

# CDC under fire over statement

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Carterton District Council's position on amalgamation has been labelled weak by two of its most vocal doubters, with councillors also taking issue with how the risks to the district were being presented.

Ron Shaw and Mike Osborne, who both failed to be elected to the council last year, came out swinging against the council's draft position statement on amalgamation during a council meeting on Wednesday.

But some sitting councillors also voiced concerns about the draft statement, arguing it needed to make clearer the risks to the district that amalgamation might bring, with the council later agreeing to do so.

Speaking in the public forum, Mr Shaw said the proposed position statement was weak, and was preoccupied by "empowering toothless community boards" and scoring the top office for Carterton.

It did not address the adverse effect on rural Carterton, particularly the weak representation of the Maungaraki ward.

That would require a lot of travelling for one person to cover a very large piece of land, he said.

Unsuccessful Carterton mayoral candidate Mike Osborne questioned the council's leadership, pointing out that at that time there had not been anything about the amalgamation on the council's website.



Carterton District Council discussed its position statement during its last meeting.

PHOTO/CHELSEA BOYLE

He also took issue with the agenda stating that the position statement was "not considered to be of significance under the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy".

But there might not be a Carterton District Council in 18 months, he said.

"The ramifications of this thing are huge, aren't they?"

The mayor was going to come from Masterton, he said.

People needed guidance from their council representatives, who had had the conversations with the Local Government Commission,

Mr Osborne said.

"I want to hear your opinions."

More noise was also needed from the councillors. Discussing the position statement with councillors, Mayor John Booth said the other councils would soon be releasing position statements.

Formulating the position statement was about "making it [proposed amalgamation] stronger and taking the Carterton perspective", he said.

"We spent quite a lot of time talking through this."

Cr Rebecca Vergunst said it needed to be clearer in the

statement that the council had not yet decided if it would support the amalgamation.

Cr Greg Lang said there was a concern in the community about the size of the Maungaraki ward and how it was represented.

The remuneration did not justify the workload and there was concern about the calibre of applicant it would attract.

"It is a big, big job."

Chief executive Jane Davis said they did not know what the remuneration was going to be.

She said because it was a bigger council, it could be assumed the

councillor's salaries would be bigger than what they are now.

Cr Jill Greatead said the risks for Carterton needed to be listed earlier in the statement. Councillor Ruth Carter also wanted to see the risks "right at the top".

Mr Booth agreed and said that would highlight a lot of the concerns people in the community had about the proposed amalgamation.

"That is something I am hearing. I am hearing it today."

The council opted to move the risks higher up in its position statement.

Mr Booth acknowledged there were different views about the proposed amalgamation around the table, to which Ms Greatead answered "you bet".

Mr Booth said the council would continue to show leadership by putting in a substantial submission to the Local Government Commission.

Ms Greatead asked about how they would amend the website and it was agreed a link would be put on display to the commission's website. Mr Booth said it was important because people needed to see it and talk about it.

The council also took on board the suggestion of Hurunui o Rangi iwi representative PJ Devonshire to reiterate the statements about increasing the support for community boards in favour of the Maori Standing Committee as well.