

**Part 11**

# **Civic Leadership for Auckland**

*An International Perspective*

Briefing Paper prepared for the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance

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## Executive Summary

The Royal Commission on Auckland Governance (“Royal Commission”) has been established to investigate and report on the local government arrangements that are required in the Auckland region in order to maximise the current and future well-being of the region and its communities, and the region’s contribution to wider national objectives and outcomes. The Royal Commission’s Terms of Reference specifically invite it to consider what governance and representation arrangements will best “provide leadership for the Auckland region and its communities, while facilitating appropriate participation by citizens and other groups and stakeholders in decision-making processes”.

This briefing paper has been commissioned by the Royal Commission to assist it in its task. It is intended to support the work of the Commission by providing a wide-ranging, international perspective on civic leadership themes – on concepts, models and approaches – that deserve consideration in the Auckland context. The paper does not represent the views of the Royal Commission, but the Commission welcomes the paper as a useful contribution to the leadership debate.

This briefing paper aims to provide the Royal Commission, and others, with a range of insights relating to the changing nature of civic leadership and, in light of the analysis, to offer suggestions on ways of strengthening multilevel leadership in the Auckland city region. It should be stressed at the outset that there is no suggestion here that Auckland should embark on an international search for a “solution” to the leadership and governance challenges now facing the metropolis. Such an approach would be misguided because cultures, histories, legal systems and geopolitical factors vary across nations. The value of an international perspective is, then, not that it might generate a “quick fix” answer. Rather the hope is that it can widen horizons and contribute to fresh thinking within the Auckland context.

The introduction sets the scene by drawing attention to the pace of global change. The forces of urbanisation, international migration and climate change put new pressures on governments to deliver innovative approaches and solutions. These changes have very significant implications for the exercise of local leadership. In essence, if “place-based” leadership is to be successful in turning global challenges to local advantage, civic leaders will need to be much more outgoing than in the past and need to be supported by better designed institutional structures. The paper distinguishes three overlapping civic leadership roles in the modern city. Civic leadership is defined broadly to embrace all leadership activity that serves a public purpose in the city region. Civic leaders are found in the public, private, and community/voluntary sectors and they operate at many geographical levels – from the street block to the entire city region and beyond. The three kinds of civic leadership discussed in this paper are as follows:

- **Political leadership** – referring to the work of politicians elected to leadership positions by the citizenry

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- **Managerial leadership** – referring to the work of public servants appointed by government to plan and manage public services and promote community well-being
- **Community leadership** – referring to the work of the many civic-minded people who give their time and energy to local leadership activities in a wide variety of ways.

These three roles overlap, and some individuals may play more than one role. A key theme in the report is that Auckland needs a high-calibre contribution from **all three** kinds of leader and that this leadership needs to be multilevel.

The movement from “government” to “governance” is analysed. Local government refers to democratically elected councils. Local governance is broader – it refers to the processes and structures of a variety of public, private and community/voluntary sector bodies at the local level. Successful place-based leadership needs to combine legitimacy with capacity. That is, bold outgoing leadership needs to be underpinned by electoral legitimacy but, in modern times, government cannot “go it alone”. Leaders therefore need to tap into the capacity of a range of stakeholders if they are to respond to the difficult cross-cutting challenges that they now face and enhance the quality of life for all in Auckland.

The paper reviews the expanding literature on leadership and identifies four dimensions that could be of interest to the Royal Commission: personal characteristics, the context (including institutional design), the nature of the leadership task, and the interplay between leadership and management. It also sketches out the multiplicity of leadership roles in the modern city region.

Following this scoping of the terrain of local leadership, the spotlight is focused on the modern city leadership agenda and, in particular, the changing nature of local political leadership. Recent debates and developments in the UK may be helpful in this regard. The paper outlines changing approaches to local political leadership in England, refers to possible indicators of good political leadership, and explains the importance of civic leadership in strengthening local democracy. It suggests that leadership development programmes for local government can play a very important role in helping Auckland gear up to meet new challenges. Approaches to leadership development for politicians, managers and community leaders are outlined.

The final section offers some “pointers” for Auckland derived from the analysis set out in the paper. The pointers cover six related areas:

- strategic leadership of the city region
- constitutional arrangements to support legitimate regional leadership
- a directly elected mayor for the Auckland region
- civic leadership within the metropolis
- leadership development in the diverse city
- managerial leadership for civic engagement.

All the suggestions set out in this paper stem from an international perspective. They are grounded in real experience in cities and city regions in other countries. My hope is that they will be helpful to those charged with reshaping the governance of Auckland in this coming period.

## 1. Introduction

The starting point for this discussion is that the challenges now facing the citizens of Auckland are not the same as they were in the past. In common with metropolitan regions across the world Auckland is experiencing rapid change – the economic functions of the city region are shifting, New Zealand society is transforming and the aspirations and expectations of citizens are changing. In addition, different public policy challenges – for example, sustainable development and climate change – have leapt to the top of the policy agenda putting new pressures on the established systems of government to deliver innovative approaches and solutions. When viewed from an international perspective it seems clear that a range of forces – particularly the forces of urbanisation, international migration and globalisation – are causing cities, and particularly metropolitan regions like Auckland, to restructure both economically and socially. This process of transformation raises new challenges for those involved in leading and shaping the political institutions set up to govern increasingly complex city regions.

The very existence of a Royal Commission on Auckland Governance is testimony to the fact that the New Zealand Government recognises the significance of these changes and, indeed, the terms of reference of the Royal Commission refer explicitly to global forces: “over the next 100 years, the Auckland region will face enormous change brought about by global economic, environmental, and political forces”. The text continues: “Local trends, including high population growth, add to the challenges and opportunities for the region. Auckland has to compete in a global market place to sell its goods and services and to attract the talented people it requires to secure a sustainable and prosperous future”. Twenty years ago local governments did not have to trouble themselves with international trends and rapid shifts in global economic relations. Now they do, and this redefinition of the scope of the tasks confronting city governments lies at the heart of this paper on civic leadership for Auckland.

It will be suggested that the dynamics of modern change have implications for the very way we conceptualise “civic leadership” as well as for the leadership roles of elected politicians, appointed officers and the various “community-based” leaders representing the interests of different stakeholders in society – for example, private sector leaders, religious leaders, university leaders, community activists and so on. None of this is to imply any criticism of those who now exercise leadership roles in Auckland or, indeed, those who led Auckland in the past. Rather it is to suggest that fast-moving events require us to reconsider established practices and approaches. Some practices will be found sound and well suited to modern challenges. However, given the pace of global change, it would be surprising if maintenance of the status quo in leadership arrangements across the city region represents the perfect model for the future.

In this paper we will examine the experiences of local governments in other countries and seek to draw out insights from different settings that can inform thinking relating to the

redesign of the systems of governance for the Auckland region. The paper discusses three related themes in the first three sections:

- **The changing context for civic leadership.** Over the years governments across the world have been required to reconsider and update arrangements relating to local government – and, in particular, metropolitan government – in order to adapt to changing economic, social and urban trends. Present and emerging challenges imply a need to put in place strong, outward-facing city leadership arrangements.
- **From government to governance.** In this section we examine the debate about the so-called shift from “government” to “governance”. This is a comparatively recent development and the implications for local leadership are significant.
- **Understanding civic leadership.** In this section we discuss the nature of civic leadership in more detail. We consider who exercises leadership in a modern metropolis and summarise views on the tasks of civic leadership as drawn from the literature and experience in other countries.

Against this background we then examine the modern civic leadership agenda and, in particular, we allude to recent developments relating to local leadership in the UK. It is stressed here that Auckland should **not** embark on an international search for a “solution” to the leadership and governance challenges now facing the metropolis. Cultures, histories, legal systems and geopolitical factors vary enormously among nations. It follows that it is misguided to believe that a model of metropolitan governance that is felt to be successful in one country can readily be transposed to another. Rather the purpose in examining various experiences beyond the frontiers of New Zealand is to spur fresh thinking in the Auckland context. Appropriate civic leadership models for the Auckland city region will be invented in New Zealand by local leaders and citizens – this ensures that they will be tuned to the local situation. Foreign experience is best seen as providing a set of resources – of ideas, experiences and innovations – that can, perhaps, assist this process of locally based institutional design.

In the light of all the above we then outline, in the final section, some pointers for civic leadership in Auckland. The discussion here considers alternative institutional forms but it is emphasised that this addresses only part of the challenge. It is equally important to invest in a range of leadership development programmes to bring forward and develop local talent. It is clear that strong civic leadership of Auckland in the future will be multilevel, and it is suggested that leadership development programmes can be created that will enhance the civic capacity of the entire city region to respond to changing events.

Before we embark on the argument, it may be helpful to define a few phrases in the hope that this will avoid unnecessary confusion. **Civic leadership** is defined in very broad terms – it is taken to mean all leadership activity that serves a public purpose in the city region. This broad definition recognises and values the leadership contribution of individuals both inside and outside government. A very large number of individuals give their time

freely to serve the public interest in Auckland and an aspiration of this paper is not just to celebrate these many contributions, but also to consider how to strengthen multilevel civic leadership in the city region.

