

An Evaluation of the Waiheke Governance Pilot: Progress after the first 18 months

Rachael Butler and Jesse Allpress

September 2019

Technical Report 2019/020



An evaluation of the Waiheke governance pilot: Progress after the first 18 months

September 2019

Technical Report 2019/020

Rachael Butler
Dr Jesse Allpress
Research and Evaluation Unit, RIMU

Auckland Council
Technical Report 2019/020

ISSN 2230-4525 (Print)
ISSN 2230-4533 (Online)

ISBN 978-0-9951278-6-9 (Print)
ISBN 978-0-9951278-7-6 (PDF)

This report has been peer reviewed by the Peer Review Panel.
Review completed on 3 September 2019 Reviewed by one reviewer
Approved for Auckland Council publication by: Name: Matt Hope Position: Acting Manager, Research and Evaluation (RIMU)
Name: Phil Wilson Position: Governance Director
Date: 3 September 2019

Recommended citation

Butler, R and J Allpress (2019). An evaluation of the Waiheke governance pilot: progress after the first 18 months. Auckland Council technical report, TR2019/020

© 2019 Auckland Council

Auckland Council disclaims any liability whatsoever in connection with any action taken in reliance of this document for any error, deficiency, flaw or omission contained in it.

This document is licensed for re-use under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

In summary, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the material, as long as you attribute it to the Auckland Council and abide by the other licence terms.



Executive summary

In late 2017, a three-year Auckland Council pilot programme was established to trial greater devolvement of decision-making to the Waiheke Local Board.

In order to track changes and impacts over time, researchers from Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) conducted a series of interviews both at the start of the pilot (the baseline) as well as in June 2019, 18 months on.

This report documents the progress of the pilot at its halfway point, from the perspective of Waiheke Local Board members and Auckland Council and Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) staff.

The most important findings are described below.

Council staff have stepped up

Findings from this stage reveal that consistent staffing and a dedicated point of contact for Waiheke issues within some departments have enabled more productive interactions; further, staff reported involving the board more collaboratively at earlier stages in projects, and projects benefitting from this. There was also evidence of a less siloed approach across council departments, with several examples of various stakeholders working together to address Waiheke issues.

The board environment and working relationships have improved

The baseline interviews revealed an unproductive environment prior to the pilot, with the board expressing dissatisfaction with the performance of council staff, and staff reluctant to engage with the board due to sometimes hostile interactions with board members. Eighteen months on, this has improved markedly.

The pilot, along with other organisational changes, has resulted in an improved local board environment for staff, an increased willingness of staff to engage with the board, and improved working relationships between the board and staff.

There's no doubt there's been really significant change in the way that our staff are received ... I actually think the degree of willingness to work on Waiheke has increased.
(Staff member)

People are coming now, listening, they're not trying to impose a regional [approach] unless they have excellent reasons for doing so... But in the general run of things the starting position of people's attitudes and mind-set is 'how do we accommodate the Waiheke scenario'. That makes a massive difference. (LB member)

Board influence has increased

The interviews at the start of the pilot highlighted the board's frustration with several issues, namely:

- their limited level of control, power and influence, particularly over how ratepayer money was spent on the island
- the prioritisation and design of transport projects
- planning and development on the island
- the impacts of tourism.

Recent interviews found that board members felt that they have greater control over the issues affecting Waiheke, although no board members were yet fully satisfied with the situation. Notable developments, resulting in the local board having more influence, included the prioritisation of Auckland Transport (AT), Community Facilities, and Customer and Community Services spending on the island, developments at Matiatia ferry terminal, and input into the Waste Services procurement plan.

Improved collaboration on transport issues

Transport issues and the relationship with AT since amalgamation were previously highlighted by the local board as a key frustration.

Findings from this stage of the evaluation indicate that the working relationship between the board and AT has improved dramatically and can be considered a key success of the pilot to date. This was evident via more constructive dialogue, less animosity between stakeholders, and increased engagement between senior figures.

I've told the mayor and Governing Body that Auckland Transport's made more progress with the governance pilot than any other component of council... On the ground I think the way they're working is amazing. (LB member)

Other reported developments in relation to AT included:

- the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AT and Waiheke Local Board (signed in May 2019)
- work underway to create a new Waiheke Operations Manager role within AT
- the development of a 10-year transport plan for Waiheke
- the establishment of a Waiheke Transport Forum.

Key facilitators of these changes included the involvement of AT's senior leadership in bridging relations, and the flexibility to trial different approaches offered by the pilot programme.

Progress on long-standing issues

The baseline evaluation identified a number of individual projects or issues that the board considered a priority or were seen to be long-standing matters on Waiheke requiring resolution. Findings from this stage indicate that some had been resolved, while others were nearing completion.

Facilitators of progress within the overall pilot

The recent wave of interviews identified a number of factors which have facilitated the pilot's progress to date.

Programme Manager role

The dedicated Programme Manager position, which was set up to lead the implementation of the pilot project and to motivate and coordinate input from across various parts of the council group, played a key role. The seniority of the position was seen as fundamental to progress. The attributes of the person employed in the role at the time of the research were viewed as a key strength of the pilot, and included his long-standing connection with Waiheke, knowledge of council structures and processes, and strong relationship-building skills.

A lever for change

The pilot has given Auckland Council staff permission to step back and do things differently, including evaluating current practices and trialling new ways of working. For some, it has been used as a lever for change.

Because I was able to say we don't have to do this for everyone else because Waiheke is special, they do have permission to do this differently, that enabled the freedom for senior managers to test the waters and to have that safety net that they could go it's the pilot, it's the pilot, we're doing this because of the pilot. (Staff member)

Other facilitators of progress included **mandates from senior management** within council and **staff willingness** to engage in the pilot.

Challenges and ongoing frustrations

While there was strong consensus that positive outcomes were emerging as a result of the pilot, it has not been without its challenges.

Ownership by staff

Interviewees spoke about the need to remind key stakeholders of the existence and value of the pilot, including the Governing Body decision to endorse it. Where resistance from other council staff was experienced, this was attributed to a fear of change, concern about potential workload implications and a belief that the pilot posed a threat to their position.

Complexity of issues

It was recognised by both staff and board members that many of the issues the pilot is seeking to address are entrenched and complex. This, coupled with the (sometimes) convoluted nature of council structures and processes, means that a quick resolution is often not feasible. While recognising the influence of external factors on delays to some projects, board members expressed frustration in relation to what had been achieved to date. They stated a desire for the pilot to focus on governance and legislative issues, and a need to clarify opportunities and key priorities for the remainder of the programme.

... we should be going 'okay by the next period these are the things that need doing'. I think it's [still] vague, there's a vagueness about securing more governance responsibilities, because that's what this is about. It's about governance responsibility for the local board. (LB member)

Staff resourcing concerns

A small number of staff spoke about a lack of resourcing to support the work associated with the pilot, and its impact on workloads, although these were not viewed as insurmountable barriers by others.

Scope of Programme Manager role

There were differences in opinion regarding the role and function of the Programme Manager. The overlap between the Programme Manager role and the responsibilities of Local Board Services support staff was also discussed. While this had been navigated successfully within this pilot, it may pose a risk for other boards, should the programme be rolled out more widely.

Slow progress on devolvement of decision-making

The lack of changes to allocations or delegations to the board was highlighted. With the exception of the delegation of decision-making over Matiatia, there were no other formal developments reported within this area, although there has been an increase in the decision-making of the local board in some matters, such as waste management.

Key risks

While the evaluation has documented significant progress, there are a number of risks to the pilot at its halfway point, including:

- *a change in key personnel*: this may negatively impact the relationships that have been established within the first 18 months of the pilot
- *disagreement over the focus of the pilot*: aspirations for the pilot have changed and a divergence in staff and board members' views may decrease its effectiveness
- *changes to the Programme Manager role*: the additional Operations Manager responsibilities may lessen the ability of the Programme Manager to respond to non-operational matters
- *AT Operations Manager*: this new position was being developed at the time of writing; significant delays to its inception may jeopardise the progress made in relation to the AT-local board relationship.

