

Papakura Local Board input into Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) discussion paper on 'Reinvigorating local democracy'

About the Papakura Local Board

Papakura Local Board is one of 21 local boards which are part of the Auckland Council co-governance model. The board has responsibility for local decision making while the Governing Body has the regional decision making focus.

The board's population, as at the 2018 census, was 57,636. The population is ethnically diverse with 49.1% European, 26.8% Māori, 23.4% Asian and 16.9% Pacific peoples. Since the 2013 census there has been a significant growth in the Asian population. Papakura still has the largest Māori population per head of capita. The median age in Papakura is 32 years, with 23.6% of the population being aged between 0 and 14 years.

Background

In 2019, Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) released its discussion paper 'Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities'. LGNZ is seeking feedback from individuals and organisations.

The discussion paper seeks to refine LGNZ's advocacy position on 'localism' and calls for an active programme of devolution and decentralisation of services. The paper argues that decentralisation will be more efficient and effective in meeting community needs, be more relevant and able to respond to growing diversity, increase voter interest and participation and spur innovation.

Some of the key elements of the proposal include:

- establishing a framework to enable councils to take over certain devolved functions where local capacity exists; or, alternatively, enabling negotiated devolution
- removing regulatory and legislative constraints on local government, such as those related to pre-fabricated building, public transport and the Resource Management Act
- a suggestion that the State Services Commission regularly review the range of services that could be transferred to local government or appropriate local agencies
- a principle that any transfer would need to include (a) funding (b) guidance and support to build competence and (c) enabled only where local capacity already exists.

There is no official Auckland Council position on this proposal. This proposal has also not received any endorsement by central government. The council may wish to discuss and agree the types of services that would be appropriate for Aucklanders to have more say and influence on, and this could be the subject of future discussions at Auckland Council/LGNZ meetings.

The submission period closes on **Friday, 31 January 2020**.

Papakura Local Board feedback

Question	Papakura Local Board feedback
1. Do you agree with the three recommendations in this section, devolution, negotiated devolution and removing constraints?	Papakura Local Board has consistently championed the devolution of decision making to the local level in terms of the Auckland context. The board believe the same principle should apply in the context of the relationship between central and local government.
2. If not what would you change?	N/A
3. What, if any, functions currently provided by central government should be devolved to councils and other local organisations like Iwi/Maori and not for profit organisations?	<p>Papakura Local Board agree that the following central government functions should be devolved to councils and other local organisations like Iwi Māori and not-for-profit organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing • Vocational training • Public health • Integration & coordination of health and social services • Mental health services – give local government capacity to respond to issues • Services to improve wellbeing generally, including enabling older citizens to “age in place” • Urban development • Employment • Services for young people not in employment or training <p>For example, in terms of social housing the board believe local authorities are better placed to ensure that clients are housed closer to their community and support networks, and to make decisions about the most appropriate type of housing to be provided in an area.</p> <p>The board do not agree with welfare services being devolved to local authorities in its entirety. However, the board do agree that the area of support could be devolved.</p> <p>The board agree that an iterative or incremental approach is required.</p> <p>The board agree with the following recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That services, including the appropriate funding, should be transferred to local government (or an appropriately accountable local agency, such as an Iwi/Maori organisation), where it can be shown that

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	<p>improvements in efficiency and effectiveness will be achieved;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. That a framework should be established to enable councils to apply to “take over” or run a function that is currently provided by a central government department or agency within their local jurisdiction. 3. That all constraints on councils and other providers that limit their ability to craft policies and programmes to address local issues should be systematically and cautiously assessed and removed if they prove unnecessary. 4. That central government should regularly review whether or not the services they currently provide or commission would result in more efficient and effective outcomes if decentralised. Such reviews could be the responsibility of the State Services Commission. 5. That any transfer of services should also include the funding necessary to provide the services or the means by which the receiving agency can raise the necessary revenue. 6. That any transfer, for example to local governments, is accompanied with guidance and support for councils to build appropriate competence and capability.
<p>4. What, if any, central government responsibilities would be more effective if your council, or other local organisation, applied to take them over under the negotiated devolution approach?</p>	<p>The Papakura Local Board agree that the following central government responsibilities would be more effective if council or other local organisations applied to take them over under the negotiated devolution approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & wellbeing – councils cannot address basic needs / issues like rubbish when community health is poor • Funding of not-for-profits / social service providers – local government is connected at the community level and can see what is working on the ground and is therefore in a good position to review the provision of service by not-for-profit organisations or social service providers. • The use of school grounds should not be an option as there are significant issues with vandalism and inappropriate use that impact the wider school environment. It is not a practical option. • A process would need to be in place to hand back the matter to central government once the issue is resolved.