For the purpose of this paper it is suggested that it is helpful to view civic leaders as comprising three important groups – see Figure 1. These are not “once-and-for-all” definitions. Rather, they represent an attempt to sharpen the conversation in the Auckland context by distinguishing three overlapping leadership roles as follows:

- **Political leadership** – referring to the work of those people elected to leadership positions by the citizenry. These are, by definition, political leaders. Thus, all elected local councillors are political leaders, although we should acknowledge that different councillors carry different roles and responsibilities and will view their political role in different ways.
- **Managerial leadership** – referring to the work of public servants appointed by local authorities and central government to plan and manage public services and promote community wellbeing. These officers bring professional and managerial expertise to the task of governing the city region.
- **Community leadership** – referring to the work of the many civic-minded people who give their time and energy to local leadership activities in a wide variety of ways.

A point that will be stressed repeatedly in this report is that Auckland needs high-calibre contributions from all three kinds of leaders. Indeed, how to ensure top quality and effective contributions from all three sets of leaders is the central challenge for civic leadership in Auckland in the 21st century. Figure 1 shows that the different realms of leadership are highly connected and that they overlap. As we shall see, some of the most important leadership challenges lie in the zones of overlap between the different realms of leadership. In particular, we can note that local government leaders – whether they are elected or managerial – need not only to work well together but also to collaborate creatively with a wide range of community leaders who are not formally part of the government system.

## 2. The changing context for civic leadership

It should be recognised at the outset that reorganising the government arrangements of metropolitan areas is not a new phenomenon. On the contrary reorganisation has been an issue ever since cities began sprawling over their original municipal boundaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A first approach to the problems created by jurisdictional fragmentation was annexation of the suburbs. Indeed, this model of local government reorganisation is still highly influential in many countries. In the United States, for example, where many metropolitan areas are extremely fragmented, “city-county” consolidation and local authority mergers are very much alive and well.<sup>1</sup> However,





a second approach, pursued in many countries in the 1960s and 1970s, involved the creation of two-tier metropolitan governments. In this model certain powers and policy-making competences are transferred to the metropolitan scale – an approach adopted in several European capitals, for example, Berlin, Paris and London.<sup>2</sup>

It can be claimed that metropolitan reforms following these two patterns – the consolidation route and the two-tier route – did not necessarily require a radical rethink of the nature of the city leadership task. After reorganisation the main focus of attention for city leaders would still be the organisation and delivery of high-quality public services to meet the needs of the local population in a democratically accountable way. True, the introduction of an upper tier of metropolitan government was intended, in many cities, to enhance the capacity of government to think and operate in a more strategic way, and to engage more effectively with major stakeholders in the private sector. But it can be claimed that all pre-1990 metropolitan reorganisations were “pre-global”.

A recurring theme in this paper is that the world has changed remarkably in the period since 1990 and, more specifically, that global economic transformation and societal changes have altered the terms of the debate relating to city leadership. We will revisit the notion of a shift from government to governance in the next section but, in summary, we can record that the globalisation of the economy has turned cities into powerful engines of economic growth. This has, to some extent, blurred the boundaries between public and private interests, and this new economic context has led to the creation of new urban institutions in many countries.<sup>3</sup>

These changes have important implications for civic leadership. First, we will consider the implications for political leadership. As explained in the introduction, in this paper, we define **political leaders** as those people elected to leadership positions by the citizenry. These

political leaders are accountable in some shape or form to the electorate. They may be leaders of particular municipalities within the metropolis and/or they may have leadership roles in the government of the entire metropolis. In the New Zealand context they may be members of community boards, which represent smaller geographic areas within particular local authority areas. In the third section below we will expand our discussion of civic leadership to include other important leaders in the metropolis – including appointed officers, business leaders, community leaders and so on. It is helpful first, however, to focus on the changing roles of political leaders.

In the academic literature there are two main perspectives on city leadership, which we describe here as the “global approach” and the “place-based approach”.<sup>4</sup> The global approach scrutinises the wider context within which cities operate and, more often than not, draws attention to the constraints on local leadership. Some, but not all, commentaries adopting this perspective conclude that the scope for city leadership in the modern world is pretty much trivial. Thus, according to Paul Peterson, an influential American urban scholar, cities are heavily constrained by local and regional economic competition and must give priority to policies that promote inward investment and stimulate economic growth.<sup>5</sup> In his view cities that do not comply with these forces will be punished by loss of private investment, jobs, and tax revenue. Acceptance of this analysis has led city leaders in some countries, and this is particularly noticeable in the United States, to conclude that their central role is to project the advantages of their city to would-be investors. In extreme form the argument suggests that traditional concerns about democratic accountability and transparent decision making need to be set aside. Because global competition for capital investment is so intense city leaders should, according to the tenets of what Americans call “civic boosterism”, take steps to create business-friendly decision-making arrangements that can attract “footloose capital”.

A second approach to city leadership rejects this perspective, claiming that it overstates the constraints within which political leaders actually operate. The place-based approach starts from an examination of the forces creating the particularities of a specific place – its economic base, its social make-up, its constellation of political interests and so on. In this formulation local political leaders (and, indeed, civic elites) are not seen as victims of global economic forces. Rather they are seen as civic leaders who can have a considerable impact on the fortunes of their city by taking advantage of the strengths of the local population and the distinctive history and characteristics of their city. Scholars adopting this perspective argue that Peterson, and commentators who share his views, have overemphasised the role of footloose capital in shaping urban fortunes. They suggest that prosperity can be driven by place-based attributes, and that multinational companies are not necessarily crucial to the economic success of a city.

This division of views is, to some extent, revealed in the diversity of approaches cities are currently pursuing in relation to local economic development in different countries. Thus, the traditional marketing approach of striving to attract new businesses is now challenged by approaches that stress other routes to economic prosperity – for example, supporting local businesses with a low-carbon footprint. Indeed, some cities take the view that is better to support and attract creative and inventive people rather than multinational

companies that are, at root, unconcerned about the fortunes of particular places. Answerable to shareholders in far-off lands, they can have a habit of disappearing at short notice. Thus, some writers, for example, Richard Florida, suggest that city leaders may be better off making their cities “people friendly” rather than “business friendly”.<sup>6</sup>

In practice both these perspectives on city leadership are helpful. The same city can be regarded as part of a totality and as a unique outcome of its particular history. Comparative academic studies that combine both a global and a local perspective are now on the increase and this combination of perspectives is leading to a better understanding of the scope for and limits on city leadership.<sup>7</sup>

Enough has been said, however, to suggest that the nature of the civic leadership task is in the process of being transformed. In the past city leaders could legitimately focus their attention on meeting the needs of the local population by working with their officers to plan and deliver high-quality public services and by encouraging the self-organising capacity of local communities. Global changes are now creating additional challenges for civic leaders. In the Auckland context, political leaders are expected to deliver good community outcomes in line with the Local Government Act 2002. The changes we have outlined here suggest that effective approaches to achieving good community outcomes will require an approach to city leadership that is more outgoing, more visible and more committed to influencing the actions of other stakeholders.

### 3. From government to governance

In this section we will consider the suggestion that we are moving from an era of government to one of governance.<sup>8</sup> But what do these terms mean? For the purpose of this discussion *government* refers to the formal institutions of the state. Government makes decisions within specific administrative and legal frameworks and uses public resources in a financially accountable way. Most important, government decisions are backed up by the legitimate hierarchical power of the state. *Governance*, on the other hand, involves government *plus* the looser processes of influencing and negotiating with a range of public and private sector agencies to achieve desired outcomes. A governance perspective encourages collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors to achieve mutual goals. Whilst the hierarchical power of the state does not vanish, the emphasis in governance is on steering, influencing and coordinating the actions of others.

Moving to the local level *local government* refers to democratically elected authorities. *Local governance* is broader – it refers to the processes and structures of a variety of public, private, and community and voluntary sector bodies at the local level. It acknowledges the diffusion of responsibility for collective provision and recognises the contribution of different levels and sectors. In a recent international volume bringing together contributions from scholars examining urban governance in all continents the nature of this so-called shift from government to governance is examined in some depth.<sup>9</sup> We draw on this discussion here to summarise some of the main arguments.

Twenty years ago the literature on local government focused on government. The word “governance” was rarely used and was certainly not a central part of the political or the academic discourse relating to local democracy and public service improvement. Much of the discussion about potential reforms focused on local government structures and how to improve policy and management processes – by, for example, strengthening public involvement in decision making. On the whole, local government was perceived narrowly as an arm of the state operating in the locality and, in those days, many countries placed great faith in the role of the state to solve societal problems.

We can see the emergence – in the 1980s and the 1990s – of a case for moving from government to governance, although this varied cross-nationally in scale and scope. The oil shocks of the late 1970s, the recessions in the 1980s and the 1990s, and global economic restructuring, left many governments facing funding shortfalls. In addition, there was a shift in the nature of the challenges governments were trying to tackle. New cross-cutting challenges – such as environmental degradation, social exclusion, poverty, and community safety – emerged, which required different agencies to work more closely together if they were to be effective. Couched differently in different countries common themes in the debates that brought about this shift were a recognition that the state could not go it alone; that working in partnership with other stakeholders could improve problem-solving capacity; that no one organisation had a monopoly of wisdom in relation to solving urban challenges; and that new and more inclusive approaches to community representation and leadership needed to be developed. Driven by public purpose all these motivations signalled a desire to strengthen the capacity of government to work with a range of stakeholders to solve societal problems.

