



Engagement Strategy

2019-2022

Background of Strategy

We are well connected in the Albert-Eden Local Board area and understand the importance of engaging with our communities. Since 2010, the Albert-Eden Local Board has championed engagement efforts which have led to important outcomes such as the creation of strong partnerships with community groups, high community engagement during consultations and progress on mana whenua and mataawaka engagement.

While our current engagement and consultation efforts have been key to building local connections, more work needs to be done. Our unique communities and landscape will see important changes in coming decades. It is crucial that the Local Board champion efforts to foster new and ongoing relationships with the community in order to ensure all the people of Albert-Eden have a say on the issues that matter to them.

Implementing the six key outcomes identified in this Engagement Strategy will require building on existing engagement work while also taking innovative approaches. Stronger community engagement will have long-term rewards and lead to better democratic outcomes.

Statutory Framework

The statutory framework that guides Auckland Council engagement is provided by the Local Government Act 2002 (and subsequent amendments) and the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009. Along with the principles outlined in the Local Government Act, this Strategy follows the methods and best practice approach of the International Association for Public Participation, and is tailored to the unique population of Albert-Eden.

Purpose

- Ensure that the Local Board's community engagement efforts have a purpose and lead to ongoing relationships with communities
- Enable elected members to make decisions that are informed by the views of all our communities.
- Provide a strategic engagement framework which informs yearly engagement work plans delivered by staff.

Objectives

As a result of assessing engagement outcomes for the term 2016-2019, observing census trends and understanding local board member priorities, six key objectives were identified for the term 2019-2022. These are:

We lead and partner with communities to build and strengthen relationships

Our communities are well informed about local board activities and opportunities to engage

Our engagement efforts are strategic, purposeful and continuously improve based on evidence, local knowledge and innovation

We value our diverse communities and reach out to our community members so their views are considered in our decision-making processes

Mana whenua and mataawaka are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute and participate in our decision-making processes

We foster life-long civic participation among our youth and children

Together, these objectives provide a vision for ongoing engagement through the term and inform the planning of consultations for the Local Board Plan, Local Board Agreement, work programmes and regional consultations.

We lead and partner with communities to build and strengthen relationships

The Local Board has several communications and engagement channels available to connect with our people, ranging from attending public meetings regularly, to empowering community groups through funding and operational support. Our scale and size provide us with a unique opportunity to lead the way in promoting interconnected and resilient communities. We want to co-design engagement approaches in partnership with our communities.

Focus Areas:

- **Bridging the gap:** We build connections with hard to reach groups in ways that work for them and encourage their integration with other community groups.
- **Working on common goals:** Working toward common goals is an effective way of creating long-term relationships. When appropriate, we involve community groups in early planning of projects, such as in the case of Te Auaunga – Oakley Creek Vision and Restoration Strategy for the Lower Catchment, and ensure relationships are maintained long-term.
- **Closing the loop:** We make sure our communities are aware of how their feedback has impacted decisions so that they stay engaged.
- **Meeting face to face:** Our long-established community partnerships are strengthened through elected member attendance at local meetings and events. Going to the meetings of newer communities is also a valuable way to increase visibility of the work of the Local Board.

Our communities are well informed about local board activities and opportunities to engage

Our communities are interested in knowing about local issues and activities happening in their area but are often not aware of how to participate or what is available to them. We value well-informed public input as it enables democratic decision-making.

Focus Area:

- **Communication:** The Chair, Local Communications Specialist and Engagement Advisor will work to identify opportunities to raise awareness of the role of the local board through channels and our community groups.

Our engagement efforts are strategic, purposeful and continuously improve based on evidence, local knowledge and innovation

The information we gather from our communities is used effectively and the questions we ask give us information that is useful for decision-making. We can learn from our findings and communities feel like their input was meaningful.

Focus Areas:

- **Strategic partnerships:** We create partnerships with local groups to enhance our engagement with communities and identify joined-up consultation opportunities.
- **Purposefulness:** Information gathered is useful to decision-makers and communities feel like their input is valued.
- **Continuous improvement:** We track our engagement efforts, establish benchmarks and review our performance to identify improvement areas.
- **Localised input:** We localise regional consultations to make them relevant to our communities.
- **Innovation:** We use technology and innovative methods of engagement such as Bang the Table for local consultations.

We value our diverse communities and reach out to our community members so their views are considered in our decision-making processes

We are aware of the diversity of our local population and want to know more about the communities we don't often hear from. The diversity of our local population should be reflected in the feedback we gather and in the ways in which we reach out to communities.

