Waitākere Ranges Local Board

OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

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Note: The attachments contained within this document are for consideration and should not be construed as Council policy unless and until adopted. Should Councillors require further information relating to any reports, please contact the relevant manager, Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.
CCO Review feedback – Waitākere Ranges Local Board

1. The Waitākere Ranges Local Board area is a mix of urban and rural and includes the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area which has legislative requirements for how the area is managed.
2. Auckland Transport, Watercare and ATEED are the main agencies operating in our area, with Panuku’s role limited to commercial leasing and the buying and selling of land.
3. A fundamental question the review should address is whether the decision-making of the substantive CCOs should be restored to the governing body and local boards of the Auckland Council.
4. The Waitākere Ranges Local Board:
   a. Endorses in part the council controlled organisations model for delivering council services, but would seek that CCO’s:
      i. Demonstrate improved accountability to ratepayers and an improved understanding and respect for the co-governance role of local boards;
      ii. Improve engagement with local boards and local communities;
      iii. Must actively improve the internal culture of their organisations and recognise the role of CCO’s is to serve the needs of the people of Auckland and to operate as an integrated part of the wider Auckland Council;
      iv. Better align to council policy at the regional and local level to enable a “whole of council approach”;
      v. Include in their annual reports an impact statement to say how they have considered the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 in their decision making over the year. This should apply to AT, Watercare and ATEED in particular.
   b. Recommend that the roles and responsibilities of Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) be bought into Auckland Council to ensure a “whole of council approach” to economic recovery across the region.
   c. Recommends that Panuku should continue as a property and urban development agency as a CCO but responsibility for its service and other properties not planned for development should be returned to the Council.

Watercare Services

5. The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area is a public water catchment and supply area, which supplies around 20 percent of Auckland’s drinking water. There are five dams, as well as reservoirs, treatment plants, and other water supply infrastructure.
6. For this reason, the WRLB relationship with Watercare has aspects that may differ from elsewhere in the region. As well as being the water and wastewater services provider, Watercare:
   - is a significant landowner and infrastructure operator in the area;
   - provides recreational opportunities, e.g. the popular Exhibition Drive walk;
   - operates water tanker filling stations that are critical for rural residents during the dry season.
7. Plans to replace the aging Huia Water Treatment Plant has been highly contentious and has generated significant community opposition around the preferred sites, firstly in Oratia, then in Waiwera. We want to see Watercare improve the way it works with affected communities. We recommend the CCO review panel independently review the process as a case-study to see what can be learnt.
8. Watercare needs to better align its activities with council policies on conservation, sustainability and recreational access. While Watercare provide highly valued access to recreation in places like Exhibition Drive, adjoining the regional park, some facilities in the area have been closed off over the past 10 years on health and safety grounds. This includes the iconic Rainforest Express tramline which has been closed indefinitely. The Titirangi Reservoir’s large flat concrete surface has historically been used as a makeshift playspace for locals in the surrounding bush covered suburb although it is now closed.

9. We recommend Auckland Council advocate for a fine tuning of the legislation relating to Watercare’s obligations to widen the scope. It should include implementing council policy for recreational access, the environment, and other public good outcomes.

10. In our area we have been in favour of Watercare providing park space in areas with significant wastewater infrastructure. Watercare is obligated by legislation in its dealings with council to “not pay a dividend” and this has been interpreted by Watercare as requiring it to treat any transaction with council as having to be on a commercial basis. This is a potential barrier to public good outcomes.

11. Some local board members have reported ongoing constituent complaints about burst water pipes in parts of Glen Eden where the agency is either slow to respond or does not address what appears to be any underlying issue causing repeated leaks.

12. On the whole, the local board has a good relationship with Watercare and support it remaining as a council controlled organisation. As long as Watercare provides regular communication, are responsive to local board and elected member enquiries, and engagement with the local board is supported by senior staff.

Auckland Transport

13. Auckland Transport needs to advance the expectations for improved accountability agreed to through the Governance Framework Review. While the AT Statement of Intent 2019 – 2022 includes a commitment to improve its engagement with local boards and the community, the WRLB is not reliably kept up to date on some key transport projects for the local area although it is well served with AT staff engaged in regular liaison.