However, at the same time as these arguments were being put forward, some protagonists sought a shift from government to governance for ideological reasons. Politicians on the political right – and this was particularly noticeable in the US and UK during the Reagan (1981–1989) and Thatcher years (1979–1990) – were attracted to the notion of governance because they saw it as a way of “rolling back the state” and enhancing the role of the private sector in public affairs. Strongly influenced by public choice theory, these politicians advocated the importation of private sector management techniques into the public sector. In the academic literature on public management these reforms have come to be described as “new public management” (NPM).<sup>10</sup> While it should be recalled that these ideas were implemented in different ways in the different countries that adopted them – and many did not – it can be noted that common features were an effort to downsize government, to privatise public services and to introduce private sector approaches from contracting to performance management. There was also a strong interest in introducing more transparent systems of financial management, and many countries were attracted to the idea of introducing a customer orientation into public service delivery. This shift, which was intended to tackle the bureaucratic paternalism that had built up over the years, had important implications for both central and local governments in many countries. The New Zealand Treasury was attracted to these ideas and they were picked up with some enthusiasm by the central government in the period from 1987. Indeed, they influenced national policy to the point where the country became known internationally for the “New Zealand model” of public service reform.<sup>11</sup> The

influential Schick Report of 1996, commissioned by the Treasury, provided a critique of the NPM reforms; the present Government, while it has not repudiated the NPM approach, has sought to reaffirm the distinctiveness of public service values.<sup>12</sup>

What lessons for civic leadership can we draw from this discussion of the movement from government to governance? First, and this will be explored further in the next section of this paper, we can surmise that the legitimacy needed to exercise bold and effective metropolitan leadership in modern times is likely to flow from an approach that combines multiple actors drawn from local government and civil society, from the public, private and non-profit sectors. This is not to advocate an abdication of responsibility on the part of political leaders. Rather it is to recognise the value of partnership working and the importance of bringing together government and governance models. Stated simply, governance in the absence of government risks throwing political leadership into crises of legitimacy. There are risks with governance models. Thus, if citizens come to believe that decision making is less than transparent and that lines of accountability for making decisions about public spending are becoming blurred, it will not be surprising if they come to question the legitimacy of those taking decisions. On the other hand, a government that is inward looking, that ignores the governance challenge and that fails to engage with the various communities of interest and place in the city region risks creating a crisis of capacity. Put bluntly, local government cannot “go it alone”. While they clearly enjoy a democratic mandate granted by citizens at the ballot box, political leaders need the support of **other** stakeholders in the city to accomplish their objectives.

It follows that the old hierarchical model of city leadership – the city “boss” determining policy for services controlled and delivered by the state – is long past its sell-by date, even in cultures where the city boss style of leadership had become fairly embedded. Thus, for example, we can note a complete contrast in leadership style between Mayor Richard J. Daley, who ruled Chicago from 1955 until his death in 1976, and his oldest son, Mayor Richard M. Daley, who has been Mayor of Chicago since 1989.<sup>13</sup> The present Mayor Daley is one of the most respected city leaders in the United States, but his style of leadership is much more consensual than that of his famous father. An important challenge for all political leaders is, then, to develop their skills and effectiveness as facilitative leaders, rather than “top down” leaders. The importance of being able to reach out to other stakeholders and local people in an effort to influence decisions made by **others** in order to improve the local quality of life is difficult to overestimate. In summary, then, it is suggested here that modern political leaders can take the debate **beyond** an unhelpful divide between government and governance models and can use the legitimacy of their elected position to orchestrate new approaches to metropolitan leadership. We turn to this challenge in the next section.

## 4. Understanding civic leadership

The Royal Commission proposed in its initial March 2008 discussion document (Call for Submissions), that the needed characteristics of local government to support the

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development of a successful and sustainable city region in Auckland should include four key qualities:

- *Transparency*

The responsibility for decision making and the consequent responsibilities for delivery and funding should be clear to the general public.

- *Accountability*

The local government arrangements should provide for clear accountability for achieving outcomes, use of public funds, and stewardship of public assets.

- *Efficient resource use*

The supply of local government services should be timely and cost-efficient, supporting delivery of the right quality and quantity of services to local residents and businesses without undue waste, at reasonable cost.

- *Responsiveness*

Local government should be proactive in identifying and responding to the current and future needs of its communities and should have the strength and flexibility to cope with uncertainty, complexity, and change.

These are all important considerations, and effective political leaders need to develop approaches that maximise these values. Clearly, then, political leadership involves considerations that are not to be found in the private sector, and this is one of the reasons why leadership concepts and models developed in business settings do not usually translate well into the local government arena. Business management books are largely unconcerned with the politics of decision making as encountered in local government. While they can contribute helpful insights relating to what we call here “managerial leadership” of public services, they offer little of value to thinking creatively about civic leadership in a highly charged political environment. In the discussion that follows we will draw on the business management literature relating to leadership, but the political science literature and the social psychology literature is probably more important for our purposes.<sup>14</sup>

In this section we set out to build an understanding of civic leadership by discussing two perspectives on leadership:

- the four dimensions of leadership as identified in the literature
- the multiplicity of leadership roles in the modern city.

### **The four dimensions of leadership**

First, the **personal characteristics** of individual leaders matter. Qualities such as vision, strength, stamina, energy, inventiveness and commitment are associated with successful leadership. There is a well-established tradition within leadership studies that adopts the biographical, or case study, approach to the study of leadership.<sup>15</sup> These studies can, by

examining the conduct and behaviour of known leaders, provide valuable insights on the exercise of leadership.

In the field of urban politics there is, in fact, a considerable body of literature built around this approach. For example, the “fly on the wall” study of Ed Rendell when he was Mayor of Philadelphia in the period from 1992 to 1997 provides an excellent, albeit journalistic, picture of personal emotion and energy in city leadership.<sup>16</sup> Other more academic studies of US city leaders include books on Robert Moses of New York City,<sup>17</sup> Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago<sup>18</sup> and Mayor Harold Washington, also of Chicago.<sup>19</sup> A similar tradition exists in Europe with, for example, studies of Joseph Chamberlain, the Mayor of Birmingham,<sup>20</sup> and Herbert Morrison, leader of the London County Council.<sup>21</sup> These and other studies lend some weight to the idea, discussed earlier, that place-based leadership can make a difference.

The second aspect of leadership that should be stressed is that **context** matters. An effective approach to leadership in one setting might not be appropriate in another. On this analysis the accomplishments of individual leaders may be less important than forces – economic, political, institutional and cultural – shaping the context within which they exercise leadership. Sometimes called situational leadership, at other times contingent leadership, this approach has become popular within the field of management studies as well as political science.<sup>22</sup>

A recent UK study of leadership in urban governance, built around an examination of approaches to leadership in three localities, highlights the impact of contextual factors.<sup>23</sup> By comparing experience in different parts of the country this study shows that the institutional design of the governance system of a city can be an important factor either hindering or supporting the exercise of city leadership. The research shows, for example, that the constitution of the Greater London Authority (GLA) provides a platform for high-profile, outgoing leadership by the directly elected mayor of London.<sup>24</sup> This institutional design, comprising an elected strategic authority headed by a directly elected mayor, provides both a strong legitimacy for leadership and a clear focus for leadership. We will examine London’s governance arrangements later in the paper as they could well have relevance to the Auckland context. Suffice it to say here that the mayor enjoys a mandate from the citizens of the entire metropolis and is recognised by all concerned as the leader of the capital. This design contrasts with the governance arrangements in Bristol, in the south-west of England, where confusion reigns. Hardly anybody knows who is the political leader of any of the local authorities. The poor institutional design of the governance of Bristol – it is a fragmented city region with confusing municipal boundaries and a proliferation of complex partnerships with overlapping responsibilities – constrains leaders. Political leaders in the Bristol city region are held back by the absence of suitable metropolitan governance arrangements. They are forced into an endless process of negotiation with diverse stakeholders. Nobody has the legitimacy to exercise strong leadership for the city region as a whole, with the result that even modest changes require leaders to participate in a delicate dance. This partly explains why the public transport in the greater Bristol area is so poor.

Our third dimension of leadership concerns the **nature of the leadership task**. James MacGregor Burns, in his classic book on leadership, draws a helpful distinction between transactional and transformational approaches to leadership.<sup>25</sup> Stated simply the old paradigm defined leadership as a “transaction” between a leader – often described as the “boss” – and a follower, or “subordinate”. A typical exchange is pay for doing a job, but other exchanges can take place – such as the favours and feelings psychologists suggest are traded in social exchange theory.

Transformational leadership is different in nature from transactional leadership. It has been described as a process of “bonding” rather than “bartering”.<sup>26</sup> Burns argues that leadership is about transforming social organisations, not about motivating employees to exchange work efforts for pay. Sashkin and Sashkin, in their excellent articulation of transformational leadership, build on the argument advanced by Burns and suggest that a shared approach to vision building is crucial.<sup>27</sup> In addition, transformational leaders couple self-confidence with an orientation toward the empowerment of others and recognise the importance of building a caring organisational culture. These ideas resonate with the idea of the “servant leader” and remind us that effective leaders pay a high level of attention to the emotions and feelings of others.<sup>28</sup>

This discussion of the difference between transactional and transformational approaches to leadership resonates with another distinction found in the literature on leadership. In some languages – French, for example – the word “leader” is derived from the image of the head of the body. Framed in this way the leader sits on top of the body and is clearly seen as the most important person. The Anglo-Saxon origins of the word are rather different; the root of the word “leader” is “laed”, which means a path or road. This notion of lead, meaning to find the path or shape the journey, is found in other languages too – for example, Greek, Roman, and Egyptian. As Adair explains, the two metaphors of the head and the journey have very different connotations: one is vertical and the other is horizontal; one implies hierarchy, while the other does not.<sup>29</sup> The key point that emerges from this literature is that the way leadership is conceptualised has profound implications for the way leadership is exercised.

