



Submission: Auckland Council Annual Budget 2023 / 2024

28th March 2023

Business North Harbour Incorporated

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28th March 2023

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Submission to Auckland Council Annual Budget 2023/2024

Auckland Council is seeking feedback on the Auckland Council Annual Budget 2023/2024.

Introduction

Business North Harbour (BNH) representing the North Harbour Business Improvement District welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the Auckland Council Annual Budget 2023/2024.

BNH is a significant commercial and industrial Business Improvement District (BID), representing over 4,500 commercial property owners and businesses within the North Harbour area. Collectively they employ over 35,000 Auckland residents and ratepayers. The organisation is located within the Upper Harbour Local Board area, which remains one of the fastest growing areas in the country, in both absolute and percentage population terms, which brings both challenges and opportunities to the North Harbour business district.

BNH represents and works with a wide range of businesses comprising of a mix of sole traders, Small Medium Enterprises (SME), through to multi-national organisations, representing sectors such as ICT, business services, specialist manufacturing, light – medium warehousing, logistics, retail and hospitality. In addition, we have key educational institutions within or on our boundary, including Massey University Albany and AUT Millennium, along with a variety of primary and secondary schools including Rangitoto College, the largest secondary school in New Zealand.

Our primary interests are decisions within the Draft Auckland Council Budget 2023/2024 which:

- Impact on the cost of business – across a short to medium timeframe
- Impact on economic development and the ability to leverage value from location
- Support or restrict business growth opportunities
- Impact on access to both regional and localised transport hubs
- Impact on R&D and investment – sector development and capability
- Provide the scope to leverage natural assets for economic development across the leisure and tourism sectors – enhancing Auckland's reputation

There are currently 50 BIDs in Auckland, with a combined capital value estimated at \$72.7 billion.

Our role in the Auckland economy is to improve the business environment of our areas, promote innovation, prosperity and employment as well as attract new businesses, customers and visitors.

We share the common goal with the Auckland Council group of promoting Auckland's economic prosperity. The Council group play a pivotal role in providing efficient and effective core services for the city. Auckland must continually strive to attract more visitors, and bid competitively to host major events, as well as support economic development activities.

The marketing of "Auckland Inc" firmly sits within the scope of Council's core services - no other entity has the resources, nor the single-minded focus, to position our brand internationally. Council must continue investing in this important service to support economic development.

Turning to the key themes identified in your Consultation Document, the 2023/2024 Budget sets out Council's budget challenges and how Council proposes to mitigate these. You are

seeking feedback across several key proposals, to which our response is set out below and covers:

- (1) Operating Spending Reductions
 - (2) Amending Auckland International Airport Limited (AIAL) Shareholding Policy
 - (3) Managing Rates and Debt
 - (4) Storm Response
 - (5) Upper Harbour Local Board Priorities 2023/2024
 - (6) Changes To Other Rates and Fees and Charges
 - (7) What Else Is Important To You?
- Appendix 1 - BNH Individual Member Feedback

(1) Operating Spending Reductions:

Member responses were divided on this topic. (Individual feedback is provided at Appendix 1)

In addition to the specific feedback question BNH offers the following comments:

- a) BNH acknowledges that Auckland Council is facing significant budget challenges with a forecast budget shortfall of \$295 million and now also an additional huge cost blow-out of \$1 billion for the City Rail Link (CRL). We absolutely support Auckland Council holding robust talks with the Government to push it to pay more for the CRL. This is a fundamental piece of national infrastructure, a national asset and should always have been fully or mainly funded by Government. Hundreds of millions could potentially be clawed back here by Council.
- b) In terms of the need for efficiencies and savings, we support a budget package that sharply reduces Council's group operating costs and BNH asks that the detailed review of services across the Auckland Council group be progressed more quickly. We believe that there should be a sharp focus on finding savings from the management of contractors and consultants by the Auckland Council group. We still experience evidence of wastage, a high-profile example being the cost of traffic management across a wide range of services, which is excessive.
Many town centre-based BIDs are having their ability to hold events curtailed due to these excessive costs. We know that we are not alone in this view and ask that action be taken immediately to stop what appears to be the exploitation of the situation by some traffic management contractors.
Whenever possible, any variation in contract price should be negotiated and contractors held accountable to the agreed total.
Additionally, Council and the CCOs all incur considerable expense through the engagement of consultants. Whilst BNH appreciates that this is sometimes necessary, we would ask that Council thoroughly examine their internal capability before making a decision on the need to engage consultants.
- c) BNH also suggests immediately introducing criteria which indicate whether an activity needs to be done urgently or can be deferred. If it does need to be done right now, then we would ask Council and its CCOs to adopt a 'do it once and do it right approach'. On too many occasions projects are undertaken and completed, only to be re-visited and changed a short time later at significant additional cost.
- d) As expressed earlier, we do not support the \$27.5 million funding reductions proposed for Tātaki Auckland Unlimited. Instead, we ask that the budget for marketing Auckland internationally, attracting visitors, bidding for and hosting major events as well as supporting economic development activities be maintained. We also ask that the budget for local board-funded events, local economic development and town centre re-generation be maintained. These activities are what makes Auckland a 'vibrant' place in which to live. A harsh austerity budget will be detrimental to the city's recovery from three years of COVID-19 disruptions.