14. Some positive steps have been made. The increase in the amount of the Local Board Capital Transport Fund, and the two-year provision of a Local Board Transport Safety Fund has given more local discretion over projects.

15. In the previous term, AT reported a three-year safety programme for the local board area. Unfortunately, effective early engagement by AT has given way to uncertainty on the status of projects and timelines for delivery. The proposed pedestrian improvements to West Coast Road, Glen Eden is an example.

Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area

16. The local board worked with AT over a number of years to develop “Transport design guidelines for the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area”, which were recently incorporated into AT’s Transport Design Manual. We recommend AT include a WRHA impact statement in its annual report to show how it has considered the WRHAA and the design guidelines in its decision making.

17. Controlling pest plants in road reserves in significant ecological areas remains an area where there is a lack of accountability. There are extensive weed infested road reserves in the Waitākere Ranges that are part of a continuous forested areas and which are not maintained beyond the road edge. Some areas have been transferred to Community Facilities though not all. Ecological restoration is seen as beyond the core functions of AT.
18. Our local board has a large rural area. About 40 percent of our residents live in low density settlements in bush, coastal and rural foothill areas. AT is often seen as an urban transport authority that is unaccountable to its rural communities. The issues commonly identified in our area are road and roadside drain maintenance, dealing with road slips, rural road safety, safety for people walking on rural roads, access to public transport, parking / traffic impacts on coastal communities during peak periods.

19. Rural communities need to be more a part of AT’s thinking. We recommend programmes such as public transport, footpaths, and walking safety include an allocation for improving transport access in rural communities to ensure benefits are fairly spread.

Strategic transport advice and local policy context

20. Regionally, Auckland Transport has taken forward substantive infrastructure improvements such as the City Rail Link, integrated ticketing, walking and cycling improvements.

21. At a local level enhanced governance quality advice and support for decision making beyond stakeholder management is required. There is also an opportunity to see what internal support may also be bolstered within Auckland Council on strategic transport advice.

22. AT need to demonstrate they are taking the local policy context into account in their decision making and prioritization of projects. In our area, as well as the high-level local board plan, there are five local area plans, a greenways plan, and a town centre plan that should be considered when making transport decisions. These reflect transport priorities for our local communities.

23. Local boards have an important role in placemaking. The Roads and Streets Framework introduced a framework to recognize the place making role of roads and streets and provide the ability to set the place and movement functions appropriate to an area. This seemed like a step forward. However, it is not clear who is responsible for implementing the policy, there does not appear to be funding for it, and it has not been automatically factored into AT projects to date.

24. There needs to be greater transparency and accountability over projects within RLTP programmes, and what the decision-making criteria are. When potential local transport projects are unfunded there is no forward view of where they might sit in the over all scheme of things.

25. The local board regularly hears about local transport issues from residents and community groups. Community responsiveness needs to be improved.

26. We support Auckland Transport remaining as a CCO, provided there are much strengthened requirements to provide meaningful consultation and accountability to the Auckland Council Governing body and Auckland Council Local Boards and in turn to the ratepayers of Auckland. These requirements include:

   a. Recognition within the Auckland Transport organization that they are a Council Controlled Organisation and not a stand-alone business,
   b. that the Council Governing body holds decision-making authority for Auckland Transport and all CCO’s, in regard to the office accommodation needs of the CCO’s, and regarding bonus and supplementary payments to directors and staff of Auckland Transport and other CCO’s,
   c. the inclusion of an improved performance standard for Auckland Transport to align with the wider local planning and Auckland regional planning and vision documents including Local Board Plans for local projects of significance,
   d. A requirement for Auckland Transport to provide wider consultation and communication channels for Local Boards rather than only managing to contact through the relationship manager.
That AT reviews its powers over local roads to determine which of these powers can be delegated to Auckland Council so that more of its powers are placed under direct democratic control.

