VISION FOR AUCKLAND

2. Future Auckland – A Leading World-Class City

2.1   The *Call for Submissions* document asked submitters to send in their ideas on what kind of local government arrangements would help Auckland to become a successful world-class city. In response to this question, over 300 submitters responded by offering descriptions or definitions of their vision for Auckland and the characteristics that they believe Auckland should have to become a "world-class city".

Discussion of "world class"

2.2   The predominant theme to emerge was one of preserving and enhancing the aspects of Auckland that are unique and that give the region its own distinctive character, rather than adopting a concept of "world-class city" as defined elsewhere:

> The theme for Auckland is water, first city of the Pacific and the gateway to New Zealand. [10854]

2.3   These comments were reflected in one suggestion that Auckland should be asserting its individuality and uniqueness as a "boutique city with attitude" [1557] rather than competing with other international cities. Similarly, another submitter asked,

> What makes you think Auckland isn't already successful and world-class. Why should we worry about aspiring to other world-cities standards? We should please ourselves and be content with the advantages we have. [1135]

2.4   Submitters advocated that the Commission should not hesitate to recommend solutions that are uniquely New Zealand with character and diversity.

2.5   About 20 submitters commented that they believe Auckland already is a "world-class city" and that the research agrees. They cited a recent global survey in which Auckland was ranked the fifth city in the world as a place to live and work [10422], as well as an older book "200 Best Cities in the World", in which Auckland rates 56/200. It was noted that given Auckland's status as an important tourist destination, it follows that these qualities are already recognised internationally. One said,

> One other classifier of global city region status … is as a venue of Rolling Stones concerts. Given that the Rolling Stones performed in Auckland in 2006, then Auckland is without doubt a global city region. [10813]

2.6   There were some submitters who objected to the assumption that Auckland should aspire to be a "world-class city" because of what this term seemed to imply:

globalisation, technology over humanity, and an exclusive focus on business and economic aspirations. They emphasised that Auckland should primarily be "a good place … to live" for its citizens, rather than for "foreign visitors or businessmen." [10723] One submitter added that it's "not about making Auckland a competitive, world-class city. A city should serve the people who live in it …". [10519]

2.7   A minority were even more sceptical about the concept of Auckland being a "world-class city", indicating that they thought Auckland was "dreaming". [1122] One submitter considered that

> Auckland has neither the population nor the financial means to become a 'world class city' …. No other city is so geographically challenged, with water, water everywhere. [10757]

2.8   There was also a view that "world-class cities" require a long history, tradition, and character – things to which "Auckland may aspire … one day" if they stop "ripping down every building over 30 years old." [10589]

2.9   In contrast, others pointed to both the national and international significance of Auckland as important reasons for Auckland to aspire to be a "world-class city". They characterised Auckland's position as

> one of the most vital parts of the nation. It is a critical economic engine room … culturally the most diverse … the largest national centre for education, commerce, manufacturing and tourism … contributes more than any other part of the country in taxation … [and] is better known internationally …. [10436]

2.10   One submitter thought that

> Auckland needs to function at a world-class level, for the sake of Auckland and for the sake of New Zealand. It is in the interests of everyone in the country for Auckland to be effectively developed and governed. [10473]

Another submitter observed,

> The decisions required of local authorities in an international city like Auckland are more significant than elsewhere because of their scale and impact on the rest of the nation. For example, failure to address Auckland's transport congestion affects the cost of New Zealand's imports and exports. [11294]

The latter went on to make the case for Auckland's unique status in the New Zealand context:

> Local authorities in international cities must make more decisions, more quickly, often with significant price tags, which deal with complex problems, may be very unpopular, and have significant, long lasting effects. This alters the balance between providing leadership and responsiveness to popular concerns required for effective governance. Current examples of issues which require decisions by local leaders in Auckland include: waterfront/CBD development; … transport investments; … Rugby World Cup facilities; and, broadband fibre-optic roll out. [11294]

Characteristics of a world-class city

2.11   In responding to the question about "world-class cities", many submitters described the qualities they would like to see in Auckland. These qualities included being vibrant, thriving, inspirational, inclusive, accessible, responsive, collaborative, innovative, accountable, efficient, caring, friendly, cultured, cosmopolitan, and more "like Wellington". [10412]

2.12   Many submitters took the opportunity to describe the qualities of Auckland that they love such as its diversity, beauty, multiculturalism, and friendliness. They also referred to the world class attractions in the region such as the Hauraki Gulf islands, Waitakere Heritage Area, and the volcanic cones.

2.13   Many talked about the need for Auckland to be more people-oriented – both in terms of making more of the talents of its citizens, and developing policies that prioritised the well-being of the citizens.

2.14   They wanted to see people who would be proud to live in Auckland, who had opportunities, and were hopeful and optimistic. They wanted neighbourhoods to be strong, resilient, and safe. They also wanted to enhance local diversity, develop a "heart, which is world-class" [1513] at the centre, and at the same time, develop a strong, unified regional identity. They felt that these qualities could be measured by people choosing to live in Auckland, and by the morale, happiness, and health of its citizens.

2.15   While some submitters proposed singular solutions to assist Auckland become a "world-class city", others proposed a more holistic or multifaceted approach that included social, cultural, environmental, and economic components. It was observed by several submitters that Auckland governance should be "vitally concerned about all aspects of economic and social development for the whole of the Auckland region", with one submitter noting that being very active in these areas would be new, but would make the difference for Auckland and ensure that it became a great city. [10436]

2.16   There were several submitters who identified a governance structure that honours the Treaty of Waitangi as being pivotal to Auckland becoming a world-class city. They wanted to see the treaty principles reflected in the structure to ensure that the unique value and cultural flavour of New Zealand is fully realised.

2.17   Often submitters proposed a particular governance structure as the way to achieve "world-class city" status, such as a two-tier system with stronger community boards. They also focused on other aspects of governance such as strong leadership and good people, clear strategies, clearly defined responsibilities, strong democracy, expeditious decision making, capacity to deliver quality services, equitable distribution of gains, and minimised boundaries and transactional costs. Several stressed the importance of grassroots governance, or a model based on the principle of subsidiarity:

> The key to success is to maximise the benefits of a single governing body while maintaining local decision-making on local issues. [10084]

2.18   Auckland's sense of identity and vision was also considered as a critical aspect of being a world-class city. The Committee for Auckland looked at the vision statements of all eight councils, and noted that "they show eight different visions, all focused within their own jurisdictions and all with potentially different futures." The region needs a "cohesive sense of purpose … and united identity" rather than the competitiveness that exists now. The Committee for Auckland called for an alignment of these visions to give Aucklanders a single integrated goal:

> an all encompassing 'Mission Statement or Vision for Auckland' that provides all councils and populace with a 'Unity of Purpose' that creates the building blocks and guidance for our strategies for the city and region. [11136]

Without this, the committee feared that Auckland would continue to have a "confused and fragmented image", and not realise "its potential as a great place to live and work, and as one of the world's best cities." [11136]

2.19   The importance of shared values and shared purpose set out in a long-term overarching plan was highlighted by a number of submitters. One described a "world-class city" as having "collective ambition, driven by values-based leadership." [10820] Another submitter added that such a city "never ceases reflecting on what diverse definitions of a 'successful world-class city' are valid … ". [10708]

2.20   More active participation by all citizens in democratic processes and community initiatives was identified by several submitters as a prerequisite for attaining "world-class city" status. In line with calls for stronger indicators of Auckland's cultural identity, submitters wanted to see governance that would articulate and implement the aspirations of tangata whenua[5], Pacific, Asian, and other cultures that live within Auckland's boundaries. One defined the style of governance required to become a successful world-class city:

> Governance which reflects and respects its citizens. Governance which seeks to maximise civic engagement in the democratic processes. Governance which seeks to make decisions according to principles of subsidiarity as locally as possible. [10416]

2.21   There was a note of caution, however, one observation being that in fact Auckland governance needs to make more decisions, more quickly, about complex problems with significant price tags that may be unpopular and have long-lasting effects: "This alters the balance between providing leadership and responsiveness to popular concerns required for effective governance." [11294]

2.22   The significance of good infrastructure was identified as being necessary for "world-class city" status by many submitters, noting that infrastructure has a huge impact on quality of life and the local economy:

> World-class cities rely on good infrastructure. Infrastructure is what moves people; goods; water; energy and information. [836]

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5   People of the land, indigenous people.

2.23   Security of supply of energy and water were also mentioned, as was the availability of regional high-speed broadband.