(2) Amending Auckland International Airport Limited (AIAL) Shareholding Policy:

Member responses were again divided on this topic. (Individual feedback is provided at Appendix 1)

In addition to the specific feedback question BNH offers the following comments:

- a) BNH understands the rationale behind selling the shares to reduce debt and annual interest costs, but we would ask the Council to consider using some of the proceeds from any sale of shares that it undertakes to reduce the \$295 Million budget debt first and foremost, before reducing Council's overall debt.

(3) Managing Rates and Debt:

Member responses were again divided on this topic. (Individual feedback is provided at Appendix 1)

In addition to the specific feedback question BNH offers the following comments:

- a) BNH appreciates that this is important in terms of Council's budget challenge however, we do not support pausing the long-term differential strategy. The intention of the long-term differential strategy is for the share of general rates paid by business properties to be made fairer. However, every time there is a budget challenge, Auckland Council pauses the long-term differential strategy and we are strongly of the view that this is unacceptable.
- b) BNH does support an increase in General Rates no higher than inflation, which the 7.0 per cent proposed increase in General Rates offset by the reduction in the Natural Environment and Water Quality Targeted Rates, giving a net increase of 4.66 per cent achieves.
- c) As noted in b) above, BNH also supports reducing the Natural Environment Targeted Rate and the Water Quality Targeted Rate by around two thirds and using the money Council has already collected from these targeted rates to continue delivering these work programmes.
- d) We also support prudent borrowing even if it requires more than \$75 million of additional debt.

(4) Storm Response:

58% of members who responded supported proceeding with the proposal to increase the operating budget by around \$20 Million each year, with 36% preferring Council not to proceed with the proposal.

In addition to the specific feedback question BNH offers the following comments:

- a) BNH acknowledges the impacts of the recent storm events over Auckland Anniversary weekend and Cyclone Gabrielle have been substantial for Council and we ask Council to acknowledge that they have also been very serious for many businesses, with a number of Business Associations bearing witness to this devastation in their locality.
- b) BNH is concerned about the lack of ownership regarding the risks from flooding and all the silos that operate within the Council group, which certainly came to the fore during and following the flooding events. We find it incredulous that core functions, such as keeping the drains free from blockages or maintaining storm water pipes, fall between several agencies, and sometimes into some kind of void between Auckland Council and Auckland Transport or Waka Kotahi. BNH understands that the maintenance schedule was reduced to only once annually in 2020, which we all now know to be hopelessly inadequate. This needs your urgent attention as keeping the drains free and regularly maintained is core business. We believe that the schedule needs to at least double to twice annually.

- c) We agree that the floods and slips mean that urgent repairs and replacements must be carried out ahead of less urgent work.
- d) BNH absolutely agrees with increasing operating budgets by around \$20 million to support the repairs and replacements as well as prepare for and respond to future storms. We understand that this may raise rates by an additional 1% and we ask that this funding must be ring-fenced for use for these purposes only.

(5) Upper Harbour Local Board Priorities 2023/2024:

44% of our members who responded supported most or all of the UHLB priorities with 23% unsure and a further 15% opposed to all of the UHLB priorities. (Individual feedback to Q5a and Q5b is provided at Appendix 1)

In addition to the specific feedback question BNH offers the following comments:

- a) BNH would ask Council to reconsider the reduction of funding to Upper Harbour Local Board (UHLB) and indeed to local boards in general. The rationale behind this request is based upon the fact that Council has already indicated that rate payers will be asked to pay more for a reduced service from Council, a situation that will be exacerbated if local boards also reduce the level of service to rate payers in their community.
UHLB are looking at savings that may result in the reduction of services which maintain the amenity of the area and those which support peoples' health and wellbeing, both mental and physical. These reductions would be counter-productive as they may well save money in the short-term, but with the inevitable reduction in people visiting the area as amenity declines and the increase in people requiring support, particularly for their mental wellbeing, as they can't visit the library or pool as often or can't fully utilise the open spaces because the grass is too long, any savings will be swallowed up by the increased cost of supporting these people.
Council can't just say these people aren't our problem and expect other organisations or the individuals concerned to carry that cost, prevention is better than cure!
- b) Within their priorities for 2023/2024 UHLB do not make any reference to economic development, hence they do not appear to significantly engage our business owners and commercial property owners and investors. Having noted the absence of specific economic development and business development priorities, BNH remains confident following regular discussions with UHLB, of the importance the board places on the enhanced economic performance of the local economy. BNH will continue to work with UHLB whenever opportunities arise to further support the growth of the local economy.
- c) Upper Harbour is a diverse and vibrant area, continuing to be one of the fastest growing areas in the country in both absolute and percentage population terms, a trend that is expected to continue. This brings both challenges and opportunity for BNH and as the Local Board's only formal Business Improvement District, we look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with UHLB, leveraging from the ongoing growth of the region.
- d) Maintaining the current level of growth will prove difficult if the infrastructure business needs is not made available. The business community aspires to achieve improved productivity whilst also improving sustainability and reducing environmental damage, all of which are critical for the sustainable growth of the region.
- e) Access to, through and around the business district remains of great importance to BNH members and is critical for the 35,000 employees across the North Harbour BID. BNH requests greater support for local transport infrastructure projects which support business and economic development, over and above community or politically led initiatives. We acknowledge and support the development of improved cycleways, walkways and footpaths making these modes of access more user-friendly, hopefully encouraging some commuters out of their vehicles.

