

Annex C: Voting for Resource Management Decisions

Some resource management decisions require a different form of decision making (from the CTBs) to ensure the management of common pool resources (such as freshwater) has strong regional governance that isn't fragmented across catchments and that balances urban and rural interests.

Under the proposed model, voting rights within CTBs are largely allocated proportionally based on the population of each territorial authority. They will then be adjusted, following advice from the Local Government Commission, to ensure fair representation for communities of interest.

For certain resource management decisions, a strengthened role for rural districts is needed. This is because these decisions will often affect rural land and rural communities, the protection and allocation of water resources, and flood protection across urban and rural land.

The Government has agreed to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 with two new Acts: the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act. These Acts will require regional councils to:

- participate in the development of a region-wide **spatial plan chapter** of a combined regional plan, and
- develop and agree a **natural environment plan chapter** of a combined regional plan.

Ministers have decided that CTBs, if established, should be the decision-making body for both these new planning instruments.

Ministers have also decided that the relevant Minister would be able to appoint one member to a CTB for decisions on spatial plans and/or natural environment plans. Those appointees may or may not have voting rights at the Minister's discretion.

Finally, Ministers have decided that the voting arrangements CTBs use to make decisions on these new instruments would require that both:

1. CTB members representing more than 50% of the population support the resolution, and
2. more than 50% of CTB members with a voting mandate for decisions on spatial plan chapters and/or natural environment plan chapters, support the resolution.

This two-stage voting arrangement ensures that decisions reflect both population weight and broader district and rural interests. It also ensures that national level interests can have a 'voice' and influence on decisions where necessary.