2.24   The need for integrated, efficient, user-friendly transport was frequently identified as the most critical area for infrastructure development, with one submitter noting that "any structure that addresses [transport] will be helpful." [10276] Transport organisations such as Auckland International Airport [11266] and Auckland Regional Transport Authority [11291] identified the need for great improvements and described transport as "vital" for supporting sustainable economic activity. [11291] In particular, many submitters identified the need for improved public transport. The current situation was described as "an embarrassment", which caused disbelief to overseas visitors. [10474] Many sought a rail-based system as the solution, while others wanted to see increased emphasis on active transport (walking and cycling), with incentives to reduce car use.

2.25   A few submitters also mentioned health and education infrastructure as being a "significant local asset", vital to the successful development of the city. One submission stated that impacts on the education infrastructure should carry equal weight to impacts on other infrastructural matters such as transport, water, and energy. [11184]

2.26   Many submitters recognised that a successful "world-class city" is characterised by positive social well-being outcomes and accordingly they wanted to see more activity in this area. There were many comments highlighting how essential positive social well-being was for Auckland to achieve in all spheres. There was one comment that social welfare must be the priority because "we are only as good as our weakest link." [10276]

2.27   Indeed, many submitters commented that they believed social development should be prioritised over business and economics. One submitter wryly observed that "All cities are world class. It is the classes which differ." [1473] Others proposed a more balanced approach, pointing out that the provision of infrastructure and other council services (e.g. urban design) usually have social well-being implications (and vice versa) and that "successful world-class cities aim to get the balance right." [10493]

2.28   A key part of achieving improved social well-being, was the desire to focus more on community development – building stronger communities, and a stronger sense of community spirit. Submitters wanted a city that would be "rich and generous in spirit" [10820], with strong, safe, healthy, and cohesive communities built on the strengths of the uniqueness and diversity of each community, but avoiding, for example, creating ethnic or "economic ghettos" [10703]. They saw the characteristics of these communities as being affordable housing, access to healthy food, less poverty and despair, greater participation in tertiary education, reduced discrimination (particularly in employment), reduced violence and crime, and greater participation in positive community activities such as volunteering. They described the characteristics of the people as "happy, empowered, connected" [1435], confident, proud, aspirational, and able to "attain their dreams and use their potential to the full" [1136].

2.29   As part of this, some submitters wanted to see more support for community groups, community services, and activities that celebrate culture, sport, and the arts.

2.30   There were a number of definitions proposed for a successful world-class city that centred on social well-being and people-centred outcomes. A successful world-class city

- [has] a structure that addresses social issues and facilitates a sense of belonging (to Auckland); arrangements that maximise the energy and participation of citizens by encouraging and supporting local initiatives; responsibilities clarified to remove duplication of decision making (and conflicting decisions!); ... accommodating all cultures, religions, ethnicity, etc. in a harmonious and safe environment that encourages tolerance ... [10557]

- encourages community participation through activities such as volunteering, health promotion, Abuse and Neglect Prevention, information-sharing, advice and support, and recreational and social opportunities for all ages [10497]

- is not just judged by the availability of facilities, financial or commercial facts and figures or its popularity as a tourist destination but ... by [the] 'successful' relationship of its people with each other and with their environment. That is represented by factors such as happiness and contentment and measured by behaviours such as community involvement whether positive (eg volunteers) or negative (eg crime) [10723]

- [must be] a great place in which to live, to work, to travel, and to enjoy recreation. It should ... sustain strong communities. [10787]

To summarise,

- At the end of it all reasonably happy people will make for a top class city. [10582]

2.31   A number of priority groups were also identified, including children, Māori and Pacific communities, migrants, and older people. The importance of placing children at the centre of local government policy was emphasised, with one submitter noting that "Children are the future of the city". [1458] Other submitters representing the interests of older people pointed out the need for communities to be safe, to provide social and recreational opportunities, and to have access to affordable public transport, housing, and adult education.

2.32   There were other general comments about improving the availability of facilities, recreational opportunities, and events. Some submitters considered the provision of world-class arts, theatre, and sport and recreational facilities to be the key indicator of a world-class city. Retaining a green belt and extensive interconnected green spaces was often noted as an important part of achieving this objective. Similarly, some submitters felt that strengthening the focus on the arts would create an extraordinary and unique environment that reflected Auckland's cultural identity:

The arts build national identity and pride; bring pleasure to diverse audiences; enable New Zealanders to develop their creative talent; and contribute to the New Zealand economy. The arts are therefore an essential part of any modern, vibrant international city. [11101]

2.33   By contrast, others emphasised the need to take a more "hardline" [63] approach to supporting the business and finance sector in order to become more economically competitive, and to achieve prosperity. The importance of Auckland in achieving national economic prosperity was not overlooked:

> The [Economic Transformation Agenda] states:
>
> "New Zealand's economic development strategy – The Economic Transformation Agenda – identifies the critical role that Auckland needs to play in the transformation of New Zealand's economy. As New Zealand's only city of scale, Auckland will need to lead the country's economic transformation and become an international, outward-facing city with a concentration of economic activity that leads to greater specialisation, increased knowledge flows and higher levels of productivity" [10855]

2.34   Some of the broad strategies that were proposed included creating a more positive regulatory and business environment, increasing productivity, maximising the number of people participating in the economy through job creation, and attracting overseas investors. Several submitters also commented on the importance of recognising and addressing the skill shortages that exist, as well as the need to pay "world-class wages" in order to develop and attract highly qualified and skilled people.

2.35   The University of Auckland pointed out the importance of educational institutions to world-class cities and their economic, social, and cultural development. Universities attract skilled and talented people, and research projects and new companies often occur in the same location. It noted that it is "a national institution of the highest international standard", which makes "a very significant contribution to the Auckland region", and advocated for city governance to acknowledge the contribution of tertiary education in its planning. [10850] This point was echoed by others:

> a successful future for Auckland will be built on innovation, a skilled workforce, high quality schools and tertiary institutions, high quality of life built on educated and knowledgeable people who contribute to informed, democratic decision-making and social inclusiveness. [11184]

2.36   There were several comments about improving the standard of urban design and public architecture as an integral strategy for making Auckland a world-class city:

> If Auckland is to prosper, and become one of the world's most desirable places to live and work, any structure for Auckland's governance must encourage and make possible quality urban design. [10523]

2.37   Submitters recognised the important contribution that the built environment makes to civic pride and quality of life noting that "Infrastructure is important but so is having an attractive place to live aesthetically." [11118] They wanted urban design to be on a human scale and an inspiration for positive community feeling, including safety. There was concern about the destruction of historical buildings and the need to have a more stylish, modern city with innovative, exciting buildings. One described Auckland's public architecture as "by and large a public disgrace" because of the "collusion with unprincipled developers and lack of vision." [10089]

2.38   There were calls for enhancement of the waterfront both as a residential and tourist centre. Others emphasised the need to ensure that the urban-rural balance is preserved and that development is ring-fenced to eliminate urban sprawl – "going up, not out." [10090]

2.39   On the other hand, there were some observations that unlike many great cities, Auckland is defined more by its geographical features (e.g. harbours, islands, and volcanoes) than by its buildings. Accordingly, they recommended that protection and improvement of these unique geographical, environmental, and heritage features should be prioritised to achieve a world-class city. One submitter described how people who travel from world-class cities should see

> A city with 1000 year old Pohutukawa trees in its streets, a city with a shoreline with a mix of industrial and recreational zones. A city with volcanic cones. A city not powered by nuclear power!! [10703]

2.40   Again, there was some concern that wealth creation is prioritised over the environment with the potential for "inappropriate developments" [10809] to destroy the natural environment. Some submitters emphasised that effective land use and a clean, green environment will contribute significantly to improving the quality of life of Auckland residents:

> If Auckland is to adopt such a goal as being a world-class city, then care for its environment should be recognised as an essential ingredient … international competition between cities is … dangerous … if it emboldens those who interpret this in an economic sense to require a sacrifice of community or even national aspirations for our environment. [10814]

2.41   In responding to the issue about what Auckland needs to do to become a world-class city, nearly 50 submitters identified sustainability, and proposed definitions of "world-class city" centred around sustainability, e.g. a world-class city is one that is "managed sustainably in a manner that respects and empowers its various contributing communities and cultures." [11114]

2.42   Significant concerns were raised about the impact of climate change, peak oil, and other global environmental trends:

> The Royal Commission has the responsibility of making recommendations for a system of local and regional government for the next 100 years. To do this effectively means taking into account the probable impacts and consequences of climate change and peak oil. …. In this context, what constitutes a model 'world class city' will change. … Climate change will force a reassessment of the basic qualities of what city life is about. … We will have to live within our ecological footprint. [10414]

2.43   Submitters identified the need for strong leadership on this issue and the need to "future-proof" [608] Auckland's governance and infrastructure so that Auckland will be "resilient in the face of future ecological shocks" [10435]. They predicted that the city would need qualities of resilience, flexibility, stability, independence, vibrancy, and conscious care of its environment.