- f) BNH supports any focus that UHLB places on the infrastructure challenges for the growing population and any advocacy for improved public transport and roading networks. We would however ask that the provision for rapid transport does not remove or compromise infrastructure assets and facilities depended upon by commercial trade and employee commuters, in the absence of alternative modal options.
- g) BNH continues to rely on the UHLB's extensive local knowledge, and influence across the Auckland Council family to add value to their role of local board governance. We also collectively rely on the board's ability to influence government decisions for the greater good of the region and the economic vitality of those who choose to create local employment opportunities within the North Harbour district.
- h) The UHLB area incorporates one of Auckland's major commercial and industrial hubs. BNH supports UHLB to identify opportunities that ensure that Tātaki Auckland Unlimited (TAU) contribute to, support, and deliver, localised economic initiatives. It is imperative that TAU are held accountable for delivering economic development projects within the Upper Harbour Local Board area that support local economic growth and development.
- i) BNH would like to acknowledge the collaborations with and the support received from UHLB over the past twelve months. The Team look forward to working with UHLB and its four new members in the coming twelve months and beyond, to achieve the best outcomes for our members and the area as a whole. BNH will continue to support UHLB's strategic priorities and outcomes whenever possible.
- j) Finally, in response to Q5b, in addition to any economic development initiatives, BNH would ask UHLB to maintain the services that support peoples' health and wellbeing, sustainability outcomes and connected and engaged communities.

Business Improvement District (BID) Targeted Rates:

The 50 Business Improvement Districts across Auckland are directly accountable and responsible to their members for their BID targeted rate level and how it is expended. The Business North Harbour BID targeted rate of \$782,938 for the 2023/2024 period has been approved by our members through the Annual General Meeting process and we fully support its approval by UHLB.

(6) Changes To Other Rates and Fees and Charges:

Waste Management Rates Charges: 41% of our members who responded supported the proposal with 42% opposed and 17% undecided.

One-off \$40 Fee To Change The Bin Size: 72% of our members who responded supported the proposal with 21% opposed and 7% undecided.

Extend The Food Scraps Targeted Rate: 45% of our members who responded supported the proposal with 43% opposed and 12% undecided.

Swimming Pool/Spa Fencing Targeted Rate: 49% of our members who responded supported the proposal with 46% opposed and 5% undecided.

Change Which Bus Services Are Funded By The CATR: 36% of our members who responded supported the proposal with 51% opposed and 13% undecided.

(Individual feedback is provided at Appendix 1)

In addition to the specific feedback question BNH offers the following comments:

- a) BNH acknowledges and understands the staff challenges being experienced by Auckland Transport. However, rather than just simply maintaining the currently reduced number of public transport services, we ask that they be increased exponentially as soon as more staff become available. Failure to increase services will result in an increased number of

commuters being denied the opportunity to change their mode of transport from private vehicles to public transport which is counter-productive to the climate change outcomes identified by Council.

To help reduce the cost of increasing these services, we suggest that Council could consider utilising smaller buses or mini buses on routes where patronage is insufficient to fill large double decker vehicles, but is still sufficient to require the service.

BNH also believes that the AT HOP Card system needs to be reviewed to enable more people to access public transport via an App or using their own credit cards or eftpos cards.

(7) What Else Is Important To You?

(Individual feedback is provided at Appendix 1)

BNH offers the following comments:

- a) We are concerned about the proposal to reduce open space maintenance by reducing 30 per cent of litter bins across the region. In our view, keeping our region, including our town centres and other BIDs tidy and free from litter, is core business.
- b) BNH is concerned about the reductions in garden maintenance for 80 per cent of gardens. Again, we don't want to see this result in the reduction of amenity of gardens in our town centres and other BIDs.
- c) We are also concerned that Eke Panuku Development plans to reduce or withdraw from public realm projects and local events in town centres, such as Matariki festivals, weekend workshops for kids as well as Christmas and cultural New Year celebrations. Again, we are concerned that these reductions will reduce the amenity and enjoyment of our town centres and other BIDs.
- d) BNH is further concerned that if additional cost reductions are required, Eke Panuku will exit from urban regeneration activities in up to 11 priority locations across the region. We fear this will impact heavily on the amenity of our town centres and other BIDs as private development will continue, but without regeneration of the public realm.
- e) Recent research shows that Auckland is not seen as a preferred place to settle for immigrant families with the housing market proving to be inhibitive. The current rate of crime and the likelihood of reduced amenity will make the city even less attractive than it currently is thus inhibiting economic development.

Conclusions:

As we enter another year where the resilience of small and medium sized businesses will be tested, we ask the Council to consider carefully the needs of these businesses as it makes decisions about the priorities and proposed savings in the Annual Budget 2023/2024.

We ask that there be a focus on providing those services which grow the economy and support local businesses, especially in our town centres and other BIDs.

BNH fundamentally believes that greater savings can be made with a culture of efficiency being instilled across the council group. Now is the time for the Council and its significant number of employees to adopt a rate-payer mindset.

