Review of the 2016-2019 Auckland Council Demographic Advisory Panels

Dina Dosmukhambetova and Jesse Allpress

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Dr Dina Dosmukhambetova
Dr Jesse Allpress

Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU)

This report has been peer reviewed by the Peer Review Panel.

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Reviewed by two reviewers

Approved for Auckland Council publication by:

Name: Matt Hope

Position: Acting Manager, Research and Evaluation (RIMU)

Name: Alison Reid

Position: Manager, Economic and Social Research and Evaluation (RIMU)

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Executive summary

Auckland Council has six demographic advisory panels, which were established to help the Mayor of Auckland, the Governing Body and council staff effectively engage and better understand the views of increasingly diverse communities of Auckland. There are currently six advisory panels: Ethnic Peoples, Pacific Peoples, Disability, Youth, Seniors and Rainbow Communities. In the current term, the total panel budget was approximately $400,000[1].

Auckland Council Democracy Services commissioned the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) to conduct a review of the 2016-2019 demographic advisory panels in late 2018. The research team was asked to consider four key and two supplementary evaluation questions. The key evaluation questions were as follows:

1. What impacts have the panels had during the 2016-2019 term?

2. How well have the panels, staff, councillors and the communities with which the panels identify engaged with one another?

3. What did and did not work well this term?

4. What improvements can be applied?

The supplementary questions were as follows:

1. How well have the changes to the panel model this term been implemented?

2. Do the different stakeholders involved with the panels have similar expectations of the panels' purpose?

The overall purpose of this report is to contribute to the improvement of how the panels work in future terms. Some of the recommendations suggest new ways of working with the panels while others strengthen existing processes and work.

Methods

The research project took place between January and August 2019, and primary data was collected in April and May of the same year. A total of 27 in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted with various stakeholders and stakeholder groups, including liaison councillors, senior staff, demographic advisory panels, support staff and other teams who worked with the panels during the term on plans, policies and strategies. The transcriptions of the sessions were thematically coded in several waves, and the emergent themes and ideas formed the basis of the current report.

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[1] This budget was for six demographic advisory panels as well as three sector panels. We do not consider sector panels during this review.

Panel set-up

The panels operated within the parameters set in the 2016-2019 Terms of Reference. Each panel had (i) a liaison councillor who acted as a conduit between the panels and the Governing Body, (ii) a lead officer who provided a strategic organisational perspective, (iii) a deputy lead officer who supported the work of the lead officer and managed the panel's work programmes, and (iv) a governance advisor who provided logistical support. The panels were overseen by the principal advisor for panels. Each panel held 10 meetings a year, of which at least three were open to the public. Each panel had a budget of $20,000 per annum which they could choose to spend on communications and engagement.

Changes to the panel model this term

The research team was asked to consider how well three changes to the panel model this term had been implemented, namely: the introduction of strategic agendas, the establishment of the role of the chief liaison councillor and the introduction of meetings closed to the public.

First, the introduction of the strategic agendas helped some panels to focus on regional strategic matters, but this was not consistent across all panels. More consistency is required. Second, it was found that the establishment of the chief liaison councillor was seen as an effective and positive development by most stakeholders. Finally, there was consensus that the introduction of closed meetings was beneficial in facilitating more meaningful and open conversations between the panels and council staff.

In the previous term there were different expectations among panel members, staff and elected members about the purpose of the panels. In the current term, therefore, Democracy Services strengthened the fact that the panels were advisory in nature. As part of this review, participants were asked what they perceived to be the main purpose of the panels, and there was a near-perfect overlap in the expectations of various stakeholders: most participants viewed provision of advice as the primary function of the panels.

Value and impact

Study participants were asked what they thought were the main impacts of the panels this term. Participants gave a variety of answers, which were grouped into six themes as follows:
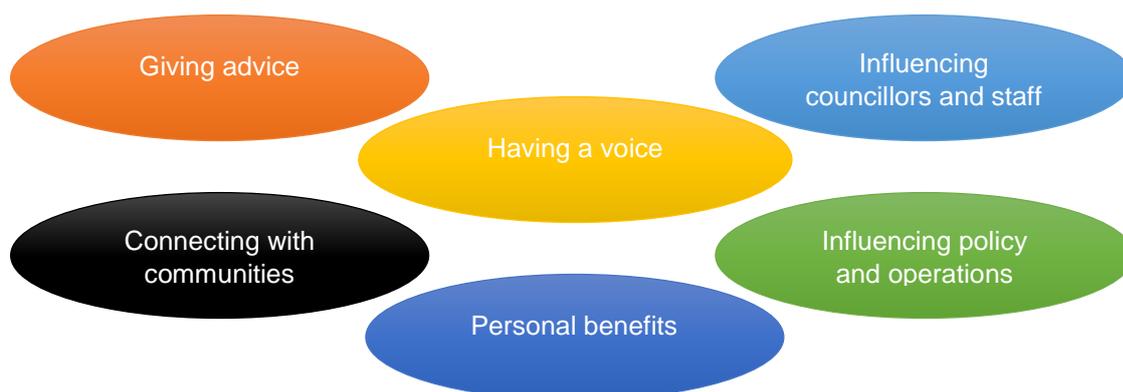
1. *Giving advice.* This is the main function of the advisory panels and participants talked often about the feedback they provided on a number of big and small policies, plans and strategies. For example, the Auckland Plan 2050 and the Long-term Plan 2018-2028.

2. *Connecting with communities.* The advisory panels ran a number of community forums this term, and participants discussed some examples of what they considered to be successful engagements.

3. *Having a voice.* Many panel members placed high value on the existence of the panels because it offered an opportunity for their communities to feed into council decision-making.

4. *Personal benefits.* Membership had personal benefits for the panellists. Stakeholders spoke about what they had learnt, being connected to a range of other opportunities, networking as well as having an enhanced sense of belonging.

5. *Influencing councillors and staff.* When discussing the value of the panels, councillors and council staff often spoke about the way their opinions, attitudes and behaviours changed as a result of their interactions with the panels.

   You might have understood it at a conceptual level, but until you actually hear people telling you some of those stories and giving you some of that information and see what happens, it kind of doesn't really sink in. ~ Staff member

6. *Influencing policy and operations.* It is not easy to directly measure the influence that panels have on the development of Auckland Council policy and operations, as their feedback is part of a complex system of decision-making. Nonetheless, there were examples of clear impact during this term: work to gain Age-Friendly City classification; input into the Disability Operational Action Plan; gender-neutral toilet signage; input in the Health and Hygiene Bylaw Review; and the introduction of Rainbow demographic questions into some of the council's research.

Stakeholder engagement

The research team was asked to consider the engagement between the panels and the Governing Body, council staff and the communities with which the panels identified. We looked at each of these relationships in turn.

Governing Body

Relationship between the Governing Body and the panels was stronger this term than in previous terms. For example, the Diversity and Inclusion team organised joint panels/Governing Body/Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meetings where panel members could meet and discuss key issues with the Governing Body and ELT.

However, participants noted that there could be more visible engagement between the panels and the Mayor, as well as more engagement with councillors, especially those who do not work directly with the panels.

The review therefore makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the relationship with the Governing Body in the following ways: (i) hold a six-monthly panel forum with the Mayor; (ii) provide an orientation for new liaison councillors about their roles and responsibilities; (iii) clarify how other councillors could engage with the panels; (iv) schedule at least three joint panels/Governing Body/ELT meetings each term; and (v) identify other opportunities for councillors to engage with the panels.

Communities

Participants spoke about a number of community-engagement events that they thought had worked well this term. However, they also raised some concerns about the organisation of community forums. For example, panel members were not specifically recruited for their community engagement skills and panel members were busy individuals who might not have expected to devote a substantial amount of unremunerated time to organising events.

In addition, study participants found it difficult to connect digitally with their communities and found the process of gaining access to digital tools challenging. While support was provided by communications staff for some panels to gain access to social media tools, panel members were responsible for managing the day-to-day operational aspect of the sites such as adding content and discussions. Panels did not always have a member who could commit to monitoring and updating the pages as planned.

Finally, there was a lack of clarity around the role the panels should play in connecting council staff to their respective communities. In particular, some staff members expected that the panels' role was to add to council's existing engagement mechanisms and provide more insight about who to contact within their communities. At the same time, some panel members were confused by these expectations and believed that council officers should have the networks they could access without the panels' help.

The review therefore makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 2: (i) Retain the community engagement budget; but (ii) remove the expectation that the panels would deliver community engagement; (iii) provide staff support for organising engagement activities; and (iv) find synergies with engagement that the council is doing themselves in line with the issues and activities that the panel wishes to get involved with.

Recommendation 3: Provide good practice guidance and more support for online engagement with communities: (i) work with the panels to identify the best ways of communicating and engaging with their community online and (ii) provide operational

support to implement and maintain digital engagement channels. This could be done by existing or additional panel support staff.

Recommendation 4: (i) Clarify the role the panels play in connecting the council with communities and (ii) communicate these expectations to the panels and council staff.

Council staff

A key function of the panels was to provide advice to council staff on regional policies, plans and strategies. Council staff could seek advice by organising integrated panel sessions (with all six panels), attending a meeting of each individual panel, and/or by emailing queries to the panel members and support staff.

Similar to the findings of the previous review, we found that it worked well when staff approached the panels early, sent information in good time, and 'closed the loop' with the panels later (provided feedback on the impact of the advice received). Study participants noted that closing the loop was still not common practice. This could have been due to the fact that, for a variety of factors, providing feedback was not always straightforward.

Many study participants also noted that there was a lack of centralised panel-related resources online, so it may have been difficult for council staff who were new to engaging with the panels to find relevant information.

The review therefore makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 5: Strengthen the mechanisms for closing the loop: (i) require council staff to acknowledge that they heard the feedback by sending an outline of key messages back to the panel; (ii) adopt an action tracker template for all panels; (iii) strengthen ongoing communications between consulting staff and the panels around projects; (iv) strengthen the current report template guidance regarding the panels' input; and (v) encourage staff to invite panel chairs to present alongside them at committee meetings.

Recommendation 6: Consolidate panel-related resources on Kotahi (the council intranet) in order to make it easy for staff to access information about the panels.

Support staff

Each panel was supported by a team of council staff, including a lead officer, a deputy lead officer, a governance advisor and the principal advisor for panels. One of the biggest themes that came through during the focus groups and interviews was the appreciation for the quality of support these staff provide.

However, study participants also identified some issues: the workload on support staff was far in excess of what they had anticipated; there were no formal arrangements releasing some support staff (lead and deputy lead officers) from their main responsibilities; there was

a lack of clarity around the delineation of the respective roles of the support staff, and there was little to no induction offered for the roles.

The review therefore makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 7: Set clear expectations about the likely workload of support staff: (i) revise the expectation of time commitment for lead and deputy lead officers from one day per month to at least two days per month; (ii) set up formal arrangements where managers agree to release staff from their other roles to work with the panels; and (iii) clarify the respective responsibilities between support staff.

Recommendation 8: Provide orientation and support for the support staff: (i) hold an induction workshop for lead and deputy lead officers and (ii) consider arranging peer-support mechanisms.

Panel members

Study participants discussed various matters to do with the panel membership. One strong theme that came through in these conversations was around the quality and the calibre of the panel members this term. Study participants were very appreciative of the expertise and dedication that the panel members brought to the roles.

On the other hand, participants also touched on some of the difficulties that they had experienced.

First, they suggested that members would have benefited from a more extensive training and orientation programme, more time for whakawhanaungatanga with fellow panel members and more opportunities for personal development.

Second, participants noted that there was a variable commitment to panel work among panel members, and a seemingly diminishing motivation to participate. Reasons for this lowering enthusiasm and participation may have been the facts that (i) panel membership required more work than first anticipated by the panel members, and (ii) the contributions of panel members to activities other than attending meetings were not financially compensated.

Further, when discussing the appointment of members to the panels, participants spoke about the value of continuity in terms of panel membership, about a lack of handover between the panels from one term to another, and about difficulties replacing members who stopped attending meetings.

Finally, study participants discussed aspects of diversity and representation in the panels. Panel members were keen to underscore that the communities with which they identified were multidimensional and that there was a lot of diversity within each panel's communities. The diversity within panel membership was, therefore, seen as very valuable both by the panel members and council staff. Study participants suggested enhancing diversity in the

future; they also felt that the ability of the panel members to apply a Māori lens should be strengthened.

The review therefore makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 9: (i) Provide a more extensive training and orientation programme for panel members; (ii) provide more time for whakawhanaungatanga with fellow panel members; (iii) allow more time before selecting a chair; and (iv) provide opportunities for upskilling.

Recommendation 10: Set clear expectations about panel-member workload: (i) clarify the amount of time required for panel work; (ii) make the scope clear to panel members before they take up the role; and (iii) introduce an hourly rate to allow recognition of additional work by panel members.

Recommendation 11: Make changes to the appointment of panel members. More specifically, (i) enable the re-appointment of up to half of existing members to enhance continuity; (ii) create a lessons-learned guide each term; (iii) set a two-term or three-term limit for panel members; (iv) strengthen the relevant provision in the terms of reference about non-attendance; and (v) simplify the process of replacing panel members by creating a pipeline of approved candidates and/or delegating the responsibility for mid-term panel appointments.

Recommendation 12: Enhance diversity and representation within the panels: (i) actively apply a diversity lens during recruitment; (ii) raise the minimum number of members on the panel from six to eight; (iii) offer intersectional candidates a choice as to which panel to serve on; and (iv) encourage panel members to move between panels in different terms to enhance diversity. Finally, demonstrate the importance of Te Ao Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi by providing more emphasis on the Treaty throughout the term as well as more support and guidance during orientation.

Panel functioning

Advocacy and panel-led initiatives

Many panel members joined the panels with a strong motivation to make a tangible difference and a meaningful contribution to Auckland. Although it was well-recognised that the primary function of the panels is advisory, panel members were often motivated to advocate for the issues they believed were important to their communities. However, the advocacy role was not very well defined in the current terms of reference, and there were different perspectives on the appropriateness and effectiveness of panel-led advocacy. As a result, panels and panel members who undertook advocacy during this term did so at some personal expense in terms of the time spent and without clear guidance on how to approach and undertake such activities.

For this reason, many study participants suggested that it would be beneficial for the panels to have support in choosing and progressing one or two advocacy projects during their term. However, asking the panels to undertake such an iniative must be carefully balanced against other panel activities. In addition, it would be advisable to select projects that could be embedded within the council's existing work prorammes.

The review therefore makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 13: (i) Clarify the role of advocacy in panel functioning; (ii) consider offering panel members means to choose, shape and support a project they feel passionate about in collaboration with the relevant council department, but also (iii) consider time and resource implications of this change: panel members should be remunerated for their time working on the project.

Cross-panel work

There was general agreement among study participants that the times when the different panels worked together were positive and productive. In particular, participants commented that they enjoyed integrated panel sessions where all panels offered their views on a policy in a joint forum. Panel members further expressed enthusiasm for more formal and informal opportunities to get together and collaborate with other panels.