2.44   One submitter observed that Auckland is currently one of the least sustainable cities in the world and that sustainability must be the priority. The importance of applying the principle of sustainability across environmental, economic, and social domains outcomes was identified:

> I would like to see Auckland really sustainable, protecting our beautiful, unique, and exquisite (world-class?) environment, with a population whose basic needs are adequately met, and who are happy and satisfied enough in life to create a crime-free society. [1435]

2.45   Many submitters proposed holistic definitions for a successful world-class city. Those that broadly capture the flavour of the proposed definitions and incorporate a range of interconnected elements are set out below:

- My vision of a world class city is one where the environment is treasured and encouraged, rather than just preserved, where individual and local flavour is welcomed and nurtured rather than just tolerated, and where the quality of life is measured by the warmth and aliveness of the inhabitants rather than by their wealth. [10227]

- [A] 'world-class city' is a vibrant, multi-cultural and innovative city committed to becoming sustainable. [10516]

- [The] priority for making Auckland a world-class city must focus on social and environmental sustainability, with a sustainable economy being a consequence of these … [11141]

- World-class cities are sustainable cities. London, New York, Sydney, Melbourne – all these places are actively pursuing more sustainable futures, connecting their economic potential with broader issues of urban place-making, community building and environmental responsibility. [835]

- [A] world-class city is one in which:

  • The connections and interdependence between the environment, social, cultural and economic realms … form the basis for planning and action.

  • A healthy environment … is the foundation of a healthy society.

  • Social equity and justice concerns drive decision-making.

  • Social harmony and cohesion among people, and a … harmonious relationship between people and the rest of nature is the foundation of policy development.

  • An asset based approach is taken to economic and social development, focusing on the significant opportunities, wealth and assets of the region, rather than its deficits. [10263]

- [A world-class city] has … a political, management, professional and physical infrastructure that is aligned and leveraged to create sustainable economic,

environmental, social and cultural returns for individuals as well as diverse local, regional, national and international communities. [10410]

- A world-class city is vibrant, dynamic and attracts creative people. [10734]

- The liveliest and most memorable parts of world-class cities are idiosyncratic, lively, people-oriented, historically glued together and fiercely protective of their own festivals, customs, values, and diversity. [10820]

- World-class arises from the journey towards becoming a fully democratic and inclusive urban society that has respect for the wider environment in which it lives, works, and plays. New York, London and Sydney never set out to be 'world class' cities; they played to their strengths, and in doing so, became the cities that they are. [11008]

3. Values, Principles, and Characteristics of Local Government

3.1   The *Call for Submissions* document identified some of the characteristics of local government that would be needed to support the development of a successful and sustainable city/region. The four characteristics identified were transparency, accountability, efficient resource use, and responsiveness (see Appendix B). The document asked submitters whether they agreed or disagreed with this list. In responding to that question, many submissions identified a range of other principles, values, characteristics, and criteria that they considered to be important underlying influences on good governance. Democracy was referred to by many submitters, and for most was clearly a "given" that underpinned other considerations.

3.2   Many submitters responded directly, indicating that they generally agreed with the list identified in the *Call for Submissions* document, because these characteristics are important for good-quality democracy. Some submitters added qualifications, noting for example that this list was process-focused and should be complemented with a set of outcomes for a successful and sustainable region. Another qualification was that cost efficiency should not be at the expense of the other principles.

3.3   Other submitters expressed their frustration that there was a lack of these characteristics and said that the issue was to have "effective mechanisms to ensure they are delivered" [1453]. Some submitters noted that these characteristics relied on greater emphasis on participatory governance, and that to achieve all of them, at least two tiers of local government (regional and local) were required.

3.4   Many recommended that other principles, values, characteristics, and criteria be added to the list, on the basis that they were important aspects of good governance. These are discussed below, along with more detailed comments on each of the characteristics proposed in the *Call for Submissions* document.

3.5   It is also important to note at the outset that some submitters identified some positive values that they believed local government currently displayed, for example,

> There are many things to be happy about with the form of our local government. For example, racism in hiring and contracting does not seem to be an issue, nor does religious preference – two items common in many other cities of the world. Commonly accepted forms of governmental corruption like nepotism are largely absent because our system will not tolerate it. There is stability. Democracy is expressed, though sometimes with an uneven hand. The system works, yet there is room for improvement. [10883]

Democracy

3.6   Although the *Call for Submissions* document did not explicitly focus on democracy, the high value placed on democracy emerged as a key theme in many submissions. Clearly, democracy was precious and important to submitters and considered to be a fundamental right that needed to be safeguarded. Improving democratic processes was seen as the responsibility of local government and central to effective governance.

3.7   Like other principles, improved democracy was often cited as part of the rationale behind support or opposition for a particular proposition, such as voting systems or council structures. Reduced democracy was frequently cited as a reason for opposition to larger councils, in particular the proposed "super city".

3.8   Many submitters saw "fully participatory democracy" [10996], particularly at a local level, as a strength rather than an impediment to effective local government, positive outcomes, and sustainability. They saw it as a key mechanism for "growing a city of responsible and engaged citizens" [10708] and increasing involvement in issues. "It is vital that citizens feel part of their cities governing process" [771] and the community has a "sense of identity and influence over decision making" [10632]. One submitter emphasised that the most effective forms of local government occurred when there was proactive participation and it was "easy for citizens to kick-start democratic processes in matters of concern to them". [10269]

3.9   The Local Government Centre from Auckland University of Technology quoted a paper that said "Democracy and devolution are regarded in the literature as essential ingredients for neighbourhood governance".[6] It saw a strong argument for joint council/ community decision making as a way of ensuring that council funding and activities responded to differing neighbourhood needs, where conventional representative democracy might fail to achieve that. [11078]

3.10   Some submitters were concerned that democracy must not be traded off against exercising a vision, or prioritised over "economic and political rationalisation" [10708]. Others, however, cautioned about the need to balance the demand for democratic participation with the need for timely and efficient decision making.

3.11   The particular value of democracy for minority groups, smaller populations, or special-status areas (such as Great Barrier Island) was also highlighted, with one submitter noting that democracy provides "a safeguard …, builds respect across different groups, and enables different communities to find their voice, and influence their area's future." [10687]

3.12   For these reasons, "democracy and majority rule need to make allowance for minorities and small communities" [1554], reflect cultural contexts and needs, and provide equitable representation, particularly for Māori.

6   Pill, M., "What Rationales are Driving Neighbourhood Governance Initiatives in the US and UK?", Paper at European Urban Research Association Conference, 2007, available at http://www.eura2007.org.uk/media/ media_48173_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008. Quoted in Local Government Centre, AUT, "The Future Governance of the Auckland Region: A discussion paper on possible options for local governance – the role of scale, function and engagement in effective local governance", March 2008.

3.13   Views were expressed about what democracy means, ranging from adequate representation to actively including the public in decision making and taking account of a wide set of viewpoints:

> Governance is more than just the authority of local government to impose its statutory power over others; it's about the effectiveness of the interrelationships between all the people and groups of people within the regional community and its external partners. The legitimacy of the governance structure will derive from an accepted balance between regional and local responsibility and accountability. The level of acceptance will depend on the responsiveness of the governance structures to the needs of the people, business and social communities and all of the wider communities of interest. [1476]

3.14   One submitter commented that governance was all about interested citizens being "heard, taken seriously and fairly evaluated". [10304] Another submitter explained that governance was

> [a] social contract between governors and the governed … [with] the implicit assumption that any such governing body function in a way that has the broad agreement of the citizens concerned. When this fundamental principle is breached by those who govern, increased disquiet, protest and even disorder occurs. [10464]

3.15   There were clear concerns that democracy was not taken seriously enough, and that the adage "no taxation without representation" had become ignored. [10425] A prevalent theme in many submissions was that most people were unaware of the issues councils were tackling, and that councils did not listen to communities or implement what they wanted. There were particular concerns about the lack of public consultation in relation to the sale or privatisation of public assets. It was felt that the level of complexity, the excessive power of officials, the lack of transparency, and the role of stakeholders other than citizens were also factors that contributed to eroding democratic legitimacy. One person commented, "Public policy can't be manufactured by public relations consultants. It has to have the approval of the people it's going to be affecting." [10745]

3.16   The lack of transparency and engagement was seen as an erosion of democracy that resulted in negative attitudes towards councils, apathy about affecting positive change, and low voter turnout particularly among minority groups:

> Voter turnout is a fairly blunt instrument to measure interest, trust and confidence in local government as it can be influenced by factors outside local government control. However, it is a cause for concern that voter turnout for local elections is at an historic low. [11279]

3.17   The majority of submitters believed that democracy had been neglected and wanted it to be protected and enhanced. The proposed solutions broadly centred around structures and processes that would strengthen connections and foster meaningful engagement between councils and their communities. This relied on accessible and responsive politicians, informed and interested citizens (particularly at the grassroots

level), and processes that focused on building consensus, rather than the current approaches that increase conflict and division.