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5. Can you identify legislative and regulatory constraints on councils and other local organisations that limit their ability to be responsive to local needs?	The board believe central government funding should be provided to support local authorities in giving effect to the Local Government Act four well-beings.
6. What additional form of funding or tax should councils have access to in order to meet community expectations and address future challenges?	<p>The board agree councils should have access to the following additional forms of funding or tax in order to meet community expectations and address future challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding from tax revenue. There should not be an expectation that local authorities taking on a central government responsibility should have to fund the service. Central government funding must be adequate so that the local authority can provide the service. • Access a proportion of tax rather than levy another tax • GST on rates • Bed tax / visitor levy on tourists.
7. What process should councils go through in order to implement a new levy or tax?	The board believe existing mechanisms should be utilised rather than creating additional charges for residents.
8. Do you agree that the government's annual well-being budget process should be informed by priorities set by each community?	The board agree that local government should be involved in the government's annual well-being budget process and should be informed by priorities set by each community.
9. What roles could councils play to ensure that government spending on well-being addresses local needs and priorities?	<p>The board believe there are currently processes in place that could assist central government in its spending on well-being to address local needs and priorities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing local board plan aspirations • Holding hui to gather information from local groups and feed back to central government.
10. Do you agree with the suggestion of local well-being plans and reports?	The board support local well-being plans and annual reporting as a means of ensuring accountability and an opportunity to set local priorities.
11. What additional approaches could be used to strengthen participation in local government decision-making?	<p>The board believe approach to strengthen participation could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering groups eg: Papakura Commercial Project Group

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandated authority to representative groups eg: mana whenua, youth council, to sit at the table, participate, and provide input into decision-making.
<p>12. What needs to change to strengthen relationships between councils, Iwi/Māori, business organisations and the community/voluntary sector?</p>	<p>The board believe the following needs to change to strengthen relationships between councils, Iwi/Māori, business organisations that the community/voluntary sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always approach an issue with an empowered community approach, however, ensuring funding supports the empowered community approach • Genuinely engaging in a co-design process on an issues • Make it easier to navigate the organisation • Break down jargon • More information sharing in a timely manner – know what each is doing in the community – opportunities are being missed for synergy – we need to be thinking three years out to be effective in this space • Remove the need to have Iwi repeat the same thing to more than one body • making engagement more meaningful by taking action rather than just listening.
<p>13. Do you agree that legislation will solve the unfunded mandates and cost shifting problem?</p>	<p>The board believe legislation can solve the unfunded mandates. However, the board does have a concern about a situation where central government removes a service, yet the community has an expectation for local government to fill gap. Potentially this could be addressed under negotiated devolution and ensuring a bottom up approach to addressing issues.</p>
<p>14. Are there other measures that you would recommend to reduce costs being imposed on councils?</p>	<p>The board believe that if the driving factor is to reduce costs, devolving functions will be challenging. The board agree costs must be managed but it should not be the driver. The board believe the overall driver for devolution should be better and more connected outcomes for the community. If cost savings are achieved as part of this then that is a bonus but it should not be a driver.</p>
<p>15. What else could be done to protect the constitutional status of local government?</p>	<p>The board feel it is difficult to comment on this matter as Auckland Council is a unitary authority, ie: the regional council was amalgamated with seven other council's. Yet other areas of the country have a regional council and local councils. The question is, is this structure fit for purpose going forward or would a unitary authority approach be better.</p>

Question	Papakura Local Board feedback
Other	What are the implications of implementation for the size of the organisation and role of elected members?



Brent Catchpole
Chairperson
Papakura Local Board



Jan Robinson
Deputy Chairperson
Papakura Local Board

Date: 31 January 2020