The review therefore makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 14: Encourage inter-panel interactions and collaborations: (i) look for more opportunities to bring panel members together, both in formal and informal capacities; however, (ii) if establishing cross-panel working groups on specific issues, consider purpose, workload and appropriate remuneration.

Support infrastructure

It was noted by a number of panel members and support staff that panel operations relied primarily on mainstream methods of communications, like paper printouts, emails and face-to-face meetings. Participants thought that panel functioning would be enhanced if technological solutions were used to enable real-time feedback during meetings, the use of online discussion forums and to reduce paper usage.

The review therefore makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 15: Provide technology solutions to enhance communications between the council and panel members and to reduce paper usage.

The Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel

The Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel (EPAP) was one of the first panels to be created. In the current term, the EPAP had several successes, including holding well-attended meetings and launching the Future of Auckland microsite. However, participants pointed out some

conceptual and practical difficulties associated with the set-up of this panel. First, it was difficult for the panel to identify strategic issues, common to everyone, because – more than other panels – they were a small group asked to reflect the views of a very large number of quite different communities. Second, participants noted that the term 'ethnic' encompassed broad categories of peoples. Finally, some participants had expected that the panel would consider issues important to newcomers to New Zealand, but this did not occur.

The review therefore makes the following recommendation:

<u>Recommendation 16</u>: (i) Revisit the remit and purpose of the Ethnic Advisory Panel before the new panel is set up and recruited, and (ii) reflect the growing diversity of Auckland in the ethnic compositions of all demographic advisory panels.

The Youth Advisory Panel

The Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) was first formed in 2012. Study participants commented on the high quality of the current panel members. However, they also felt that the panel's size and level of remuneration created some issues.

Unlike other panels, the YAP had 21 members who were selected from each of the local board areas. There were some advantages to having a large number of members on the panel, such as maintaining continuity despite relatively high turnover (as some panel members left to attend university, etc.) and maintaining good geographic spread.

However, participants also noted that the arrangement implied that the panel members represented their local boards, which created confusion about their role. In addition, the large size of the group posed challenges to the panel's ability to progress their work programme, and for support staff to provide appropriate care and attention to each individual panellist. To maintain a good geographical mix of panel members and to keep a slightly larger size group to support continuity, the number of members could be based on the number of wards (13).

The YAP members were remunerated at a lower level to other panels as the fees framework stated that a lower level of skill and experience was required, which could mostly be attributed to their age. Panel members pointed out the negative effects of the lower remuneration.

Raising the remuneration rate for the YAP, while simultaneously reducing its size to 13 would result in a net financial gain (from $37,969 per year to $35,300 per year).

The review therefore makes the following recommendation:

<u>Recommendation 17</u>: (i) Reduce the number of the YAP members from 21 (local-board based) to 13 (ward-based); (ii) clarify and emphasise the fact that the panellists are not ward representatives; and (iii) increase remuneration levels to that of other panels.

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1.0 Introduction

Auckland is New Zealand's largest and most diverse city. Approximately four in 10 Aucklanders were born overseas, and some estimates indicate there are people of more than 180 ethnicities living in the region. Auckland also has the largest Rainbow population in the country, and one in five Aucklanders identify as disabled.

Auckland Council plays an important role in the wellbeing of all Auckland's residents. One of the challenges of representative democracies, however, is that the election process does not guarantee that the diversity of the population is reflected in the composition of the elected members. The council is continuously working to become more community-centric to ensure that decision-making is supported by good advice that is shaped by engagement with Auckland's diverse communities.

Many council departments and units (e.g. those working in policy advice, bylaw development and service provision) engage with Auckland communities. In addition, the organisation has a dedicated Citizen Engagement and Insights team, which leads and advises on best-practice design and delivery of strategic and significant public and community engagement processes across the council.

Demographic advisory panels were created as another mechanism for meaningful engagement with diverse communities during the establishment of Auckland Council in 2009-2010. Section 9 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 stated that ensuring effective engagement between the council and the people of Auckland, including those too young to vote, is one of the roles of the Mayor of Auckland. To achieve this, the Mayor can "establish processes and mechanisms for the Auckland Council to engage with the people of Auckland, whether generally or particularly (for example, the people of a cultural, ethnic, geographic or other community of interest)".

Section 86 of the Local Government (Auckland Transitions Provisions) Act 2010 also set out a requirement that an Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel and Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel be established for the duration of one electoral term. The purpose of the panels was to identify and communicate to the council the interests and preferences of their respective communities in relation to the content of the council's strategies, policies, plans, and bylaws.

Fulfilling this legislative mandate, in 2011, Mayor Len Brown, the first mayor of the amalgamated Auckland Council, established Ethnic Peoples and Pacific Peoples Advisory Panels, as well as two additional panels – Disability and Youth. The panels were intended to advise elected members, both on the Governing Body and local boards, on council activities and on ways to engage with diverse communities in Auckland.

After the first term, the legislative mandate for the Ethnic and Pacific Peoples Advisory Panels ceased to exist, but the Mayor retained the power to establish the panels in the following electoral terms (with endorsement of the Governing Body). In the 2013-2016 term, Mayor Len Brown re-established the panels, adding two more panels, Seniors and Rainbow

Communities. The Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel was the last one to be formed, in 2015, only a year before the end of the term.

1.1   The 2016-2019 demographic advisory panels

In the 2016-2019 term, Mayor Phil Goff, with the endorsement of the Governing Body, re-stablished the panels with some changes to their purpose and operation. The six demographic panels were Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel (EPAP), Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel (PPAP), Youth Advisory Panel (YAP), Disability Advisory Panel (DAP), Seniors Advisory Panel (SAP) and Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel (RCAP).

Their terms of reference stated that the panels advised the Governing Body and staff on regional and strategic matters within the remit of the Auckland Plan and offered advice on other council plans, policies and strategies that impacted their respective communities. In 2016, these terms of reference were updated to focus more explicitly on regional matters with no direct connection with local boards.

The panels advised through their agreed strategic agenda and detailed work programme. For the 2016-2019 term, the total panel budget was approximately $400,000 (this budget was for six demographic advisory panels as well as three sector panels; we do not consider sector panels during this review).

1.2   Journey to diversity and inclusion

As explained above, the demographic advisory panels are not the only way that the council engages with diverse communities. Building on previous initiatives, during this term there has been ongoing work within the council to promote wider recognition of the importance of becoming more inclusive and more culturally competent as an organisation. This included improving engagement practices to hear from those who do not usually participate, promoting diversity and inclusion among staff, and encouraging more candidates of diverse backgrounds to stand for office in local elections and for the boards of council-controlled organisations. Some specific examples include the following:

- The Citizen Engagement and Insights team has developed new partnerships with community organisations to improve council engagement practices and interactions with diverse communities of Auckland.

- Community partnerships and accessibility have been a key focus within the Elections team to encourage more diverse candidates and votes to participate in the upcoming elections.

- The Diversity and Inclusion team is implementing its organisation-wide Inclusive Auckland Framework, which concentrates on promoting diverse workforce and inclusive culture within the organisation, being more responsive to diverse needs of Aucklanders, fostering an inclusive Auckland, and supporting diverse governance.

The discussion of the demographic advisory panels should be understood within this wider context of the council's journey towards greater diversity, inclusion, and ultimately, equity.

1.3 Previous reviews of the advisory panels

Reviews of the advisory panels were conducted by MartinJenkins at the end of both the 2010-2013 and 2013-2016 terms. The 2013-2016 review assessed the panel model in relation to a number of alternative engagement models and made a number of recommendations for improvement.

Among other things, the review found that the panels made a valuable contribution when the council genuinely engaged with the panels at an early stage over its plans and initiatives, and that the council under-utilised the panels due to lack of clarity about their role.

The review considered alternative models but recommended that the panels continue for this term, with a number of recommendations for improvement. These recommendations included enabling less formal and more collaborative meetings, developing strategic agendas and work programmes that would enable the panels to focus on strategic regional matters, and establishing liaison councillors to strengthen the relationship between the panels, the Executive Leadership Team and the Governing Body. These recommendations were largely adopted by the council and endorsed by the Governing Body in November 2016.

1.4 This review

Auckland Council Democracy Services asked the council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) to conduct a review of the 2016-2019 demographic advisory panels. It is intended that this review will inform the recommendations on the setup of the panels in the new term that Democracy Services will present to the Mayor following the 2019 elections.

The objective of this review is to answer the key evaluation questions proposed by Democracy Services and to provide recommendations for improvements to the way the panels are set up in the 2019-2021 electoral term.

The key evaluation questions for this review are as follows:

1. What impacts have the panels had during the 2016-2019 term?

2. How well have the panels, staff, councillors and the communities with which the panels identify engaged with one another?

3. What did and did not work well this term?

4. What improvements can be applied?

In addition to these key questions, the research team was also asked to consider two supplementary questions:

1. How well have the changes to the panel model this term been implemented?

2. Do the different stakeholders involved with the panels have similar expectations of the panels' purpose?

In the chapters that follow the supplementary questions are considered before the key evaluation questions, because they contextualise the main analysis.

The purpose of the review is to describe the current model, understand its strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations about ways to strengthen the model. The MartinJenkins review identified that successful panels require time to mature and develop, and this review attempts to make a contribution to further development and improvement of the panels. Some of the recommendations suggest new ways of working with the panels while others strengthen existing processes and work.

With rare exceptions, the review covers panel activities in the two-year period from February 2017 to February 2019.

1.5 Methods

This project was approved by the Auckland Council Human Participants Ethics Committee in March 2019 (Application #2019001). Primary data was collected in April and May of the same year.

Between January and March, the research team met the key stakeholders of the review. As part of this process, the researchers attended the meetings of the panels to start building relationships and to discuss the research, its scope and purpose with the panel members and support staff.

In February 2019 a project Reference Group was formed, which consisted of senior managers whose teams had direct engagement with the panels, Executive Leadership Team members, and a senior staff member from the Mayoral office. The purpose of the Reference Group was to sense-check the development of the project and help contextualise the findings of the review. The Reference Group received monthly updates on the progress of the project and participated in a workshop in early August to discuss key findings.

1.5.1 Data collection

We used a mixture of archival and qualitative research methods in this project.

A review of panel-related documentation was conducted in March and April 2019. The purpose was to get familiar with the history, set up and current operations of the panels.

During the same period, the research team identified and approached key stakeholders of the panels. All teams and individuals approached agreed to participate in the study.

Fieldwork was conducted in April and May 2019. A total of 27 in-depth interviews and focus groups were held with the stakeholders, including liaison councillors, senior staff, demographic advisory panels, support staff and other teams who have worked with the panels during the term on plans, policies and strategies. There was an average of five participants in the 13 focus groups that were conducted.

Further, the research team received written feedback from several stakeholders who were not able to attend the interview/focus group sessions, including the Mayor of Auckland. Unfortunately, the time and logistical pressures meant that we did not collect the views of the councillors who did not work directly with the panels.

All interviews and focus groups were semi-structured, with the researchers asking a standard set of broad questions that sparked various discussions among participants. The interview questions were based on the key and supplementary evaluation questions.

The research team was mindful that this project involved working with historically marginalised communities. We therefore sought to ensure that we engaged with the panel members in a way that was sensitive and respectful, by incorporating important guiding principles of Kaupapa Māori (Smith, 1999) into our research practice: kanohi kitea (the seen face), aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people), and kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of the people).

1.5.2   Data analysis and reporting

The 27 interviews and focus groups conducted as part of this research project yielded about 40 hours of audio recordings, which were transcribed by a professional transcriber. The transcriptions were thematically coded in several waves. The emergent themes and ideas formed the basis of the sections in this report.

The report contains a large number of quotations from interview and focus-group sessions. Most quotes were edited to improve readability, correct grammatical mistakes and remove identifying information. The report is loosely organised around supplementary and key evaluation questions.

2.0 Panel set-up, changes and expectations

The 2016-2019 period was the third term in which the panels existed. Since the original creation of the panels in 2010, there had been a number of changes to the way they were set up, supported, and managed. In this chapter we provide an overview of the way the panels operated during this electoral term, discuss participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of some of the changes introduced, and explore whether Governing Body members, council staff and panel members have similar expectations of the model.

2.1 An overview of panel set-up

Demographic advisory panels were created by the recommendations of the Mayor with the endorsement of the Governing Body. In this term, there were six demographic advisory panels in total: Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel (EPAP), Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel (PPAP), Youth Advisory Panel (YAP), Disability Advisory Panel (DAP), Seniors Advisory Panel (SAP) and Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel (RCAP). The panels had between six and 10 members, with the exception of the YAP, which had 21 members. Each panel, except the EPAP and PPAP, had at least one member with lived experience of Te Ao Māori. See Appendix 1 for panel member selection criteria.

The panels operated within the parameters set by their 2016-2019 terms of reference. Each panel had a liaison councillor who acted as a conduit between the panels and the Governing Body. In this term the role of chief liaison councillor was also established. The purpose of the role was to promote collaboration and consistency across the panels and to bring relevant issues directly to the Mayor.

The panels had a formalised relationship with the Environment and Community Committee, made up of all Governing Body members. The committee endorsed panel appointments, reviewed and approved their strategic agendas and work programmes, and received reports from the panels at the end of each term about their achievement and activities.

In 2018, the terms of reference of the Governing Body were amended to specify that the Community Development and Safety committee (CDS) would work with the panels to promote their visibility and influence.

Each panel was supported by a team of staff, including a lead officer, a deputy lead officer, a governance advisor, and the principal advisor for panels. In this term, lead officers were selected from Tier 3 staff in the organisation, to make sure they had good visibility of the strategic matters in the council. The deputy lead officers supported the lead officers' work with the panels; they also maintained and managed the panels' work programme documents. Governance advisors provided logistical support to the panels. Finally, the principal advisor for panels oversaw the functions of all panels.

Each panel held 10 meetings a year, of which at least three were open and the rest were closed (closed meetings were also known as workshops). Although the terms of reference

stated that the YAP was an exception to this rule and that it should have up to only four closed meetings a year, in 2018 it had the same number and type of meetings as the other panels. Panel members' remuneration was tied to their attendance at the meetings. The fee was calculated based on 5.5 hours per meeting (including preparation time) for regular panel members and eight hours per meeting for chairs.

The agendas for the open meetings were published on the public-facing InfoCouncil website, and members of the public were invited to attend. Chairs and deputy chairs, support officers and liaison councillors also attended pre-agenda meetings where they shaped the agenda for the upcoming panel meetings.

For substantial policy, strategy and plan developments, the panels provided feedback in the integrated panel sessions, where all panel members were invited to contribute in a single forum. There were three integrated panel sessions in 2017 (Auckland Plan 2050, Investing in Aucklanders, and Long-Term Plan), and two in 2018 (Auckland Plan 2050 and Long-Term Plan (combined), and Becoming a Smart City).