3.18 Voting, elections, referenda, and more encouragement to vote were identified as important factors within this context. Increased use of referenda was described as the ultimate form of accountability.

3.19 Other ideas included active participation of citizens in projects, democracy education in schools, and more support for volunteers.

3.20 Smaller was usually viewed as better by these submitters. A shift to smaller, more locally oriented councils was considered to be more democratic as the voices of citizens would carry more weight and decision-making processes would be less complicated. Papakura District was often cited as a good example by residents who felt that the smaller size created citizens who were passionate about their community, and politicians who were in touch. A small number of submitters, however, cautioned that "small" on its own did not necessarily increase public access or improve democracy.

Transparency

3.21 A number of submitters commented on the current lack of transparency, and proposed a range of solutions to be implemented at all levels. Submitters appeared to value transparency in its own right, but they also considered that greater transparency would lead to increased public participation in local government processes, increased responsiveness to communities, and greater accountability.

3.22 Several submitters expressed concerns about decisions being made "behind closed doors" [e.g. 10727, 1127, 10393], with one submitter noting: "There seems to be a lot of 'corridor' decisions with no record of the decision or record of meeting." [10584] One cited an example of being approached by planning staff offering to do "private work for me to assist in getting planning approvals." [10472] There is a perception that bureaucrats operate in secrecy [10287] with hidden vested interests leaving "the governed" excluded from involvement and consequently disadvantaged by the policies [10398]. The main area of concern seemed to relate to lack of transparency around reporting on financial matters.

3.23 A few submitters were particularly concerned about a lack of transparency and accountability around the costs and tendering processes of contractors' services. One submitter believed the failure by Auckland City to respond to an official information request

> "to provide the costs of contracting out for any of the 64 core Council services," proves that this council is more interested in protecting its 'preferred contractors' than being accountable to the public for its spending of our money. [11299]

3.24 Several factors were identified as contributing to poor transparency including the involvement of a multitude of agencies, a lack of incentives to make activities and

outcomes transparent, the inability to challenge and review non-notifiable decisions, a lack of penalties for an absence of transparency, and the Environment Court making decisions behind closed doors. There were also concerns that privacy and commercial sensitivity were cited as excuses for insufficient transparency when they should have no place in that area. One submitter noted that although a lot of effort had gone into council policies and processes, ensuring that these were principle-based had been neglected.

3.25   Various solutions were proposed, particularly involving provision of more information to "ensure the population have been enlightened not brainwashed" [11224], and increasing the public profile of elected representatives. Several submitters commented that all decisions and discussions should be available to the public, and all consents should be notifiable. Key mechanisms for this included publicising council agendas, holding open council meetings, making supplementary reports available, and publishing annual reports with more information and clearer rules about disclosure. In relation to financial reporting, it was suggested that there should be a regional policy and publication of forecasts versus actuals on a monthly basis, with the annual report including important information such as capital expenditure. Other suggestions were to provide long-term council community plans ("LTCCPs") on a ward basis, with regional oversight to monitor and ensure transparency. Audit processes and the appointment of ombudsmen were also recommended. Some stipulated there should be greater transparency around the contracts given by councils, with one submitter pointing out that details of contracts, including the sums of money and projects involved, were not given in council reports. There was also a call for cost-benefit analysis of the previous amalgamation, and any proposed amalgamation, as well as of the contracting-out model, to investigate whether it does save money or provide better service compared with having services performed "in house". [11300] One submitter wanted all representatives to disclose their business and financial interests:

> I think everyone elected to public office in this country should have all their business interests and affiliations detailed and freely available to the people who have elected them. I believe it is called transparency. [10393]

3.26   For all these submitters, transparency in these processes was directly linked to democratic principles: that as ratepayers, they were entitled to know, at the very least, how their money was being spent; and at best, these decisions would become public knowledge, which would then be part of the public record upon which councils could be judged at elections.

Accountability

3.27   The Commission was interested to hear submitters' views on how to ensure that local government remains properly accountable to the people of Auckland. Over 220 people specifically commented on accountability as a key principle of local government.

3.28   Many of these submitters identified accountability as the principle they considered to be the most important. Some noted that accountability is strongly dependent upon other key principles such as transparent processes, subsidiarity, efficiency, improved democratic processes, and community participation in decision making. For example, one submitter observed that councils could not be accountable when making decisions "behind closed doors" or claiming "commercial sensitivity". [1127] The need to balance accountability with efficiency was frequently noted.

3.29   Improved accountability was frequently cited as a reason for a range of propositions, for example, support for retaining community boards, or three-yearly elections; or opposition to executive appointments to local authorities, or to the "super city" concept. In the latter case, it was felt that such a structure could lead to concentration of power in the hands of a few who would not be accountable to Auckland.

3.30   While the comments on accountability strongly support the notion that it is essential for successful governance, very few submitters went into detail about why accountability was important, or the benefits that would result from improved accountability. This may reflect an assumption that the value and benefits are implicitly understood by citizens. One submitter noted that greater accountability would "ensure that the strategic benefits for the majority are not undermined by any parochial obstruction." [10727]

3.31   A number of submitters described who should be accountable to whom. Many emphasised that accountability should operate at all levels, starting at the local level with local people making decisions close to the population. There were strong views expressed that ultimately local government is always accountable to communities as set out in the Local Government Act 2002 ("LGA 2002"). A small number of submitters raised concerns that the interests of "other groups and stakeholders" (as noted in the *Call for Submissions* document) might be given undue weight [1117], and that this had the potential to "erode democratic legitimacy" [1120]. In terms of accountability between tiers of local government, the predominant suggestion was that the local level should be accountable to the regional, particularly where a two-tier model was supported. A smaller number suggested that it should be the other way around.

3.32   Submitters discussed what local government should be accountable for. Some emphasised the LGA 2002, stating that local government should be held accountable for delivering on outcomes that reflect the purposes of the Act, namely sustainable development and community well-being. Other key areas of accountability were in relation to the use of public funds and stewardship of public assets.

3.33   Submitters generally expressed a high level of frustration with the lack of accountability in the current system, describing it, for example, as "hugely unaccountable" [10115]. Of those who responded directly to the question in the consultation document, only one person expressed the view that councils in Auckland were already accountable.

3.34   The lack of accountability was attributed primarily to inadequate attention being paid to ratepayer views, particularly in relation to spending. A number of submitters

observed that decisions are made (e.g. the purchase of assets) without public knowledge, consultation, or approval. The lack of information and community participation was cited as a contributor to inadequate accountability:

> They are not accountable to the Public except at Election time, and we usually don't know what they have done or stood for in their previous term anyway. [773]

3.35   Submitters also identified a range of structural impediments to greater accountability that were associated with "seven disparate local authorities and a fairly toothless regional council" [1125]. The complexity of the system was highlighted as a major barrier:

> Transparency and public accountability in decision-making are diminished because there are too many parallel and overlapping decision-making processes at any one time. This makes the overall system of decision-making obscure and confusing to citizens, and many elected members and officials. [10897]

3.36   The lack of top-down oversight of policy implementation was also an issue. Various submitters noted that local government was characterised by political conflict. At the same time, local government was the ultimate enforcement authority for compliance with statute, and if it abrogated its responsibility there was no higher authority to ensure compliance, other than the Office of the Ombudsmen or the courts. One submitter noted that "there is no effective accountability short of litigation" [1457], while another added that "this is a highly ineffective and very adversarial system" that could be remedied by the proper empowering of regional and central government [738].

3.37   There was particular concern that because of the lack of accountability, councils were currently able to act in ways that undermine progress on regional priorities without any consequences. [10493] The general lack of consequences or incentives (including financial) for not meeting obligations, was identified by a number of submitters.