Recommendations

We recommend that the following is considered as the pilot progresses:

1. Re-establish the importance and direction of the pilot early in the new electoral term.
2. Re-establish pilot objectives and assign roles to achieve these.
3. Celebrate and communicate progress to date.
4. Investigate additional governance, managerial and staff delegations.
5. Consider mechanisms for central government and other advocacy.
6. Consider how to bring on board departments that have been reluctant to engage.
7. Investigate how to refine and improve the Auckland Council Operations Manager role for Waiheke.

This report concludes with an outline of some of the key implications when considering the pilot's application to other local boards; these will be developed further at the end of the pilot.

Table of contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Background	2
2.1	Waiheke Local Board pilot	2
2.2	Waiheke Island	2
2.3	Governance context.....	3
2.4	This evaluation report	4
3.0	Key impacts of the pilot so far	6
3.1	The board environment and relationships have improved	6
3.2	Board influence.....	9
3.3	A less siloed approach.....	13
3.4	Progress on long-standing issues	14
3.5	Increased delivery of council services by local providers	14
4.0	Case studies	16
4.1	AT Relationship	16
4.2	Matiatia	20
4.3	Waste services contract.....	23
5.0	Facilitators of progress.....	27
5.1	Dedicated Programme Manager	27
5.2	The pilot as leverage for trying things differently	28
5.3	Senior management support.....	29
5.4	An openness to change	30
6.0	Challenges for the pilot	31
6.1	Staff resistance and/or lack of buy-in	31
6.2	Resourcing to support the pilot	32
6.3	It takes time	32
6.4	Ongoing frustration for the board	33
6.5	Ongoing frustration for some staff.....	35
6.6	Delegations/allocations of decision-making.....	36
6.7	The role of the Programme Manager	36
7.0	Key risks and recommendations	39
7.1	Key risks.....	39
7.2	Recommendations.....	40
7.3	Considerations for other local boards.....	43

1.0 Introduction

The 2010 Auckland governance reforms brought about significant change for local government in Auckland. The primary intent of these reforms was to provide stronger regional decision-making alongside greater community engagement and decision-making at the local level.¹ The resulting governance model for Auckland created a shared system of local government, with regional consistency over regulatory and planning decision-making allocated to the governing body, and decision-making over local activities being allocated to 21 local boards.

In 2016, Auckland Council commissioned an external review of its governance framework.² The review investigated the extent to which the implementation of the governance model has enabled Auckland Council to meet the aim of the 2010 reforms. In 2017, a political working party and council staff worked through the review's recommendations, and in September 2017 Auckland Council's Governing Body endorsed 37 recommendations.³

Many of the recommendations related to further empowering local boards to fulfil their role as local place shapers and representatives of the interests of their communities.

In particular, one resolution established a Waiheke Local Board pilot project ('the pilot'), which aims to trial greater devolvement of decision-making to the local board, and to test ways of resolving a number of long-standing issues on the island. The pilot formally commenced in late 2017 and is scheduled to run for three years. It is largely governed by the local board, with additional oversight and sponsorship provided by the Auckland Council Governance Director.

The pilot is being evaluated by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), in order to track impacts over the three-year period, to document what is working well, and to identify areas for improvement. The evaluation findings will be used to inform the development of the pilot as it progresses, as well as to inform decisions about whether the pilot should be continued or expanded at the end of the three years.

This report presents an overview of how the pilot is running at its halfway point, as at June 2019, from the perspective of Waiheke Local Board members and Auckland Council and Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) staff.

Changes over time are identified by comparing results from recent interviews to a baseline evaluation that was conducted at the start of the pilot. That baseline evaluation documented the aspirations and frustrations of the local board members, council and CCO staff.

A Waiheke community survey was also conducted as part of the baseline evaluation; this will be repeated at the end of the pilot.

¹ Royal Commission on Auckland Governance: <https://www.parliament.nz/resource/0000075891>

² Governance framework review final report: <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/media/9572/auckland-council-governance-review-released.pdf>

³ For minutes relating to the recommendations, see Governing Body minutes 28 September 2017 p.9 onwards: http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2017/09/GB_20170928_MIN_7818.PDF

2.0 Background

This section provides background information on the aims of the Waiheke pilot as well as an overview of Waiheke Island's social and economic context.

2.1 Waiheke Local Board pilot

The objective of the Waiheke Local Board pilot is to trial greater devolvement of decision-making to the Waiheke Local Board. The pilot is an opportunity for council staff (including CCO staff) and the local board to not only reflect on what is working well, but to identify areas for improvement, and to trial new, or modified, processes and approaches.

The project scope includes consideration of:

- potential changes to the allocation or delegation of specific decision-making
- solutions to long-standing issues
- changes to policy and planning support
- increased local board influence over funding
- improvements to compliance and enforcement, and
- relationships with council-controlled organisations.⁴

As part of the pilot, resourcing has been provided for a full-time Waiheke and Gulf Islands Programme Manager, whose role is focused on providing local operational leadership in relation to long-standing issues where previous attempts to make progress have not resulted in satisfactory outcomes. At the time of writing, the Programme Manager has been given a delegation from council's Chief Operating Officer to make decisions on agreed matters relating to operations on Waiheke Island. The additional role does not have line management responsibilities or a budget, but is intended to bolster the Programme Manager's influence on delivering operational outcomes on the island.

We document progress in relation to some of these issues in this report.

2.2 Waiheke Island

Waiheke Island is the most populated and second-largest island in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf. Located just 21.5km and 35 minutes via ferry from the Downtown Ferry Terminal in central Auckland, the island is both separate from and closely connected to the rest of Auckland.

The island has experienced significant growth in recent decades. The current residential population on the island is 9770 (as at June 2018), having grown 50 per cent over the last 22 years, from 6500 in 1996.⁵ Many of the permanent residents have strong economic ties with

⁴ For more detail on the Waiheke pilot proposal, see 'Governance Framework Review - Waiheke Local Board pilot Project':

http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2017/09/GB_20170928_AGN_7818_AT_files/GB_20170928_AGN_7818_AT_Attachment_55680_5.PDF

⁵ This level of population growth is similar to Auckland as a whole, which grew 52% in the same time period.

the rest of Auckland, with more than a quarter of employed Waiheke residents (28%) commuting regularly via ferry off the island. Fullers Ferries is currently the main provider of passenger ferry services to and from the island.

Matiatia ferry terminal, on the western end of the island, is the main passenger transport gateway for travel on and off the island. Increasing use of this gateway by residents, bus services, taxis, tour operators, and businesses has resulted in parking and space pressures.

The island is home to a number of vineyards, olive oil producers, and a thriving hospitality industry. The island is a popular tourist destination, for example with Lonely Planet rating the island as the fifth best region to visit in its world Best In Travel 2016 publication. Many local businesses rely on seasonal workers during peak periods.

2.2.1 A popular tourist destination

In addition to an increasing permanent residential population, the island has experienced significant growth in visitor numbers in recent years. The island functions as a popular holiday destination, receiving an estimated 1.3 million unique visitors in 2016/2017⁶, up 18 per cent from 1.1 million visitors in 2015/2016. Attractions include coastal scenery, beaches, vineyards, water sports, walking tracks, and events.

Many people have holiday homes on the island that they use regularly and/or rent out to temporary guests via online platforms such as Airbnb and Bookabach. An analysis of Airbnb activity in Auckland estimated that 16 per cent of the island's rental stock (three per cent of all Waiheke dwellings) was available for rent on Airbnb 'full time'.⁷ This analysis was conducted prior to Auckland's Accommodation Provider Targeted Rate coming into effect, which may have moderated these numbers.