The fourth important consideration to highlight from the leadership literature concerns the **interplay between leadership and management**. Some writers attempt to draw a sharp distinction between leadership and management. As Bennis and Nanus put it “managers do things right, and leaders do the right thing”.<sup>30</sup> Kotter sees managers planning, organising and controlling while leaders focus on the change-oriented process of visioning, networking and building relationships.<sup>31</sup> But Gardner counsels against contrasting management and leadership too much:

Every time I encounter utterly first-class managers they turn out to have quite a lot of the leader in them. Even the most visionary leader is faced on occasion with decisions that every manager faces: when to take a short-term loss to achieve a long-term gain, how to allocate scarce resources, whom to trust with a delicate assignment.<sup>32</sup>

This interplay between leadership and management is vital in local government. It is, as we shall see shortly, misguided to claim that politicians lead and officers manage.



Both have roles in leadership and management, but the received models of political/administrative relations fail to recognise this. It has reached the point where these out-of-date models are impairing the development of effective locality leadership in many countries.

This summary of four dimensions of leadership does not amount to a comprehensive examination of the literature on leadership. The purpose is, however, a more modest one: to provide some pointers from the literature that can inform the Auckland conversation about what civic leadership may entail.

### **The multiplicity of leadership roles in the modern city**

We now turn to consider the multiplicity of leadership roles encountered in the modern city. It will be suggested that many leaders – great and small, formal and informal, celebrated and unsung – comprise the civic leadership of Auckland. Earlier it was suggested that place-based approaches to leadership can make a difference in our modern, rapidly globalising world. If this argument is accepted, then it becomes critical to consider how to nurture and strengthen leadership talents right across the city region. The terms of reference of the Royal Commission set the scene for a discussion of these leadership roles by identifying the following “relevant matter”:

- (e) what governance and representation arrangements will best—
  - (i) enable effective responses to the different communities of interest and reflect and nurture the cultural diversity within the Auckland region; and
  - (ii) provide leadership for the Auckland region and its communities, while facilitating appropriate participation by citizens and other groups and stakeholders in decision-making processes; ...

In a city as diverse as Auckland it is clear that a sophisticated governance system is needed that can take full account of the needs of very different communities of interest and place. Effective civic leadership, defined broadly, can play a crucial role in ensuring that different voices are heard and that decisions are made at the appropriate level within the governance system.

We can now expand on the definition of the leadership terms we outlined in the introduction and summarised in diagrammatic form in Figure 1. First, **civic leadership** is defined here in very broad terms – it is taken to mean all leadership activity that serves a public purpose. This broad definition recognises and values the fact that many individuals, from a wide range of backgrounds, give their time freely to serve the public interest. These leaders range from community activists campaigning to improve public safety in their neighbourhood through to large-scale voluntary organisations striving to protect the natural environment. Important civic leaders are, of course, found hard at work in the Town Halls of the city region, but many important civic leaders are not part of the formal government system. This broad definition resonates with the notion of community leadership that is now well established in British local government.<sup>33</sup>

As mentioned earlier, we believe it is helpful to distinguish three overlapping civic leadership roles: 1) political leadership, 2) managerial leadership, and 3) community leadership. In this paper we are using the term **political leader** to refer to those people

elected to leadership positions by the citizenry. These are, by definition, political leaders. Thus, all those elected to serve on local councils or community boards can, to some degree, be seen as political leaders although we should acknowledge that different councillors carry different roles and responsibilities. Thus, some councillors may see themselves very much as community representatives and will focus their efforts on the needs of their ward or neighbourhood. Others can be found exercising much broader leadership responsibilities relating to policy making for their local authority as a whole. The leaders of the local councils in the Auckland Region – Auckland City, Manukau City, Papakura District, Franklin District, Waitakere City, North Shore City, and Rodney District – are all very important city leaders in the Auckland context. Some of these political leaders are also very active in carrying out leadership responsibilities relating to the entire city region.

If we return, for a moment, to a distinction we made earlier between government and governance, we can note that, within government, there are two main sets of players – elected politicians and appointed officers. As just mentioned it is normally the elected politicians who are seen as the main leadership figures in a locality. They enjoy a political mandate from local citizens and, even if voter turnout in local elections is not very high, their legitimacy to make decisions and to speak out on behalf of local people is difficult to challenge. In practice, elected politicians exercise a range of leadership roles in their locality and the nature of party politics can have a profound impact on the way councillors operate. In many European cities the party group is enormously powerful; in other situations the political leader may have a wide area of discretion. In some countries individual leaders – for example, the directly elected mayor – may be pivotal. In others the city may be led by a group of senior politicians – sometimes described as a cabinet. And in some countries – for example, England and the United States – the institutional design of local leadership arrangements varies by locality.<sup>34</sup>

A second important group of leaders are the **managerial leaders**. These are the public servants appointed by councils – or, more accurately, for those below chief executive officer (CEO) level, by the CEOs acting on behalf of the councils – to plan and manage public services and promote community well-being. A longstanding myth in local government is that there is a sharp separation of roles between politicians and officers. The old adage that politicians decide on policy and officers implement it was challenged over 20 years ago by research on policy implementation. This showed that implementation is an interactive and negotiative process between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends.<sup>35</sup> More recently James Svara, a respected American political scientist, has demonstrated how early contributors to the field of public administration acknowledged a policy role for administrators that has often been ignored partly because, over the years, the dichotomy became a “useful myth”.<sup>36</sup> The dichotomy idea shields administrators from scrutiny and serves the interest of politicians who can pass responsibility for unpopular decisions to administrators.<sup>37</sup> A more sophisticated conceptualisation of the politician/officer interface recognises that **both** groups contribute to **both** policy development and local management.

Mouritzen and Svava provide a valuable cross-national analysis of leadership at the apex of local government in 14 countries.<sup>38</sup> The authors do not examine the role of leaders outside the institution of local government. Rather they provide a detailed and fascinating picture of the roles of mayors (and other leading politicians) and the way they interface with their CEOs. This research shows that overlapping leadership roles between senior politicians and CEOs is the norm – a view confirmed by other scholars of local government.<sup>39</sup> We will revisit this notion of overlapping leadership roles between elected members and officers in the next section. Getting this balance right is crucial to effective civic leadership.

We can now move outside local government to consider the contribution of what we here describe as **community leaders**. This is not an ideal term as some political and, indeed, some managerial, leaders may see themselves as community leaders. However, it is important to give explicit attention to the leadership work carried out by figures who may not be part of the local government but certainly are part of the community. It is clear that attention needs to be given to the civic leadership contribution that business interests can bring to the table. Many business leaders are well informed about international trends and developments and, given the remarks made earlier about the significance of global forces, it is clear that business leaders can play an important role in widening horizons. A variety of other players may, depending on the local context, be in a position to exercise decisive leadership.

In the Auckland context it is clear that central government has a crucial role to play. Auckland, with a population of over 1.3 million, is more than just a major city within New Zealand. One-third of the elected Members of Parliament are from Auckland and are closely interested in its fortunes. The Government is very interested in ensuring effective governance of the city region and this has implications for the work of many central government ministries. It follows, therefore, that colleagues in central government actually play a significant role in the civic leadership of Auckland. Certainly, as it becomes clearer that city regions form the effective spatial unit in an era of global economic competition, leadership arrangements for relatively large metropolitan regions, having been neglected for decades, are now receiving increased attention from national governments in Europe and elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> It is also the case that many important decisions affecting particular localities are made at higher levels of government and this points to the value of understanding how cities fit within the multilevel system of governance.<sup>41</sup>

In some countries the non-profit (or community and voluntary) sector plays a vital role in local civic leadership. Religious groups, trade unions, voluntary organisations and, at times, universities, as well as charitable foundations, can make a significant contribution in helping to set the local agenda as well as in relation to specific community projects.

At the local level community-based leaders can come to play a particularly important role, not least in areas experiencing rapid demographic change. Research on community leaders in area regeneration partnerships in the UK suggests, however, that state agencies are still not very skilled at working with local people in ways that support their neighbourhood leadership role.<sup>42</sup> Marilyn Taylor, a leading authority on community involvement in the United Kingdom, also shows how community-based leaders can be

caught in a kind of no man's land between their communities and the decision makers, accused on the one hand of failing to deliver and on the other of being unrepresentative.<sup>43</sup> Research on ethnically diverse city regions suggests that the rapid arrival in an area of significant numbers of people from another country can create significant additional challenges for local democratic systems. Jill Gross and I have described the nature of "dynamic diversity" and its implications for local government elsewhere.<sup>44</sup> It is clear that many cities are struggling to cope with dynamic diversity – that is, the very rapid arrival in an area of peoples from different countries. In Germany, for example, there is evidence that immigrant residents are severely under-represented in local decision making.<sup>45</sup> Many US cities face similar problems relating to the inclusion of ethnic minorities, and this has become a key challenge for public service managers.<sup>46</sup>

In the Auckland context there is a range of business organisations and groups operating at different geographical levels within the city region and there is also a range of trusts pursuing various environmental, heritage and social objectives. The City Mission, the Selwyn Foundation and the Salvation Army are just some of the organisations contributing to leadership on social issues within the city region. Some have a specific focus, such as child poverty, youth development, and family violence. At the local level most of the seven local councils have community boards, made up of directly elected representatives, making regular inputs into the local democratic process. And school boards provide another important area for community involvement and local leadership. Auckland is home to people from many different ethnic backgrounds, and the relatively swift arrival of significant numbers of immigrants into the city in the past 20 years means that the city is faced with some of the challenges of dynamic diversity referred to earlier. In addition, New Zealand has particular commitments to the involvement of Māori in council decision-making processes. This commitment goes well beyond the formal requirements set down in the Local Government Act 2002, and embraces deeper historic, cultural and constitutional understandings stemming from the Treaty of Waitangi.