In 2018, Auckland Council's Diversity and Inclusion team organised two joint panels/Governing Body/Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meetings where panel members could meet and discuss key issues with the Governing Body and ELT members.

Panel chairs and deputy chairs were also invited to optional chairs' meetings (once in 2017, and three times in 2018) to provide an opportunity for cross-learning between the panels and to gain strategic input into the overarching panel programme of work.

In this term, each panel was allocated a budget of $20,000 per annum which they could choose to spend on communications and engagement (e.g. by holding community forums).

2.2   Changes to the set-up of the panels

The research team was asked to explore participants' views on three particular changes that were made this term with respect to the set-up of the panels, following the review of the 2013-2016 demographic advisory panels.

The first change was the introduction of strategic agendas, a small list of key priorities that the panels developed in the beginning of the term. These were designed to keep the panel focused on strategic regional matters. The second change was the establishment of the role of Chief Liaison Councillor; this change was designed to strengthen the relationship between the panels and the Governing Body and promote an integrated panel approach. The third change was the introduction of closed meetings that the public could not attend. In the previous terms all panel meetings were open to the public, which was thought to be a barrier to frank and honest conversations between the panels and council staff wishing to consult on early drafts of their work.

The findings are discussed in turn below.

2.2.1 Introduction of strategic agendas

Strategic agendas were a small list of key priorities identified by each panel at the beginning of the term. They were designed to help panel members prioritise their activities during the term and focus their attention on the regional strategic matters that were most important to their communities. The strategic agendas sat at the top of the panel work programme, which was a document that contained an overview of the policies, plans and strategies that the panels advised on during the term; the work programmes usually aligned with the forward work programme of the Governing Body. There were work programmes in the previous terms.

The strategic agendas, together with the work programmes, were developed by panel members in the beginning of the term with guidance from support staff. As they were contained within the same document, many participants use the terms interchangeably.

Most participants who were asked about the strategic agendas felt that overall they were useful in keeping the panels focused on strategic matters.

> *The panel get a huge amount of requests from staff to come to them and the work programme is really useful for helping guide the chair and the deputy chair and for going back to staff to say 'well, these are actually the panel's priority'* ~ Support staff member

> *We identified what we felt were the key strategic pillars that allowed us to contribute meaningful advice.* ~ Panel member

For at least three of the panels, strategic agendas were central to how they operated and thought about their activities and contribution. However, not all panels operated in the same way and not all used their strategic agendas to guide their operational focus.

> *The work programmes have been useful but the [panel] members haven't really focussed on this.* ~ Support staff member

Further, some panel members felt that the setting of strategic priorities was done too early in the term, before the group had time to build relationships with each other and properly understand their role and purpose.

> *Admittedly, we didn't really know what we were doing in the first few months when we were putting together the work programme* ~ Panel member

Others felt little ownership of the agenda because of how it was developed.

> *I still haven't quite worked out who sets it [the strategic agenda], if it's set by the council staff or by the elected representatives; certainly, I don't feel that we have much say in that.* ~ Panel member

In summary, the introduction of strategic agendas helped some but not all panels focus on regional strategic matters. In order to improve this in the future, it is suggested that panel members need to have ownership of the agenda, by spending time together before developing the agenda and being more actively involved in its development (see also Section 6.1: Induction and orientation, and Section 7.1: Advocacy and panel-led initiatives).

2.2.2 Establishment of the role of Chief Liaison Councillor

The role of Chief Liaison Councillor for panels was established in the current term. This position was in addition to liaison councillors for each individual panel. The role was designed to sit above all the panels and to support a more integrated panel approach, as well as strengthen the connections between the Governing Body and the panels.

The majority of study participants had a positive view of the role and its effectiveness in increasing the visibility of the panels and promoting stronger linkages between the panels. Many participants commented that the success of the role was directly attributable to the enthusiasm and energy of the particular person who had undertaken the role.

[The chief liaison councillor is] a massive advocate for the panels, she is the perfect person for that role and there have been some good outcomes in terms of integrated panel sessions, also she often advocates for panels in both meetings and workshops of the Governing Body. ~ Support staff member

The establishment of the role of the chief liaison councillor, therefore, added value with respect to its purpose.

2.2.3 Introduction of closed meetings/workshops

As described above, in this term each panel had 10 meetings a year, of which three were open to the public and seven were closed. This was a change from the previous term when all panel meeting were open.

The closed meetings were introduced with the purpose of enabling more productive conversations between panel members and council staff, who came to consult with them. All the participants who commented on the issue agreed that the introduction of the closed meeting format was a substantial improvement. They enabled more robust discussions and were well received.

This term's felt more comfortable in terms of being able to have open discussions through the closed meeting/workshop approach. ~ Support staff member

Since we've been able to have closed meetings, the level of detail and the amount of information coming a lot earlier is definitely there. ~ Panel member

2.3   Expectations about the purpose of the panels

In previous terms, there were some differences in expectations among panel members, staff and elected members about the purpose of the panels. To address this issue, Democracy Services strengthened the fact that the panels were advisory in nature. In addition, there was a concerted effort this term to build collaborative relationships between panel members and council staff, as well as panel members and elected members.

As part of this review, the research team was asked to explore whether in the current term Governing Body members, panel members and council staff had similar expectations around the purpose of the panel. To do this, we asked study participants to comment on what they thought the purpose of the panels was. There were three overall themes, as discussed below.

First, there was a high degree of agreement among Governing Body members, council staff and panel members that the primary purpose of the advisory panels was to provide advice to the Governing Body. Some respondents talked about panels providing a particular demographic 'lens' to Auckland Council policy making; others talked about the panels 'sense-checking' some of the work underway at the council. Overall, there was an almost complete overlap in different parties' expectations of the panels' primary purpose.

Another perceived purpose of the panels was to act as community conduits. This function, however, involved varying expectations around how panel members would engage with their communities. We explore this issue further in Section 4.2, which deals with the engagement between the panels and their communities.

Finally, advocacy was also perceived by many to be one of the purposes of the panels. However, there was much more variability in this regard, with some panel members considering it to be a key function and a small minority contending that an advisory role is incompatible with advocacy. We explore this issue further in Section 7.1, which covers a discussion of the role of advocacy in panel functioning.

Overall, it seems, the panel stakeholders had similar expectations of the panels' purpose and function, especially as it related to the primary function of the panels – providing advice.

3.0   Value and impacts

The impacts of the demographic advisory panels are difficult to measure directly. The main reason for this is that the panels were advisory in nature, and as such, they provided opinions and feedback rather than having direct impacts on policy or operations.

In addition, the social, political and organisational context in which the panels operated did not lend themselves easily to delineating simple cause-and-effect relationships. The direction in which Auckland Council moves on any particular issue is determined by a multitude of factors, of which the input of the panels was only one. Thus, attributing any changes (or lack thereof) solely to the quality or effectiveness of the panels' advice is often not possible.

Study participants were invited to comment on what they considered to be the main impacts of the panels. Participants discussed a variety of subjects, and in this section, we attempt to organise some of these thoughts and shed light on what stakeholders viewed as valuable.

The themes and examples in this section do not cover an exhaustive list of the panels' achievements during the term. Rather, they are a reflection of what was top-of-mind for the respondents at the time the data was collected (April-May 2019).

The figure below shows the six main themes that study participants touched upon when discussing the impacts of the panels. These are discussed further in the following sections.
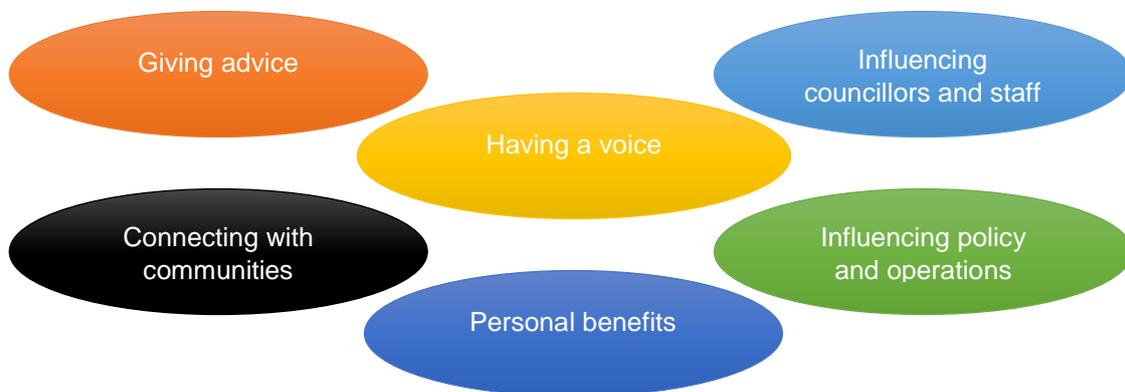
3.1   Giving advice

The primary function and purpose of the demographic advisory panels was to provide advice on regional strategic matters. During the interviews and focus groups, the conversations about impact often focused on this aspect of the panels' activities.

In the current term the panels provided advice to the council on several significant policies, plans and strategies, as well as a number of smaller projects. The main strategic plans that the panels provided feedback on during 2017 and 2018 were as follows:

- *Auckland Plan 2050.* The Auckland Plan 2050 is a long-term plan for Auckland, it considers how the region will grow in the next 30 years, and sets a strategy for six key outcomes, including (i) belonging and participation, (ii) Māori identity and well-being, (iii) homes and places, (iv) transport and access, (v) environment and cultural heritage, and (vi) opportunity and prosperity.

- *Long-term Plan 2018-2028* (also known as 10-Year Budget 2018-2028). The Long-term Plan lays out key priorities for a ten-year period and details how they will be paid for. Some of the topics covered in the plan include the introduction of the Regional Fuel Tax, protecting endangered species, and housing.

In 2017, as part of the broader development of both plans listed above, integrated panel sessions were held, where all the panels came together to provide feedback. In 2018 the panel chairs participated in the deliberation process about the plans in a workshop with the Governing Body committee.

There was a generally positive perception of the panels' contribution to this work. For example, at the launch of the Auckland Plan 2050, a councillor commended the YAP's input into the plan around Māori housing. Another councillor commented:

> *Their input into the annual plan and their input into the Auckland Plan is phenomenal and it changed hearts and minds on the council.* ~ Councillor

In addition to these overarching strategic plans, panel members were also consulted on a number of other plans and policies, including:

- Auckland Climate Action Plan

- Auckland Homelessness Plan

- Emergency Management Plan

- Future Urban Zones

- I Am Auckland (strategic action plan for children and young people)

- Inclusive Auckland Framework

- Investing in Aucklanders

- Public Safety and Nuisance Bylaw Review

- Tākaro – Investing in Play

- Ward Representation Review

Some participants observed that the panels played an important role for these smaller initiatives. This was because unlike the big priorities, such as the Long-term Plan, the

smaller initiatives did not always have large budgets that would allow them to effectively gather the views from hard-to-reach communities. The panels thus provided a very valuable perspective.

3.2 Connecting with communities

In the current term the panels were allocated a budget of $20,000 per annum that they could choose to spend on holding community forums to connect with and hear from their respective communities. During the discussions of panel impact, participants often spoke about the panels' engagement with their communities.

Some of the engagements that were mentioned were as follows:

- The EPAP's Have Your Say on the Auckland Plan 2050 and Long-Term Plan (March 2018)

- The EPAP's Future of AKL Microsite and Storytelling Campaign (2018-2019)

- The PPAP's Pasifika Tattooing Talanoa (February 2018)

- The PPAP's Pasifika Debate, a meeting co-hosted with the CDS committee (March 2019)[2]

- The DAP's Public Forum in partnership with YES Disability (October 2018)

- The YAP's Pub Quiz (June 2018)

- The SAP's Focus on the Future – The Journey to Age Friendly Communities (March 2018)

- The RCAP's Public Forum on the Auckland Plan 2050 and the Long-term Plan (March 2018)

- The RCAP's 3Questions Community Engagement Project (September 2018)

3.3 Having a voice

The advisory panels were often seen as a conduit between the council and the diverse communities of Auckland. One of the themes that emerged during interviews was that panel members placed high value on the existence of the panels because it offered an opportunity for their communities to have a voice in the way Auckland is run.

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[2] This event is included in the list even though it took place after the two-year period this review considers (February 2017 to February 2018). This is because it was held before the focus group with the PPAP in March 2019. There were a number of other co-hosted events with the CDS in 2019; however, they all took place after the data collection for this project had closed.

*As an Aucklander, I didn't really feel as if disabled people honestly have a place in it …
and this [the panels] seemed to be the only place where disabled people could bring
those kind of ideas and vision.* ~ Panel member

*I was really interested in this work because I think Auckland Council has a hugely
important role to play in the wellbeing of our communities and oftentimes rainbow
communities are not very visible in that work.* ~ Panel member

We force the council collectively to consider the youth experience because we exist. ~
Panel member

Participants viewed the panels as a rich resource available to the Governing Body in an
ongoing fashion, providing a different, authentic perspective on policy.

*I think if you're getting good valuable information from a subset of a community, always
got them as a connector, then its achieving what its set out to be; they're a good
resource.* ~ Councillor

The existence of the advisory panels also sent a powerful message to Aucklanders with
diverse backgrounds that Auckland Council was actively making efforts to be inclusive and
to listen to their needs.

*It's very symbolic that Auckland Council or Auckland as a region is making efforts to
appreciate differences, embracing difference and then it appears to the people of
Auckland that we do have this panel, and we are thinking about it, we are talking about,
we [are] actually hearing from their opinion, and I think this has meaning.* ~ Panel
member

*In a democracy people need to [have] a line of sight between their lived experience
perspectives and the decisions that affect them. In the absence of that, it breeds cynicism
and distrust in the organisation. People look at the organisation in a different light having
seen that it's genuinely attempting to get perspectives into its decision making, and I do
believe that they make a difference.* ~ Senior staff member

3.4   Personal benefits

When asked what the impacts and value of the panels were during this term, many
stakeholders spoke about the value membership offered the panellists themselves. In
particular, participants talked about what they had learnt, being connected to a range of
other opportunities, networking as well as having an enhanced sense of belonging.

- Stakeholders noted that being on a panel was a good educational experience for panel
members, in terms of understanding governance and the way the council operates.

    *I feel like the impact of the panels is it's a very educational thing. You learn about
    policy.* ~ Panel member

I think we have learnt a lot, things we might not have been aware of. I think I've learnt a tremendous amount. ~ Panel member

Panel members have learnt the complexity and the scope of the council's work, so they became more aware of what the council is about and how it works. ~ Support staff member

- Members of the YAP talked about the opportunities that they had connected with through their membership in the panel.

  There's been heaps of other opportunities that you wouldn't get if you didn't have access to the panel, like going to China and meeting the royal family. ~ Panel member

- Panel members also talked about the fact that panel membership was good for networking.