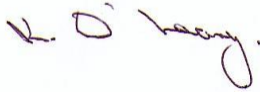
Finally, BNH believes that despite these significant budget challenges, Council must not lose sight of Auckland's ongoing economic prosperity and the core services that Council must continue to provide to support this outcome such as:

- a) the marketing of "Auckland Inc" to position our city's brand internationally
- b) retaining Eke Panuku Development's plans for public realm projects and local events in town centres, such as Matariki festivals, weekend workshops for kids as well as Christmas and cultural New Year celebrations

- c) retaining the existing number of litter bins across the city to maintain amenity and attract visitors and customers
- d) keeping the drains well maintained to enable business continuity, thus supporting ongoing economic development

Should there be any questions or other matters arising from this Submission, we would be pleased to respond to these.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. O'Leary'.

Kevin O'Leary
General Manager

Appendix 1 – Individual BNH Member Feedback

Q1 What is your preference on the proposed operating cost reductions?

Tell us why:

1. I believe the priority of local government should be to manage within budget on given revenues, if this cannot be done then first look at costs - particularly non-essential services costs. Later I support more user pays policies – for example why are ratepayers paying for buses? Bus riders should be paying for buses and Toll cars into the city to balance commuter travel choices.
2. We need to increase public transport services to get more cars off roads. I agree to reducing funding to Tātaki Auckland Unlimited. Our homeless need to be a priority over arts and culture - they should not be lumped in the same group together - some funding could be reduced in this area and increased funding for youth and homeless. I agree to Reducing local board funded activities and agree to Reducing regional contestable grants to save \$3 million. I think the Early Childhood Centres should stay as they are.
3. the council should be doing the basics only.
4. exclude the reduction on public transport. Use strategy for reductions based on low volume/user uptake
5. I believe this is the most realistic outcome given economic outlook internationally with pressure on limited resources prices/cost must continue to rise and Auckland must accept higher costs than already budgeted will happen anyway. Particularly don't reduce spending on cultural events and facilities - this is the heart and soul of our Auckland identity and our significance in the world, our essence, our community spirit - what makes us special and happy and feeling worthwhile.
6. Council must focus on delivering services and an environment that benefits the region's citizens. Not all proposed reductions above will achieve this. Maintain facility, development, environment services and add to their betterment through an increase in rates. Social spending should default to central government under a more cohesive national framework policy to address social issues.
7. Proceed with some of the proposed reductions except social services / community funding such as homelessness funding, youth centres etc. Auckland has become a hive of criminal activity, homelessness and social disorder and council and central government policy and under-funding has driven this. Auckland council needs to take responsibility for reducing social disorder in our communities. Let's make Auckland a safe and an aspirational place to live and visit. Having lived here for 54 years I can say that the last 10 years have been an embarrassment.
8. Look at what is going... We are competing with cities around the world to get highly skilled people to choose to live in Auckland. Making Auckland a worse place to live isn't the answer. Higher rates is fine as long as it isn't mismanaged and we see results. I have higher cost to keep my great staff, people of Auckland will have higher costs to keep a great city.
9. Only essential services should be funded by ratepayers. Venues should be self-sufficient and management of them should include an update in use and payment for use. Social services are great when there's a surplus of funding but should be encouraged to become more self-reliant and less dependant on the goodwill of ratepayers.
10. Public transport cannot be cut - it needs to be invested in. What about using our water for ferries?
11. A renewed focus on council delivery of 'the basics' is required.
12. Reduce the amount of people working within the council. (managers)
13. just makes economic sense & starts to address the she'll be right the ratepayers just wear uncontestable inefficiencies & whether its actually needed anyway
14. Reducing so many community services isn't a good idea. So a 2% increase in rates and halve the number of reductions.
15. Basic services first
16. The wording of your survey is biased and offers the same ridiculous answer twice.
17. I would prefer public transport services to only be reduced in areas where it is used infrequently or smaller mini-buses used instead of large buses with only 5 passenger or less which is huge waste of fuel.
18. We should be assessing all spending and eliminate anything which is considered nice to have. Minimise waste and keep essential services only.

19. Current economy status and forecasted NZ economy doesn't look flash

20. Council needs to re focus on giving priority to basic infrastructure services as essential to the future of Auckland.

21. cherry pick them

22. Sounds like the best option.

23. Some items are needed like parks. It keeps the kids out of trouble. And the local boards know which ones should keep their funding.

24. Auckland Council should stick to providing core services and reduce spending on non-core services. Any expenditure outside of core services needs to be curtailed or scraped.

25. Need to focus on core business. Must have over nice to have.

26. none of the above partial reduction yes but further rate increases causing more problems for the ratepayers instead look at alternative contractor works currently spend a fortune as there is no organized road/water/park and maintenance work to work efficiently, the organisation is a complete disaster and wasted too much rate payer money.

27. Definitely reduce funding to Tataki Auckland Unlimited and contestable grants however Council needs to ensure that their reduced spending in other areas does not mean they are remiss in

28. Rates for commercial buildings are already too high

29. Already had a 20% increase last year, how are we meant to afford it when wage growth is lower than inflation?

30. I agree in the main but I think early childhood education is important-I am a grandfather.

31. the critical issues for Council are to maintain services related to waters, roading, waste collection and disposal, transport, all of the above are discretionary. In fact I would reduce Community Board spending even further!!