Tourism and population growth have created a range of environmental and infrastructure pressures on the island, including water pollution, litter and pressures on toilet infrastructure. Local waterways are vulnerable to pollution from poorly maintained and stressed septic systems, and Little Oneroa Lagoon has a long-term no-swim warning in effect due to poor water quality.

2.3 Governance context

Auckland Council has a unique two-part governance structure made up of the Governing Body and local boards. The Governing Body focuses on Auckland-wide strategic decisions including strategies, policies, plans, regulations and activities. The Governing Body also appoints the chief executive and governs council-controlled organisations such as Auckland Transport.

Local boards set local direction through local board plans and make decisions on most local issues, activities and facilities. Local boards are also responsible for identifying and

⁶ Made up of approximately 60% Aucklanders, 10% other domestic and 30% international visitors.

⁷ Airbnb and Housing in Auckland: <http://www.knowledgeauckland.org.nz/assets/publications/TR2018-001-Airbnb-and-housing-in-Auckland.pdf>

communicating the interests and preferences of their communities as they relate to council strategies, policies, plans and bylaws.

Land use regulations for the island currently fall under the Hauraki Gulf and Islands District Plan. A planning process to incorporate the planning rules for Waiheke into the Auckland Unitary Plan is however progressing.

In addition to these statutory requirements, the Waiheke Local Board, along with the Waiheke community, has developed Essentially Waiheke, a strategic framework document that summarises what makes Waiheke special and presents a vision for the future.

In late 2017, at the time the pilot commenced, an application was lodged with the Local Government Commission (LGC) to create a Waiheke Unitary Authority, separate from Auckland Council. This application was ultimately unsuccessful, but the LGC's recommendations in response to the application remain relevant. They recommended, among other things, to continue the work done so far on the Governance Framework Review, and to:

- further explore ways to balance regional and local needs without losing the benefits of being part of a large organisation. This could include:
 - keeping delegations and/or allocations of functions to local boards under active review; and
 - considering where people benefit from service delivery standardisation and where service delivery could be tailored to different areas;
- consider whether to roll out the Waiheke pilot (or aspects of it) elsewhere before the pilot is complete, if it is achieving the desired results.

2.4 This evaluation report

The three-year pilot is being evaluated by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) in order to track impacts, to document what is working well, and to identify areas for improvement.

The evaluation findings will be used to inform the development of the pilot as it progresses, as well as decision-making in relation to its future direction at the end of the three years.

A baseline evaluation was undertaken at the start of the pilot, with findings produced in September 2018. This provided an overview of the initial perspectives and experiences of Waiheke Local Board members and Auckland Council and Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) staff working with the local board.

Stage two of the evaluation – documented in this report – focused on: key developments since the baseline phase; progress in relation to 'sticky issues' previously identified; impacts of the pilot to date; and priorities for the remainder of the pilot.

This report presents findings from stage two of the evaluation. It incorporates data from:

- surveys and interviews with four of the five Waiheke Local Board members
- interviews with 25 Auckland Council and CCO staff who work with and support the local board.

Data were collected during June-July 2019, around 18 months into the pilot. Both frontline and senior staff who had been involved in the pilot and/or worked closely with the board during the first 18 months of the pilot were interviewed. Interviewees came from the following areas across the council group:

- Auckland Transport
- The Governance division
- The Customer and Community Services division (including Community Facilities Parks, Sports and Recreation; and Service Strategy and Integration)
- Infrastructure and Environmental Services
- Plans and Places.

The report contains verbatim excerpts from interviews. Some have been edited slightly to maintain the confidentiality of participants, or to aid readability. Excerpts followed by (LB member) are from local board members; those followed by (Staff member) are from council and CCO staff.

3.0 Key impacts of the pilot so far

This section presents the main impacts associated with the pilot so far, as identified by council staff and local board members. Overall, there was widespread agreement that the pilot has resulted in a range of positive outcomes, and the majority of participants were enthusiastic about its progress to date.

It is important to note that the pilot did not occur in isolation. There were other organisational and departmental initiatives happening in parallel. These, alongside the impact of the evaluation itself (including the release of the baseline evaluation findings), meant that a combination of factors has come together to bring about change on Waiheke in the 18 months since the pilot commenced.

The pilot has resulted in positive impacts in the following areas:

- The board environment and relationships have improved
- Increased board influence in some areas
- A less siloed approach to addressing issues on Waiheke
- Progress on long-standing issues
- Increased delivery of some council services by local providers.

Each of these issues is described in more detail below. Progress in relation to three aspects of the pilot that have been selected as case studies is also provided in Section 4.0.

3.1 The board environment and relationships have improved

The baseline interviews revealed an unproductive environment prior to the pilot, with the board expressing dissatisfaction with the performance of council staff, and staff reluctant to engage with the board due to sometimes hostile interactions with board members. Eighteen months on, interviewees reported a very different environment. Indeed, it was widely reported that relationships between the local board, and council and CCO staff, had improved significantly since the pilot's inception.

This was apparent in the more relaxed atmosphere at meetings and the respectful way in which council/CCO staff were treated by board members. Several interviewees also noted that problematic behaviour identified in the baseline evaluation (e.g. staff being yelled at) had ceased.

When I attend the meetings, I walk out of them quite proud of what the board is saying about our staff and even what our staff are saying about the board. They're getting on well. (Staff member)

I think we've had some pretty vigorous debates, but they've always now been well mannered, listening to what the staff are saying, we're listening to them. I think it's been quite good, I think it's been quite positive. (Staff member)

As evident in the following feedback from staff members, this was markedly different to how things had been previously:

A previous staff member pretty much ended up in tears after leaving workshops because she felt that everything she said was being twisted and just not being taken the right way and she wasn't receiving constructive feedback ... but since I have been in this role I have seen a culture shift. It feels like the board are a lot more supportive and trusting of staff. (Staff member)

It was a really different place to be and I mean I had people internally [start to] come to Waiheke and they're going 'oh my god that was great, they gave us some really good feedback, it was really valuable'. (Staff member)

[The mood at meetings has been] easy, cheerful, chatty, friendly even, not unchallenging but respectful in that challenge. So [board member] would no longer personally attack me, he would challenge the statement or challenge the conversation or challenge the presenter but there was no attack behind it. It was as you would expect somebody who's got a very strong opinion and is hearing something contrary, but it was in a respectful space. (Staff member)

Staff acknowledged that the steps taken by council to address a number of legitimate frustrations of the local board members (e.g. staff turnover) had played a role in improved relations. These included more consistent staffing, a dedicated point of contact (or contacts) for Waiheke issues, and increased engagement with the board (e.g. via more regular meetings or a higher profile on the island).

Things are much better than what they were and that's largely, my impression was, ascribed to the more responsiveness of many of the operational departments that have now become aware that they needed to up their game. (Staff member)

I think for [the board] it must be nice that they're dealing with the same people and also people that know the historic issues. (Staff member)

Similarly, board members were generally positive about the impact of changes within council, which had resulted in higher levels of contact with staff, and an overall improvement in performance.