  I think its allowed us a platform to really network with people. We can just touch on the fact that we sit on this panel and so that gives us potentially door opening opportunities. ~ Panel member

  It's a very good introduction to tell people that you are on an Auckland Council panel, and we're looking at the wellbeing of the people who live here. It does open doors. ~ Panel member

- Finally, some panel members spoke about the fact that being on the panel gave them a sense of belonging.

  It's been a really awesome growth of my personal development and I really feel that I am part of Auckland now. So I just feel really connected being part of the journey for the last three years. ~ Panel member

3.5 Influencing councillors and staff

The panels did not influence policy and operations directly. Instead, they worked towards their strategic priorities by having meaningful interactions and building relationship with council staff and Governing Body members. During the discussions of panel value, councillors and staff spoke about the impacts the panels had on their awareness of and appreciation for the issues that faced diverse communities.

The reality for most decision makers is that they do not have a first-hand real-life experience with people from every diverse community. And it is through positive interactions and relationship building with members of diverse communities that they can understand their viewpoints and take these perspectives into account. The panels provided the council with unique opportunities to have those relationships and to enrich their perspectives.

[As decision maker] you can distance yourself from, for example, rainbow issues because perhaps it doesn't really affect you, but when you're in a room and somebody tells you

that something that you've done or something that you might want to do would be really hurtful or would really impact them because they are a member of the rainbow communities, then you listen. ~ Councillor

Many participants spoke about the influence that the panels had on councillors and their perspective.

One of the seminal impacts for me was to hear first-hand panel members discuss issues that are really meaningful to them. ~ Councillor

I think for quite a lot of councillors the last meeting was a real aha moment; it was put in front of them black and white, people telling their stories, what the issues are. So I think for me, it's not the facts and figures that gets decisions, it's actually the human side and that's what panels can bring to some of the issues that we're looking into. ~ Support staff member

Staff also spoke of the value of bringing their ideas to the panels and sense-checking them before going out to public consultation.

I think part of the value from the panels is around challenging and providing contrary views and for really testing us. Why are we doing things? Why do we think this? Why are we taking this approach? Why are we not looking at things from a different perspective? And what accessibility means, just as an example, for me, might not be the same as what accessibility for somebody else. ~ Staff member

I think the panel members themselves were incredibly generous, in terms of the insights that they were willing to give us. Some of the things were actually probably quite close to the bone for some of them. They were willing to share [their experiences] in a way that actually you could go, yeah I understand it, and I'll think about how it needs to be responded to. ~ Staff member

Finally, respondents discussed the value of the experience of engaging with particular communities and how that could contribute to the skills of council staff and councillors.

We used to use words very casually and what the panels have taught us is that words are really important when you're describing people and I think that that's definitely another skill that I've learned from the panels is that if you're going to describe somebody, make sure it's how they want to be described, not how you think they should be described and that's been really valuable. ~ Councillor

You might have understood it at a conceptual level, but until you actually hear people telling you some of those stories and giving you some of that information and see what happens, it kind of doesn't really sink in. ~ Staff member

3.6 Influencing policy and operations

As discussed in the previous sections, it is often not possible to identify the precise nature and magnitude of the panels' impacts on policy. Policy is created in a complex environment, and meaningful change can take a long time to occur.

Nonetheless, during the interviews, participants highlighted several policies and operational activities to which they felt the panels had made a significant contribution. As in the previous sections, the list provided here is not meant to be an exhaustive account of all panel impacts on policy and operations. Rather, it is a reflection of what study participants thought was important to discuss.

- Age-Friendly Cities classification. The SAP's advocacy played a pivotal role in the Governing Body's decision to seek membership in the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities, and to create an action plan to deliver an Age–Friendly Auckland. The SAP's advocacy for the Age-Friendly Cities started in the previous term.

- Disability Operational Action Plan is the disability strategy of Auckland Council. The DAP provided input into the development of the plan in the end of last term (2016). In the current term the DAP continued working with the council staff (Diversity and Inclusion Team) to shape the next iteration of the plan and provide guidance on implementation.

- Gender neutral toilets signage. The RCAP successfully advocated for the signage on accessible toilets to be made gender neutral in order to make the spaces more inclusive. The accessible toilet signs were changed to gender neutral in Te Wharau o Tāmaki (the Auckland House), and the recently opened Westgate Library Community Centre also has gender-neutral signs on its toilets. This work started in the end of the previous term.

- Health and Hygiene Bylaw Review. The PPAP made a valuable contribution to the review of the Health and Hygiene Bylaw as it related to the practices of traditional Pacific tattooing, by providing advice and hosting a community fono to help the council engage with the Pacific community on this issue of cultural significance.

- Rainbow demographic questions. The RCAP was successful in advocating for the inclusion of Rainbow demographic questions in the council's research, e.g. in Homelessness Count, and in partnering with the council to advocate for this change at a national level. Inclusion of such questions would increase the visibility of Rainbow communities and enable the council to understand Rainbow communities better and serve them more effectively.

4.0 Stakeholder engagement

One of the key questions the research team was asked to consider was how well the panels, council staff, Governing Body members and the communities with which the panels identified engaged with each other. In the three sections that follow we explore the interactions between (i) the panels and the Governing Body, (ii) the panels and their respective communities, and (iii) the panels and the council staff who engaged with them to receive feedback and/or advice. For each of these, we describe the ways that the parties engaged with each other during this term, provide overviews of what worked well and less well, and offer recommendations about how to improve the engagements in the future.

4.1 Governing Body

In this term, panel members engaged with the Governing Body in a variety of ways.

- The Mayor established the demographic advisory panels and set the tone for the relationship. At the beginning of the current term, Mayor Phil Goff sent a strong message around the value of the panels and was keen to continue the panels with some improvements.

- Each panel had a liaison councillor. Liaison councillors went to panel meetings, updated or provided advice on council issues; explained the priorities of the Governing Body to the panels, and brought the issues raised by the panels back to the Governing Body. In this way, they acted as a conduit between the panel and the Governing Body.

- The chief liaison councillor oversaw all the panels, promoted an integrated panel approach, and advised the Mayor on panel-related issues. This role was new in this term.

- Auckland Council's Environment and Community Committee (ECC) had the overall responsibility for the panels. ECC approved panel membership and signed off their work programmes. The panels were accountable to the ECC and were required to present back their outcomes and recommendations at the end of the term.

  Panel members presented their feedback to ECC; however, as the agenda of the Committee was often busy, the decision was made to delegate the relationship-management function between the Governing Body and the panels to the Community Development and Safety Committee.

- Community Development and Safety Committee (CDS) worked with the panels. In July 2018, the Governing Body terms of reference were amended to include a change to the definition of the delegated role of the CDS committee, such that one of the functions of the CDS was to work with the panels "to give visibility to the issues important to their communities and help effect change" (p.17)

  The membership of the CDS Committee consisted of seven councillors, including the chief liaison councillor and five liaison councillors. The purpose of this change was to

promote a more integrated panel approach and raise the visibility of shared panel priorities.

- Joint panel sessions with the Governing Body members and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). In 2018, the Diversity and Inclusion Team organised two meetings where panel members had a chance to build relationships with the ELT and Governing Body members and discuss key issues. The first one was held in July 2018 and included panel chairs and deputy chairs. This was intended primarily as a relationship-building session but several issues of importance to the panels were raised. The second session was held in November 2018 and all the panel members were invited. This covered the topic of transport with the Chief Executive and the ELT members from Auckland Transport presenting and responding to panel members' questions.

- In 2018, the Diversity and Inclusion team also supported the panel chairs to participate in Governing Body deliberations on the changes to the Auckland Plan and LTP.

- Councillors were invited to attend community forums organised by the panels held in their wards or with specific communities of interest.

This meant that panel members had more opportunities to build relationships with the councillors, through both formal and less formal means. As a result there were stronger relationships between panel members and Governing Body members, and many study participants specifically noted the positive value of the sessions organised by the Diversity and Inclusion Team in 2018.

We had more contact with councillors than we've ever had. I think there were several forums where councillors were present and we were there to help formulate some of the views that were on the table. ~ Panel member

I think there's a great recognition internally of our role now than it was, because they made a concerted effort to make sure that staff and especially the Executive Leadership Team have been engaged with panels. ~ Panel member

The liaison councillors have a better relationship [with the panels] because there's more time to build rapport ~ Councillor

There was more buy-in from the councillors about the value and effectiveness of the panels than in previous terms.

When the committees have their decision papers, they [councillors] will ask about engagement with the panels. They want to make sure that staff have engaged the panels where the agendas are relevant. ~ Support staff

When the panels present to the Governing Body on issues, everyone's interested, everyone understands, generally everyone knows the chair of the panels and respect their views too, so everyone's listening. ~ Councillor

In addition, the panels had good relationships with their councillors.

[Our liaison] Councillor has been a massive gift to us. ~ Panel member

It's been great having a Liaison Councillor who's so supportive and who has direct links obviously into other elected members and the Mayor. ~ Panel member

However, there was still room for improvement. In particular, many panel members felt that:

- The Mayor could have been more visibly involved with the panels.

  The previous Mayor had more interaction with the panels than the current Mayor, he's not as visible. Whether he has drawn on the input from the panels is not as obvious to me. ~ Staff member

  The Mayor meets with them but I'm not sure he's actively engaged to the degree that would be necessary if they were more influential. ~ Senior staff member

- There was variable commitment to the panels amongst liaison councillors, in terms of attendance at meetings and advocating for the panels.

  How the councillors engage with the panel, what they take back, and what they contribute is up and down and very variable, and their attendance is extremely variable too. ~ Support staff member

- There was room for closer relationships with other councillors.

  In terms of what contact the wider panel has with the council it's extremely limited. There are twenty-odd elected members on the Governing Body and we only see two of them, sometimes. ~ Panel member

  There has been a level of frustration expressed by certain members of the Governing Body around lack of opportunities to engage. They don't know whether they can just [turn up] and have a chat at one of our meetings or not. ~ Panel member

In terms of the engagement between panel members and the Governing Body members, there was a tangible improvement from the last term. However, if the panels are to provide effective advice to the Governing Body as a whole, more needs to be done to make the engagement more consistent across the board and improve the mechanisms already in existence.

> **RECOMMENDATION 1: Strengthen the relationship with the Governing Body**
>
>   i.   Establish a panels' forum with the Mayor: a six-monthly meeting with panel representatives to provide an update to the Mayor, raise major issues, and participate in a Q&A. Consider holding a nomination process within the panels to choose a representative for each forum meeting.
>
>   ii.   Provide orientation to liaison councillors about the expectations for the role (role at meetings, attendance, being an advocate).
>
> iii.   Clarify the mechanisms that other councillors have to engage with the panels (e.g. that they can be invited to or ask to attend panel meetings).
>
> iv.   Schedule at least three joint Panels/Governing Body/ELT meetings each term.
>
>   v.   Continue to identify other opportunities for councillors to engage with the panels.

4.2   Communities

Every day the council is making decisions that have far-reaching impacts on the communities of Auckland. The council's organisational strategy puts citizens, customers and communities at the centre of everything the organisation does and emphasises the importance of engaging communities to enable Aucklanders to have a strong voice and role in shaping their city.

The demographic advisory panels act as one of the council's engagement mechanisms with Auckland's diverse communities. Panel members were selected from their respective communities based on their personal experience, knowledge and skills. As such, they were not elected representatives and were not mandated to speak 'on behalf' of their communities. Instead, the panellists advised the council by speaking to their lived experience as members of a community and to their knowledge of the issues faced by the community.

Though not elected, panels were often seen by councillors and council staff as conduits between the council and diverse communities, with an implication that there would be a strong ongoing relationship between the panels and their communities. Further, a common theme among panel members themselves was an appreciation of the responsibility they held as panellists providing advice to the council and a desire to do so in an authentic manner, i.e. by staying connected with their communities and understanding their views.

> *They should have links to the community that they're representing and so whatever feedback they get from the community gets fed back into the staff who then feed back to us.* ~ Councillor

In this term, there were four main ways in which the panels connected to their communities: (i) through open meetings, where members of the public attended a meeting of the panel and could contribute to the discussion; (ii) through community forums, which panel members held to connect to their communities; (iii) through digital communication channels, like Facebook, which some panels were able to utilise; and (iii) through panellists' personal

community networks. In the following sections we discuss what worked well and not so well for three of these channels. This is because there was little discussion of open meetings in the interviews and focus groups.

4.2.1 Community forums

In the previous term (2013-2016), the panels did not have a budget to connect with their communities, because their main role was (as it still is) to advise on the basis of their experience and knowledge. However, it became clear over the course of that term that the panels needed a stronger connection to their communities.

> *If they are here to represent their community and tell us how to serve them [their communities] better, they need a mechanism to engage with those communities from time to time, to hear it from them.* ~ Support staff member

In addition, MartinJenkins' 2016 review identified that, internationally, advisory panels are effective when they can draw information from and link back to their communities (MartinJenkins, 2016). MartinJenkins thus recommended that Auckland Council "increase expectations and support for panels to link with their communities and disseminate information" (p.49).

On the basis of these considerations, in this term each panel was allocated a budget of $20,000 per annum that they could choose to spend on engaging with their communities. It was the responsibility of the panel members to deliver the engagements. In recognition of the fact that panel members may have a better understanding of their communities' particular needs and preferences than the council, little expectations were set on what form the community engagements would take. This flexibility was meant to provide the panels with the freedom to design and deliver engagements that were fit for purpose for their communities.

During the discussions of what worked well, participants commented that there were a number of community engagements run by the panels this term that they considered to have been successful. The definition of success, in this instance, is based solely on the overall positive nature of comments offered by participants, as they were not specifically asked to rate the events that took place during this term. Some examples of the events that drew positive comments included the EPAP's open meeting community forums in south and west Auckland; the RCAP's panel's public forum on the Auckland Plan 2050 and the Long-term Plan attended by the Mayor as well as the community research project; the PPAP's Western Springs debate event co-hosted with the Community Development and Safety committee[3], as well as their engagements on the Health and Hygiene Bylaw; the SAP's community engagements around Age Friendly Cities and the DAP's community forum in north Auckland.

Community engagement activities carried out in 2017 in relation to the development of the council's Long-term Plan (LTP) were noted as having been particularly valuable.

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[3] The PPAP's co-hosted event with CDS is the only such event covered in this review, because most co-hosted events of 2019 took place after data collection for this project had finished.

All the forums run by advisory panel members, the attendance level was between minimum 60 to a 100 and 120. Those were the most attended forums that the council has run out of the LTP process. ~ Support staff

Although there were a number of successful community forums held this term, this success was not consistent across the panels. During the discussions, a number of participants brought up various aspects of community forum development that did not work well and may have contributed to the inconsistency of results.

First, it was highlighted that panel members were not selected on the basis of their ability to design and deliver community engagement (see Appendix 1 for selection criteria). Further, panel members were generally highly active, time-poor individuals, many with full-time jobs/study, young families, and/or other extra-curricular commitments. They had an expectation that the role would take about six hours a month, which would include meeting and preparation time. Yet, they were asked to volunteer their time to deliver community engagements in addition to other work.