32. I do not think the reductions go far enough, cost benefit analysis of Auckland Tourist Board? cost benefit of Auckland Transport - order them to get traffic flowing not to restrict vehicle use in an effort to get cars off the road.

33. The transport reductions will not encourage people to reduce cars on the already crowded roads. Any increase in vehicles, even electric, will make that problem worse. It affects the communities and Auckland as a whole. The majority of voters wanted to scrap Three waters and seemed happy to pay for all water to be managed by the council. The proposed cuts in social activities will not help to maintain the community aspect of living in a city. It is important that a city of people work together, play together and spend time together. performing their community outcomes as required under the Local Government Auckland Amendment Act.

34. Auckland Council is too bureaucratic, and these are carefully thought through spending cuts with minimal impacts on Society.

35. Public Transport. Publish the number of passenger kilometers on each of the routes and times. This info should be available from the 'click on - click off' It would soon become obvious which routes should be suspended.

36. It seems quite legitimate to me to spend less money, at least temporarily, when there is less to no budget. Not proceeding to some reductions wouldn't sound like a good financial management.

37. No longer directly providing early childhood education services to save \$1 million. I do not agree to shut down childhood education, as you think that this is a cost why doesn't this can be revenue or it can breakeven, if the education price is reasonable, I believe this can help a lot of teachers and families in the community. Education is so important in anywhere around the world, we got a nice teacher and environment at Kauri Kids. The teachers are patient, it needs to take a serious decision and not to shut down easily. Thanks.

38. I don't support community grants or arts & culture spending. However infrastructure, libraries and environmental management including environmental volunteer groups are important. The volunteers need some coordination and resources.

39. It's pretty simple really.

Cut the massive staff, get rid of the 1000's of consultants, stick to robust road maintenance, competent water supply, drainage and effective waste disposal and leave everything else to private enterprise. Oh and reduce the inefficient costly consent process for building. I heard from reliable sources they are spending billions in consultants in this consent department.

Q2. What is your preference on this proposal to change the AIAL shareholding policy to enable the sale of all Auckland Council's shares?

Tell us why:

1. Council have no business in private enterprise - the governance aspect is a clear conflict of interest (example: ARC blocking a city stadium proposed and to be paid for, by central Govt - for WRC)
2. Our Airport should be kept in our hands.
3. If reducing debt interest reduces costs more than the return then the Council should sell the shares
4. This is a simple business decision - if the financial experts say sell - get on with it - buy shares in another enterprise that produces price gains above the market average - like Mainfreight!
5. Best of both worlds, partial debt reduction and dividends from the remaining shares.
6. Short-term gain. Auckland council will always be involved in the Airport, due to where it is. Might even speed development up, with more active progressive shareholders. There could be downsides to the sell off though, depending on who buys the shares. Air NZ or Qantas may buy bigger stakes, and make it harder for more competition of new airlines entering NZ.
7. Auckland airport is a fundamental requirement for maintaining and expanding the city's growth in local and international tourism. It is vital that council retains a voice in the development and decision-making of changes made to the airport and related infrastructure.
8. I think we have to - this plan hasn't contemplated the next CRL \$.5B cost over run - \$1.1B in total
9. flexibility
10. Also comfortable with a partial sale.
11. Again, biased brainwashed wording. This is ridiculous.
12. We only have an 18% shareholding in any case so not a decisive share.
13. If the return on the investment is at least equal to the cost of debt then it makes sense to keep the status quo and not reduce the investment to cover debt incurred for other projects.
14. I agree with partial sale
15. Great idea - council does not need to be involved in airport ownership at all.
16. AKL airport might need significant money spent on it for future proofing. ACC need is now.
17. Don't sell the shares sack the mayor he is useless
18. Hold on to at least 10%. We're selling off too many of our assets!
19. If we are not going to get about as much in dividends as the cost of interest then it is better to sell some of the shares.
20. Sell them but only to New Zealand shareholders and not overseas group
21. In simple terms, if the books can't be balanced without consistently gouging ratepayers then selling or divesting assets to pay for the inordinate waste and neglect of the Auckland Council is the right option.
22. Stop increasing rates as there are other ways
23. Selling these shares will provide a one-off cash injection but no long term gain. Steady rates increases should have occurred for many years but council decided not to and now they have hard decisions to make.
24. Over time airport will generate significant dividend so keeping a holding balances short term needs and long term returns. Council's shares have already been diluted due to COVID capital raise

25. Sell some now, the rest later if still makes economic sense to do so. Reason being, the council shouldn't be making the share price unstable to others invested in AIAL
26. Mine is a conservative answer-it is always good to retain assets-maintaining a 10% share would achieve this.
27. Ownership of shares in AIA is a legacy issue and retention of some sort of partial ownership is an essential item, somewhat similar to Ports. A one off gain can never compensate for future issues, it is like land, don't make that anymore!!!
28. Selling the silver reduces our asset base
29. The airport is an essential part of the city and needs to have a share of control.
30. Auckland Council does not need to own part of an airport. let the travelling public own it.
31. While selling some of the shares seems like a good way to proceed, selling all AIAL shares may end up in a loss of control in what is happening, flight costs. So I wouldn't go the "sell all shares" path, just partially to keep a foot in the place.
32. I just think that now the traveler & international student is coming back, we might have a very good return of this share in next year. Can't we keep it?
33. this is a one time Asset Sale and the shares should increase higher than the debt servicing. like selling the family farm – crazy
34. Ideally the people of Auckland would own the whole airport and it would be an awesome revenue stream. Council spend vs income has been unbalanced for too long, creating too much debt. A partial sell down alleviates some debt while leaving the door open to acquire more share again in better times.