3.38   A range of other system-related factors, such as blurred lines of responsibility, unclear reporting systems, over-reliance on consultants, and the way councils operate generally, were also cited as drivers of inadequate accountability: "the general demeanour of Council is one of pragmatism and expediency rather than legal principle or doing the right thing." [1457]

3.39   In responding to the question in the *Call for Submissions* document, submitters identified a range of solutions for improving accountability. The most frequent suggestions involved retaining local-level governance, elections (at three-yearly or greater intervals), and increasing "the checks and balances" [849]. More generalised suggestions included applying models established in business or central government.

3.40   One submitter believed that in measuring effectiveness and accountability, the key question should be "are the socio-economic statistical indicators of health and wellbeing improving for those currently disadvantaged through poor outcomes, and are the gaps between Maori and non-Maori disparities lessening and moving toward total elimination?" The reasoning for this was that "when Maori do well, then communities do well, cities and regions do well and New Zealand as a whole will do well." [10609]

3.41   There were particular concerns that the creation of (one or more) larger governance bodies (such as the "super city" model) would deliver services more efficiently, but would also be less accountable:

> the answer is to remove the middle layer of local governance altogether – the city and district councils – and delegate all their powers either up to the regional level, or down to the community board level. [10843]

In this case, the need to strengthen linkages and communication between the regional and local levels was stressed.

3.42   Preserving and strengthening democratic processes was seen as critical for improving accountability. (Submissions on the topic of elections and representation are covered in more detail in Chapter 7.)

3.43   Many of those who commented on the accountability of councillors emphasised the importance of the councillors being approachable and known in the community. "New boundaries and structures are not enough" and in the end "it is essential that there is a governance model where the community knows the leaders whom they choose". [10734] This would necessitate increasing the public profile of local government politicians: "ask the average person in Auckland who are their LG [local government] politicians and they wouldn't know." [10760]

3.44   Another submitter observed: "Apathy in the electorate has grown with the distance increasing between councillors and their community." [1123]

3.45   The general characteristics and behaviours of councillors were also identified as being important for achieving greater accountability. One submitter emphasised the importance of strong leadership. (See the section on leadership later in this chapter.)

3.46   The submissions clearly indicated that greater political and bureaucratic accountability is needed. However, there appeared to be significantly more concern about the lack of accountability associated with officials:

> Elections allow ratepayers to vote out those proved unsatisfactory. The real problem is that the bureaucrats get the bit between the teeth and persist with their own agendas … mayors keep getting voted out because the bureaucrats keep on with their own agendas. [10529]

3.47   There were suggestions that the situation would improve if councillors were full time and more actively engaged with officials and council business on a day-to-day basis. Some felt that officials need more clearly defined roles and job descriptions, and there were a small number of suggestions that officials should be elected. [1523]

3.48   Increased community participation was frequently mentioned as part of the solution to achieving greater accountability. Some noted that community empowerment should be an important objective for councils. This involved more consultation on all elements of local government, at all levels, with full and open debate, including opportunities to comment on key planning documents such as the annual plan and LTCCP. Some

commented that consultation processes needed to be more inclusive of business and Māori.

3.49   Some submitters did, however, say that they felt consultation was adequate, and that there were many opportunities to provide feedback to councils. They added that the consultation needed to be genuine, cost efficient, more targeted, and should cover "all things developmental" [10703].

3.50   Suggestions were made about additional mechanisms that could enhance community participation. These included more use of electronic forums, establishment of a "citizens assembly" [10516], or council annual general meetings. Another suggestion involved hosting "non-threatening" [1161] discussion forums to actively engage communities and local government with local, regional, and national issues. One submitter commented that if rates were set at a local level and clearly linked to the services requested and provided in that area, then citizens would feel more empowered to influence councillors and hold them accountable.

3.51   The provision of information was identified by many submitters as a key strategy for improving community engagement and accountability. Generally, submitters expressed a desire for more information that was accessible and understandable, provided through a range of channels – internet, libraries, and newsletters. To improve accountability, this information should assist citizens to understand where accountability lay and what the local government authorities were responsible for. One submitter, however, cautioned that a lot of information was provided but widely ignored, suggesting that the information needed to be more targeted and provided, for example, on request.

3.52   Provision of reports was seen to be a key mechanism for sharing information. Submitters were interested to see disclosure of all deliberations and decisions, particularly in relation to local and regional integration, and finances and expenditure.

3.53   In addition to provision of more information and greater community participation, submitters identified a range of structural, financial, and auditing solutions. It was suggested that clear separation of policy, compliance, and funding functions from service provision (similar to other sectors) would improve accountability. There were some strong statements that central or regional government funding should be explicitly dependent on implementation of the relevant strategy, particularly in relation to key infrastructure. When poor alignment occurred, there should be consequences, such as the withholding of funding. Another suggestion was that chief executive remuneration should be linked to cost reduction, public satisfaction, and councillor satisfaction.

3.54   Various submitters identified the need for central government to take a more proactive and systematic oversight role to ensure that the provisions of the LGA 2002 were met, rather than just intervening when there were "serious and ongoing problems" [1652]. Avenues of appeal to central government should also be strengthened.

3.55   There were many comments that auditing and monitoring systems needed to be strengthened, either through central government mechanisms (such as the Auditor-General) or through the creation of independent monitoring systems, possibly including

a new audit body. Areas identified for audit included all decisions, annual reports, expenditure, protection of environmental standards, complaints processes, and instances of fraud and/or corruption.

Efficient resource use

3.56   The efficient use of resources is a theme that occurred frequently throughout the submissions, and was often cited as a reason for particular propositions. A number of submitters also commented explicitly on efficiency as an underlying principle. They broadly identified that decreasing costs to ratepayers and making more money available for "important things" [1352] would be the key outcomes of increased efficiency. Increased efficiency would also improve international competitiveness, and as one submitter noted, would lead to a well-constructed community, "which is more efficient than an alienated and dismembered one" [642].

3.57   A number of submitters emphasised the need to maximise efficiency, but not at the expense of democracy. They highlighted facets of efficiency other than cost, for example, timeliness and "whether people and communities are enabled to meet their own needs in timely and cost-efficient ways" [10493].

3.58   One submitter described efficiency as

> an effective public transport system that gets nine-tenths of commuters out of their cars and onto trains, buses, bikes and ferries; … effective public ownership and operation of major infrastructure; … generous and locally-tuned representation on councils, and planning provisions that protect in perpetuity the region's coastlines. [642]

3.59   It is apparent that submitters considered inefficiency and high costs in the current system to be a significant problem. They saw inefficiency being driven by too much complexity which had arisen from duplication of bureaucracy and infrastructure (particularly water and transport). The lack of collaboration and coordination between councils was also identified as a key driver. One submitter noted that expertise was diluted and "high quality political and staff resources are wasted" with a considerable amount of time "taken in transactions and consultation among and between parallel organizations." [1476] The division and argument between councils was cited as threat to "regional economic well being". [10440] One submitter, however, noted that the territorial authorities were "doing their best to deliver to the needs of their respective communities" but that this was "also the source of the problem as it fragmentises regional priorities and decision-making processes" with the sacrifice of "important outcomes … in order to achieve less significant delivery of local benefits." [11140]

3.60   Excessive compliance costs associated with inefficient regulatory processes were also identified. The Department of Building and Housing highlighted the need to reduce housing-related costs, particularly in light of the housing affordability issues that New Zealand was currently experiencing. [11293]

3.61   Various solutions were proposed to improve efficiency. These centred primarily around reducing duplication and improving collaboration through a stronger regional governance model that allowed for decision making at the appropriate level. This would increase efficiency locally and regionally. Consistent regional strategy and standards, streamlined functions, and regional provision of infrastructure and core services would all contribute to efficiency gains, and lead to a smaller bureaucracy and more cost-effective administration.

3.62   Other factors that contributed to efficiency were also identified. For example, urban planning decisions were an important influence – horizontal urban expansion or low-density development (urban sprawl) increased inefficiency across a range of outcomes. A number of submitters commented on the need for "functionality before image" [11244] with less "pomp, 'baubles of office', marketing, re-branding and…public relations" [470]. Others suggested reviewing processes to reduce compliance costs and undertaking five-yearly efficiency reviews.

3.63   Some submitters were sceptical about the likelihood of savings arising from any proposed restructure as a result of the Commission's process. One council manager observed that councils are usually under-resourced and doubted that restructuring would achieve significant savings. Another warned that in determining efficiency, cost-benefit analyses should be treated with caution because of methodological and information quality limitations.