A lot of panel members are confused and also concerned that [running community forums] is not necessarily what they signed up for and what was communicated to them. – Support staff member

I found it really surprising when we had such a big [community] budget because my perception was that we would just be in an advisory role and we weren't going to [be] trying to connect with anyone. Because to have one meeting – and it's hard enough to wrangle everyone there – and then to have a budget essentially implies that there's going to be more involved than just one meeting a month. I wanted to know what have I committed to because I was keen to get involved but I also didn't have the time to be in extra meetings and extra organisation. ~ Panel member

Although given a budget to run the community engagement, panel members were not remunerated for the time they spent organising or attending the events. In addition, questions of how to spend the budget sometimes posed challenges because of potential conflicts of interest.

I think there was a bit of conflict [with] who gets paid and who doesn't, and I think that complicated things as well, because there wasn't [clear guidance on] whether you as a panel member, if you got involved in community forums did you get paid or was it voluntary? ~ Panel member

We're all time poor and being on the panel takes a lot of time, so people who are going above and beyond, doing more hours need to be compensated. ~ Panel member

The additional workload also detracted from the time panel members could spend on their core business of being advisors.

If they're focusing on community forums then they can't do the advice and I think we haven't got the balance right for them. ~ Support staff member

Because of these considerations, some panel members voiced the view that it should not fall to them to organise the forums.

It's not our day job to do the nuts and bolts of organising forums. It's our duty to turn up and support them and ask questions and all sorts of things. ~ Panel member

Instead, what panel members could bring to community forums was to help shape its format and to leverage their personal connections in the communities to encourage people to attend the forums.

When panel members are there supporting engagement, people in those communities think 'oh right okay there's faces I recognise, I'm hearing this through my network, I'm going to come along'. There are relationships that the panel members hold, they're known by their community, they're trusted, they can get us in or support where perhaps it's much harder for your bureaucrat to do. ~ Senior staff member

In summary, community forums and the associated budget provided a mechanism for the panels to engage with their respective communities in a fit-for-purpose manner. However, the panel members should help shape and promote the forums rather than be solely responsible for delivering them. Panel members who spend their time working on community forums should be compensated for the labour.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Alter the expectations about the community forums

i.   Retain the community engagement budget.
ii.   Remove the expectation that the panels would deliver community engagement.
iii. Provide staff support dedicated to organising community engagement activities, with panels having a less operational role.
iv.   Find synergies with engagement that the council is doing themselves, but ensure that panel members are able to take a lead role in confirming what engagement they get involved with.

4.2.2 Digital connections with community

Many social platforms are available for connecting online. These tools could be used to connect with communities, promote events and share information. In this term communications staff provided support for some panels to engage online, including setting up social media pages. However, study participants expressed frustration at a perception that such tools were not readily available to the panels and felt that there should have been more guidance and support to utilise them.

It's hard for the panels to feed back to the community 'this is where your ideas went, this is who's following it up'. ~ Councillor

I don't advertise [our successes] to my networks as well as I should because I'm scared I might send out the wrong information. I want to share that information but I don't quite know how. ~ Panel member

We don't need to do everything face-to-face. There are a lot of people who are active digitally and we could be asking the panels to support community engagement activities through their networks. ~ Support staff member

Access to our Facebook page is something that we had to fight for, for months. There were so many loops that we had to jump through just to get access. ~ Panel member

Facebook is not the only social media site that could be utilised, and each panel would likely have ideas about their own way to connect with their communities online. One success story this term was the launch of the [Future of Auckland](#) microsite in Autumn 2019, which the EPAP developed in order to connect with and collect insights from their community. With the help from support staff, this platform could be further developed to include other panels.

It needs to be remembered, however, that a social media presence requires constant upkeep, which panels might or might not have the capacity to sustain. In this term, some of the Facebook pages that were set up lay dormant for prolonged stretches of time (weeks/months), when there was no panel member who could commit to monitoring and updating the pages as planned.

Thus, the panels need a way of communicating and engaging with their communities, in a way that is appropriate and sustainable, but they require support because they may not possess the skills or the time resource to develop and/or keep communication active. Part of the community engagement budget could be spent on effective ways to connect digitally with the communities.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Provide good practice guidance and more support for online engagement with communities

  i.   Work with the panels to identify the most appropriate and sustainable ways of communicating and engaging with their community online.
  ii. Provide operational support to implement and maintain digital engagement channels. This could be done by existing or additional panel support staff.

4.2.3 Personal networks and community connections

One of the criteria for selecting and appointing panel members was lived experience and sound understanding of their communities. For some – but not all – panel members this was the strength of their relationships in their respective communities. During the interviews, it became clear that panel members and staff members sometimes had different expectations about the panels' role in connecting the staff with their communities through their personal networks.

Many council teams engage with communities to improve operational services or to consult on policies, plans, strategies and bylaws. Some council staff in this study had the expectation that the panels would have strong grassroots connections and that they would add to the council's existing engagement strategies by offering tangible advice about who to connect with in their communities.

> *We were presenting to the panels just recently and asking the panel about effective ways of reaching into the community and I personally thought that there could have been more insight.* ~ Staff member

> *Our role is to provide advice and guidance to Auckland Council on how to engage and my understanding is that that was also part of the role of the advisory panels – to give us another toolkit to tap into any gaps that we might have.* ~ Staff member

Panel members, on the other hand, were sometimes confused by these expectations, because they thought that council staff would have effective existing ways of reaching into the communities.

> *They should be specialists. They have no knowledge of whom to contact. They always ask - can you recommend somebody who knows about something. That is unfortunate, the organisation just does not have a network.* ~ Panel member

> *I think they were often reliant on our own personal networks [to reach out to the communities], which is fine but that should probably be quite clear before you sign on to be a part of the panel.* ~ Panel member

Thus, it is important to clarify the role that the panels play in connecting the council to communities. Panel members were appointed advisors who shared their lived experiences and views, and they may or may not have had strong grassroot connections.

The value-add of the panels when it came to community engagements was their ability to promote events to their networks, provide the council access into some of their communities, bring people along, and give specific tips on what to think about when engaging with their communities.

> *The panel had that access into the community to be able to bring the right people to the table and help with that discussion. This is the kind of knowledge and the kind of links with the community that I think they can bring us.* ~ Staff member

> *What the panels can do is give you some tips and some insights on the specific issues, [they] have a deep understanding of the community and what matters to them and how they're organised and how they interact.* ~ Senior staff member

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RECOMMENDATION 4: Clarify the panels' role in connecting the council with communities

    i. Clarify the role the panels play in connecting the council to their communities.
   ii. Communicate these expectations to the panels and council staff.

4.3   Council staff

A key function of the demographic advisory panels was to provide advice to council staff on regional policies and strategies. During the current term, panel members fed into a variety of policy proposals, plans, strategies and updates, including the Auckland Plan 2050, the Long-term Plan, as well as a number of smaller initiatives.

Panels had a degree of influence on what policies were presented to them for feedback. For example, panels set strategic agendas that reflected their priorities and developed work programmes that contained specific policies they considered during their term. Further, at pre-agenda meetings the chairs of the panels worked with support staff to determine which items would be included in the agenda at the following meetings. Finally, panels could invite presentations from staff on matters that were of interest to them.

However, as the work programme (and in part the strategic agenda) was developed to align with the council committee forward work programme, in practice council staff could add items that were of importance to the organisation. In addition, panels were not decision-making bodies, and as such they could not pass resolutions that were binding to council staff (although they could pass resolutions about the formal view of the panel on particular issues).

Council staff could get input and advice they sought through the following mechanisms:

- Integrated panel sessions, where members of all panels attended and contributed at the same time. This was usually reserved for large council-wide strategies and plans, like the Auckland Plan 2050.

- Attending meetings of each individual panel. Although technically council staff could seek advice both at the open and closed panel sessions, many staff chose to present at the closed sessions, as the less formal format of the closed sessions was more conducive to productive discussions.

- Email queries. This method worked best when a council staff member had an established relationship with the panels.

In the current term the visibility and profile of the panels seemed to have increased in comparison to the last term: participants commented on the fact that there was more awareness of the panels' function and value among council staff.

There is a lot of buy-in from the organization to come to panels and seek their advice ~ Senior staff member

The way council staff approached the panels and engaged with them shaped the nature of the interaction and therefore the quality of the advice they received. Study participants noted that it worked well when staff approached panels early, sent information in good time, and 'closed the loop' with the panels later (i.e. provided feedback on the impact of the advice

received). They also commented that council staff often attended with a good attitude that laid the foundation for a productive conversation.

People coming in are great. I found they are very, they just seem sincere and wanting to hear what we say. ~ Panel member

However, respondents felt that some staff treated engagement with the panels as a box-ticking exercise, because they came to the panels at the last possible minute, and they failed to close the loop on the advice that they had received.

Sometimes it feels like they've already planned everything out and they kind of have to just go on the journey and make sure that they sign off, 'we talked to young people', and then we can keep going. ~ Panel member

4.3.1 Closing the loop

One theme that came through during the discussions was council staff closing the loop with the panels by providing feedback to them about the effects of their advice. Panel members and panel support staff often invited council staff who engaged with the panels to let the panels know about how their work progressed by presenting again after a period of time or by sending a memo to the panel.

One of the responsibilities of the deputy lead officers was to help council staff close the loop by facilitating follow up reports for panel members, and both lead and deputy lead officers often liaised with presenters after their presentations about the progress of their projects. In addition, some deputy lead officers kept track of progress through work programmes and action trackers (work programmes provided an overview of the panels' activities, both future and past, and action trackers were adapted from work programmes to enable more efficient capture of progress made).

It seems that these mechanisms for helping council staff close the loop with the panels were insufficient during this term, however, as many panel members spoke about not having clear sight of the impacts their advice made.

What happens when you walk out of a meeting? How do I know that you've understood exactly what I'm meaning here and what are you going to go away and do about it? ~ Panel member

Though closing the loop is an important part of engagement, for council staff (and support staff) this task was not always straightforward. Some of the reasons it was difficult to feedback to the panels could be that the panels' advice needed to be weighed against other pertinent considerations; projects could have very long timeframes spanning several years; staff responsible for the work could leave; or the project could be de-prioritised because of budgetary considerations.

I think some of the projects that council staff are looking for advice on, they have very long timeframes. So we often feel like we are chasing staff and they have nothing to give back yet because nothing has happened with that piece of work. So that's a challenge. ~ Support

staff member

However, even when nothing happens or the feedback is not incorporated in the original form, it is important to communicate that to the panel members, because it is helpful for them to understand how their advice fits into the larger context of council operations.

There was general support among study participants for strengthening the feedback loop mechanism in order to enable better understanding of the impacts of the panels. Some suggestions for improvement included:

• Capturing detailed nature of the feedback provided. One of the weaknesses of the current system was that panel documentation did not capture the precise nature of the feedback given. Only consulting staff themselves captured the details of the feedback provided, which participants suggested they should circulate back to the panels after the meetings. This would be a way for consulting staff to acknowledge that they heard the feedback, and for the panels to have a record of the feedback provided for later reference.

• Encouraging consulting staff to provide an overview of the expected timeline for projects when they first engage and request occasional updates on long-term projects.

• Including a section about consulting with the advisory panels on the formal decision paper templates that staff use when they write reports to the Governing Body committees. Including a mandatory section may complicate the template and increase the demand placed on panel time for issues that panel members may not care about. However, it is possible to strengthen the report template guidance regarding the panels' input. Not all officers check the guidance, but it would go some way to developing an expectation that panel input must be acknowledged.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Strengthen the mechanisms for closing the loop

   i.   Require council staff who receive advice from the panels to send a document outlining key messages back to the panel.

  ii.   Adopt an action tracker template for all panels, incorporate feedback detail provided by council staff.

 iii.   Strengthen ongoing communications between consulting staff and the panels around projects.

 iv.   Strengthen the report template guidance regarding the panels' input and include an optional 'demographic advisory panels' heading where appropriate.

  v.   Encourage staff to invite panel chairs to present alongside them at committee meetings.

4.3.2 Centralised web resources

When council staff first decided to engage with the panels, they did not always know how to go about it. This may have been one reason why they came to the panels too late into the development of the project.

There were some online resources available to help staff understand how to engage, but it was not always readily accessible or widely promoted. More specifically, panel-related information was available on Kotahi, the council's staff intranet page; however, the information was spread between different pages and could be difficult to find.

There is a panel page but it's not very visible. You have to navigate to find the webpage. ~ Support staff member

The council's got a document about guidance for accessible documents. Problem is, staff aren't taught about it so staff keep making mistakes. ~ Panel member

We need to give better guidance to people about when they come and how it works. ~ Support staff member

Perhaps in part due to the lack of centralised web-resources, the internal operations of the panels, their activities and their achievements were not as visible to the wider Auckland Council as they could be.

They [the panel] were going to be doing some research and it all sounded really interesting and really useful, but I'm not sure where any of it ended up. That would have been a really useful piece of work to consider. ~ Staff member

I think it's been a problem from day one is how do we communicate what the panels are up to. ~ Support staff member

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RECOMMENDATION 6: Consolidate panel-related resources on Kotahi (the council intranet)

i. Consolidate all the information about the panels onto a single page on Kotahi to make it easy for staff to access information about the panels and make it easy for the support staff to signpost interested people to the right place.

5.0   Support staff

The research team was asked to consider what worked well and not as well in the current term and to provide recommendations for improving the set-up of the panels in the future terms. In this chapter, both of these questions are discussed in relation to the function and role of the staff supporting the panels.

The panels' terms of reference stated that each panel would be supported by a team of council staff, including a lead officer, a deputy lead officer, a governance advisor, and the principal advisor for panels. During interviews and focus groups, stakeholders highlighted the following aspects of these roles:

- Lead officers were Tier 3 staff. They helped provide policy context to the panels, helped set strategic agendas of the panels based on their knowledge of council direction, provided advice to the panels about their scope and role, and advocated on the panel's behalf where appropriate.

- Deputy lead officers were Tier 4 or 5 staff. They supported the work of lead officers, managed and updated the work programme, tracked progress, and followed up with council staff to get feedback on the way panel advice was incorporated. Deputy lead officers also helped staff understand how best to engage with the panels.

- Governance advisors looked after the logistics of panel meetings, which included organising catering, booking venues, creating and distributing agendas, liaising with staff, arranging pre-agenda meetings, and providing guidance to staff about the best way to engage with the panels.

- Principal advisor for panels was a full-time role dedicated to the panels. Principal advisor for panels was responsible for the overall functioning of all panels, providing guidance to panels about their purpose and scope, promoting the understanding of the panels among council staff, and connecting staff to the panels where necessary.

In addition to these responsibilities, all support staff had a duty of care for the panel members.

5.1   Quality of support

One of the biggest themes that came through in the focus groups and interviews about what worked well this term was the quality of support provided by the support staff.

