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	37	21%
No	35	19%
Yes	108	60%
Total	180	100%

Q6 Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	13	7%
No	58	32%
Yes	113	61%
Total	184	100%

Q9 Which age group do you fall into?

Answer Options	Number	Per cent
65+	60	33%
45-64	80	43%
25-44	43	23%
0-24	1	1%
Total	184	100%

Westland District tables

Q1 How important is it that your district council is retained?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	154	57%
4	21	8%
3	19	7%
2	20	7%
1 (Not very important)	55	20%
Total	269	100%

Q2 How important is it that the West Coast Regional Council is retained?

Answer options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very important)	80	30%
4	40	15%
3	42	16%
2	32	12%
1 (Not very important)	75	28%
Total	269	100%

Q3 How satisfied are you with the way your district council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	39	15%
4	59	22%
3	49	18%
2	50	19%
1 (Not very satisfied)	71	26%
Total	268	100%

Q4 How satisfied are you with the way the West Coast Regional Council provides its services?

Options	Number	Per cent
5 (Very satisfied)	39	15%
4	59	22%
3	71	27%
2	28	11%
1 (Not very satisfied)	67	25%
Total	264	100%

Q5 Do you think there are any council services that would be better delivered as shared services across the West Coast region or over part of the region?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	37	14%
No	86	33%
Yes	140	53%
Total	263	100%

Q6 Do you think any of the West Coast councils should be combined?

Options	Number	Per cent
I don't know	16	6%
No	152	57%
Yes	101	38%
Total	269	100%

Q9 Which age group do you fall into?

Answer Options	Number	Per cent
65+	103	38%
45-64	116	43%
25-44	45	17%
0-24	4	1%
Total	268	100%