

Facility Partnerships Policy

Public feedback summary



This paper provides a summary of public feedback on the draft Facility Partnerships Policy, and an overview of the activities undertaken during the consultation period.

Key messages

- During July and August 2018 the public had the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Facility Partnerships Policy.
- Seventy-one responses were received online, by email and at a series of public drop-in sessions run at community venues across Auckland.
- Public feedback was highly supportive of the draft policy overall. Those providing feedback generally saw the value of having a policy for this activity, and were positive about its intent. Responses to questions about specific aspects of the policy were also strongly affirmative.
- Concerns mainly focused on how the policy will be applied and how the new approach will work in practice, rather than the content of the policy itself.

Background

1. On 12 June 2018 the Environment and Community Committee of Auckland Council approved the draft of the new Facility Partnerships Policy for public consultation (ENV/2018/74).
2. During July and August 2018, Community and Social Policy staff undertook a series of engagement activities on the draft policy. The intention was to gauge support for the proposed approach, and enable the draft to be refined before final adoption.
3. Staff engaged with local boards, advisory panels, members of the public and existing and prospective facility partners to outline the proposed approach and invite feedback on the draft.
4. A total of 71 public submissions were received on the draft policy during the consultation period. Anonymised comments from survey respondents have been included in the document.

Consultation questions

5. Public feedback was welcomed on any aspect of the policy, but respondents were invited to answer eight specific questions that tested key aspects of the policy:
 - a) Do you think the draft policy clearly outlines the **purpose and benefits** of facility partnership?
 - b) Do you think the **Treaty Principles** is an appropriate way to guide facility partnerships with Māori?
 - c) Do you think the combination of Track, Type and Scale is a useful way to **differentiate partnerships** and ensure our processes and requirements are appropriate?
 - d) Do you think these are the right **principles to guide our investment** in facility partnerships?
 - e) Do you agree with the council's position on **commercial activities** as part of facility partnerships, as outlined on pp. 31-32? Are there any commercial activities that you think should not be allowed?

- f) Do you think the **Lead Relationship Broker** is the best approach to ensuring the council can support quality partnership relationships?
- g) Do you think the **'Agreement' and 'Facility' sections** provide a helpful overview of the technical aspects of facility partnerships? What else should be in these sections?
- h) Did you find the policy document **easy to read and navigate**? Do you have any comments on how to improve it?

Key findings

- 6. Public feedback was highly supportive of the draft Facility Partnerships Policy overall. The responses to all of the specific questions asked were strongly affirmative, and the majority of respondents were positive about the intent and proposed approach of the draft policy.
- 7. Those providing feedback generally saw the value of having a policy for this activity. Some expressed frustrations with the process of initiating or maintaining a facility partnership in the past. They hoped that the new policy would lead to better investment decisions, and ensure that partnerships work for both partners and council. People also hoped the new approach would make it easier for partners to navigate council, get good support from council staff, and cut down on bureaucracy.
- 8. Respondents were positive about many specific aspects of the policy, particularly the investment principles, the proposal to enable appropriate commercial activities in facilities, and the establishment of Lead Relationship Brokers. The Track, Type and Scale model was welcomed for its ability to encompass a wide range of facility partnerships, and the intention to ensure processes and expectations are proportionate to the circumstances.
- 9. Where some respondents expressed criticism or concerns about the policy, it was more often about how it would be applied in practice than about the policy content itself. Some people were uncertain that the policy would be implemented as intended across the council, in a supportive and empowering way. Others questioned if the policy adequately allowed for the messy reality of facility partnerships.
- 10. Using the Treaty principles to guide partnerships with Māori was welcomed by most, but this was acknowledged as a complex area. Other concerns identified included how the investment principles will be applied and 'traded off', and whether some communities will be advantaged by the new approach.
- 11. Respondents appreciated the effort to make the policy document visually appealing and more accessible. While a number noted the complexity of the document, respondents generally found it easy to navigate and understandable.