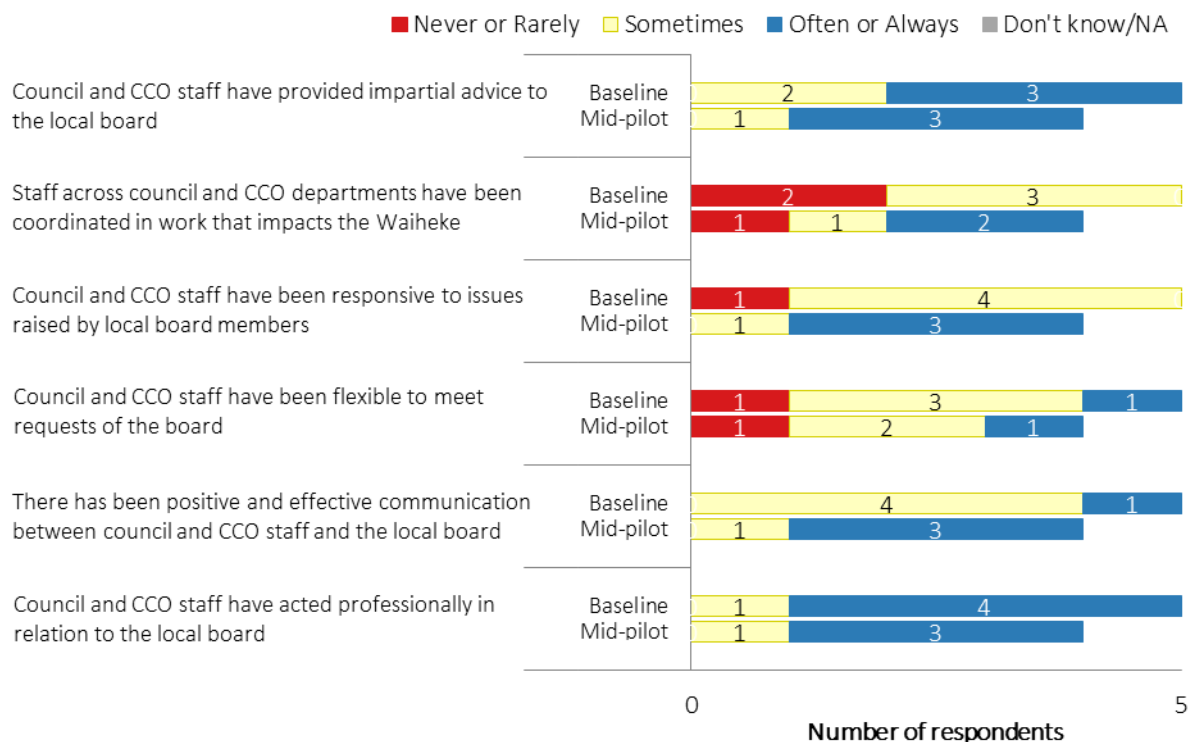
We're getting a good deal now with contact with each of the CCOs, the departments. (LB member)

People are coming now, listening, they're not trying to impose a regional [approach] unless they have excellent reasons for doing so and that does apply in areas like environmental issues particularly. But in the general run of things the starting position of people's attitudes and mind-set is 'how do we accommodate the Waiheke scenario?' That makes a massive difference. (LB member)

As displayed in the following chart, this was also evident in their survey responses, which show an increase in reporting of positive staff behaviours and interactions. Local board members were surveyed at the start of the pilot (5 members completed the survey) and again 18 months in (4 members completed). In the latest survey, two board members

reported that staff across council and CCO departments have been coordinated in work that impacts Waiheke ‘often or always’, whereas previously it was claimed that this happened either ‘never or rarely’ or ‘sometimes’.

Figure 1. Local board members’ attitudes toward council and CCO staff



Note: Five board members completed the survey at baseline, and four out of five completed it mid-pilot.

As a result of these developments, a number of staff reported that they (and their colleagues) were more enthusiastic about attending local board meetings and workshops, a shift that had also been observed by board members. One council manager stated that, whereas previously they had always accompanied staff to ensure they weren’t “hassled in any way”, they had recently felt more comfortable with them attending meetings alone. Comments included:

There's no doubt there's been really significant change in the way that our staff are received ... I actually think the degree of willingness to work on Waiheke has increased. (Staff member)

[Previously] we didn't take anyone to the island unless we absolutely had to because it wasn't a safe place to have meetings ... [But as the pilot has progressed] we started bringing people and they started seeing Auckland Transport in its many, many facets. (Staff member)

I think we get on well, the relationship. When we have visitors here they all seem happy now, they're not coming along with trepidation. (LB member)

The improved relationships had also enabled staff to involve the board more collaboratively at earlier stages in the project.

I've spent quite a lot of time now with the board actually working through projects where [previously] we wouldn't necessarily take it to them at that [stage], we'd actually wait until we'd moved to the next phase. (Staff member)

While the pilot was seen to have played a key role in enhancing the quality of advice and interactions with staff, other changes that had taken place at the local board level, such as the scheduled change in the chairperson role, offered opportunities to reset relationships and try another facilitation approach. All of this appears to have contributed to the new, more collaborative and inclusive atmosphere at meetings.

[The board chair] gives more thanks to staff, she protects them in meetings, she ensures that things stay on track ... She supports outcome driven discussions and seeks collaboration with the other board members to come to a conclusion that they can agree with or have majority agreement on. (Staff member)

I feel like it's definitely more progressive, it's more collaborative, it's a lot friendlier even. It really felt like an 'us-them' [situation previously]. (Staff member)

Some staff believed that the release of the baseline evaluation findings, which highlighted a number of legitimate board frustrations, but also some counterproductive ways of expressing those frustrations toward staff, had acted as a “wake up call” for all involved:

The fact that [the board's] behaviour has changed and I don't know whether it's changed because of the pilot or whether they suddenly, when they saw the [baseline evaluation] results and presumably saw some of the verbatim comments that staff were too afraid to come across or whatever, that they thought 'we really better change'. (Staff member)

3.2 Board influence

The baseline interviews highlighted the board's frustration with their limited level of control, power and influence. Although opinions differed at the start of the pilot with regard to how many additional decisions the board wanted formally allocated or delegated to them, all felt strongly that they should be given greater influence over the way budgets are allocated and prioritised on the island; this was to ensure projects and services meet the needs of the community. One board member described during the baseline evaluation how they would like to:

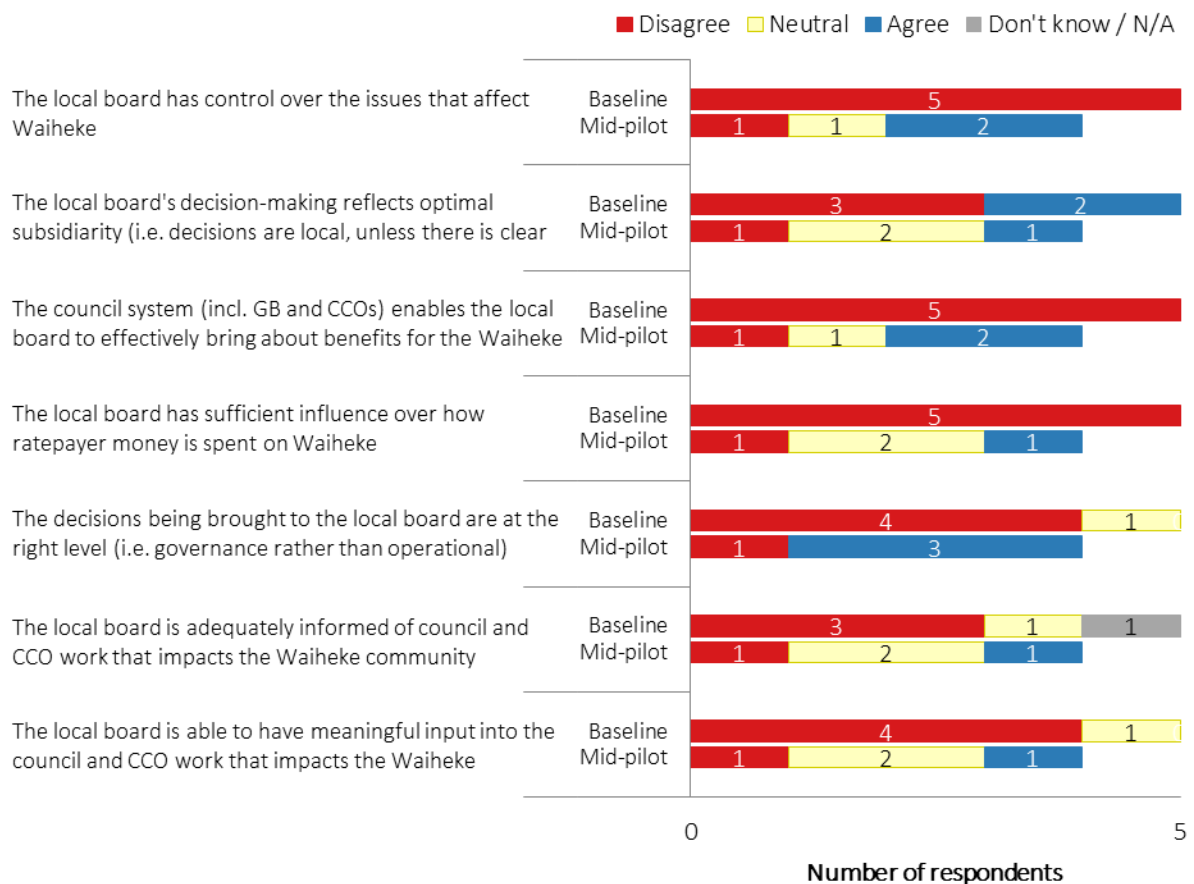
...see the board consulted prior to any significant budget being allocated so that we are part of the process, not outside of it. I'd like to see us being able to contest some of that spending in favour of alternative projects. I'd like to see a far greater collaboration.