One thing that's really worked is the support from the staff. They've been really supportive in helping us deal and manage with all the stuff that we don't know, and their availability has really helped with easing the process of the panel over the past two years and a bit. ~ Panel member

I think the actual back of house administration of the panels is really well done. ~ Staff member

From my perspective what's working well is the communication between them [support staff]. If they're communicating well, the advisory panel is doing well. ~ Councillor

It is encouraging that support staff were seen to be effective, efficient and engaged, because as the previous review of the panels found, the effective models of engagement "stood or fell on the quality of their facilitation and support" (p. 49, MartinJenkins, 2016).

5.2   Workload

When asked to comment on what did not work well this term, many support staff talked about difficulties they experienced with their roles. In particular, support staff discussed the fact that the workload associated with being lead officers, deputy lead officers and governance advisors are in addition to their everyday responsibilities.

Everyone's doing this on top of their regular day jobs. I don't think that [it was made] clear what the role was and how much time it would take, and I think that is also a problem for the lead officers, the deputy officers, and [governance advisors]. ~ Support staff member

There is a lot of resource in it [the panels], the staff resource time. I don't have the capacity within my role to start late on [the day of the panel meeting], so I work. That's a 13- to 14- hour day, and that is an absorbed cost. ~ Support staff member

The role description for lead and deputy lead officers stated that the role would take about five to eight per cent of their time, or one day a month; and for governance advisors the panels should have also been a relatively small part of their job. However, there was general agreement between support officers that this was not reflective of reality.

I think one day a month is not enough to do it justice. You just can't do it and if you want to do a quality job then you have to do more. ~ Support staff member

The Governing Body committees are our main priority and then we fit in the demographic advisory panels in that mix because they're part of the terms of the reference of the Governing Body, but it seems like that could be quite a big resource where it's probably supposed to be .25 of our time and it might push up to .5 in some cases. ~ Support staff member

It was also pointed out that there were no formal arrangements releasing deputy lead officers from their main roles:

I'm actually quite concerned that when [my managers] see how much time I'm spending [on the panels], they will pull me from the role. I'm working on behalf of the panels and my department sees none of it, so they can't replace me as a resource. ~ Support staff member

At the moment I think a lot of people do it out of the kindness of their hearts. You do it because of your own interest and passion. So perhaps we need to start moving beyond that to something a bit more structured ~ Senior staff member

Support staff highlighted that the boundaries are somewhat blurred between the respective responsibilities of lead officers, deputy lead officers and governance advisors.

The role differs depending on which lead [and deputy lead] officers you have. So if you have a really involved lead officer, you're doing more of the logistical stuff. If you don't, you often need to step into that role and provide more advice to the panel members. ~ Support staff member

Lead and deputy lead officers noted that they did not receive a thorough induction that explained their roles and responsibilities.

I had next to no induction [about] my roles and responsibilities. I saw one piece of paper before I turned up and away I go. To this day, [I am] still finding my feet. ~ Support staff member

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RECOMMENDATION 7: Set clear expectations about workload (support staff)

  i.   Revise the expectation of time commitment for lead and deputy lead officers from one day per month to at least two days per month.
 ii.   Set up a formal arrangement where managers agree the amount of time that staff are released from their other roles to support their work with the panels.
iii.   Clarify the respective responsibilities between support staff.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Provide orientation and support (support staff)

  i.   Hold an induction workshop for lead and deputy lead officers.
 ii.   Consider arranging peer-support mechanisms for the support staff.

6.0   Panel members

In this chapter, we explore the roles, workload, appointment and orientation of panel members through the prism of two of the key evaluations questions: what worked well and not as well, and recommendations for improvements.

Study participants were asked what worked well this term, and many respondents took the opportunity to comment on the calibre and dedication of the panel members this term.

> *The quality of the people that we have around the table I think was high and they were dedicated and engaged people who really wanted to participate.* ~ Staff member

> *The thing that I thought was really positive was just how we've all, groups of different people, came together and journeyed the last three years.* ~ Panel member

Though there was a lot of appreciation for the work that the panel members did, participants also noted that the contribution that panel members made in terms of expertise, attendance, 'extra-curricular' activities, preparation and general participation was not consistent across the board. We discuss these matters in the sections below.

6.1   Induction and orientation

Panel members were appointed because of their skills, knowledge and experience. They were highly capable individuals, many with a track record of success in their respective fields. Nonetheless, they stepped into their positions on the panels with varying degrees of understanding of advisory roles, Auckland governance, and policy making.

The 2016 terms of reference of the panels specified that they would receive induction and orientation. In the first three to five months of the current term, as part of the orientation process, panel members received a series of presentations from various council departments. This was designed to help build their connections with council staff, an understanding of the work that they did as well as the council's key priorities. Some panels also participated in a three-hour induction workshop.

Although this helped build some capability and shared understanding, there was strong appetite among study participants for a more extensive induction and orientation for panel members.

> *In order to serve, in order to fulfil the responsibility as a panel member, I think we needed to have more briefing and induction.* ~ Panel member

There were three main themes in participants' reflections on what a more thorough orientation would entail.

1. Need for more initial training around specific topics for panel members, with additional training for the chair.

We would be working so much more efficiently if we took a first meeting or two to have formal training on how to actually go about this and the other thing. ~ Panel member

[Some panel members] are finding it hard because this is the first policy driven space that they're a part of, so trying to catch up on all the lingo and all of the little nuance of council, there needs to be a lot more support in that regard. ~ Panel member

Stakeholders also spoke about the fact that it would be advantageous to form peer-support networks between panel members and/or panel chairs. This would help panel members understand the organisation better and build panel capacity for providing fit-for-purpose advice.

Some of the modules and topics stakeholders suggested were governance; policy making, conflicts of interest, overview of the panels' role from the Quality Advice team; introduction to major council initiative, e.g. Auckland Plan and Unitary Plan. The first year of the term could be spent on building the shared understanding and capacity.

2. Time for whakawhanaungatanga to establish and build relationships and to come to a solid mutual understanding of how the group functions.

Let the panel members get to know each other. I remember the very first time we came here, I expected to say something about myself and why I joined that panel. Nobody gave us an opportunity to say that. So I was really learning about them [fellow panel members] from scratch. ~ Panel member

The amount of time required for building the team culture and understanding the ways of working together can be substantial, but it is essential to the good functioning of a group. Each panel is unique and the panels bring together different perspectives, so building mutual understanding and respect can enhance group dynamics and productivity over the course of term.

The panel members often don't know each other before they're brought together you know, so they're in a process of getting to know each other and forming a way of working and as we all know that can take ages. So that can take the first year of your three year term to figure out how to work together well and they might all come from really differing viewpoints and backgrounds and issues. ~ Staff member

[If] we get to know each other and we can build some trust, we will be able to deal with anything. ~ Panel member

One particular point that many respondents raised was that it was crucial to get to know your fellow panel members before choosing the chair and deputy chair. In the current term panel members were asked to elect chairs early on, before they got a chance to get to know each other.

If you ask people to choose chair and deputy chair, give them a chance to actually get the feel for other people. ~ Panel member

3. Opportunities for upskilling over the course of the term. There was also a recognition of the fact that panel membership could be more rewarding to panel members if there was an effort to connect them to opportunities they would find personally meaningful, e.g. acquiring specific skills or joining the board of a council-controlled organisation.

> *There was mention that there will be some type of training during our term and I thought oh that would be really good, help me with my facilitation skills, but I noticed that that hasn't really happened.* ~ Panel member

> *So why did they join the panel in the first place from a personal perspective, what do they want to get out of that. I think a little bit of recognition that they're humans and they need some support and some guidance at a personal level not just at the panel level as well, that may be nice.* ~ Support staff member

> *It might give some panel members the feeling that their time as a panel member is more valuable because something comes from it for them if they're interested in that* ~ Staff member

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RECOMMENDATION 9: Provide training and orientation (panel members)

  i.   Provide a training program for panel members, including topics such as governance, policy making, and conflicts of interest, and a separate training module for chairs.
  ii. Provide time for active whakawhanaungatanga and team-building with fellow panel members and with support staff.
  iii. Allow panel members to get familiar with each other before selecting a chair. The council can appoint an interim chair and deputy chair for the initial time period or offer an option for the liaison councillor to facilitation the discussions in the interim.
  iv. Provide opportunities for upskilling. Have regular check-in conversations with panel members about the way panel membership is going for them.

6.2   Workload and expectations

In addition to preparing for and attending monthly meetings, panel members were expected to volunteer their time for various panel-related activities, e.g. providing offline feedback on policy proposals, organising and running community forums, managing communications with their communities, etc. This did not include any advocacy-related work they may have wanted to undertake to contribute to the work of the panels.

During the interviews, stakeholders observed that there was variable contribution from panel members, in terms of attendance at scheduled meetings as well as 'extra-curricular' activities that were outside of normal panel meetings.

> *Some people don't always contribute or do as much work as other people and so the chairs [and deputy chairs] do a lot.* ~ Support staff member

If you wanted to become part of the panel surely you should commit your time to the task that you've signed up to and it's incredibly frustrating from a council perspective to have meetings that have low numbers in attendance. ~ Support staff member

Respondents also noted that over the course of the term some panel members experienced diminished motivation, which manifested itself through low attendance and participation.

So there's excitement and 'oh yeah we're going to do this, we're going to do that' and then over the term it goes down, and so there might be two or three members turning up to meetings and there'll be a whole lot of them, you know, 'oh sorry, I can't make it'. ~ Support staff member

One reason for this pattern of lowering enthusiasm and participation may have been the fact that the role of a panel member required much more commitment, in terms of unremunerated volunteer time, than the panel members expected at the start of the term.

It does really concern me, things like burnout, not turning up to meetings, resignations, and I think some of that is [because] we haven't been clear from the start about what we expect. ~ Support staff member

[It would be good to have] clear expectations on what our roles are and what is expected of us and what is over and above. ~ Panel member

I'm really concerned that the workload has not been clearly explained to the people. We have a nominal figure, you know, you'll be paid for this much work and that involves this many meetings and pre-reading, and then about the middle of last year it was discovered that there was a budget for community forums that had to be spent by July. I think there was a lot of pressure felt by the panels to come up with this great event and if we don't spend the budget then we're in trouble, and I felt that pressure on their behalf and I felt bad that they felt that pressure. ~ Support staff member

Another reason for the lowering enthusiasm among panel members may have been that the contributions of the panel members were not always well compensated.

There's a bit of lack of clarity about when you get paid for what. We know that we're paid for meetings, but there are some other meeting times and chairs and deputy chairs get paid extra money for some of the in-between work, but in my experience, no way does it reflect all the in-between work. ~ Panel member

At first I was thinking that's great, you know, I would like to volunteer my time but actually we should be valued if we are going to be spending five to ten hours plus in a week working on a particular project. ~ Panel member

It is important therefore to set expectations early about the amount of work the role might take and to articulate the various activities in which they can partake. Panel members should be given an overview of (i) what's expected of their role as a minimum, i.e. mandatory; (ii) what are the voluntary opportunities that exist, and (iii) when and where additional payments would be made.

To encourage more panel members to consistently participate in activities that were voluntary in the current term, it may be advisable to remunerate them for some of the additional work, e.g. attendance at community forums.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Set clear expectations about workload (panel members)

i. Clarify the expectations about the amount of time and the type of remunerated and unremunerated work that panel members would be expected to commit to the role.
ii. Make sure that the scope of work required of panel members is in line with the expectations set out before they accept the role.
iii. Introduce an hourly rate to allow recognition of additional work by panel members.

6.3 Appointment and replacement

During the interviews and focus groups, participants often talked about their experience with the appointment and replacement of panel members. More specifically, they discussed the value of continuity between terms, the possibility of imposing a limit on the number of terms served by members, and the practicalities of replacing members who stop attending meetings.

6.3.1 Continuity between terms

Panel members and support staff spoke of the value of some continuity between terms, in terms of panel membership. Those panels who did not have any members continue from the previous term felt that they would have benefited from the institutional knowledge of the previous panel members.

We didn't have any panel members that were on the previous term and that resulted in a massive knowledge gap. Essentially, everybody was fresh and we had no idea what was going on. ~ Panel member

Well with this panel of course it was a lot easier because half the panel had served before, so there were only the newer ones that we had to get to know. ~ Panel member

Participants also commented that there could be more handover from one panel to the next in terms of lessons learned.

We're not learning from the other panels, past panels and what they've done bad and how we can improve. So I don't know what they've done well, I don't know what they've done bad and I don't know whether there's an improvement. ~ Panel member

There's no handover when we leave, we take with us all our documents and all our knowledge and experience. There's so much that we could give. The transition between panels is really limited, especially if there aren't members that span those panels. ~ Panel member

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6.3.2 Limit on the number of terms

Reappointment of panel members, however, could lead to panel membership remaining largely the same from one term to the next. Study participants felt there should be a limit to the number of terms served by panel members.

I think you get them there for too long and then they get settled and they get blasé and they forget. ~ Support staff member

The council should limit the number of terms that a panel member can serve. ~ Panel member

6.3.3 Replacing members

Some panel members stopped attending meeting during the term, and respondents commented that there was no easy way to replace members who had shown a lack of interest in the panel through absenteeism.

When the panel member is not attending and there needs to be a way for asking them politely to resign. ~ Panel member

When we've lost members for whatever reason, whether they've resigned, whether they've moved, passed away, it's [been] extraordinarily difficult to replace them. ~ Support staff member

In the current term, the replacement, though possible, was difficult to implement for two main reasons. First, the terms of reference took a soft approach to non-attendance, stating that if the member failed to attend 'a significant number of meetings', the chair would have a discussion with them about expectations and performance. Second, all panel replacements (like all panel appointments) needed to be approved at the Governing Body meetings, which

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> **RECOMMENDATION 11: Make changes to the appointment process (panel members)**
>
> i. Enable the re-appointment of up to half of existing members to enhance continuity. Whether or not a panel member is re-appointed should depend in part on their good attendance and participation in the previous term.
> ii. Create a lessons-learned guide each term that passes on the knowledge between the panels.
> iii. Set a two-term or three-term limit for panel members.
> iv. Strengthen the language used in the terms of reference about non-attendance to state that any member who misses three consecutive meetings without an apology would be deemed to have abandoned their position and replaced.
> v. Simplify the process of replacing panel members, by creating a pipeline of approved candidates and/or delegating the responsibility for mid-term panel appointments.

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could cause delays.

6.4   Diversity and representation

During the discussions panel members often emphasized that the communities they identified with were not uniform and that there was a lot of diverse backgrounds within the same panels. This diversity was seen as very valuable by many participants.

One thing that helped in terms of what we got out was the fact that they had a really good representation across the rainbow communities and within that broad umbrella of rainbow there were quite a lot of differences coming through. So that breadth was actually one of the things that was the most useful. ~ Staff member

The intersectionality within the groups was really important because you were getting something that was three-dimensional, four-dimensional, and the panels did seem to have a really good nice spread. A disabled person who is young might have different needs or different thoughts than a disabled person with the same disability who is older. So you can get a better understanding of how the intersectionality [plays out]. ~ Staff member

Study participants often wanted to see the diversity of the panels enhanced further.