In summary, local leaders comprise a mixed bag. In some situations a powerful, directly elected mayor or council leader can give the impression of exercising decisive leadership of the entire city with other actors having relatively minor roles. This discussion has suggested, however, that it is more than likely that, in any given city, there is a pattern of **dispersed leadership**. In modern conditions of social complexity power is fragmented and this means that civic leadership involves a process of connecting the fragments. Elected politicians, appointed officers, business leaders, non-profit organisations, religious groups, community representatives and figures from higher education can all be found carrying out leadership roles in modern systems of urban governance. An important insight from this discussion for the political leadership of Auckland is that elected leaders have a crucial role in orchestrating the leadership activities of many different civic leaders in the Auckland city region.

## 5. The modern city leadership agenda

In this section we discuss the modern city leadership agenda in a little more detail. That is, we are now focusing mainly on the **political leadership** of local and metropolitan authorities. In the UK there has been a wide-ranging debate about new local government leadership models during this past 10 years or so. And, more important, there has been some bold innovation in practice. By drawing on this experience we highlight some of the strategic choices that emerge for the debate in Auckland. We divide the section into five parts:

- the UK local leadership debate
- the notion of purpose-driven political leadership
- developing the leadership roles of councillors
- supporting the development of civic leadership
- civic leadership and local democracy.

### The UK local leadership debate

Various UK academics have been advocating the idea of introducing stronger political leadership models – including directly elected mayors – into UK local government since the 1970s.<sup>47</sup> These voices were ignored until, in 1991, Michael Heseltine, then Environment Secretary in the Conservative Government led by John Major, floated the idea of introducing directly elected mayors in a government consultation paper on the internal management of local authorities.<sup>48</sup> Fearing the creation of strong local leaders in their areas, Tory MPs resisted the proposals and the idea vanished from the political landscape.

Fast forward six years to 1997 and we find newly elected Prime Minister Tony Blair giving the mayor agenda a significant boost. Always veering towards a presidential style in his own approach to leadership, he published a booklet, *Leading the Way: A new vision for local government*.<sup>49</sup> It was unprecedented for a serving Prime Minister to take such an interest in local government and, not surprisingly, his views, and this paper in particular, had a very significant impact on the direction of the English local leadership debate.<sup>50</sup> Prime Minister Blair advocated the introduction of directly elected mayors to give localities a clear sense of direction, to unify the management and delivery of local services and to provide high profile, outgoing local leadership. This time the idea, despite a distinct lack of enthusiasm in local government circles, had momentum and led to two important Acts of Parliament.

First, the Greater London Authority Act of 1999 created an entirely new form of metropolitan government for a world city of seven million people. Introducing a strategic metropolitan authority headed by a directly elected mayor was, when compared with the rather fragmented systems of city government found in many major cities across the world, a startling breakthrough in institutional reform. And it is a reform that has captured the

public imagination. The recent contest for the position of directly elected Mayor of London has stimulated unprecedented interest in a UK local government election.<sup>51</sup>

By comparison the UK's Local Government Act 2000 has been disappointing. While it spurred consideration of the directly elected mayor concept, by requiring all local councils (except those with a population of less than 85,000) to modify their political management structures and to at least consider introducing a directly elected mayor, only 3 percent opted for the mayor model (known as the mayor/cabinet model). England still has only 13 elected mayors, including Boris Johnson, the recently elected Mayor of London. Opponents of the directly elected mayor model claim that low take-up of the model suggests it is unattractive to voters.

UK ministers are now contemplating a third run at improving local leadership. A White Paper from Communities and Local Government Secretary, Hazel Blears, published in July 2008, sets out proposals to increase the number of directly elected mayors.<sup>52</sup> It outlines proposals designed to make it easier for local people to demand a referendum on establishing a directly elected mayor, and proposes giving directly elected mayors a more formal status in local partnership arrangements – for example, the role of chair in the Local Strategic Partnership.

In the UK context arguments against the directly elected mayor model include the following: it does not fit with British traditions of local government; it concentrates too much power in the hands of one person; it is too difficult to recall a mayor if she/he is incompetent; and it promotes US-style “personality politics” at the expense of serious discussion of the policies of different political parties. It is important to record that criticisms of this kind have been levelled at the directly elected mayor model by leading scholars as well as commentators in the popular press.<sup>53</sup>

Supporters of the directly elected mayor model attempt to counter these four arguments in the following way. On the first point they ask why models of decision making developed by municipal reformers in the 19th century are appropriate for the 21st century. Surely, they argue, models of decision making need to be updated from time to time to take account of changing requirements. The second point is a more powerful argument, particularly when it can be noted that some directly elected mayors (in some US cities, for example) have misused the power entrusted to them. The counter argument is to ensure that effective checks and balances are built into the system of government. Strong scrutiny arrangements should be able to prevent wrongdoing. On the third point, there is a genuine dilemma. One reason for having a directly elected mayor is to grant this political leader the authority to take tough, sometimes unpopular, decisions. And it is clear that city leaders do need to make decisions that serve the long-term interests of the city. A solution can, perhaps, be arrived at by crafting constitutional checks that can be put in place to check the actions of an extreme mayor – for example, a power of recall leading to a new election, either through a petition from the people or a vote of no confidence with a special majority. On the fourth point opinion is divided. Some argue that colourful candidates for mayoral office distract voters from the crucial policy debates; others argue that cities need leaders with forceful personalities who can win hearts and minds and influence other stakeholders.

This, then, is a cameo of the directly elected mayor debate in the UK context. Two additional points should be made. First, the New Zealand context is different – the country has had directly elected mayors in many local authorities for many decades. The directly elected mayor is, then, less of a challenge to accepted patterns of government. Second, the focus of the elected mayor debate in Auckland concerns metropolitan or regional leadership, rather than local council leadership. It follows that the London experience may be of most interest to the Royal Commission, and here the story is one of remarkable success. In the new White Paper the Government put it this way:

We have established a directly-elected Mayor for London and a Greater London Assembly, with a budget of £11.4 billion. This re-establishment of London-wide government, after an absence of 14 years following the abolition of the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1986, has been deemed a huge success and is now an accepted part of the lives of Londoners. No serious commentator, lobby group or political party now wants to reverse the decision to have a directly-elected mayor and assembly for London. The existence of a high-profile mayor for London helped our capital win the 2012 Olympics.<sup>54</sup>

### **Purpose-driven city leadership**

Leadership is inextricably linked with purpose. Stone examines modern urban politics and observes aimless interaction requires no leadership.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, in cases where a compelling vision emerges from an inclusive process and is then articulated by a leader or leaders, the results can be inspiring. A clear statement of purpose (or mission) can provide a formative experience, shaping the identity of group members, and articulating shared values and aspirations. In the mid-1990s Sir Steve Bullock, who is now the directly elected mayor of the London borough of Lewisham, and I were commissioned by local government to develop national guidance for the United Kingdom on local leadership.<sup>56</sup> In carrying out this research we asked leading figures in UK local government what they thought constituted successful local authority leadership and the indicators of good leadership that emerged are summarised in Figure 2.

There is no suggestion here that the indicators listed in Figure 2 are comprehensive or appropriate in all settings. Rather they are offered as a possible set of aspirations for local leadership. The substantive objectives of leaders will, of course, vary depending on local trends, political preferences and context. Leaders who can set out a convincing and hopeful vision for their area – and follow through with specific and practical actions in line with the vision – can be expected to enjoy stronger electoral support than those who seem more interested in obtaining and holding onto the power of office. All leaders and aspiring leaders will claim to have a vision for the area but only some will actually mean it.

This relatively early work on local leadership has been followed up in the UK context by more specific guidance from the UK Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) for local government in England and by central government.<sup>57</sup> In 2005 a Leadership Centre for Local Government was created to improve political and managerial leadership in English local government and leadership development programmes are now expanding.

**Figure 2** Indicators of good political leadership

- **Articulating a clear vision for the area**  
Setting out an agenda of what the future of the area should be and developing strategic policy direction. Listening to local people and leading initiatives.
- **Promoting the qualities of the area**  
Building civic pride, promoting the benefits of the locality and attracting inward investment.
- **Winning resources**  
Winning power and funding from higher levels of government and maximising income from a variety of sources.
- **Developing partnerships**  
Successful leadership is characterised by the existence of a range of partnerships, both internal and external, working to a shared view of the needs of the local community.
- **Addressing complex social issues**  
The increasingly fragmented nature of local government and the growing number of service providers active in a given locality means that complex issues that cross boundaries, or are seen to fall between areas of interest, need to be taken up by leaderships that have an overview and can bring together the right mix of agencies to tackle a particular problem.
- **Maintaining support and cohesion**  
Managing disparate interests and keeping people on board are essential if the leadership is to maintain authority.