Improved responsiveness

3.64   The Commission's *Call for Submissions* document identified "responsiveness" as one of the needed characteristics of local government. Although submitters indicated that they agreed with this as one of the characteristics proposed by the Commission, and many submitters noted issues related to responsiveness as their rationale for a range of suggestions, only a small number commented specifically on "responsiveness".

3.65   There clearly are concerns about the current lack of responsiveness, and the need for greater responsiveness in the future as the region faces issues such as rising oil prices, security of supply, climate change, and increasing sociocultural diversity. One submitter noted that response times needed to be "about ten times as fast" as they were at present and pointed to "leaky homes" as an example of the consequences of delayed action. [549]

3.66   Some described responsiveness as being about vision, flexibility, cooperation, and engagement. The need for decision-making structures and processes that lead to good and timely decisions was highlighted. Appropriate levels of expertise and strong implementation capability were also identified as being essential for improved responsiveness. Those who commented generally agreed that it was most important at the local level, and that wider benefits such as greater citizen participation would accrue from increased responsiveness.

Improved community outcomes

3.67 A number of submitters referred to the requirement (under the LGA 2002) for local government to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities. In this context, many submitters emphasised the need to improve the well-being of communities as a key principle for future governance of Auckland, and identified it as an issue that had been neglected to date. There was wide recognition of the view that good communities, with happy, healthy citizens make good cities.

3.68 Some submitters spoke of the need to be more people-centred [e.g. 10071, 10089] and to focus more on improving the welfare and quality of life of the residents. As one submitter noted,

> He aha te mea nui o te ao?
> He tangata, He tangata, He tangata.
> What is the most important thing in the world?
> It is people. It is people. It is people. [2160]

3.69 There was also a focus on the importance of the relationship between environmental and well-being outcomes, with one submitter noting, "It's all down to the People & the Planet – How much do you care??" [10232]

3.70 There was recognition of the wider benefits that would come from being more people-focused, including becoming a successful world-class city: "a city that is good for its citizens will also be good for our visitors and will hold its head high in the international arena." [711]

3.71 Social well-being, in particular reduction of inequalities, was an important principle to some submitters. They sought a strong focus on disparity across all council policy, funding, and service delivery areas, including more transparent distribution of resources. There were some comments that "human rights [should] be the basis for policy development and standards of engagement" [1537]. Submitters also sought regional oversight and responsibility, greater leadership and advocacy from local government, and a strong local democracy so that the voices of diverse and less powerful communities could have an equal voice. Fair and active representation of diverse groups, particularly Māori, Pacific, other ethnic, and disadvantaged communities, was highlighted. (See also Chapters 14, "**Social Services and Community Development**", 25, "**Māori Representation**", and 26, "**Pacific Island and Ethnic Representation**".)

3.72 Some submitters highlighted concerns that improved community outcomes should be of equal or greater importance than economic benefits. There were concerns about the perceived trade-off between effectiveness and efficiency, and that efficiency in this context should not be confused with private market models.

3.73 Comments about how to improve community outcomes more effectively pointed to good management systems, application of best practice, an emphasis on service quality, and democratic ownership and control of public assets. Others suggested a stronger orientation towards outcomes, noting that integrated outcomes across local authority functions would improve both efficiency and community well-being outcomes.

3.74   As an underlying principle, submitters stressed the importance of being more responsive to the needs and differences of communities to improve well-being:

> The essence of the democratic process is to try to find the greatest good for the greatest number, while at the same time ensuring that the needs of minorities are not overridden or ignored. [839]

3.75   To embrace this principle, submitters pointed to the need to encourage real participation at the local level, to empower local communities, to strengthen connections within and between communities, and to resource them adequately. Many concerns were raised that if local government bodies became too big, the focus on improving community outcomes would be lost.

Leadership

3.76   The *Call for Submissions* document did not explicitly include a question about leadership; however, many submitters chose to comment on the importance of strong and visionary leadership in the future governance of Auckland. One submitter noted,

> Cities that have succeeded internationally have been driven by innovative and courageous leadership that offers a vision and a pathway to the future, that captures the imagination of its people, gives certainty and direction to business and is not compromised by political expediency. [10909]

3.77   Some described leadership as being critical for both articulating and achieving a vision for the region [e.g. 10601], with leaders being responsible for setting out a clear direction and then taking responsibility for implementation. The importance of leadership at all levels – political, planning and operational, regional, and local – was emphasised by several submitters. [e.g. 10734, 10344] It was also noted that supportive processes and structures were required for good leadership, as was a genuine mandate and authority. The importance of leadership if Auckland were to be able to speak with one voice on national and international matters was also highlighted.

3.78   A number of submitters, in recognising the importance of effective leadership, described the style of leadership they would like to see. Submitters called for leadership to be courageous, strong, and visionary. One suggested that it is acceptable for leaders to be "parochial, proud and protective". [641] These views were balanced by those who sought an approach they described as consistent, steady, knowledgeable, collaborative, and unifying. One submitter said, "Those in power need to be people of vision, with practical solutions to current issues and problems, not hungry for power and glory." [10653]

3.79   The need for a strong service attitude and high regard for ratepayers came through strongly. One submitter noted that "inspired" rather than "strong" leadership would "carry the city to success rather than dragging or bludgeoning it into any particular course", and added that if inspiration was too hard to find, then at the very least,

consultation and transparency were needed; the worst thing for Auckland would be "uninspired leadership trying to ride roughshod over public opinion." [10745] However, one submitter with a strong interest in improving public transport, said that the "necessary changes" needed to be driven "rather than just responding to where the public's thinking currently is." [10337]

3.80   In proposing solutions to the leadership issue, those who commented noted that leaders must be ultimately focused on the good of Auckland, the people and communities in particular, with a long-term, strategic approach. On the other hand, there were comments that good leaders needed to be able to make more decisions, more quickly, and about complex problems with significant price tags that might be unpopular and have long-lasting effects. This then altered the balance between providing leadership and responsiveness to popular concerns required for effective governance.

3.81   One particular submission that commented extensively on leadership [10734] suggested that in order to attract high-calibre leaders in the long term, strategies should begin with leadership education in schools. Some considered that the quality of people was more important than the structures, with one submitter noting,

> Quality people develop and lead quality organisational cultures and therefore consistently attracting quality people will be essential to achieve enhanced governance and civic leadership in the Auckland region. [11009]

Connecting with decision makers

3.82   Although the *Call for Submissions* document did not specifically raise the issue of accessibility to elected representatives, over 100 submitters identified this as an important principle. In particular, these connections were seen as integral to other valued principles such as democracy, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness.

3.83   There was a perception that "in general, local bodies appear to be remote from and inaccessible to their electors" [10590] and that this contributed to a lack of ownership and lack of ability to influence decision making. Concerns were expressed that increasing the size of local government units, such as the proposed "super city" model, would exacerbate the problem. As one community board member observed,

> Size does matter. When it comes to people and social well-being, people are able to connect better with small local governance structures. [10851]

3.84   The importance of citizens knowing their representatives and being able to connect with them directly was frequently highlighted. The value of councillors and council staff being "close to the people" so that "the people, not the functions ... remain uppermost on their minds" [10035] was stressed. One submitter described accessibility as "a need and a right". [11044] A range of other benefits from closer connections with local government included increasing accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and trust, directly engaging and empowering communities, and fostering a lively community spirit.

3.85   Submitters wanted their representatives and council officers to be more recognisable, approachable, and part of the community, with some preferring very informal mechanisms. One Waiheke Island submitter, for example, described how he valued meeting the "councillor or roading engineer in the supermarket or ferry and being able to address issues with them." [10703] Some submitters believed the ability to regularly speak with councillors made them "more accountable and caring". [71] A number of residents from Papakura District described the benefits of a smaller council that enabled them to engage closely with councillors and officers.

3.86   More formal mechanisms to increase accessibility were also recommended, such as increasing the public profile of councillors, conducting more regular public meetings, and hosting information-sharing forums. One submission suggested that workplaces could provide an opportunity for representatives to connect with workers. The predominant recommendation was that local authorities needed to be kept small.