Q3. Managing Rates and Debt:

Tell us why:

1. Sounds balanced - but constant rates increases are placing the burden on property owners - plus GST (a double tax) rubs salt in the wound. I support more user pays.
2. Its the right balance
3. Sell Airport shares
4. see question 1 - increase the budget for cultural events and facilities
5. Contributing to the increase in the cost of living crisis would put too much pressure on households. OCR hikes and commodity costs are just too much to bear for most households
6. We need to keep some of the proposed cuts to the liveability of the city.
7. Debt can only increase due to interest rates which trend continuing in an upward trend. Interest has no value to the borrower except as an easy means to gain funding. If funding can be achieved without interest, then the entire capital amount has value. Biggest waste of council money is due to overcharging on works, paid reworks, lack of accountability for poor performance.
8. We are already paying amongst the highest rates in the world. There is inefficiency right though the council - this needs to be removed to free up funds needed
9. NONE OF THE ABOVE! Are you out of your mind thinking of increasing rates when the average person is still struggling from the idiotic lockdowns! Maybe reduce the wages of councilors!
10. Is the rates increase in addition to the reductions in part 1? There seems to be a mis-communication.
11. I don't want to see the targeted rates reduced. I would accept a higher general rate rather than lose the benefit of the targeted rates.
12. Increasing rates (other than minimally) should not be necessary if you make the other cost savings.
13. Why don't you also reduce people doing the same jobs and stop over paying your top people
14. It makes more sense to fund capital projects through term debt and not through operating revenue. There should be a "Zero Based Budget" exercise conducted by the council to ensure that only the higher ranking items get budget approval and all the nice to have projects get scrapped.
15. Food essential and daily survival with kids is very crucial without looking for benefits that will dampen the country and probably ppl will continue to fly out of NZ
16. User pays - should not be using debt in a higher interest rate environment.
17. Charge businesses more. It's tax deductible to us business owners but not to the homeowners.
18. Cut operating cost make staff accountable get rid of the dead wood

19. People are struggling to survive, and you are responsible for all those people that lost their homes and possessions in the flood because the council can't provide adequate infrastructure!
20. Provide core services only - hoping the savings means no rates increase. Look at staffing levels - specifically any unnecessary management and channel funding to efficient staff undertaking core services. Debt only on essential assets that are required to meet councils obligation to provide core services.
21. Need to sell surplus Auckland Council assets With consents to maximise value
22. Why aren't we proposing keeping the rates as is and cutting more excess staff, reducing waste on endless consultants, streamlining as promised in the Super City restructure that's never eventuate. Cut all fluff projects, cycle lanes and the likes and focus only on core services.
23. be proactive and not reactive to find a workaround
24. Tricky one but seriously have to consider the impact on rate payers of continuous large rate increases. Some people had up to 25% increase just last year. The way the properties are rated is unfair (based mainly on land value rather than house value) and based on hypothetically what 'maybe' able to use that land for 'if' no house was on it, in an 'unknown' point in the future. Whereas it should be based more on user pays - number of people at that address.
25. I think that those much more familiar with the rating process and needs have provided this solution
26. a sensible way of gaining added funds and added capability of debt
27. Its a fiscally prudent approach.
28. A Rate payers should be delighted that the increase is less than CPI B ?? may need a higher rate take to cover for all our Flood damage
29. High general rates will have a domino effect and will push up inflation.
30. Put rates up and cut some jobs at Council to avoid more debt. Start balancing the budget. Contract infrastructure build to companies that can deliver on time, with an incentive to deliver early and an increasing penalty for increasing lateness

Q4. [Storm Response:](#)

No individual feedback was sought on this question.

Q5a. [Given this possible reduction in funding, what do you think of our proposed priorities for services and activities in this local board in 2023/2024?](#)

Tell us why:

1. reduce scope of work and local boards cost
2. not a resident.
3. Events such as ANZAC Day should happen because the citizens want it to happen not because Council are funding the event. Cut funding to this event priority. Cutting funding to Pest, Plant and Animal Control is short sighted and will result in longer term / more expensive remedies. Continue with funding this Priority.
4. Now is not the time for "nice to haves"
5. Only essential services should be prioritised.
6. What are your priorities?
7. Education and childcare should be the last thing cut. Public transport, funding road changes can be renewed (a new bus provider bid will likely yield more efficiency, busses are failing us so people have moved away from them thanks to Richies not making their feeder runs as promised even though we are funding wage increase ourselves!). What about staff reviews for all though "Managers" and higher who did NOT reach KPI's in the last 5 years being removed
8. Any money should be spent on EDUCATION!
9. see 5
10. What is the value of the staff reduction? How many staff?
11. The local initiatives identified as being on the hit list are crucial to maintaining a healthy local environment - be it education that has ongoing environmental benefits, or other events that draws the community together. Given that many of these initiatives also require significant donated community labour, depriving the various services and activities also contributes to depriving the community of the donated labour.
12. What do the local boards actually deliver?
13. Local boards need to tighten their belts as we all need to do when facing higher inflation and Costs
14. Local Boards are a waste of time