Source: Adapted from Hambleton, R. and Bullock, S. (1996), *Revitalising Local Democracy – The Leadership Options*. London: Local Government Management Board.

### **Developing the leadership roles of councillors**

In 2006 the UK government established a Councillors Commission to review the incentives and barriers to people standing and serving as councillors. Chaired by a very experienced local councillor – Dame Jane Roberts – the Commission reported in December 2007.<sup>58</sup> The “Roberts Report” rejected calls for full-time professional councillors; Dame Jane argued: “Councillors need to be reasonably normal human beings. Rather than having a separate political class made up of lobbyists, being a councillor must be compatible with whatever else you do in life.”<sup>59</sup> In the United Kingdom most councillors are white, male and retired, and a key theme in the Roberts Report concerns the need to reach a better balance across class, age, ethnicity and gender in the make-up of the typical council.



One of the flaws in the reforms pursued in UK local government concerns the failure to develop the community leadership role of councillors not serving in the executive of the council. The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a separation of powers between an executive (sometimes an elected mayor, sometimes a cabinet of councillors) and an assembly (the council at large).<sup>60</sup> The balance of powers between these two arms of local government has excited much interest in UK local government, but the focus has tended to be on the work of the executive. A consequence is that much of the political leadership debate has concentrated on the work of directly elected mayors and cabinet members.

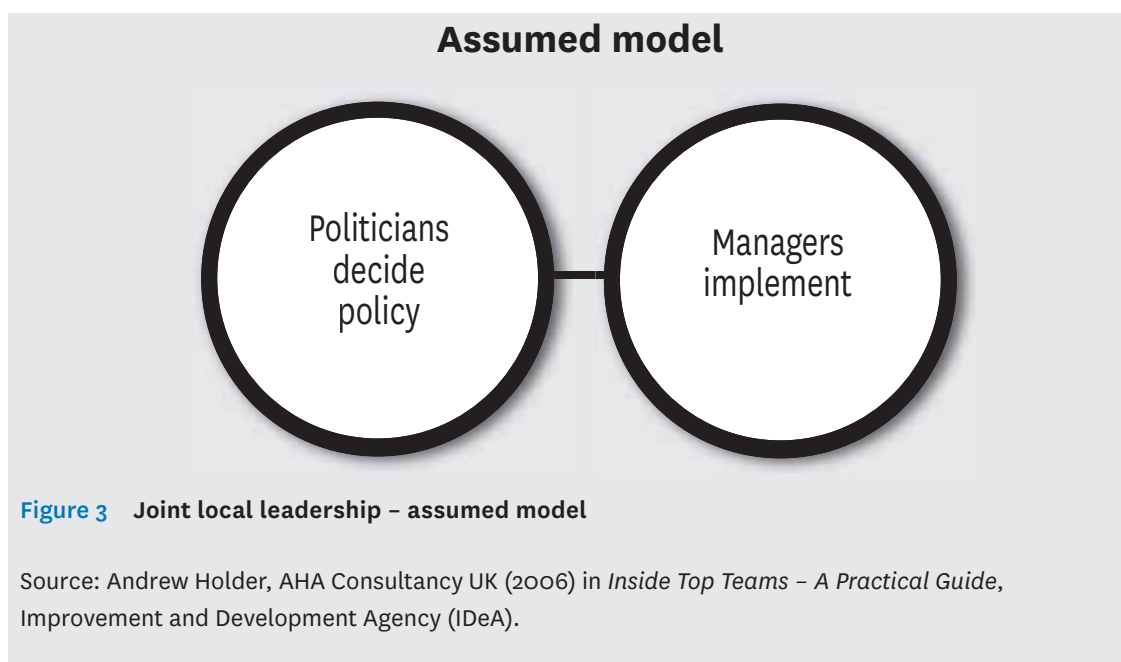
The role of the front-line councillor – the elected politician serving in the assembly – has been neglected, and it is hardly surprising that comparatively few individuals are now willing to stand as councillors. This is because, in too many local councils, the role has been seen as simply one of scrutiny of the executive. Indeed, the phrase “back bench councillor” has been introduced into UK local government debates – and it even appears in the new White Paper – even though it is a Westminster term that is entirely inappropriate in the local government context. Councillors are not back benchers – they are active community leaders and need to be able to exercise local leadership in their localities and wards. To some extent the Roberts Report is designed to correct this error of demoting the role of councillors in many local authorities. It is a mistake reformers in New Zealand do not need to make.

We may conclude that the role of the elected councillor in Auckland and, indeed, the role of the representatives on the community boards (where they exist), is one that should be prized and supported. Political leadership does not just take place at the top of the organisation. As explained at various stages in the argument set out in this paper, local leadership is multilevel. There is no contradiction between having much stronger leadership at the level of the metropolis as a whole and stronger leadership at lower levels within the governance system. In the next subsection we explore ways of supporting the development of local political leadership capacity at these various levels.

### **Supporting the development of civic leadership**

A number of countries are in the process of developing leadership programmes for local governance. In some cases established programmes are being updated, in other cases entirely new programmes are being created. The growth and development of these leadership programmes is to be welcomed as it is clear that there is a significant civic leadership gap in many countries. The gap arises because the world is experiencing unprecedented urban growth and because the nature of the leadership challenges confronting locality leaders – as discussed in some detail above – is changing dramatically. Here we will highlight some of the work now taking place in the United Kingdom and, in particular, the work of Andrew Holder, one of the leading local government management consultants in England.<sup>61</sup> We offer brief comments on each of the three categories of leadership we have identified in this paper.

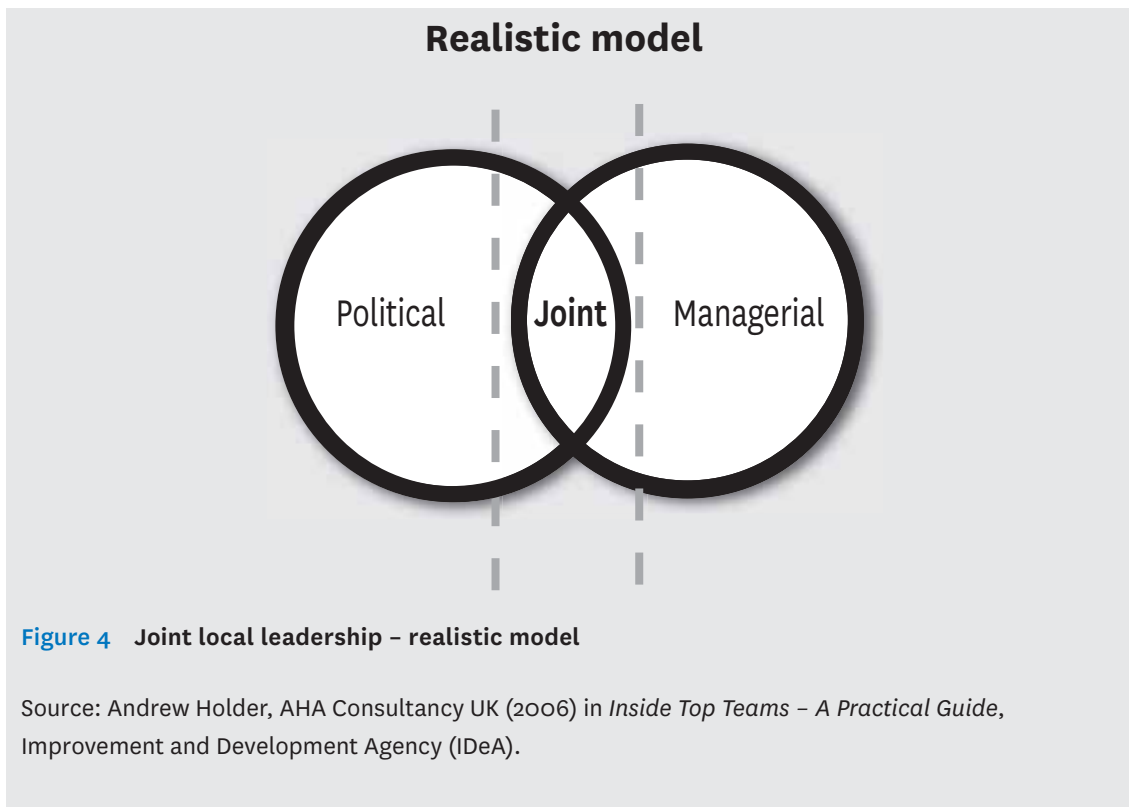
In relation to **community leadership** we can discern the emergence of new leadership programmes designed to bring together leaders and potential leaders from different sectors to engage in shared learning and idea exchange. One example is provided by the UK-based organisation known as Common Purpose. Founded in 1989, and with an initial



core of four staff, the organisation provided geographically based leadership programmes bringing together potential future leaders from a given city. The model creates a “learning set” with individuals from different backgrounds working together to develop their understanding, knowledge and skills. Now Common Purpose has over 150 staff scattered across the United Kingdom and runs a large number of leadership programmes – from programmes for teenagers through to advanced programmes for experienced leaders.<sup>62</sup> There are similar programmes in the United States and in other countries.