Analysis of feedback by question

Do you think the draft policy clearly outlines the purpose and benefits of facility partnerships?

| Yes | Partially | No | Don't know | No response |
|-----|-----------|----|------------|-------------|
| 46 | 15 | 3 | 5 | 2 |

12. Public feedback on this question was strongly positive. Of the 71 respondents 46 thought the policy clearly outlined the purpose and benefits of facility partnerships.
13. Respondents were positive about the clarity of the policy document and felt that it provided clear direction.
14. Three respondents did not agree that the policy clearly outlined purpose and benefits, and 15 thought it did so partially, while five were unsure. Comments included that facility partnerships need to work for both council and partners, but the policy tends to focus mostly on the council's role.
15. Others recommended that evaluation of success should go both ways, with partners able to evaluate the council's performance and hold staff accountable, as well as the other way around.

"This is a great way for both council and other organisations to provide well managed facilities effectively in the community."

"[The policy] covers a broad spectrum of possibilities and defines concepts that have not been published before."

Do you think the Treaty Principles is an appropriate way to guide facility partnerships with Māori?

| Yes | Partially | No | Don't know | No response |
|-----|-----------|----|------------|-------------|
| 38 | 11 | 12 | 9 | 1 |

16. A majority of the respondents (38) agreed that using the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi was an appropriate way to guide facility partnerships with Māori.
17. Some noted that the Treaty is central to New Zealand and that the principles had the capacity to empower everyone, not just Māori. One noted that the use of these principles ought to extend wider than facility partnerships, and across all council's relationships with Māori.
18. Twelve respondents disagreed that the principles were an appropriate guide, while 11 had mixed feelings. A number of these respondents objected to what they saw as they prioritisation of one ethnic group over others, and felt all communities in Auckland should be treated the same.

"I think that upholding Te Ao Maori principles as a guide for partnerships with community organisations is a great idea."

"Treaty principles are a useful starting point to guide facility partnerships with Maori. However, such principles are affected by multiple interpretations."

19. One noted that partnerships with Māori will not always be marae or iwi-based. Another pointed out that a Treaty-based partnership would not begin or end with a facility, and that council will need to be responsive to non-facility issues to uphold the relationship.

Do you think the combination of Track, Type and Scale is a useful way to differentiate partnerships and ensure our processes and requirements are appropriate?

| Yes | Partially | No | Don't know | No response |
|-----|-----------|----|------------|-------------|
| 43 | 13 | 5 | 8 | 2 |

"It's very clearly articulated and makes a lot of sense. I found the distinctions in the matrix for types of arrangements to be quite useful."

20. A significant majority of respondents (43) agreed that the Track, Type and Scale model was a useful way to differentiate partnerships and ensure that our processes and requirements are appropriate.
21. Among the reasons given for their agreement, respondents cited the model's ability to cover a range of partnerships, the potential flexibility to move between categories over time, and the importance of having processes and expectations that are proportionate to the circumstances.
22. Five respondents disagreed that the dimensions were useful, while 13 considered them partially useful. A typical concern was that partnership arrangements are inherently complex and changeable, and this model may not be practical to implement.

"There will be many blurry boundaries, so I'd worry about council developing a black and white mentality around categorisation. Partnerships generally require flexibility and willingness, not hard and fast rules."

Do you think these are the right principles to guide our investment in facility partnerships?

| Yes | Partially | No | Don't know | No response |
|-----|-----------|----|------------|-------------|
| 48 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 2 |

"Great clear way for me to understand. Sounds perfectly logical and a definite win for all involved."

23. A significant majority of respondents (48) considered that the principles set out in the draft policy were the right ones to guide our investment. The sustainability and equity principles were particularly popular among respondents.
24. Seven respondents disagreed about the appropriateness of the principles, almost all because they considered that the principles would favour particular groups, e.g. areas with higher populations, more established sports or more affluent communities.
25. Thirteen respondents had mixed views on the principles. These included concerns about whether or how the principles would be traded off against each other, whether all parts of the council (including CCOs) would be equally committed to the principles, and how equity would be defined in practice.

"Strategic investment is desirable; however [members of] communities that have more time/education/ less transient etc. [are] usually versed in providing the "correct" answers and outcomes... more affluent suburbs have better success at lobbying council."