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED)

27. We recommend the roles and responsibilities of ATEED be bought into Auckland Council rather than continuing as an arms-length organisation to increase accountability, reduce duplication of functions, and ensure any benefits gained are enjoyed evenly by communities across the region.
28. Economic recovery will need to be the new driver which we believe needs democratic accountability.
29. ATEED is largely city-centre focused and it is not clear what economic benefits it provides to businesses and communities across the region.
30. The Waitākere Ranges is a popular destination for visitors and filming because of its proximity to metropolitan Auckland and its scenic beauty, wilderness, extensive coastline and beaches.
31. There needs to be greater level of engagement with local boards on how industries like filming, and the visitor and tourism economy work in local areas to match up regional and local aspirations.
32. The “State of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area 2018” monitoring report highlighted increasing visitor pressures in areas with limited visitor infrastructure. Often the already popular areas are promoted rather than looking diversify the places people want to go to.
33. Whilst there has been active support from the local economic development staff who transitioned from AC to ATEED it is hard to identify any gains made. Beyond an operational level programme management there has been limited opportunity for active advice and support for the governance role of strategic analysis and direction setting. This is reflected in that the current three-year plans for the west local boards will likely not include stand-alone local economic development outcomes, rather a few initiatives will be included as contributors to other outcomes around youth, Māori and diverse community development.
34. The 2018/21 ATEED Statement of Intent identifies a cross cutting priority which includes having an ‘Enhance spatial focus’ across the west. At a local board governance and support level there is no awareness that ATEED is acting innovatively and with a step-change towards improving household prosperity across the west.
35. Over the past two terms there has been support toward supporting the Business Improvement Districts from staff in the CCO/External Partnerships team in Auckland Council’s governance division. This is practical on the ground support that assists the local board taking forward its governance direction around local economic development. There is a gap around town centre and business strategy and facilitation that could be taken forward through reinvesting staff and a portion of the budget allocated to ATEED back to a dedicated Local Economic Development team within council.
36. At a local board level there is limited understanding of local operational directions and even less involvement in informed decision making. Consideration should be made to increase accountability for the functions of ATEED to support to governors around strategic directions locally.
37. ATEED in recent years has not effectively engaged with the Waitākere Ranges Local Board on a regular basis on local issues of employment and business development.
38. ATEED have a regional focus and appear to provide limited benefit to the Waitākere Ranges Local Board area. ATEED can be more effective by increasing discussion and action on local response to
BID plans, local employment initiatives and business networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

Panuku Development Auckland (Panuku)
39. Panuku has only a limited role in the Waitākere Range Local Board area. It is not currently acting as a development agency. It manages commercial leases, and the acquisition and disposal of council property. In the board’s view Panuku should continue as a property and urban development agency as a CCO but responsibility for its service and other properties not planned for development should be returned to the Council.

Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA)
40. There are no strategic facilities managed under the RFA in the Waitākere Ranges Local Board area.
Greetings Elizabeth

Do you mind forwarding this to the relevant officer with my apologies for its lateness. Hopefully it is not too late to be included.

The comments will be subject to formal board ratification at a subsequent meeting.

The local board has been asked to provide feedback on the changes to the draft Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland’s Climate Action Framework. The proposed changes include:

- introducing three pillars representing the core drivers for climate action (i.e., a place-based approach; emissions reduction; preparing for climate change)
- moving from eleven key moves to eight priorities
- changing the title from Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland’s Climate Action Framework to Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland’s Climate Plan.

Council’s summary of the feedback received on the draft plan is as follows:

I am pleased to note that residents in the Waitakere Ranges Local Board area are amongst the most supportive of communities urging the Council to take radical action and I also note the special interest amongst locals to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

My comments on the proposed changes:

- I support the emphasis on further clarity. This document needs to be as clear and precise as follows. It has to be instantly readable and understandable.
- I support the pillars of a Tāmaki response, a uniquely local response informed by learning from Māori principles and practice, that we reduce our emissions with clear goals, and that we need to prepare for climate change.
- Financial implications of the plan are significant but so is the cost of doing nothing. Priority should be given to current infrastructure projects being advanced to counter Covid-19 effects on the economy to those that have positive climate change effects.
- I disagree with the risk of failure being categorised as medium risk. The repercussions of failure are extraordinarily severe and complacency and the report should reflect this. I appreciate that the comment relates to the plan and not actions to counter climate change per se, but the language used should always be direct and the risks should be highlighted.
- I support the change of name.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.

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