Of note, members expressed a desire to have more control over:

- spending, including how budgets are prioritised and the ability to procure local services
- transport projects, including how projects are designed and prioritised
- planning and development on the island
- the impacts of tourism.

Findings from this stage indicate that the pilot has resulted in increased board influence. The figure below shows a shift from disagreement with a range of positive statements to neutrality and agreement for most board members.

Figure 2. Local board members' attitudes toward the board's level of control and influence



Note: Five board members completed the survey at baseline, and four out of five completed it mid-pilot.

Increases in influence were found in terms of prioritisation of Auckland Council projects, transport projects, and planning. Each of these is discussed below.

3.2.1 Prioritisation of Auckland Council projects and spending

The establishment of the pilot coincided with significant work across council departments to implement better ways of engaging with local boards, one of which was the introduction of 'local board work programmes' – annual operational and capital work programmes for activities over which local boards have decision-making responsibilities. This process is intended to give the boards more formal control over the prioritisation of projects delivered in their areas.

We've gone right across the local boards and it's called the local board work programme, and Waiheke along with every other local board has had that, but it did start off in Waiheke. So, in a way, one could argue that the pilot project piloted that approach which has now gone 21 boards wide. (Staff member)

Since the pilot commenced, the Waiheke Local Board has gone through two work programme rounds, and it was evident that the process had increased the board's involvement in the prioritisation of projects and allocation of budgets in some areas. This appeared to be largely in relation to Community Facilities. For example, staff spoke about the board's decision to reprioritise funding towards a community hall, which may not otherwise have been allocated budget by council. Comments included:

In terms of the new work programme, there's a lot more opportunity now for the local board to not just have a renewal (like-for-like replace, or fix like-for-like). There's [now] an opportunity to look across their entire programme, [to decide] where are they going to get the best opportunity for their assets. (Staff member)

So there's a general renewals budget and they have decided 'actually, you know, although it looks as if only ten dollars should be spent here, we're going to spend a hundred and we're going to do it up'. (Staff member)

It was acknowledged that the board's level of influence within some of these processes was not unique to Waiheke, and was reflective of wider changes that had been rolled out across council as a result of the Governance Framework Review:

For Community Facilities – that's decision making across asset classes for renewals and work programme decisions – there's been a lot more decision-making flexibility in that now, but that's the same for [all local boards]. (Staff member)

3.2.2 Transport projects

Transport was a key source of frustration for the local board at the start of the pilot, and members expressed a strong desire to have more influence over the prioritisation of maintenance and new capital projects on the island.

Significant progress has been made in relation to the AT-local board relationship, which is described in more detail in Section 4.1. This section touches on one aspect of the progress: the development of a 10-year transport plan for Waiheke.

The drafting of this plan was highlighted as a key development in the first 18 months of the pilot. It was reported that this had been requested by the board previously, but little progress had been made prior to the pilot. One staff member spoke about the significant amount of work that had gone into developing the plan, with both AT and the board contributing to this process. As a result, a “priority list” for all transport projects on the island had been developed, which had been signed off by AT's Executive Leadership Team and, at the time of the research, was soon to receive community input via a public consultation process.

A lot of hard work gone on both sides with that [10-year plan], a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, a lot of discussion about how that will work and I think that, even without that being finalised, that the whole process has been really positive because it's really crystallised a lot of thinking about what is important on the Island. (Staff member)

These guys are embracing that [10-year plan] with bells on. I just yesterday read that draft of what it will look like for the purposes of public edification and you know it's looking quite good. (LB member)

The 10-year plan has enabled AT and the board to work together to (re)prioritise scheduled transport projects on the island. While it was reported that no additional funding had been allocated beyond what would have been spent on Waiheke, the potential for the board to advocate for projects in future budget rounds was highlighted:

I think the local board can use that [10-year plan] as a really strong advocacy tool for more funding. Council for example, to say we've gone through this co-design process with AT and our community, this is what they have said is important. (Staff member)

Other developments in relation to the AT-local board relationship are outlined in Section 4.1.

3.2.3 Planning

Pressures from development on the island and increasing tourism numbers were also at the forefront of elected members' minds at the start of the pilot. In both instances, board members felt unable to address these pressures and sought additional planning and policy powers to mitigate negative impacts on residents.

The main planning-related development within the pilot, discussed by interviewees, was work undertaken on an area plan for the island. This is a document that sets out a 30-year vision for Waiheke Island and the other inner Hauraki Gulf islands that make up the Waiheke local board area, and includes key ideas, desired outcomes, and supporting activities to achieve the vision. This was ongoing at the time of the research, with reports that board input had been facilitated via a number of workshops.

We've done a whole lot of workshops with the local board and got their views on everything from tourism development to whether or not to reticulate the area. We've talked about environmental issues. (Staff member)

One staff member reflected on the impact of this for the board:

I think they [board] feel a greater level of responsibility around the area plan because I've said to them 'hey you guys are the ones who get to approve this, you know, you can put in what you want' ... We have provided power points around every fortnight of these workshops. They've read them, they've questioned some things, they've agreed with quite a few, they've said here are areas that you might want to add in as well. (Staff member)

However, it was also recognised that, for the most part, the process was similar to that which would be undertaken with all local boards:

Nothing that I've done so far is actually any different to what I would have anyway... I would want any local board to own their area plan. (Staff member)

A couple of board members commented that they had found the planning process positive, and an improvement on previous dealings with planning staff. This was despite some tension regarding reticulation issues on the island. Comments included:

I think [...] they dug up some amazing information and it's been really good to have that spotlight on Waiheke. (LB member)

We're going through a district planning process now to incorporate Waiheke into the Unitary Plan, we used to have major angst about the attitude of some of the planning guys, I totally don't have that feeling now, I think they're well attuned. (LB member)

3.3 A less siloed approach

There was evidence of a less siloed approach as a result of the pilot, with several examples of various stakeholders working together to address Waiheke issues. In some cases, this involved meetings with key personnel from different council departments to tackle a specific project; in others, groupings were formed to address broader issues relating to a specific topic (e.g. transport). Some examples identified in the research included:

- Transport Forum
- Healthy Waters grouping
- Public toilets workshop.

As can be observed in feedback from staff below, this had resulted in a range of positive outcomes including enhanced community representation, a more efficient process, and improved relations between council and the local board:

They set up a transport forum, which is basically Local Board members, Waiheke people with a role in transport, they might be transport providers or whatever, cycling interests, and Auckland Transport in that forum. So that's a mechanism [for], the local community to get its transport interests and issues on the table and to provide a vehicle whereby they can feed in formally to the things that Auckland Transport's doing. (Staff member)

I've found that helpful just coming into it when it was a bit of shambles in terms of all these things going on, and now we have an actual programme. So all of the works and all of the different things happening are actually just being monitored and someone actually knows all the answers. Instead of saying 'sorry that's Bob's job, I'll get hold of him and I'll come back to you'. I think that the [Healthy Water's] steering group's been quite helpful for that. (Staff member)

Insufficient public toilet provision was mentioned by most board members at the start of the pilot. Progress has since been made to identify opportunities and to secure funding to build a toilet by bringing together a range of staff to workshop different solutions.