Do you agree with the council’s position on commercial activities as part of facility partnerships, as outlined on pp. 31-32? Are there any commercial activities that you think should not be allowed?

| Yes | Partially | No | Don’t know | No response |
|-----|-----------|----|------------|-------------|
| 41 | 17 | 6 | 4 | 3 |

- 26. Forty-one respondents agreed with the council’s position that some appropriate commercial activity is reasonable in facilities.
- 27. Some noted that commercial activity could be complementary to the purpose of the facility, and in some cases those revenue streams would be necessary for a facility to be sustainable over time.
- 28. A number of respondents were not supportive of commercial activities that are potentially harmful to healthy living. Alcohol sales, gambling activities, loan sharks and sex work were specifically mentioned as activities that should not be supported in our facilities.
- 29. Some respondents pointed out that commercial operators would need to be willing to align their activities with the principles set out in the policy.
- 30. Six respondents disagreed with commercial activities in facilities. Some felt businesses had no place in community settings, and felt facilities ought to stick to ‘core services’. Others saw the proposal as council shifting responsibility for funding facilities to their partners and the community, or privatising community assets.
- 31. Seventeen respondents were in partial agreement, reinforcing the need for controls around the types of commercial activities to ensure that they would enhance and sustain the community purpose of the facility, and noting the importance of council doing proper due diligence in these cases. Some respondents felt community facilities shouldn’t be competing with the private sector.
- 32. A number of respondents pointed out the complexity of the planning rules affecting some sites, which may work against commercial activities in these facilities.

“It is going to be essential to have some commercial activity to allow [our] new facility to break even and encourage people through the doors... the days of single purpose fully volunteer run organisations are numbered.”

“My initial reaction was “no” but I think it’s articulated quite sensibly.”

“I am fully supportive of the position on commercial activity. However, I worry that [this] policy on its own will not effect the changes required. Layers of intersecting rules and regulations remain which restrict the financial viability of community owned facilities. I think council needs to review this whole landscape.”

Do you think a Lead Relationship Broker is the best approach to ensuring the council can support quality partnership relationships?

| Yes | Partially | No | Don’t know | No response |
|-----|-----------|----|------------|-------------|
| 41 | 16 | 9 | 2 | 3 |

- 33. The idea of appointing a lead relationship broker for each partnership was popular, with 41 respondents expressing agreement.

“Having one person who understands your facility and the community that uses it is key.”

- 34. Many respondents agreed that establishing a broker position would make the council much easier for partners to navigate, given its size and complexity. Many saw the role as critical to the success of ongoing partnership relationships, helping to ensure consistency of advice across departments, and streamlining communications and paperwork.
- 35. Nine respondents didn't feel that the role would be useful. The most commonly expressed concern was that creating these roles meant more council staff would need to be hired, which was a waste of money, and/or that it would create additional layers of bureaucracy.
- 36. Sixteen respondents saw the potential of the role, but had some reservations. The most common reservation was uncertainty that the role would work in practice, and in particular if it would be properly resourced. Some respondents expressed a lack of trust in the council and questioned whether it could deliver on the intent of the role, and work in a way that genuinely supports community.
- 37. A number of respondents emphasised that the broker would need to have particular skills to be useful to partners, and ideally be supported by a wider team to ensure a partnership wasn't reliant on the support and abilities of a single person. This would also help to manage transitions if council staff leave, maintaining relationship continuity.

"[A lead broker is an] absolutely fantastic idea. We find that staff changes and a lack of knowledge of who to go to for help a HUGE CHALLENGE."

"[The proposed broker role] needs to be resourced to do it well. Depending on the type and scale of the partnership [this] could be a significant amount of work. There WILL be a temptation to just add the workload on top of existing staff responsibilities."

Do you think the 'Agreement' and 'Facility' sections provide a helpful overview of the technical aspects of facility partnerships? What else should be in these sections?

| Yes | Partially | No | Don't know | No response |
|-----|-----------|----|------------|-------------|
| 39 | 15 | 6 | 9 | 2 |

- 38. These sections of the policy were intended to provide an overview of some of the considerations relating to the partnership agreement or the facility itself that will have to be considered as part of a partnership.
- 39. Thirty-nine of the respondents agreed that it succeeded in doing this, while six disagreed.
- 40. Fifteen respondents partially agreed but had some reservations. Comments included that although these sections were an improvement they still failed to reflect the messy reality, that they were too complicated, and that council decisions always took too long.
- 41. One respondent felt the policy ought to further clarify the difference between owning and operating a facility, and give further attention to professionalising facility management.