Subsidiarity

3.87   Nearly 180 submitters commented on the principle of subsidiarity. Many noted that subsidiarity was a core premise of their submission, and a vital ingredient for effective democracy. Submissions that described the key elements of subsidiarity without explicitly using the term are included in this section of the analysis. A typical example follows:

> City governance and accountability must take place at a meaningful size for the community. Local accountability of elected representatives and delivery must be paramount. Individuals must be able to have a say in the running of their city. Lack of local accountability will disengage community even more than present. [10957]

3.88   The submissions set out a range of definitions, including that outlined in the Maastricht Treaty, which states that wherever possible, decisions are taken "as closely as possible to the citizens", with high-level action only where it cannot be achieved at the lower level. [10853, 10855] In general, it was understood to be the grassroots, bottom-up approach that devolved "the decision-making power, money, resources and responsibility closest to the action" [10585] or the communities and people affected. It was also understood that decisions were escalated as the sphere of influence grew, when objectives could be achieved only at a higher level, when the costs of making decisions were high, or when individual preferences were relatively uniform. [e.g. 10699] In this context, local or regional governance would be limited to that which smaller communities were not able to undertake. Other submitters pointed out that subsidiarity aligns with the concepts of kaitiakitanga[7] [10665] and knowledge of whakapapa[8] [10648], which are basic to good governance.

3.89   In promoting subsidiarity as an important principle, a range of provisos were put forward. Some submitters noted that subsidiarity was dependent upon capability and

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7   Guardianship; the responsibility for caretaking.

8   Genealogy, bloodline.

capacity within the community, and in their absence, certain communities would be disadvantaged, thereby increasing inequalities. They stressed the need to have a clear pathway to the top level, with a balance between local needs and preferences and regional imperatives. One submitter noted the problems that an unbalanced approach can create:

> Local issues do need local solutions; local flavour is to our advantage, but we see local concerns have become dominant in pan-Auckland issues for too long. [11020]

3.90   Another submitter explained,

> I believe that a balance between centralised and devolved decision-making is needed. We see the dangers of centralised decision-making being inward-looking and process orientated and therefore unresponsive to community needs. However, highly devolved decision-making can result in the capture by vocal minorities and become even less democratic than centralised systems. We need a method … that retains the best aspects of both alternatives: the strengthening of local communities … and a balance of fairness that comes from centralisation. [11168]

3.91   A number of submitters expressed their view that strong local communities would actually strengthen Auckland at the regional level:

> Pushing power and ready access to power down to this level is also likely to create strong and vibrant communities and while… there is no one-size fits all model for successful cities… strong, vibrant and creative cities are formed from the bottom up, not from the top down. [10694]

3.92   Concerns were expressed that in recent years "strategy, policy and programme development has tended to be top down" [10585], and submitters wanted this reversed [11162]. Some submitters (such as Auckland Regional Transport Authority [11291] when referring to public transport organisations) considered that top-down decision-making powers "violated" the principle of subsidiarity. Others felt it was not in keeping with the LGA 2002. Many submissions described the consequences of decisions not occurring at the community level. For example, a Papatoetoe submitter noted that since amalgamation in 1989, decisions were made by 17 councillors with little or no local knowledge of the history, issues, or "local personalities" resulting in "inappropriate actions and solutions" for Papatoetoe residents. [10851] Another submitter wanted explicit governance arrangements to do with strategic planning for schools to be connected to higher-level community or central government planning. [11184]

3.93   Submitters also highlighted the benefits of embracing the principle of subsidiarity. They acknowledged that many needs and issues were only relevant locally, and indeed, "In the end, the very local issues about streets, trees, shopping centres, facilities and parks are the things that have the most impact on our daily lives." [10638] The particular importance of subsidiarity for smaller or unique communities such as Great Barrier and Waiheke Islands was often stressed.

3.94   More generally, subsidiarity was identified as an important contributor to community well-being and environmental protection. Subsidiarity also meant that

opportunities, which often "bubble up from the bottom" [10585], could be taken advantage of. It recognised local knowledge and skills and created more empowered and engaged communities. Retaining community uniqueness and diversity was also identified as an important benefit.

3.95   A number of submitters commented on how subsidiarity supported good democracy. It increased the visibility of representatives, enabled the representatives to be more effective and accountable, and contributed to meaningful elections. One submitter described how the "new localism" [10813] could build trust and empathy between citizens and governance organisations. It also contributed to better decisions, greater efficiency, and resilient solutions. One submitter summarised some of the benefits:

> Local groups have the incentive, motivation and knowledge to come up with smarter, simpler and more effective solutions and, importantly, are less likely to make expensive mistakes! [10452]

3.96   The common theme in relation to subsidiarity was that governance close to the people should be strengthened with small, local-level authorities, as well as stronger regional governance. Some commented that this should be legislated, and that there should be a clear process for allocating decision-making powers and resources, for example as part of annual plan development. Submitters generally felt that the regional body should set regional policy as the minimum standard, with local bodies accountable to the regional body and responsible for implementation, with the option of exceeding the standards where possible. A smaller number felt that rather than the regional or national level imposing mandatory policy, they should promote ideas to the local level, which could then choose how to proceed. Other suggestions included using technology to facilitate devolution of decision making and providing education in schools.

Identity and belonging

3.97   Over 110 submitters identified the development of a strong local identity as an important principle. These concepts are closely linked with other principles, particularly subsidiarity, and were often discussed together. The need to develop a stronger sense of identity was often cited as a reason for opposition to a single council, and support for strengthened local governance. On the other hand, others pointed out that the development of a strong identity at the community level helped to foster a strong identity at the regional level.

3.98   Many submitters believed that Auckland was all the richer for the diversity and individuality of its communities. They noted that the variety made it more interesting and that there was "attractiveness and character in diversity." [10458] One submitter said that building an environment that "promotes homogeneity is wrong and will fail anyway." [10517]

3.99   Many submitters expressed a strong sense of pride in Auckland, and a desire to enhance the distinctive identities of local communities: "Part of Auckland's attraction is its diversity. Whatever final structure is chosen needs to allow local communities with all their differences to thrive." [10517] Some observed that successful international cities have strongly individuated suburbs within cities. In the case of Auckland, one submitter said that the individual cities had their own brand:

> Auckland per se is the cosmopolitan city; Waitakere is the eco-edge city; North Shore is the Gulf city; Manukau is the multi-cultural city and … will incorporate an urbanising Papakura; Franklin is the rural ambience district; and Rodney is the lifestyle choices district. [11128]

3.100   The importance of local identity linking into regional identity was also acknowledged: "I want my family to love our beautiful city as much as I do, yet strongly identify with our local schools and community." [10231] Indeed, it was frequently acknowledged that people "crave a sense of identity" [10069], and that this often hinged on the "point of difference" [10723] associated with their particular (often culturally defined) local community. The importance, however, of balancing such "centring and dispersing elements" [10089] was identified by one submitter.

3.101   Many submitters described the sense of pride they felt in their own community; for example,

> As long-term citizens of Titirangi we have seen the city changing from a wild west place where it was a disadvantage to be considered a Westie, to now when we have a pride in the steps the city has taken to become an eco city, a city that welcomes people of different races and cultures and where the creative arts are considered to be important to the health of the city's communities. [10471]

3.102   At a regional level, geographic icons that give Auckland its unique identity were highlighted, particularly the Waitakere Ranges; the islands, water, and coasts of the Hauraki Gulf; and the Manukau Harbour. Similarly, a number of submissions singled out Auckland's volcanic cones as a "unique geological, … archaeological and historical landscape that contributes to the distinctiveness of Auckland and contributes to its sense of identity." [10203] Many also stressed the national significance of such features.

3.103   As well as geographically defined features, others highlighted the importance of their local community of interest for a range of historical, environmental, rural, or other reasons. They also highlighted that these differences can require different approaches and solutions for particular communities. For example, the importance of understanding and protecting rural identity was often highlighted, as was recognising different priorities:

> Rural residents seem to care most about the state of their roads … When … [they get] a muddy track that essentially has changed little in 50 to 100 years they find it hard to get excited about a central transport hub they may never use or a sports stadium or arts centre or waterfront renewal project. These things seem like indulgent luxuries in comparison to the day-to-day impact of a substandard local road. [10084]

3.104 Various factors that contribute to developing a strong identity were outlined. These included having some control over the local community and the things that made it unique through influence over decision making. Others identified sporting and cultural participation and success as important contributing factors.

3.105 Many submitters identified that a sense of belonging was associated with perceived distinctiveness of a community, and it needed to be protected and enhanced. Indeed, the Local Government Commission said that one of the characteristics of a community of interest was a sense of belonging and identity. [10851] Concerns were expressed that "A feeling of belonging, of concern for fellow men is present in district areas that has been lost in larger cities." [10058] There were a number of comments that acceptance, respect, and caring about each other within communities were essential. One submitter declared emphatically that "the key question is: how do we care for ourselves and each other – together?" [10659]

3.106 Several submitters [e.g. 10723] highlighted the benefits that arose from a strong sense of belonging. They noted that community involvement led to socio-economic commitments, and ownership of and allegiance to the well-being of the group. This was often expressed through positive behaviours such as volunteering or respect for the environment, while the opposite – alienation – led to crime and other negative social outcomes.