What we suggested to [the Programme Manager] is rather than go to different teams and try and find out who was going to take ownership ... we just pulled together some people with enough leadership and decision making to be representative of their area and that we go to Waiheke and we have a look at the toilets of Waiheke in the first

instance and then ... we ran an hour and a half kind of quite agile facilitated workshop. (Staff member)

The board have been advocating for new toilets for a number of years and it wasn't on the list of priorities for Community Facilities, and ATEED weren't able to help in a great way... We were able to get four hundred [thousand dollars] for that project, which still isn't enough to build a toilet but we [now can] go to central government and apply for tourism infrastructure funding for that. (Staff member)

3.4 Progress on long-standing issues

Interviewees reported that the Programme Manager had made progress on a number of projects over the course of the first 18 months of the pilot including, amongst others, access issues at Crescent Road and the Wharetana Bay encroachment. Some of these involved matters that had previously been identified as a board priority and/or long-standing issues requiring resolution.

[Programme manager has] been majorly focused and he actually got it through... We got it through at the last meeting that a planting setup for, to screen the house from the reserve and their access to the reserve, but [programme manager] did a magnificent job of just dealing with all of the locals. (LB member)

So one of the ones that I've been heavily involved with would be the leasing matters at Rangihoua Reserve and so just getting a resolution that all the Local Board were able to agree upon was to get that reserve management plan in place. So that's something that's been hanging around since 2013 if not longer. (Staff member)

3.5 Increased delivery of council services by local providers

The local board has advocated over a number of years for greater local procurement, where council awards contracts to local contractors. In response to this advocacy, Auckland Council focused on securing local maintenance contractors for Waiheke when negotiating new region-wide maintenance contracts as part of Project 17.⁸ All electrical, carpentry, plumbing, and water blasting-related facility maintenance work is now undertaken by small, on-island contractors, and larger park maintenance work is contracted to AIM Services (previously City Parks Service), a division of Auckland Council who employ a number of local workers on the island.

There was some evidence of the pilot leading to increased local involvement in the delivery of services on Waiheke. For example, it was reported that community groups were now responsible for the leasing of halls and public access to these facilities. This was seen to be a positive development, with one staff member highlighting that, as a result of the new arrangements, there had been an increase in levels of use.

⁸ Project 17 was the name given to the large renegotiation of Auckland Council's regional facility maintenance contracts in 2017.

It was also emphasised that a willingness to do things differently had emerged since the start of the pilot, and this had contributed to this outcome. Other comments included:

We give money to those local groups to go and do it and it works incredibly well. And I think that that's why we're in a good state at the moment because those community groups are just getting on and doing it and we just give them the money and support them however we can. And those are real successes, really, really big successes on the island. (Staff member)

Another example of providing opportunities for local providers is in relation to the island waste services contract, outlined in Section 4.3.

4.0 Case studies

This section profiles three key aspects of the pilot programme. They emerged during this stage of the evaluation as being of particular significance, either due to the substantial progress made, or their importance to Waiheke overall. They are profiled in more depth as case studies in order to highlight key learning, both for the remainder of this pilot and for other local boards should the programme be rolled out more widely. They include:

- The relationship with Auckland Transport (AT)
- Developments at Matiatia
- Waste Services contracting process.

4.1 AT Relationship

At the start of the pilot, transport issues (e.g., roads, public transport, ferries and parking) were one of the local board's key frustrations. In addition, during the baseline evaluation, several local board members were very dissatisfied with the nature of the relationship between the board and AT since amalgamation. This included a belief that Waiheke had been subsumed within the CCO's regional focus.

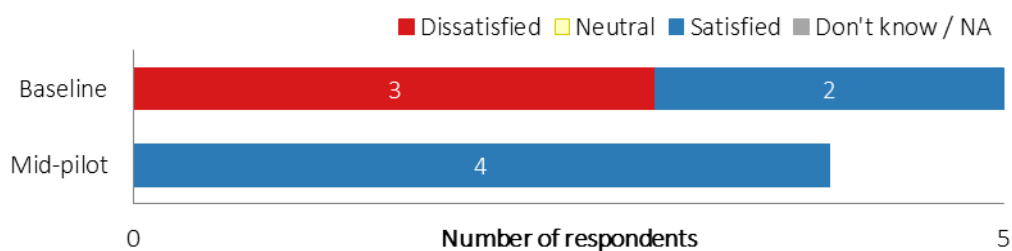
The working relationship between the board and AT appears to have improved dramatically since this time. This is evident in feedback from a number of interviewees who cite it as one of the key successes of the pilot to date.

I've told the Mayor and Governing Body that Auckland Transport's made more progress with the governance pilot than any other component of council... On the ground I think the way they're working is amazing. (LB member)

I think [the chair] made a really interesting point that the signing of the MoU – she said this is the biggest step that this project has made across the whole council family. Whereas before ... the implication was Auckland Transport was lagging behind. Now we're seen as leading the charge and I think that's a really interesting reversal of position and an amazingly positive one. (Staff member)

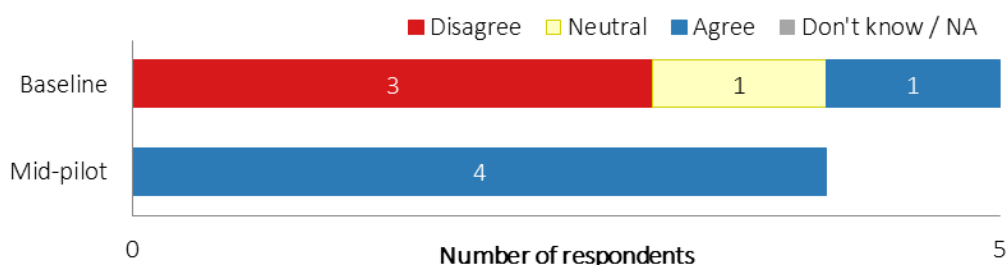
Several stakeholders spoke about the improved relations between board members and AT staff. This included more constructive dialogue, less animosity between stakeholders, and increased engagement between senior figures. This improvement was also reflected in local board member survey responses with all four respondents stating they are satisfied with Auckland Transport's performance over the last 12 months.

Figure 3. Local board members' overall satisfaction with Auckland Transport



Similarly, local board members were more likely to agree that over the last 12 months AT has taken into account the wishes and aspirations of the Waiheke Local Board.

Figure 4. Local board members' agreement with a statement that Auckland Transport had taken into account the wishes and aspirations of the Waiheke Local Board in the previous 12 months



Key developments in relation to AT since the baseline stage of the evaluation that were highlighted included:

- The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AT and Waiheke Local Board
- A commitment to the creation of a new Waiheke Transport Operations Manager role
- The development of a 10-year transport plan
- The establishment of a Waiheke Transport Forum

Each is described in more detail below.

4.1.1 Development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AT and Waiheke Local Board

An MoU between AT and the local board was signed in May 2019. The MoU – the first of its kind in Auckland – commits these two parts of Council to work together and to extend the boundaries of the working relationship between AT (which is responsible to the Governing Body) and the local board. It encourages the relationship to be innovative and proactive, and for the two organisations to work together to address issues and advance projects.

The memorandum stipulates that AT and the board will work in good faith, take a no-surprises approach and keep each other informed.