"Community groups have to go to extraordinary lengths to demonstrate a need for a facility. This process is resource-intensive. Most groups do not have access to such resources, even those that appear well-funded."

Do you find the policy easy to navigate? Do you have any comments on how to improve it?

| Very easy | Quite easy | Neither easy nor difficult | Quite difficult | Very difficult | Don't know |
|-----------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| 12 | 23 | 19 | 9 | 2 | 3 |

- 42. A majority of respondents (35) who expressed an opinion on the ease of the policy found it either easy or very easy to navigate.
- 43. For a significant number of respondents (19) the policy was neither easy nor difficult to navigate.
- 44. Those who found the policy difficult noted its complexity, and suggested there were areas where language could be simplified. While some specifically commended the font size and style, others found the size of the font too small.
- 45. There was a suggestion that more examples of current partnerships could make the policy easier to navigate and understand.

“We appreciate the efforts to make the document visually appealing, less intense and more accessible. The frequent use of images and tables rather than plain text aids understanding.”

Outline of public consultation activities

46. Information about the policy and the public consultation activities were distributed through the council's email databases of existing and prospective facility partners, community group networks and other interested parties, with encouragement to disseminate more widely.
47. The regional sports body Aktive Auckland distributed the consultation information to sports organisations and clubs on our behalf.
48. Staff attended meetings with the Ethnic People's, Rainbow Communities and Pacific Peoples advisory panels at their request, to provide a briefing on the policy and answer questions. Panels were also provided with the consultation information to circulate to their networks.
49. A story about the policy and the public consultation was published in Our Auckland in July.

Online submissions invited via 'Have Your Say'

50. Online submissions were invited on the draft policy on Auckland Council's Have Your Say website between 29 June and 17 August 2018.
51. We also received a small number of submissions via email.

Public drop-in sessions for face-to-face enquiries

52. The team offered six public drop-in sessions during July and August in community venues across south, central west, and north Auckland.
53. The public drop-in sessions provided people with an opportunity to come and view the policy in large format, take printed copies away and fill in feedback forms by hand if they wished.
54. Public consultation sessions were held as drop-ins rather than presentations to make it easier for people to get across the large amount of information, while zeroing in on the parts of the policy most of interest to them.
55. More importantly, the walkthroughs gave community organisations the chance to speak to one of the team about their individual situations, and what the policy might mean for them. This was definitely the main reason most attendees chose to come and visit, and people really valued the chance to have a chat with us in person.
56. Public drop-in sessions were held in:
 - Manukau
 - Pukekohe
 - Three Kings
 - Central Auckland
 - Kelston
 - Takapuna
 - Warkworth
57. Staff also ran a stall at the Diversity Forum in Manukau on July 24.

Characteristics of online respondents

58. Feedback was received from the majority of local board areas and was fairly evenly distributed across the city. The most responses were received from the Rodney (9), Franklin (8), Devonport-Takapuna (7), Waitemata (5) and Albert Eden (5) local board areas. No responses were received from the Great Barrier, Papakura, Puketāpapa and Whau local board areas.
59. We received 32 responses to the policy from men, 28 from women and two from gender diverse people. Nine respondents declined to give their gender.
60. Respondents to the draft policy were largely European. 50 of the 71 total responses were from people who identified as European. The next largest ethnic group who provided responses was Māori, at seven responses.
61. As a result, this feedback may not fully express the views of Māori, who the policy acknowledges have particular views and needs when it comes to partnering with the council, and it may also not give a complete picture of the views of other ethnic groups.
62. Feedback was received from a wide range of age groups (see table below). Those between the ages of 35 and 74 were the most likely to submit on the draft policy.

| Age group | Responses |
|-----------|-----------|
| <15 | 0 |
| 15-24 | 2 |
| 25-34 | 7 |
| 35-44 | 13 |
| 45-54 | 11 |
| 55-64 | 14 |
| 65-74 | 15 |
| 75+ | 3 |
| Blanks | 6 |