The rainbow panel was quite clear about needing to have a Pasifika person and a Māori person and the times when they haven't had those people they have been quite unhappy and quite vocal about it. ~ Staff member

The youth panel is really conscious, they don't have full Māori representation. They want to do better at Māori engagement. ~ Staff member

We haven't thought particularly well about the fact that you might be Rainbow and senior, or Pasifika and senior, or disabled and Chinese, we haven't thought well about intersectionality. ~ Senior staff member

To strengthen the diversity in future panels, participants felt that the diversity lens should be applied more explicitly in the future.

[During recruitment] as long as they're trying to make sure that they're selecting different kinds of people in the community, otherwise you'd end up with the same kind of perspectives and that would go against the point. ~ Panel member

Perhaps [the Diversity and Inclusion Team] could have some involvement in making sure the ads are clear enough around skillsets around representing diversity, [so we] could be quite proactive about who you want in terms of the makeup of your panel. ~ Staff member

6.4.1 Māori representation

The issue of Māori representation was raised in a number of interviews and focus groups. The current terms of reference stated that each panel, except the EPAP and PPAP, must have at least one person with lived experience of Te Ao Māori on the panel, and in practice there were more than one Māori member on most eligible panels.

Participants in the study placed high value on having members with lived experience of Te Ao Māori on the panels.

> *The Māori input in the panel is phenomenal, we're talking about people with lived experience of the Treaty, who know it intuitively.* ~ Councillor

And some respondents wanted to see better Māori representation and a more conscious application of the Māori lens across the panels.

> *In particular, we can do better around making sure there was Māori representatives across all the panels.* ~ Staff member

> *I've brought up the topic of the Treaty before, [and] it's been made clear that it's not particularly important and conversations around it have been shut down, and I feel like it's really important that that's being honoured and being considered.* ~ Panel member

Given the internal diversity of the communities the panels identified with and the limited number of panel members on each panel, it seems that the requirement to have at least one panel member with lived experience of Te Ao Māori and the accepted practice of having two or more such members is both rational and practical. However, the panels' capability to apply the Māori lens and consider the Treaty obligations during discussions need to be strengthened and promoted.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Enhance diversity and representation within the panels

  i.   Actively apply a diversity lens during recruitment in order to promote diversity within the panels. Involve the Diversity and Inclusion Team during the recruitment of the panel members.
 ii.   Raise the minimum number of members on the panel from six to eight to enable greater diversity among members.
iii.   Offer intersectional candidates, who fit the demographic profile of two or more panels, a choice as to which panel to serve on.
 iv.   Encourage and support panel members to move between panels in different terms to enhance diversity and cross-over.
  v.   Demonstrate the importance of Te Ao Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi by providing more emphasis on the Treaty throughout the term as well as support and guidance during orientation.

7.0 Panel functions

In this chapter, we consider the general issues to do with how the panels functioned, such as the role of advocacy, cross-panel work, support infrastructure, as well as matters specific to particular panels.

7.1 Advocacy and panel-led initiatives

Many panel members joined the panels with a strong motivation to make a tangible difference and a meaningful contribution to Auckland. However, the advisory role is passive and there was often no direct line of sight for panel members from advice provided to impacts on policy, strategies and plans. Although many panel members were satisfied with their advisory role, some felt they were not able to have as much impact as they wanted.

I think a lot of members came in wanting to do so much more, and therefore whatever we do achieve is seen as somewhat of a disappointment, just as a result of not being able to do more with our scope. ~ Panel member

I know that we've been consulted on a lot of things, but it feels like our words are fading into dust. ~ Panel member

Advocacy was not a core part of the panels' role. The terms of reference stated that one of the areas in which the panels would provide advice to the Governing Body and council staff was "any matter of particular interest or concern to diverse communities", which left the door open for panel advocacy.

7.1.1 Range of views on advocacy

In the context of panel work, advocacy occurred when the panels collaborated with the liaison councillor or lead and deputy lead officers to actively promote a strategic issue of importance to their communities through various council channels.

There was a range of views among panel stakeholders about the issue. Some respondents saw advocacy as central to panel functioning:

Advocacy on behalf of their community is a key role. ~ Councillor

We do play an advocacy role. We cannot not play an advocacy role. ~ Panel member

It seemed to me that part of the purpose of those panels sometimes is purely an advocacy one. ~ Staff member

Other participants accepted that the panels could engage in advocacy but within limits.

They are there to advise, they're clear that that is their role. Of course they do try to push the boundaries, which is fine. I wouldn't expect them to do anything else and when I say push the boundaries, sometimes they move more into the advocacy role rather than the advisory role. ~ Support staff member

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As long as their issues align with the council's existing agendas and priorities, they can exercise a level of advocacy. ~ Support staff member

I do understand the frustrations of the panels sometimes wanting to be a bit more on the advocacy scale and [some panels] did it very successfully and skilfully. ~ Senior staff member

A small minority, however, believed that there was no place for advocacy in panel activities:

There is no room for advocacy when you are providing advice. Advocacy is a political standpoint and it's not us. We apply to come into this to be able to provide internal advice on what the council does. ~ Panel member

Despite this variety of views, the fact remained that being on the advisory panel provided the panels with opportunities to engage with and understand how the council works and to see where advocacy on particular matters may be effective. In the current term, it was up to the individual panels to determine how much involvement in advocacy was appropriate and to provide volunteer time to pursue those activities. Thus, the panels either undertook initiatives at some personal expense, or did not have an initiative to take forward because there was lack of clarity around process and available support. (One exception to this were the co-hosted meetings with the CDS committee that took place in 2019; this mechanism was put in place as an opportunity for the panels to advocate for their key issues).

So, it's really hard to gauge what changes you're actually able to make, but I think, yes, advocacy is a huge opportunity that maybe not many people of the panel clearly understood. ~ Panel member

7.1.2 Supporting panel initiative

Because of this variability in the way advocacy was approached and lack of clarity around expectations, some study participants talked about giving the panels a mechanism to develop an initiative and advocate for it during their term.

I'd like to see that within the three years they can set a goal and achieve it. ~ Councillor

I would try and get each panel to focus on one or two things and then push them essentially, advocate for them, seek to see them implemented through an annual plan or budgetary process. ~ Senior staff member

What would be the opportunity to have some sort of project budget for the panel, so when we want to direct our resource into engaging with anything, we have a predetermined budget already? ~ Panel member

Although the idea of providing a mechanism for the panels to select and take forward one or two major initiatives during their term is attractive, it is important to underscore the danger of scope creep, where the panels' functions and responsibilities are extended far beyond the original scope of providing advice based on their lived experience. Asking the panels to undertake such an initiative must be carefully balanced against other panel activities, and a

lot of thought needs to be given to the nature of appropriate projects (e.g. it should be within the scope of Auckland Plan 2050) as well as the amount of resource it would require.

In addition, it would be advisable to find projects that can be embedded within the council's existing work programmes, so the relevant departments within the council can take the lead on undertaking and delivering the projects with the panels' support.

One way this idea could be implemented in practice is as follows. During the first year of the term, as panel members get familiar with their new role and come together as a group, they start thinking about what issues are important to them and how these issues fit in with the council's work (e.g. what work is already in progress, and/or which department/unit would be a natural partner for delivering the work). In collaboration with their liaison councillors, support officers and the relevant departments, the panels choose an issue of an appropriate nature and scope around the beginning of the second year. During the second year, they collect and solicit information pertaining to their chosen topic and work towards presenting the idea at their co-hosted meeting with the CDS committee in order to start a conversation about what the Governing Body can do in response. It would be important to fit this project in with the relevant departments' financial planning. In the last 12 to 18 months of their term, panel members support the council department to work on the project and achieve the goal.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Clarify the role of advocacy and support the panels to advocate on behalf of their communities

   i.   Clarify the role of advocacy in panel functioning
   ii.   Consider offering panel members means to choose, shape and support a project they feel passionate about in collaboration with the relevant council department.
   iii.   Consider time and resource implications of this change: panel members should be remunerated for their time working on the project.

7.2   Cross-panel work

One strong theme that came through during the interviews is that that there was a lot of support for bringing panels together, either through chairs' meetings, cross panel and integrated panel sessions.

> *When we find common things that we can share with the other groups then that's terrific because it makes the core a lot stronger*. ~ Panel member

> *I like the [integrated panel sessions], [they] remind me just how much we have in common.* ~ Panel member

Some participants expressed enthusiasm for a formal mechanism to work together more closely.

I can't think of one issue in which there is no interconnectedness amongst the panels. So why do you have to consult each and every one of us separately on an issue when in fact you should pull people into the room and run it by them, all in one. Bring an issue to a [cross-panel] who are made up of a composite of all the other panels, you might get a much more meaningful document out of it. ~ Panel member

Panel members also expressed a desire to have more opportunities to interact informally with other panel members.

We don't really get an opportunity to talk amongst each other and really understand what other panels are doing, what their priority areas are. ~ Panel member

However, there was also concern among some participants about placing further demands on panel members' time.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Encourage inter-panel interactions and collaborations

i. Look for more opportunities to bring panel members together, both in formal and informal capacities.
ii. Consider establishing cross-panel working groups on specific issues but be mindful of purpose, workload, and appropriate remuneration.

7.3   Support infrastructure

It has been noted by a number of panel members and support staff that panel operations rely mainly on the mainstream methods of communication: paper printouts, email communications, and face-to-face meetings. Participants offered thoughts as well as specific suggestions for improvements in the following areas:

- Technology use during meetings for real-time feedback.

    We could be using technology in the meetings more to get agreement or to share ideas. ~ Support staff member

    It's very easy for us to type [our ideas] in, efficiently and effectively, while still being able to listen and have some engagement. ~ Panel member

- Online forums to enable discussions within the panels, as well as between the panels and council staff.

    If you wanted to work together on a plan you could come together online and discuss and keep them up to date with what we do. You can drop in and out of these conversations when you want. ~ Staff member

    I think they need an online collaboration space so they can work together on documents or submissions, a space where they can chat freely and talk about issues.

~ Support staff member

We don't have a single place, so we've created our own Facebook page where we all talk to each other. ~ Panel member

- Use paper and printed materials.

  There's so much technology that we have available to use and we use paper every time. ~ Panel member

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RECOMMENDATION 15: Provide technology solutions to enhance communication

   i.   Provide technology solutions to enhance communications between the council and panel members and to reduce paper usage.

7.4   The Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel

The Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel (EPAP) was one of the first panels to be created: Section 86 of the Local Government (Auckland Transitions Provisions) Act 2010 stated that the Mayor of Auckland would establish an ethnic people's panel in order to hear the views of the ethnic communities. At the end of that term the legislative mandate for the panel ceased to exist, but under Section 9 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 the Mayor could re-establish the advisory panels. Both Mayor Len Brown and Mayor Phil Goff saw value in continuing with the panels, and the EPAP is now in the third term of operation.

With more than 180 ethnicities living in the region, Auckland is a super-diverse city. It is important that the Governing Body engage meaningfully with its diverse ethnic communities, and the EPAP has the potential to contribute to this. In the current term, the EPAP had several successes, including running a number of well-attended events/open meeting and launching the [Future of Auckland](#) microsite, a digital platform for connecting with communities.

However, the diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of Aucklanders posed a challenge to the idea that a single panel of six to 10 people can capture the views of the multitude of separate ethnic sub-cultures of Auckland. Despite the successes the EPAP had this term and the commitment of the panel to working together, panel members (and other stakeholders) who participated in the present study voiced a number of conceptual and practical difficulties associated with this panel. The common issues raised were as follows:

- More than any other panel, the EPAP was a small group of people asked to advise on the issues of a large number of different communities, which made it difficult for the panel to identify strategic issues, common to everyone.

  I think fundamentally the challenge for the ethnic panel is function, because we are not together, we are not a collective voice of nobody. The seniors, youth, disability,

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rainbow panels, they have a base of who they are. We are a group of different ethnic groups and then we are not [representatives] anyway. ~ Panel member

I think the breadth of that panel is too wide, which is why they're struggling, because we're asking 10 people to represent 100 ethnicities, that doesn't work. ~ Staff member

- Some participants also commented that the term 'ethnic' encompassed broad categories of peoples.

  So say they have Dalmatians who have been here for a 150 years, integral part of this society, and they are still ethnic. So … the very definition that the Auckland Council has on its website of ethnic communities is problematical and the council needs to address that. ~ Panel member

  We've lumped new migrants and people who have been here for five generations together in the same category as the ethnic community and the problem is that it's a very westernised European model that has described some people as an ethnic community rather than just as Aucklanders. ~ Staff member

- Finally, there was an expectation that the EPAP would be at least partially about newcomers to New Zealand. Indeed, in response to the MartinJenkins recommendation that the EPAP be "reconfigured to focus on the new migrants, as a group with high needs", the Governing Body recommended that the panels should continue as they were "to address cross-cutting issues across migrants, refugees, international students and asylum seekers". This did not seem to have happened as intended.

  In fact they first said this panel will look after refugees too, so I was very excited to join because it's my main interest. [However] there are no such [issues] coming to the table. If they want to help migrants and refugee communities, then its more concrete because we have common issues there. ~ Panel member

As mentioned above, the MartinJenkins review of the 2013-2016 demographic advisory panels also identified difficulties with the set-up of the EPAP. In particular, they concluded that "as currently constituted, the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel is not conceptually fit for purpose. It encompasses too broad a population to be reasonably expected to provide coherent and strategic coverage of relevant perspectives" (p. 46, MartinJenkins, 2016).

Articulating a specific method of engaging with ethnic communities through the panel model in a way that would take into account the growing diversity of Auckland, the strategic needs of the council at present time as well as the views of relevant external stakeholders is beyond the scope of this review. However, the current configuration of the EPAP needs revisiting, and it may also be advisable to increase ethnic representation across all panels.

> **RECOMMENDATION 16: Revisit the set-up of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel**
>
> i.   Revisit the remit and purpose of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel before the new panel is set up and recruited. For example, the recruitment onto the panel could be skills-based (e.g. experience-based ability to consider the views of newcomers and migrants)
> ii. Reflect the growing diversity of Auckland in the ethnic compositions of all demographic advisory panels.

7.5   The Youth Advisory Panel

The Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) was first established during the first term of the panels' operation in 2012. The set-up of the YAP differs from the set-up of the other panels. Unlike the other panels which had between six and 10 members each, the YAP had 21 members, selected from each of the local board areas. In addition, in accordance with the Auckland Council Fees Framework and Expenses Policy for Appointed Members (2017), the members of the YAP were remunerated at a rate lower than other panellists.

