

Date: Thursday 19 May 2022
Time: 6.05pm
Meeting Room: Manurewa Local Board Office
Venue: 7 Hill Road
Manurewa
and via video conference (Microsoft Teams)

Manurewa Local Board

OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

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Report to the Manurewa Local Board by Cr Daniel Newman 19 May 2022

Auckland Council will shortly conclude debate regarding the 2022/23 Annual Plan and budget, which includes a proposal to impose a new targeted rate to fund activities pertaining to Climate Change. I want to acknowledge the decision of this local board to support the proposed rate, endorsement expressed via the casting of the chair's vote following a debate and 4-4 deadlock.

At this stage I am unlikely to vote for the proposed Climate Change Targeted Rate.

The proposal for a new targeted rate cannot be considered in isolation – it is one part of a budget that continues to be compromised by a revenue path that further entrenches underfunding of business as usual as it relates to community facilities and transport assets. None of this is new but the situation is now critical as the impact of inflation as well as the constraining impact of more funding from general rates being ring-fenced for climate initiatives means unsustainable pressure on Council facilities.

If a majority of councillors vote for a reduction in the capex budget, it will likely see deferral of capex opportunities affecting this community, including:

1. Local Board OLIs
2. LDI capex
3. All new growth-related capex projects

I believe the Council may struggle to even progress funding for emissions reduction programmes, and Auckland Transport will need to further reduce its capex programme. I am not optimistic that central government funding subsidies in the form of the Funding Assistance Rate (FAR) will adequately fund any shortfall in the transport renewals programme.

Ratepayers generally do not differentiate between line items in their rate invoice; the bottom line amount is what they look at. To that end, people are calling on me on the doorstep to account for the rising cost of local government coupled with a perceived decline in the services available to them.

I am comfortable with what I can deliver through third-party funding. But progress in the form of renewals to non-Council community facilities like Weymouth Rugby are being achieved despite Council, not because of it. By contrast, defects in the auditorium on the occasion of the Parade Day for Netball Manurewa (by way of example) have not been addressed. The poor state of many Council-owned facilities is the public face of changing priorities – this is not good for Manurewa.

I am uncomfortable with the direction of the Council's budget. Capex is a fundamental tool for growing the asset wealth and addressing equity deficits affecting communities such as Manurewa. So the direction that I anticipate being signed off by Council is one that will be unhelpful to our community.

I will speak to this matter prior to the sign-off on the Annual Plan and budget – this is a debate that will have consequences for all Aucklanders but particularly for those who live in communities with limited asset wealth and degraded Council-owned community facilities.

The doorknocking reveals so much about what my constituents think.