We are aware that many of our diverse communities do not often know about the Local Board but once they do, they are often interested in engaging with us. Efforts have been made to connect with hard to reach community groups and foster their integration within our local communities. The focus areas below aim to continue these efforts in ways that ensure long-term partnerships.

Focus Areas:

- **Equitable inclusion:** The needs of our local communities are diverse, and this should be reflected in our engagement efforts. We will make efforts to break barriers to

inclusion by ensuring community groups can engage in ways that are easy for them.

- **Empowering local leadership:** We partner with community groups and empower them to lead engagement efforts in their areas when appropriate.
- **Nobody left behind:** As an organisation, we are rapidly moving toward paperless communication and are exploring new engagement technologies. It is crucial that we ensure that senior community groups and those who do not have access to technology are provided with familiar and reliable ways to engage.
- **Continued engagement:** When we engage with new communities through informing, consulting, involving, collaborating or empowering, we ensure that it is easy for them to continue engaging in future.

Mana Whenua and Mataawaka are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute and participate in our decision-making processes

Including the voices of local mana whenua and mataawaka in local decision-making is an important part of our work. We want to strengthen our relationships with Māori and include them in ways that are meaningful.

Focus Areas:

- **Fulfilling legislative requirements:** We prioritise early engagement of mana whenua and mataawaka on issues that matter to them. This is of particular importance when the decision relates to land or a body of water, where we are required to take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.
- **Championing relationships:** We will continue to create and maintain relationships with local mana whenua and mataawaka. This includes learning about Te Ao Māori (Māori worldviews), incorporating Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in our work and meeting face to face whenever possible.

We foster life-long civic participation among our youth and children

Today's children and youth have the most access to information of any generation before them. However, they are rarely aware of what we do. In addition, they do not always find our engagement opportunities accessible.

Focus Areas:

- **Engaging through schools:** Schools are some of the most important social hubs in our area. We will build closer relationships with them and ensure they are included as key stakeholders in our engagement plans.
- **Life-long learnings:** We will organise opportunities for local board members to visit schools and raise awareness of the work of our Local Board.
- **Whole-of-family approach:** Civic engagement is not often easy for young families. We will take this into account and proactively organise opportunities for young parents to have their say.
- **Empowering the youth board:** We will support the Albert-Eden youth board in leading engagement opportunities that speak to youth and children in their own words and provide us with information that is useful to decision-making.

Implementation

The Local Board Engagement Advisor will develop a yearly workplan to achieve our six objectives and key focus areas. This plan will identify resources required for each action, timelines and success indicators.

In addition to the ongoing activities identified in the work plan, the Engagement Advisor will localise engagement plans for major consultations such as those happening during the Local Board Plan and Local Board Agreements, ensuring that levels of community participation and resource allocation are appropriately defined. These consultations will align with the Engagement Strategy by incorporating its key objectives.

Evaluation

Evaluating the success of our strategy will require that staff actively record and analyse qualitative and quantitative information about engagement and communication activities on an ongoing basis. Long-term changes in community trust of our decision-making processes, as well as engagement success stories from our disengaged communities, will be key qualitative information.

Quantifiable success measures include:

Public participation will increase at Have Your Say events and other engagement opportunities.

More and better-quality feedback submissions are received when we consult.

Number of engagement partnerships created with hard-to-reach groups.

Database numbers grow

Percentage of positive feedback on the way we engage

Variance in comparison between demographic census data and demographic survey data

Below are some of the key risks identified in the implementation of this strategy, as well as actions to mitigate them.

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient resources and capacity to implement actions within the life of each workplan.	Consider and include engagement as a priority for resource allocation in annual budgets and work programmes. Stagger timelines for delivery over the 3-year term.
Engagement priorities change over the course of the term.	Strategy is devised as a 'living document' to be reviewed and amended as needed.
Staff turnover and the complex nature of engagement make 'tracking success' a challenge.	Staff actively record information about engagement and communications activities as well as feedback from the community on engagement processes. Staff place emphasis on recording qualitative feedback to provide a more complete depiction of the value of engagement activities.
Difficulty of successfully increasing engagement with hard-to-reach communities	Staff co-deliver engagement opportunities with community groups that have access to hard-to-reach communities and employ best practice approaches. KPIs are set to reflect viable incremental targets based off of previous engagement results.