The 2013 terms of reference specified that the panels would provide advice both to the Governing Body and local boards. As many local boards (although not all) already had Youth Local Boards established, in the second term (2013-2016) the YAP was formed by a varied approach, drawing heavily on the local boards' existing mechanisms. Members of the YAP were either elected within their local board areas or appointed by their local boards.

Though the formal connection of the YAP to local boards was removed for the current term, the local boards remained an important stakeholder and they had a keen interest in the way that new YAP members would be recruited. Their key concern was that the recruitment methodology be equitable. In response to this expectation, Democracy Services proposed a youth-driven approach, where Youth Citizens' Jury would be assembled to design the process of recruitment to the panel.

In the beginning of 2017, a Citizens' Jury was held, where 100 young people randomly selected from across Auckland collaborated to design the process of how to select the YAP members. This process was deemed to be equitable for the young people.

When discussing what worked well and not as well in the functioning and set-up of the YAP, participants spoke about a variety of things that can be summarised into three themes: membership, size and remuneration. It was clear that the quality of panel members was one of the strengths of the panel, whereas its size and payment structure drew more variable responses.

Participants commented on what panel members brought to the YAP:

> *Great discussion, great leadership formation, they support one another, they're full of ideas.* ~ Councillor

And the youth, my goodness! There is a heck of a lot of brainpower in that room. ~ Staff member

7.5.1 Size

The size of the YAP was a subject of discussion during the interviews and focus groups. In particular, some participants pointed out that there were some advantages to having many panel members. For example, as YAP members could reach an age where they would be excluded from the youth category or they could leave Auckland to continue with their education, having a relatively large number of panellists could help maintain continuity in membership during the term. In addition, having 21 members allowed the panel to maintain a good geographic spread.

However, other participants pointed out a number of drawbacks to this set up, as follows:

- The one-member-per-local-board structure unintentionally created expectations of representing local board areas. The YAP panel members spoke about struggling to understand their role within the council and the nature of their relationships to their local board areas.

    I think I'm still almost confused as to what role we play because we start off as being representatives and that changed to be members, so are we representing, am I representing my local board or am I someone from that local board representing my own young person opinions? ~ Panel member

    So I honestly still don't understand which part we're meant to be [representing local boards or talking about our own opinions] ~ Panel member

    The geographical nameplates were upsetting. We are not asking these young people to represent their geographical area. ~ Councillor

- The fact that the YAP set-up was different signified that it could be substantively different from the other panels and therefore created confusion about the panel's purpose and role.

- Progressing on the work programme could be a challenge because it required reaching an agreement between 21 members. For this reason, the role of the chair was relatively more complex in this panel.

    Having 21 members around the table makes it extremely challenging for them to move as a team, to move forward. ~ Support staff member

- Managing expectations, developing common purpose and vision require constant communication about the scope of influence, the role of the panels and the nature of the work programme. Creating this shared understanding as well as managing expectation around individual contribution could be a challenge for support staff working with 21 members.

I think in a group that size, some people don't contribute whether they are just naturally a quiet person or not, or they're able to just fade into the background. ~ Support staff

I'm not convinced of the usefulness of having 21 and it seems when they get broken into smaller groups they actually do some brainstorming and then feedback. ~ *Support staff*

- The size of the YAP also presented challenges when it came to providing appropriate care and attention to each individual panel member. Due to the panellists' young age, there was a duty of care on the people who supported the panel.

    I think we've got a slightly different role to play with the Youth Panel which is that role of educator and caretaker and guidance and so expecting them to function as a group of twenty one people with little experience to work as a Panel that can coherently provide advice I think is unrealistic and we probably let them down by being, not putting enough care and attention for them, to many of them anyway. ~ Support staff member

One way to make the size of the panel more manageable and still retain some geographic spread among panellists is to reduce the number to 13, the number of electoral wards in Auckland. It would be important to clarify to new panellists why their membership is associated with wards (to maintain geographic spread) and emphasise that they are not ward representatives. This approach would ease the transition to a smaller number of panellists; in addition, the slightly higher number of the YAP members in comparison to other panels would address the relatively high turnover rate in the YAP membership and maintain continuity throughout the term.

7.5.2 Remuneration

One other strong theme with regard to what did not work well in the set-up of the YAP was remuneration. In accordance with the Auckland Council Fees Framework and Expenses Policy for Appointed Members (2017), unlike other panel members who were remunerated at Level 3, the YAP members were remunerated at Level 4, because (i) participation was considered to be partly a learning experience for the members; (ii) the members were considered to be less skilled and (iii) there was expected to be less public interest in their work. Thus, while regular members of other panels received $250 per meeting, a regular member of the YAP received $173 per meeting, or about 30% less (based on 5.5 hours per meeting including preparation time).

In line with the fact that participation would be a learning experience for the members, the YAP members were actively connected with opportunities for them to develop professionally during this term.

So one thing the YAP has done is they've been able to connect us with other groups and other organisations. ~ Panel member

However, panel members emphasised the negative effects of being remunerated at a lower rate.

We are treated differently to the other demographic advisory panels and, ultimately, I believe that's down to our age and the age of some of our younger members. I guess the best way to describe it is we're treated with kid gloves and we're in some areas heavily guided in which direction to take and that doesn't necessarily get a youth voice out. ~ Panel member

They also seem to forget that the panel members are ageing as the years go on. So most of us are university students by this stage and we're quite prepared to be held with a mature audience and that we are able to respond in turn with the maturity that they even would sometimes seem quite surprised if we asked questions because they didn't expect us to have an opinion. ~ Panel member

We are paid significantly less than all of the other demographic advisory panels and that is a discrepancy that ultimately comes down to ageism and undervaluing younger people. ~ Panel member

Raising the remuneration rate for the YAP, while simultaneously reducing its size to 13 would result in a financial net gain. Currently, the cost to the council for one meeting of 21 YAP members is $37,969. With 13 members and Level 3 remuneration, the cost would be $35,300.

RECOMMENDATION 17: Consider changes to the set-up of the Youth Advisory Panel

   i.   Reduce the number of panel members from 21 (local-board based) to 13 (ward based). This would maintain the historic geographic spread of the panel and help the panel maintain continuity during the term in spite of relatively high turnover.

   ii.   Clarify and emphasise the fact that the panellists are not ward representatives.

   iii.   Increase remuneration levels to that of the other panels*.*

8.0 Summary of recommendations for improvement

RECOMMENDATION 1: Strengthen the relationship with the Governing Body

i. Establish a panels' forum with the Mayor: a six-monthly meeting with panel representatives to provide an update to the Mayor, raise major issues, and participate in a Q&A. Consider holding a nomination process within the panels to choose a representative for each forum meeting.
ii. Provide orientation to liaison councillors about the expectations for the role (role at meetings, attendance, being an advocate).
iii. Clarify the mechanisms that other councillors have to engage with the panels (e.g. that they can be invited to or ask to attend panel meetings).
iv. Schedule at least three joint Panels/Governing Body/ELT meetings each term.
v. Continue to identify other opportunities for councillors to engage with the panels.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Alter the expectations about the community forums

i. Retain the community engagement budget.
ii. Remove the expectation that the panels would deliver community engagement.
iii. Provide staff support dedicated to organising community engagement activities, with panels having a less operational role.
iv. Find synergies with engagement that the council is doing themselves, but ensure that panel members are able to take a lead role in confirming what engagement they get involved with.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Provide good practice guidance and more support for online engagement with communities

i. Work with the panels to identify the most appropriate and sustainable ways of communicating and engaging with their community online.
ii. Provide operational support to implement and maintain digital engagement channels. This could be done by existing or additional panel support staff.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Clarify the panels' role in connecting the council with communities

i. Clarify the role the panels play in connecting the council to their communities.
ii. Communicate these expectations to the panels and council staff.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Strengthen the mechanisms for closing the loop

i. Require council staff who receive advice from the panels to send a document outlining key messages back to the panel.
ii. Adopt an action tracker template for all panels, incorporate feedback detail provided by council staff.
iii. Strengthen ongoing communications between consulting staff and the panels around projects.

iv.   Strengthen the report template guidance regarding the panels' input and include an optional 'demographic advisory panels' heading where appropriate.

v.   Encourage staff to invite panel chairs to present alongside them at committee meetings.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Consolidate panel-related resources on Kotahi (the council intranet)

i.   Consolidate all the information about the panels onto a single page on Kotahi to make it easy for staff to access information about the panels and make it easy for the support staff to signpost interested people to the right place.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Set clear expectations about workload (support staff)

i.   Revise the expectation of time commitment for lead and deputy lead officers from one day per month to at least two days per month.

ii.   Set up a formal arrangement where managers agree the amount of time that staff are released from their other roles to support their work with the panels.

iii. Clarify the respective responsibilities between support staff.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Provide orientation and support (support staff)

i.   Hold an induction workshop for lead and deputy lead officers.

ii.   Consider arranging peer-support mechanisms for the support staff.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Provide training and orientation (panel members)

i.   Provide a training program for panel members, including topics such as governance, policy making, and conflicts of interest, and a separate training module for chairs.

ii.   Provide time for active whakawhanaungatanga and team-building with fellow panel members and with support staff.

iii. Allow panel members to get familiar with each other before selecting a chair. The council can appoint an interim chair and deputy chair for the initial time period or offer an option for the liaison councillor to facilitation the discussions in the interim.

iv.   Provide opportunities for upskilling. Have regular check-in conversations with panel members about the way panel membership is going for them.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Set clear expectations about workload (panel members)

i.   Clarify the expectations about the amount of time and the type of remunerated and unremunerated work that panel members would be expected to commit to the role.

ii.   Make sure that the scope of work required of panel members is in line with the expectations set out before they accept the role.

iii. Introduce an hourly rate to allow recognition of additional work by panel members.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Make changes to the appointment process (panel members)

i. Enable the re-appointment of up to half of existing members to enhance continuity. Whether or not a panel member is re-appointed should depend in part on their good attendance and participation in the previous term.

ii. Create a lessons-learned guide each term that passes on the knowledge between the panels.

iii. Set a two-term or three-term limit for panel members.

iv. Strengthen the language used in the terms of reference about non-attendance to state that any member who misses three consecutive meetings without an apology would be deemed to have abandoned their position and replaced.

v. Simplify the process of replacing panel members, by creating a pipeline of approved candidates and/or delegating the responsibility for mid-term panel appointments.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Enhance diversity and representation within the panels

i. Actively apply a diversity lens during recruitment in order to promote diversity within the panels. Involve the Diversity and Inclusion Team during the recruitment of the panel members.

ii. Raise the minimum number of members on the panel from six to eight to enable greater diversity among members.

iii. Offer intersectional candidates, who fit the demographic profile of two or more panels, a choice as to which panel to serve on.

iv. Encourage and support panel members to move between panels in different terms to enhance diversity and cross-over.

v. Demonstrate the importance of Te Ao Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi by providing more emphasis on the Treaty throughout the term as well as support and guidance during orientation.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Clarify the role of advocacy and support the panels to advocate on behalf of their communities

i. Clarify the role of advocacy in panel functioning

ii. Consider offering panel members means to choose, shape and support a project they feel passionate about in collaboration with the relevant council department.

iii. Consider time and resource implications of this change: panel members should be remunerated for their time working on the project.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Encourage inter-panel interactions and collaborations

i. Look for more opportunities to bring panel members together, both in formal and informal capacities.

ii. Consider establishing cross-panel working groups on specific issues but be mindful of purpose, workload, and appropriate remuneration.

RECOMMENDATION 15: Provide technology solutions to enhance communication

i. Provide technology solutions to enhance communications between the council and panel members and to reduce paper usage.

RECOMMENDATION 16: Revisit the set-up of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel

   i.   Revisit the remit and purpose of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel before the new panel is set up and recruited. For example, the recruitment onto the panel could be skills-based (e.g. experience-based ability to consider the views of newcomers and migrants)
   ii. Reflect the growing diversity of Auckland in the ethnic compositions of all demographic advisory panels.

RECOMMENDATION 17: Consider changes to the set-up of the Youth Advisory Panel

   i.   Reduce the number of panel members from 21 (local-board based) to 13 (ward based). This would maintain the historic geographic spread of the panel and help the panel maintain continuity during the term in spite of relatively high turnover.
   ii.   Clarify and emphasise the fact that the panellists are not ward representatives.
   iii. Increase remuneration levels to that of other panels.

9.0 Concluding remarks

This report highlights how Auckland Council's demographic advisory panels play an important role in the council's journey of ensuring that diversity and inclusion are integrated into the decision-making process. The panels reflect the voices of some of Auckland's diverse communities and add value to the council's engagements with Aucklanders. They are willing to engage authentically with council staff and elected members to enable positive change.

Our review found that while the panel model has matured in its set-up and function over the last three terms, there remains room for improvement and the platform could be strengthened further. The recommendations in this report cover a range of areas, including connections with the Governing Body, engagement with communities, and panel member remuneration and workload. The report will be presented to the Auckland Council's Governing Body in September 2019.

10.0 List of acronyms

CDS	Community Development and Safety committee
DAP	Disability Advisory Panel
ECC	Environment and Community committee
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
EPAP	Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel
LTP	Long-term Plan
PPAP	Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel
RCAP	Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel
RIMU	Research and Evaluation Unit
SAP	Seniors Advisory Panel
YAP	Youth Advisory Panel

11.0 References

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12.0 Appendix

Selection Criteria for Demographic Advisory Panels

2016-2019 term of Auckland Council

Demographic advisory panels are one of council's engagement channels with diverse communities and provide advice to the governing body and council staff.

The council will appoint members of the following advisory panels:

- Disability Advisory Panel
- Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel
- Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel
- Seniors Advisory Panel
- Two Māori people for the Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel.

The council will appoint eight people in each panel on the basis of

- lived experience and sound understanding of a diverse Auckland community or communities relevant to the Advisory Panel being applied for
- a good understanding of Te Tiriti O Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi
- the ability to think strategically and critically
- the ability to understand and interpret policy, project plans and strategy plans
- the ability and confidence to offer high-level policy and strategic advice
- an excellent command of written and verbal English or New Zealand sign language
- commitment to scheduled panel meetings and workshops (weekday day and/or evenings).
- commitment to a three year term, being April 2017 to September 2019.

In addition, the following selection criteria are required for applicants for each panel:

- Members of the Seniors Advisory Panel must be 65 years of age or older
- Members of the Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel must be of Pacific descent
- Members of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel must be of ethnic descent
- Members of the Disability Advisory Panel must have a disability or direct experience of living with disability.

Applicants must be aged over 18.

Each applicant must be a New Zealand citizen or a New Zealand permanent resident and reside in Auckland.

The Seniors Advisory Panel and Disability Advisory Panel will respectively have at least one member with lived experience in Te Ao Māori and knowledge of the contemporary issues facing Māori communities for the Panel.

Members will be appointed based on the above selection criteria, and will not be appointed on their representation of any particular community organisations or groups.

Auckland Council's elected members, members of the Independent *Māori* Statutory Board or council family staff are not eligible to be members of the panels.