15. Not all are appropriate.
16. The Local Board know what is needed in their area.
17. Cutting environmental funding should not be priority in light of recent events it is obvious that we need to be doing more for the environment
18. Focus on need to have vs nice to have. Fundraising for events should revert to community directly allowing them to fund and support what matters to them vs who pleads best case to friends in local boards
19. Question is vague.
20. Environmental initiatives to plant parks and remove pests should remain fully funded however.
21. parts of Auckland have significant needs for an improved quality of life
22. I do not expect such storms to become the norm. Infrastructure such as roads / footpaths sanitary and stormwater pipes are necessary-the nice to have/do should no longer be the main focus.
23. sorry could not find the relevant page to read and understand
24. Local Boards are wasteful, and their services are not needed.
25. Not enough info on what current priority order is and how much is spent for what outcomes.

Q5b. If funding for local board activities is reduced, which three of our services do you not want to reduce funding for? (i.e. which are most important to you?)

Tell us why:

1. Sport and leisure due to the mental impact this has and will increase health costs substantially more.
2. Libraries
3. Arts and Culture Open spaces Water Quality
4. n/a
5. waste minimisation Low mow / no mow Ecological restoration programmes
6. libraries opening hours Community Event Funding Clean waste funding
7. Rooding Water Electricity
8. as above - what are your priorities?
9. Reducing our funding to Tātaki Auckland Unlimited to save a further \$27.5 million, with effects on service delivery (including economic development and tourism promotion) and pricing at venues it manages such as Auckland Zoo, Auckland Art Gallery, and stadiums and venues in Auckland • Reducing regional services such as community and education programmes, arts and culture programmes, regional events, economic development, and other social services activities such as homelessness funding, community empowerment and funding for youth centres to save \$20 million • No longer directly providing early childhood education services to save \$1 million. without these our society goes to the dogs we know this!
10. ?
11. Environment programmes - in their different guises.
12. Libraries Parks Sports Areas
13. Maintenance of roads etc
14. Who knows?
15. Use money to fix the roads
16. Zoo, Parks and Public Transport.
17. Parks and grants
18. Environmental Education Community Grants Events in parks
19. park maintenance keep street clean once a year get together for locals like car shows and street party or like major event such as car/bike/boat races
20. Grants e.g Community Grants programme and rate remission grants Events e.g. Movies in Parks and event partnership fund • Open Space low mow and no mow areas • Library opening hours and services
21. Environmental initiatives to plant parks and remove pests should remain fully funded however. Council is a major landholder and has a legal obligation to remove pests from their parks.
22. Cultural events/activities Anything Arts related Tree planting
23. 1 grants/community grants program 2 environment volunteers
24. 1/ Reduce Regional services to community/arts etc 2/Reduce local board community activities 3/Can't decide
25. absolutely essential - waters, roading, transport, waste management,

26.Environment Waste collections Community Services
27.1. Childhood Education 2. Community Facility
28.Infrastructure & environmental management are most important.

Q6. [Changes to other rates and fees and charges:](#)

[Do you have any feedback on the proposed changes in the table above, or the other proposed changes to rates, fees and charges in the consultation document:](#)

- 1.Get the machines out to suck out the stormwater drains and clean up the gutters would be a good start
to healthy waters.
- 2.Climate action is not a council job.
- 3.Any proposed cost increases must be postponed during thh cost of living crisis. Postpone increases to when OCR rates reduce (taking mortgage and rent pressure off) and immigration returns to there is less pressure on wage inflation.
- 4.basic services only please
5. No.
- 6.Not all of us can rely on buses and public transportation
7. ..?
8. The Swimming Pool checks should be reduced to once every 5 years. Many councils don't have them at all.
- 9.What cost are we people who are employed to check Swimming Pool/Spa Pool Fencing Compliance what a joke , how many other people are employed wasting tax payers money
- 10.There is a cost-of-living crisis going on so I don't think you should increase rates. I think the councilors should all take a pay cut and that will definitely decrease spending!
11. No
- 12.Dump the CATR completely
13. be proactive and not reactive to find a workaround aucklanders get screwed all the time getting no value for money with poorer service
- 14.Stop charging or reduce charges to North Shore residents for anything rail related since we haven't had any trains for 150 years. Having lived in the North Shore for 30 years, it has never once been practical to use a train south of the bridge to get anyway.
- 15.I do not believe that the climate change is a new phenomenon-the distance from the sun is still the major factorclimate is cyclical-however cliff front owners should be given say 12 months to vertically drill their stormwater pipes to the base of the cliff where a public system is not available.
- 16.waste mgmt- increasing the size of Bin available seems counterproductive to managing waste efficiently, food scraps cost are erroneous as finding a service to collect same is near impossible very clear verification of climate change is required before further monies are expended on measures to manage- lot of rhetoric but less on scientific answers
17. No
- 18.Generally, the rate payers who benefit from a product/service should pay for that or the cost of a service will escalate by unnecessary or excessive use
- 19.Increasing general rates by 10.6% is far too much because the increase will have a domino effect.
- 20.Reduce empty busses at weekends etc Maybe use smaller buses in some areas
- 21.Existing heavy bus solutions aren't the best for emissions & congestion reduction because they're too inconvenient for too many people, who therefore persist with solo car journeys. We need the AT app to work like Uber and we need artificial intelligence helping route a dynamic fleet of buses, small buses and vans. Serve the real-time demand and use dynamic routing. The tech is there. Old ways aren't working.