It's got quite a bit of meat in there ... at both levels... there's the philosophical statements in there about working together and no surprises... and then there's

particular things that the board wanted to do that that [Auckland] Transport's agreeing to do. (Staff member)

They're looking and saying okay... rather than things that have just been driven from in the city, that maybe we can look at things from here [on Waiheke]. (LB member)

It is expected the MoU will lead to improved joined-up working between AT and council departments, as well as increased delegation of decision-making to the board.

It's noting the intention to look at more delegation of decision-making. (Staff member)

4.1.2 Work underway to create a new Waiheke Operations Manager role

As part of the MoU, AT has committed to creating a Waiheke Operations Manager position. This will create a transport decision-making role for Waiheke and incorporate the existing AT Relationship Advisor role. The job description was being finalised at the time of writing this report.

Combining the relationship management and operational decision-making functions into one local board-facing position is intended to ensure decisions better meet the needs of the Waiheke Local Board and its community, by creating a direct relationship between the local board and transport decision-makers. This was highlighted by some interviewees as a key benefit:

I think [the new AT operations manager position is] great because you've got one person to go to, they know what's going on, they have the ability to spend budgets and do what needs to be done... That's an important difference. They've got an ability to make a decision and actually move things forward. (Staff member)

What really [was] needed was somebody who had a strategic overview of the [10-year transport] plan and that they would essentially be responsible for delivering the outcomes of the ten-year strategic plan. They would report into the board in a way... (Staff member)

Local board members expressed support for the area-based approach being implemented:

If you put [the Programme Manager's] role together with this one, we're getting back to having almost a town clerk type person again that is overseeing ... all facets of the operation. Not just one little area with Auckland Transport and another area is the parks. You actually have somebody here that's overseeing the whole. (LB member)

There were some comments about delays in the role being finalised, and different stakeholders' frustration with this, although it was highlighted that the changes needed to be carefully considered, given the newness and complexity of the position.

We're still shaking down exactly what that role might look like and I think there's a little bit of frustration at council officer level ... they want to move more quickly than we can I think. But it will, I'm sure, happen, it's just in what form and what's the scope of the role and stuff like that... It's bits of about five or six different jobs ... So we have to work through that. (Staff member)

4.1.3 Development of a 10-year transport plan

As discussed in Section 3.2.2, the drafting of a 10-year transport plan for Waiheke was highlighted as a key development. It reflects a willingness on behalf of AT to enable the board to influence the prioritisation of transport renewals and capital works on the island.

I think that's [10-year transport plan] a really good example of where we have co-designed the programme and, in fact, to the point where the consultation which is due to start in the next couple of weeks, is co-branded. So, it's Auckland Transport and the Local Board have come to the community with these suggestions. (Staff member)

4.1.4 Establishment of a Waiheke Transport Forum

A Waiheke Transport Forum was established during the first 18 months of the pilot. The forum is an advisory group made up of members of the Local Board, AT, official services, and members of the local community, and has acted as a platform for input into transport projects from a range of stakeholders.

It's got the local police sergeant and then it's got up to seven members of the public who have cross-sectional really good knowledge, expertise or interest in our transport infrastructure, from active transport users through to tour buses and Fullers. (LB member)

[The programme manager] has since then used the transport forum to good effect with some of the projects that he has brought forward. Getting feedback from stakeholders and on some of those projects. (Staff member)

4.1.5 Facilitators of progress

The involvement of AT's senior leadership, particularly its Chief Executive (CE), was seen as a crucial factor for improving relationships. A face-to-face meeting between the local board and the AT CE on the island near the start of the pilot was commented on by a number of interviewees, and was seen to have played an important role in communicating AT's investment in developing closer relations with the island and its board:

I think we were fortunate to have the Relationship Manager we had for the period, but also building a relationship with Shane Ellison was vital. And it coincides with them committing to a full culture change ... Shane Ellison's been a breath of fresh air for that place". (LB member)

Additionally, the 'pilot' nature of the programme acted as an important lever within AT, in terms of doing things differently. Enabling changes to be trialled – without an automatic requirement to have to do it that way forever, or for all local boards across Auckland – was also an important factor.

I mean just having the pilot there, these are all the things that have been able to be promoted because there's a thing called the pilot. Without that, you haven't really got a vehicle to get it off the ground. (Staff member)

A number of respondents noted also the role of the AT Waiheke Local Board Relationship Manager and the pilot Programme Manager in facilitating progress.

4.1.6 Challenges

The progress described above has not come without challenges. It was highlighted by interviewees that there has been mixed support within AT for some of the developments noted above, due in part to the inertia of an “*engineering-focused organisation*”, as well as concerns regarding the financial implications of possible changes and the ability of AT to meet the expectations of the local board.

Both of those [Transport Forum and 10-year plan] has had mixed support within Auckland Transport to do them because they're worried about what they might mean, [In terms of] work programme, budgets, expectations, failure, inability to deliver or respond. (Staff member)

Developing the 10-year transport plan also required significant staff time beyond what would normally be dedicated to the board.

4.2 Matiatia

Matiatia, on the western end of the island, is the main passenger ferry transport gateway for travel on and off the island. Increasing use of this gateway by residents, bus services, taxis, tour operators, and businesses has resulted in parking and space pressures.

Progress in addressing the pressures had been difficult prior to the pilot, due to the involvement of multiple parties with different priorities. In particular, the land was managed by a combination of Panuku Development Auckland, Auckland Transport and Watercare Services Limited. The site is also of cultural significance to Ngāti Paoa, as mana whenua, and of great importance to the resident community as the island's primary transport hub.

A strategic plan and approach to addressing Matiatia issues was identified by the board at the start of the pilot as one of the primary projects they wished to see progressed. One of the primary roles of the programme manager has been to progress this plan for Matiatia.

Eighteen months into the pilot, a number of significant steps have been taken, but progress has been slow.

4.2.1 Progress so far

Significant steps in relation to Matiatia since the start of the pilot include:

- The Governing Body delegating decision-making over Matiatia land to the Waiheke Local Board (in May 2018), in recognition of the pilot, and enabling the board to progress plans for the area.
- Allocation of \$15 million to Matiatia transport improvements in the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) – Auckland Transport's 10-year investment programme for transport in Auckland.

- Transfer of ownership of land in the area from Watercare to Auckland Transport.
- Transfer of commercial leases in the area from Panuku to Community Facilities within Auckland Council.
- Improvements to existing car parking provision.
- Approval by the Waiheke Local Board of the Stage 1 Matiatia Plan consisting of principles, outcomes and high level land use zones.

These achievements were seen as significant, as two interviewees below outline:

The Matiatia one was a great coup – getting the governance – that was great. (LB member)

That's the first time ever Waiheke's had an allocated line in the [RLTP]. I'll tell you what, that was a champagne moment, that was a great moment ... [It was a] big achievement. Waiheke had never had funding allocated [to it in the RLTP] let alone to that value. (Staff member)

4.2.2 Facilitators of progress

Significant effort and time have been invested by the Programme Manager, local board members and a number of council and CCO staff to progress toward a Matiatia strategic plan.

A number of interviewees noted the essential role the Programme Manager has played in progressing the project.

Matiatia, for instance, was just a nightmare: when you've got Watercare, Auckland Transport and Panuku all with fingers in the pie and all claiming their own bit of territory. [The Programme Manager has] brokered the whole thing [and] Watercare have passed their part through to Auckland Transport and Panuku have also come [on board]. (LB member)

The one project that [the Programme Manager] has full ownership of [...] has been Matiatia. He has led that, pushed that, [...] he certainly has made that his own. (Staff member)

One participant highlighted the important role the pilot played in securing commitment within AT:

The pilot mandate was a really powerful lever to use internally in AT. Just reminding our Senior Leadership Team that we signed up to the pilot programme and that we actually had a responsibility to deliver against the intent of the pilot programme, and not just give it lip service. (Staff member)

4.2.3 Challenges

Although significant preparatory steps have been taken toward a Matiatia strategic plan, progress has been much slower than desired. The main challenges to date have involved:

- Engagement with Ngāti Paoa
- Securing funding from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA)
- Transferring commercial leases in the area from Panuku to Community Facilities.