3.107 There was widespread recognition that a strong sense of identity and of belonging were critical for building connections, strong social cohesion, and communities characterised by vibrancy, vitality, creativity, and innovation. Some submitters emphasised that these factors could be critical in delivering effective solutions, such as sustainable economic development for communities:

> Strong, diverse communities are the vital essence of the 'liveability' and the outcome that will keep Auckland delivering prosperity and jobs. [10964]

3.108 The importance placed upon identity and belonging was the rationale for many submitters who recommended that smaller councils should be considered. [e.g. 10788] Some, such as a number of Papakura District residents, saw it as a reason to retain their local council in its current form.

3.109 Many submissions promoted the idea that the governance structure and administration should support and enhance communities that people identified with. They felt that boundaries should be defined by communities of interest, with some [e.g. 10753] proposing guidelines for defining criteria, for example

- a sense of community identity and belonging
- similarities in the demographic, socio-economic and/or ethnic characteristics of the residents of a community
- similarities in economic activities
- dependence on shared facilities in an area, including schools, recreational and cultural facilities, and retail outlets

· physical and topographical features

· the history of the area

· transport and communication links.

Consistency

3.110   Consistency across the region was identified by many submitters as a key value, and was closely linked to other values such as transparency and accountability. The need for central, regional, and local bodies to "present a totally united front" [738] and to achieve greater consistency was stressed, but not at the expense of promoting and enhancing local identity. The predominant view was that strong identity and diversity were needed, but with consistent approaches and regional standards in some key areas. Generally, the submissions that favoured strengthened regional governance emphasised consistency as an important principle. Submissions that favoured stronger local and community agencies emphasised the importance of diversity. (See also Chapter 9, "Consistency and Collaboration", for practical examples and solutions.)

Sustainability

3.111   Many people endorsed the concept of sustainability as an important guiding principle for future Auckland governance. One submitter was pleased to note that "the Royal Commission's terms of reference place sustainability at the centre of Auckland's local government arrangements …". [835] Many referred to the requirements to address sustainability set out in the LGA 2002, and a few also referred to the Resource Management Act ("RMA").

3.112   Many were also careful to point out that sustainability referred not only to environmental issues but also to all operations including transport, water, energy, housing, infrastructure, culture, heritage, tourism, strategic assets and resources, facilities, and social services. One submitter reflected the views of many:

> Any regional structures should be economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable and should make decisions that are consistent with these four well beings. [10815]

3.113   One submitter pointed out that acknowledged world-class cities such as London, New York, Sydney, and Melbourne are all pursuing more sustainable futures, and for Auckland to "credibly identify itself as a world-class city, it must address the sustainability and resilience of its places and activities." [835] Another suggested that Auckland's new governance model

> must ensure that Auckland's landscape and biodiversity are protected and enhanced, that its natural resources are used efficiently, that its services and infrastructure are

developed progressively, that its buildings are designed with care for the environment and that the effects of climate change are attenuated. [650]

3.114 Some submitters linked sustainability with the need to take account of the major changes ahead and to ensure protection from "future shocks" [10486] such as peak oil, climate change, energy and water supply issues, and rapid population growth. A focus on sustainability would provide the necessary resilience in the face of increasing uncertainty, complexity, diversity, and change.

3.115 There were also views expressed that sustainability should be considered to be "paramount" [10821] with a balance between environmental and community needs at the very least, and preferably sustainability placed ahead of efficiency and economic imperatives as occurred under a capitalist model:

> as the world moves into a new era of diminishing oil reserves and climate change … increasing tensions between the need for conservation and sustainable systems, and the needs for businesses to turn a profit … sustainability needs must be given priority …. [10471]

3.116 Submitters emphasised the broad importance of sustainability, noting that "sustainable resource management 'enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety', into the reasonably foreseeable future." [1457] There were many submitters who noted that sustainability was particularly important in relation to the region's environmental treasures such as the Hauraki Gulf. Others pointed to the potential consequences of failing to consider sustainability such as the health effects of polluted air and water, or obesogenic[9] built environments. It was also pointed out that Auckland's ecological footprint impacts on the rest of the country.

3.117 Several current obstacles to people and communities shifting to more sustainable lifestyles were identified. These included water harvesting, waste disposal, energy harvesting and contributing to the national grid, and the lack of protection for food-producing trees. One submitter listed current governance arrangements that generated barriers to creating and managing sustainable places, including a need for better alignment between regional strategies and local decision making around greenfield and brownfield developments; a need for more consistency with building consent and inspectorate processes; a need to optimise skills and capacity across the region in the field of planning, infrastructure management, and the building inspectorate; and changing institutional practices and attitudes to facilitate the choice of sustainable design.

3.118 In proposing solutions, there were several submitters who endorsed the Auckland Sustainability Framework, and were concerned that it should not be lost in the transition process. Others proposed that the Ministry for the Environment guidelines should be followed more closely, and that councils should work more closely with the Department of Conservation. Some submitters wanted to see application of the sustainability principle made mandatory because they felt that governance structures would be unlikely to

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9   Facilitating obesity.

"willingly prioritise environmental management issues". [604] The Green Party said that it believed the inquiry process should result in

> the development of an agreed strategic plan for using scarce environmental and fiscal resources to develop a city-region that is environmentally, economically, socially and culturally sustainable. [10897]

3.119   More generally, submitters stressed the need for flexible and responsive structures and processes based on diversity and allowing for changing dynamics. One submitter noted that New Zealand does not have a national sustainability strategy ("unlike most OECD countries") and proposed a model based on "commonality within diversity", focusing on a strategy for sustainable development at three (national, regional, and local) levels. [10516]

3.120   The application of the principle of sustainability was emphasised in relation to planning and development. Recommendations centred around the need for long-term planning horizons, doing things right the first time, and testing all proposals against the highest standards of environmental integrity and sustainability. A number of submitters pointed to the "Waitakere model" as something that could be usefully emulated across the Auckland region:

> [Waitakere is] an eco city that has implemented sustainable development as a key part of its city vision and philosophy. [It] honours the environment … [and] conservation areas … honours its diverse ethnic groups and walks the talk about social justice … [It has] a working sustainable model of city management that can be emulated by other cities within the Auckland region. [10860]

3.121   The Māori organisation set up to work alongside Waitakere City, Te Taumata Runanga, noted that mana whenua[10] have established a sustainability framework based on tikanga Māori[11] that sits alongside the Auckland Sustainability Framework. Te Taumata Runanga wanted to see this work continued and expanded to "become more inclusive of the full breadth of Maori interests across the Tamaki rohe[12] …". [11255]

Treaty of Waitangi

3.122   While issues related to the Treaty of Waitangi are addressed in detail in Chapter 25, "Māori Representation", it should be noted in this section that there were many submitters who specifically recommended that honouring the treaty should be a key principle for Auckland governance. It was noted that local government has statutory obligations to engage with Māori and to recognise and uphold the Treaty of Waitangi, and that the new structure must be consistent with the treaty principles – partnership, protection, and participation. Others referred to principles of "Te Puawaitanga o te

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10   Local Māori with ancestral ties to the land.

11   Māori cultural protocol, customs.

12   Tribal area.

tangata"[13] [11278], and kaitiakitanga [786]. One submitter noted that the local government is best driven by a relationships philosophy and that the Treaty of Waitangi provides the most effective framework for this to develop. Another noted the value of broad Māori concepts that are relevant for all communities:

> It seems to me paramount that governance requires an understanding of certain important concepts – like taonga[14], partnership, kaitiaki or guardianship, and always e tangata e tangata e tangata[15]. [10143]

Other principles

3.123 Submitters proposed a range of other principles to be incorporated in Auckland's new governance model. These included

- wisdom
- compassion
- goodwill and generosity of spirit
- relationships
- acknowledging achievements, identifying what is working well and building on strengths
- positivity
- creativity
- simplicity, or reducing complexity
- integration
- creating a "sense of place"
- globalism – building communities and local implementation capacity
- exclusive assignment (i.e., functions should be the responsibility of one organisation only)
- form following function
- evidence-based
- outcomes-focused.

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13   Realising the special role of the Māori people.

14   Precious assets, valued resources.

15   The people, the people, the people.