Q7. [What else Is Important To You?](#)

[Do is there anything else you would like to give feedback on?](#)

1. Stormwater is currently a big issue, I believe the balance of rights between downstream or downhill property owners to those upstream needs to be restored and be more fair. Currently if the upstream create excess water flows without stormwater mitigation or systems in place , the local rules and obligations on higher ground property owners to remedy excess runoff are weak.

2. Funding in social and physical activity is a huge priority and costs less than the cost to the health sector in the future. I can reinforce this enough and all recent research around the earthquakes and Covid has shown the huge increase in mental health issues.
3. Keeping trimming the trees especially the deciduous ones in autumn!!! Sweep up the leaves, clean the drains, gutters, etc. Mow lawns, edges, etc weekly basis not once in a blue moon!!
4. Repairs and Maintenance to roads and clearing drains
5. Slim down the council, they do too much and thus it costs too much
6. Reduce debt by selling assets!
7. Fix rural roads in Rodney. Stop charging rural properties for services they do not receive.
8. The council must reduce spend whilst maintaining core services in an effort to reduce the impact on its rate payers who are already under huge cost of living pressure. That said, improving social services and reducing crime and homelessness should be fundamental investments in order to return Auckland to being an aspirational city to live.
9. To think big, to make Auckland a great City, not a penny pinching city, were nothing happens and people want to leave. If people start to leave, then there is even less rates to gather and the city slips back to being a backwater town of the world
10. Public venues should be open to all and a fee charged to all. Members of the public who do not use a facility should not have to subsidise those who do.
11. Stop wasteful spending use the resources we have more efficiently
12. Look at the running expenses and trim dead weight not community services for goodness sakes!
13. Yes I believe we miss the big two; 1. A corporate approach full strategic review - asking Why we provide every service line by line. if we cant justify the Why as essential Stop it now. 2. Introduce effective EFFICIENCY KPI's & a guarantee that missing targets will be dealt with via consequences. There will be huge savings if people are held actually to account.
14. Bloated staff numbers and services - too much red tape
15. Stop increasing rates. Rather reduce services. Pensioners are struggling
16. No.
17. I think we need to stick with the absolute core services. Anything other is just outside of the areas of council requirements
18. Priority needs to be given to roads/housing/facilitating construction industry so that people are no longer worried about how/where they can shelter their families. Rent-to-buy houses should become a priority.
19. Fix our roads do smarter things We can not all take a bus or use a bike to go to work
20. I see no evidence of Zero Based Budgeting which is the only way in which to manage the complexity of trying to compare one department or service against another.
21. Please think living cost of every Aucklanders before imposing all costs associated with living.
22. ..?
23. Why don't we allow large overseas infrastructure cos do some of our infrastructure work. The rates or tolls collected would be their return & they maintain the infrastructure. Bring in the Chinese/Pilipino workers because they know how to work. The roading staffing levels are a joke. Too many staff standing/sitting around doing nothing. Staff levels need to be reduced by at least 10% on most roading projects.
24. Get Rid of the old guy he is useless
25. Sell down council assets with appropriate consents
26. Dump the climate action program for now and make sure the traffic flows what reduces all emissions. be more selective with contractors working for council at what cost and quality of service
27. I think that a prudent budget and expenditure for the coming year is in order. To tighten the councils belt (figuratively speaking) and ensure that spending stays within the level of income.
28. 100% against anything involving race based funding or special privilege. This whole survey is about reducing costs, where is the public vote on providing segregated cultural funding? There should be no special seats or 'governance' quota which is unproportionate to population representation - everyone should have equal say as rate payers.
29. Concentrate on the core business as stated above
30. Clear the culverts and water ways so less likelihood of flooding Fix the roads Stop wasting money Ask rate payers more often on their thoughts feedback
31. Council must reduce ALL new projects and commit those new projects funds on maintenance as this has been one area that Councils have been extremely poor on for a number of years. New projects provide lovely feelings but maintenance provides longevity of the service/products classic case currently related to road surfaces Council should also review its

contracting policy for projects to ensure it receives best efficiency and quality. Current CRL over expenditure clearly reflects a lack of Control from Council on the methodology for contracting and budgeting future projects must not repeat this.

32.Reduce the number of local boards

33.Get rid of racist policies such as special rights for Maori groups , Cut Gay and cultural groups funding . No co governance

34.Stop AT from turning roads into cycle ways - accept our Auckland climate/work travel is not cycle friendly. Have AT reduce the no registration fine and for first offence have a low touch way of proving compliance and penalty waver regardless of reason.

35.I don't think my opinion will count. Kind regards

36.It is wrong to cut down old trees just because they aren't native. Many of us love all trees especially the large old ones including non-natives. Large old trees are a treasure.