In relation to **political leadership** and **managerial leadership** we can note that many countries have leadership programmes for elected councillors and for appointed officers. In the UK context IDeA has run a Leadership Academy for councillors for many years and it also provides a range of management development programmes for officers. One key feature of the IDeA approach to local government is peer review. In essence, this model involves respected peers visiting and working with a council for an intensive period. For example, a political leader, a CEO and some senior managers from a range of other local councils would act as peers for a given “client” council – they might sit in with the client council for a week to review approaches and processes in a collegial way. This model has proved extremely effective as it involves leader-to-leader exchange and development.<sup>63</sup>

Earlier, in Section 4, we referred to the interplay between political leadership and managerial leadership. Getting this relationship right is crucial for the development of successful civic leadership, and in too many councils, this relationship is not as good as it should be.<sup>64</sup> Andrew Holder has helped IDeA develop an approach that combines leadership development for councillors and officers. This work has led to detailed guidance: *Inside Top Teams – A Practical Guide*.<sup>65</sup> Figure 3 presents the “assumed” model of joint local leadership. Consistent with the research findings outlined earlier, it gives the impression that politicians decide policy and officers implement it. This is a flawed



understanding and creates much confusion in local politics. As we explained in Section 4 these roles overlap.

In practice, the actual relationships between political and managerial leaders in local government resemble the situation shown in Figure 4. This highlights the **overlap** in leadership roles between members and officers. A central task of good leadership programmes is to assist officers and managers work out how to operate in a high-performance way in the areas of **joint** leadership.

Figure 5 provides a little more detail by outlining the Leadership Capacities Framework as developed by IDeA. This distinguishes seven leadership capacities, and the Top Teams programmes use this framework to negotiate – through interactive workshops and team building efforts – effective joint leadership in specific councils.

In the New Zealand context we can note the important professional development work carried out in support of local government by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) and by the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM). Some of their programmes and events bear on the leadership agenda we have discussed in this paper. But it is at least worth considering whether they and other organisations could be encouraged to strengthen their civic leadership development offerings.

#### **Civic leadership and local democracy**

Reference was made in Section 2 to the growing impact of global forces not just on urban economies but also on the quality of life in cities. In too many cities global changes are creating social divisions, and there is evidence to show that an increasing number of people feel disempowered. Indeed, in some cities, whole communities feel so excluded

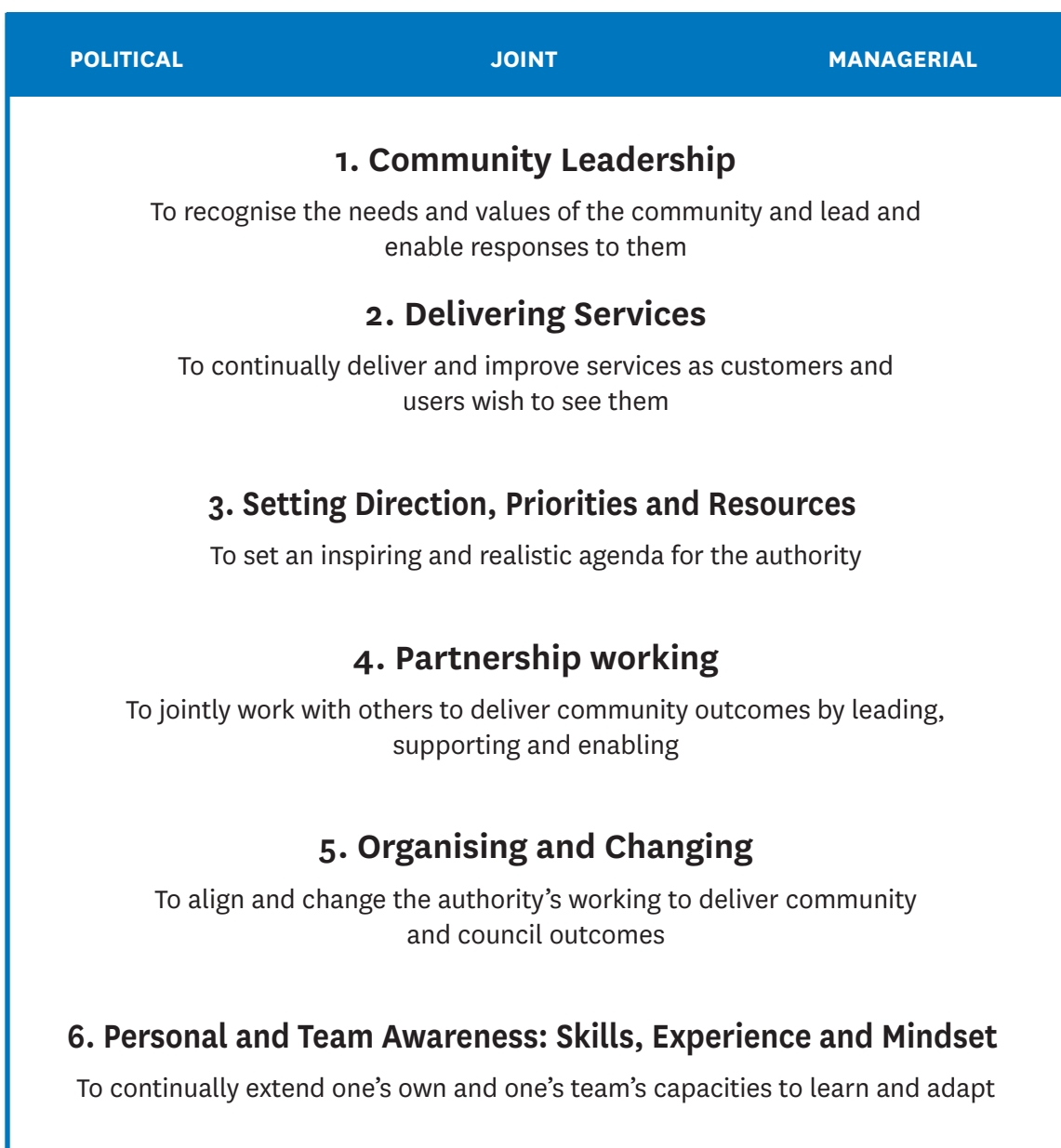


Figure 5 Leadership capacities framework

Source: Andrew Holder, AHA Consultancy UK (2006) in *Inside Top Teams – A Practical Guide*, Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

that residents have taken to the streets in public protest. Thus, social tensions and outbreaks of civil unrest are to be found in housing estates on the outskirts of cities, such as Paris, as well as in the inner cities of conurbations in both developed and developing countries. At a major International Conference on City Futures held in Chicago in 2004 over 200 scholars from 36 countries examined future urban scenarios.<sup>66</sup> The papers to this conference, and other research, suggest that it is not far-fetched to envisage a disaster scenario for cities. This gloomy scenario sees cities becoming balkanised with consumers

living isolated lives in separate fortified enclaves or gated communities. Political tensions draw forth the erosion of civil liberties as governments struggle to manage the ungovernable city.

If these concerns are justified it follows that a (if not the) central task of civic leadership is to resist these trends – to offer a more uplifting view of urban life and to create liveable, exciting cities that respond to the needs and aspirations of all inhabitants. Civic leaders will have their own distinctive visions of the kind of city they want to create, but we can expect that few will knowingly strive to bring about the gloomy scenario just outlined. To create a city that serves the interests of the people who live there requires a strong, vibrant and healthy local democracy. This is why strengthening local democracy, strengthening the power of place in a world increasingly dominated by “placeless” forces, becomes the central task of civic leadership for the 21st century. It is difficult to overstate the significance of this task for civic leaders – and it is a vital one for Auckland.

A study of civic leadership in nine countries throws new light on the challenges leaders face in facilitating and encouraging community involvement in local decision making.<sup>67</sup> Funded by the European Union, and known as the “PLUS project” (it examined participation, leadership and urban sustainability), the study involved 18 local councils and nine universities. The research, which included two New Zealand cities, explored different combinations of urban leadership and community involvement and, through case studies, shows how innovative cities have coped with the shift from government to governance we outlined in Section 3. This research suggests that successful civic leadership needs to combine legitimacy with capacity, and vision and foresight with democratic accountability and responsiveness. It provides examples of how civic leadership can contribute to the development of local democracy.

## 6. Pointers for Auckland

The previous sections of this paper have examined a wide range of themes relating to civic leadership. We have attempted to draw distinctions between three overlapping civic leadership roles in the modern city – political leadership (carried out by elected politicians), managerial leadership (carried out by appointed officers) and community leadership (carried out by many civic-minded activists). We have stressed that **all three kinds of leader have a major role to play in the future leadership of Auckland.** It follows that a key task for the Royal Commission is to consider how to reshape the institutions of government in the Auckland region in a way that excites increased interest and involvement in local politics; promotes the growth and development of civic leadership in communities across the whole region; attracts outstanding politicians to serve in city leadership roles at the local and metropolitan scales; and inspires the very best professional talent to take up managerial leadership positions in the local and regional government of the future.

In this final section we offer some pointers as to how to achieve these aims. It is stressed that these suggestions stem from an **international perspective**. While the suggestions are grounded in real experience in cities and city regions in other countries it is essential that local leaders interpret them and adapt them to the local setting of the North Island of New Zealand. The four criteria for good government identified by the Royal Commission, and summarised at the beginning of Section 4 above, guide the commentary. These criteria are transparency, accountability, efficient resource use, and responsiveness.

### **Strategic leadership of the city region: a directly elected regional authority**

Institutional redesign to support stronger, more outgoing and purposeful leadership of the entire Auckland city region is a top priority. Reference has been made to the various reforms to metropolitan governance that have taken place in other countries. Having regard to the criteria set down by the Royal Commission, there is a strong case for introducing a directly elected, strategic, regional authority along the lines of the GLA.<sup>68</sup> The strengths of the GLA model include

- a sharp focus on strategic concerns, not delivery of local public services
- strong political legitimacy arising from the direct election process
- a relatively lean form of government.

These are significant advantages, and the performance of the GLA, as mentioned in Section 5, has been impressive. It is important to stress the success of the GLA in creating a strong leadership team of assembly members as well as a high-profile directly elected mayor. The long-established system of 32 London boroughs, the lower tier of local government in the capital, continues to provide the vast bulk of important public services in London and, again, it can be claimed that the two-tier model of government is working relatively well.

### **Constitutional arrangements to support legitimate regional leadership**

Should the Royal Commission wish to recommend the creation of a directly elected city region authority along the lines outlined above, it will wish to consider alternative ways of organising the elections to such an authority as well as the form and functions of such an authority. These important aspects fall outside the scope of this paper on civic leadership, but the leadership analysis presented here suggests some key principles that should inform the institutional design of such a strategic authority:

- direct election of a sufficiently diverse range of politicians to serve on the strategic authority
- clarity in the strategic functions (covering both tax raising and spending powers) to be exercised by the strategic authority (these to avoid duplication with other levels of government – levels both above and below)
- clarity in constitutional design to balance effective outgoing leadership with strong lines of accountability to the elected body as a whole
- clear roles, including budget roles, and responsibilities for the different kinds of leaders involved in the authority (political, managerial and community, to

use the distinctions introduced in this paper), including explicit requirements relating to transparency in decision making.

### **A directly elected mayor for the Auckland region**

The evidence assembled in this paper suggests that the Royal Commission should give serious consideration to the introduction of a directly elected mayor along the lines of the directly elected mayor for London. It is possible that another term may be desirable – for example, “regional leader” or “strategic leader”. But terms of this kind would be unfamiliar in the international context – hence the suggestion that “directly elected mayor” could be the best way forward. The London model, as assessed against the four criteria set down by the Commission, performs well. On transparency the model is a dramatic improvement on the complex system of secretive boards that ran the capital before the GLA was created. The mayor is held to account by the assembly, although it would be desirable to consider strengthening the powers of the assembly vis-à-vis the mayor. Resource use is, on the whole, cost effective as the GLA is very much a strategic authority, and the Mayor model has also scored well on responsiveness, as measured by citizen feedback. To be effective, a directly elected mayor for the Auckland region should have executive powers, have a reasonably long term of office (perhaps four years), be supported by a small number of deputy mayors (or a cabinet) and should be held to account by the strategic authority (who should also have the power to recall the mayor if the mayor strays outside agreed guidelines). A model along these lines has the following leadership benefits:

- It is clear to the public, as well as other stakeholders, who is leading the city region – this reduces confusion and clarifies accountability.
- The process of direct election gives the mayor enormous legitimacy to lead.
- The mayor can use the position to address the strategic leadership challenges facing the city region, including the international challenges.

### **Civic leadership within the metropolis**

If we now move our attention to the strengthening of civic leadership below the level of the metropolis as a whole, we can suggest that efforts to expand the civic leadership capacity of the city region should be actively considered. Clearly, consultation with existing stakeholders would need to be a first step, both to clarify the nature of the civic leadership gap and to consider alternative strategies for filling it. We can surmise, however, that a strong case can be made for introducing a wide range of civic leadership development programmes within the Auckland city region. These programmes should embrace the public, private and the community/voluntary sector and, in particular, should draw strength from the dynamic diversity of the population. Without being too prescriptive it could be that programmes along the following lines could be explored:

- leadership programmes at the level of the existing seven local councils bringing together politicians, officers, voluntary/community sector and private sector representatives to strengthen the component parts of the city region
- outreach programmes to draw in future potential civic leaders from across the metropolis to encourage and develop their potential

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- school-based leadership programmes exposing young people to the exciting opportunities that public service in the city region can offer
- community-based leadership programmes designed to enhance the self-organising capacity of neighbourhoods and communities within the city region.

A significant expansion of leadership development programmes along these lines should build creatively on the existing opportunities provided by higher education and other organisations, but it should be recognised that such programmes will require adequate funding. Central government should be asked to consider funding some of these programmes, but funding should also be sought from public and private sources because all stakeholders in the Auckland city region will benefit.

### **Leadership development in the diverse city**

Auckland is a diverse city – and it is becoming more diverse. Earlier, in Section 4, we introduced the concept of “dynamic diversity” – a phrase used to describe the very rapid arrival in a city of large numbers of people from different countries and cultures. The discussion of globalisation, in Section 2, suggested that the context for civic leadership is changing at a dramatic pace. It follows that Auckland may be able to position itself as a trendsetter in how to embrace the multicultural city. Certainly the changing demography of the city region gives Auckland an advantage in this respect – Auckland has welcomed many newcomers from foreign lands in recent years. What might this mean for civic leadership?

It is possible to imagine a situation where Auckland becomes a world leader in how to lead and manage the multicultural city. From an international point of view the importance of learning how to respond to the needs of diverse communities in the modern city is difficult to overemphasise. Many cities are wrestling with this challenge. Many mistakes are being made, but there is also innovation and good practice to draw on in different continents.<sup>69</sup> The suggestion being made here is that the Royal Commission consider the idea of creating an “Embracing diversity leadership development programme”. This idea would, of course, need to be shaped by the diverse communities within the Auckland city region – and it would need to draw strength from existing community development initiatives in the diverse communities of Auckland. Such a programme would be designed to enhance the cultural competence of leaders in the three arenas we have identified in this report – political leaders, managerial leaders and community leaders.

### **Managerial leadership for civic engagement**

At first sight it may seem strange to suggest that public managers have a key role in promoting civic engagement. Surely this is the work of the politicians? Such a response is the product of the unhelpful conceptual separation of political and managerial roles we referred to earlier. In truth, public service professionals can, with the right encouragement, come to play an important role in facilitating what John Nalbandian describes as “civic discovery”.<sup>70</sup> It follows that, within the New Zealand context, there could be room for a range of programmes for existing and prospective public service managers designed to advance the role of public managers in promoting civic engagement.



## 7. Conclusion

This paper has adopted an international perspective and suggested that the nature of the challenges facing civic leaders – in all major cities in the world – has changed significantly during the past 20 years or so. The forces of globalisation – and, more specifically, urbanisation, international migration and climate change – put new pressures on governments in all countries to deliver innovative responses to changing circumstances. Auckland has a tradition of strong civic leadership. It would not be the successful city that it is if leadership had been lacking. However, the suggestion of this paper is that new possibilities are opening up for the Auckland city region to reposition itself as one of the most forward-looking cities in the world. This implies a redesign of the governance arrangements of the city region as well as the development of a range of programmes to develop civic leadership – meaning political leadership, managerial leadership and community leadership. It is hoped that this paper provides the Royal Commission and other stakeholders with some international insights that will be helpful to the conversation about civic leadership in Auckland.

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<sup>51</sup> In May 2008 Conservative candidate Boris Johnson was elected Mayor of London, defeating Labour incumbent Ken Livingstone. The election generated not just a high level of interest in London but also extensive coverage in the national media. The voter turnout in the London election was 45.3 percent, a turnout that was considerably higher than the turnout for the other local elections held on the same day (these averaged only 35 percent). This is still not a massive turnout – it is not a great deal higher than the turnout of 44 percent for the 1981 elections for the Greater London Council. But it is significant as local election turnout has been in decline during the past 20 years and the London Mayoral election of May 2008 bucks this downward trend in a dramatic way.

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- <sup>61</sup> Andrew Holder, Director of AHA Consultancy, has been an influential figure in the development of thinking relating to member/officer working in English local government. He has written numerous guidance documents for the IDeA and its predecessor, the Local Government Management Board (LGMB). We draw directly on his work in this section. More information: [www.ahaconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.ahaconsultancy.co.uk)
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- <sup>68</sup> I have been struck by the similarity between the present debates about the future governance of Auckland and the debates that took place in 1997–99 that led to creation of the Greater London Authority. There is extensive documentation on the GLA model starting with the Government's Green Paper: Department of Environment Transport and Regions (1997), *New Leadership for London*, Cmnd 3724. London: DETR. More recent documents provide information on the constitution and institutional design of the GLA.

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From 2002 to 2007 he was Dean of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He holds four professorships – one at the University of the West of England, two at the University of Illinois at Chicago and one at Tongji University, Shanghai. His new book, co-edited with Jill Simone Gross, is *Governing Cities in a Global Era: Urban Innovation, Competition and Democratic Reform* (Palgrave, 2007). In 2007 he formed an independent company – Urban Answers – to provide advice and support to city leaders. More information: [www.urbananswers.co.uk](http://www.urbananswers.co.uk)