Ngāti Paoa engagement

Matiatia is of cultural significance to Ngāti Paoa, the iwi with mana whenua over the area. Their involvement in any development is therefore essential, and there has been strong desire from the local board and staff to engage Ngāti Paoa.

A number of staff and local board members reflected on the difficulty of engaging Ngāti Paoa with the project. This included inconsistent involvement of iwi mandated representatives in meetings relating to the project. Project records show dozens of only-partially-successful attempts to contact, invite and encourage input from Ngāti Paoa representatives over the last 18 months.

Ngāti Paoa, the issues with Ngāti Paoa, being the first [reason the project hasn't progressed as fast as desired]. (LB member)

Challenges in relation to Ngāti Paoa responsiveness are likely to be driven, in large part, by the existence of two iwi trusts – Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust and Ngāti Paoa Trust Board – that both currently claim to have the mandate to represent the iwi. The Programme Manager has been attempting to engage with both iwi boards, however as these boards are currently in disagreement regarding their respective mandates, this has proven difficult. This disagreement over mandate has included a court action.

We've got the nightmare [for the project] of Ngāti Paoa who have two trusts that speak on behalf of Ngāti Paoa. Each one says they speak on behalf of them, so [the Programme Manager has] to deal with both of them. (LB member)

At the time of writing this report, the local board had, in an attempt to progress the project, approved the Stage 1 plan containing Matiatia development principles and a map of different activities on the site, pending approval from Ngāti Paoa regarding the cultural significance of the site.

We have now taken the draft plan to stakeholder engagement two weeks ago still without any substantive Ngāti Paoa input. So, it's a disappointment to me because from an external point of view it looks like the Council has failed to take into account and shape and write its document with iwi values implicit in there. But the reality is they haven't been forthcoming. (Staff member)

Securing funding from NZTA

Although \$15 million has been allocated to Matiatia transport improvements in the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP), half of this funding comes from NZTA.

NZTA requires a business case process before they are willing to fund the project. This has created some delays and has required securing separate funding to develop a business case.

... the second [reason the project hasn't progressed as fast as desired] is the funding through NZTA funding. Fifty percent of fifteen million has to come through NZTA and NZTA is tying itself in knots and not moving on a whole heap of huge projects. (LB member)

Of the fifteen million that is currently set aside or targeted for, the transport component of it only \$7.5m comes from Auckland Transport, the other \$7.5m has to come from NZTA, and NZTA has a fairly vigorous project management model and so they wanted a business case drafted to enable them to secure their funding, and that has taken up a fair amount of time. What makes it more difficult is that the budget requirements for paying a Project Manager to do this type of thing, particularly around the non-transport phase, is the council has not provided money at all. (Staff member)

Transferring commercial leases in the area from Panuku to Community Facilities

There are a number of commercial leases in the Matiatia area. There was early agreement at the start of the pilot to transfer the management of these from Panuku to Community Facilities. Staff and board members reported significant delays in achieving this transfer, as well as previously unidentified issues with building maintenance.

Panuku was the administrator of the land and collecting the revenue from [the commercial leases on it]... Part of the delegation [of decision making over Matiatia to the local board] was a transfer of authority to manage those commercial entities to council, to Community Facilities. That's dragged on for well over a year without Panuku handing over the commercial entities and therefore handing over the income. [If that had progressed] in the timeframe it should have, we would now have a couple of hundred thousand dollars in the coffers to support the local board's aspirations to progress some non-transport aspects... And what we also have found is that the majority of the commercial leases down there, the buildings which Panuku hasn't maintained, are now in a very poor condition and so not only is there no money, but there's going to be a cost to repair and improve and, which will be significant. So it's quite unsatisfactory really... (Staff member)

4.3 Waste services contract

The management of waste on the island is an important issue for the local community. At the start of the pilot, local board members also highlighted a desire to have greater delivery of services by locals.

There's a real passion on the Island in regards to waste and managing waste. Prior to the current contractor, who [...] has had the contract for ten years. Prior to them, it was a local community group that ran the waste services and they were unsuccessful winning the contract ten years ago. That created a lot of angst [in the community] and really soured the relationship between then Auckland City Council and their local elected members and the community as well. So, that's been soured for the last ten years essentially. (Staff member)

In June 2019, the contract for waste management on the island came up for renewal. Recognising the importance of the future provision of the waste services to the island, along with the history of the current contract process, the Auckland Council Waste Services team worked more closely with the local board to give them an ability to have a voice in something that is typically not their remit.

[The waste services contract] was meant to expire at the end of June but we extended it for a year to give us more time to procure, and we got the local board involved early because of the history. (Staff member)

This included working with the local board to incorporate their input into the procurement plan. The board's desire to see council provide opportunities for local providers resulted in splitting the contract into three components (to give equal opportunity during the tender to all potential suppliers, including island-based organisations), as well as boosting the assessment criteria weighting to non-price aspects such as community development and environmental innovation.

[We] got the local board on board early so that they understood that the current contracts are going to be expiring and we're going to be going to the market. We want to ensure that we give the community sector an even chance of success and being awarded a contract... They would obviously be competing against private waste companies, which is difficult around waste services because they don't have all the experience and all the resources. Community groups may not have that capacity or capability. So we tried to design the procurement in conjunction with the local board to give community groups a chance and we did that by – even though it's one contract for all these Waste Services – we bundled the services up. There's three bundles. So you could potentially win one or all of them. And we felt that it gave the community a better chance of winning [at least] one bundle... (Staff member)

So, for the non-price aspects [used to assess proposals]... we also put a lot of emphasis on community development and the environment and also on innovation and waste reduction. (Staff member)

Although the procurement process did not enable the local board to be involved in the actual tendering or negotiation process, they will have the opportunity to endorse the preferred supplier prior to the funding decision being taken to council's Strategic Procurement Committee.

While the procurement process was ongoing at the time of writing, staff members highlighted that some positive outcomes were already emerging for the local board, including an increased voice and community representation, alongside an improved relationship between council and the local board:

It's gone really well ... I think we've improved the relationship quite markedly ... not just for this procurement but also for Waste Solutions. And we've created a good working relationship with the Local Board and I think they feel that they have participated and contributed to the design of the service. (Staff member)

It is awesome to see how this pilot is playing out. The timeframes are going to be quite tough towards the end because we're heading up to elections and we're going to need the local board's endorsement of a supplier and then the committee's endorsement before the elections. So it is adding in extra steps, it is adding in extra work and extra reports, but you know I can see the benefits in doing this and I know that the Waste Solutions team have, they've been quite open about, open to this opportunity and open to picking up extra work because they can see the benefits in the long run. (Staff member)

One staff member highlighted that the positive experience with this process meant that they would consider it with other local boards, where possible:

The process to date has been great. The workshops have been really productive, and I think it's worth doing. I would almost take this approach, resource and time allowing, with any local board. (Staff member)

Local board members also appeared pleased with progress that had occurred in this area, particularly with regard to being kept informed of developments and council's response to incorporating their requests:

We established a, pretty full on set of meetings and where they came here but also [the local board chair] met with them on the months that they weren't here. So, we kind of were kept in the loop and they were responsive. But we got right in front of that to say 'no this is the way we'd like to see it' and they were very responsive in terms of shaping the processes to include us. (LB member)

But waste services is a good news story, because we've actually been involved in considering, developing the RFP [request for proposal] and considering the issues behind [it]. And we've been involved in the weighting of the factors that will be considered when tenders are in. And we will be involved in a review and a recommendation to the Governing Body Committee on the awarding of the contracts. (LB member)

One board member also felt that, while it wasn't a formal delegation of decision-making, it provided the local board with increased say in an important process:

And probably the waste services would come closest to [...] where we have this approval and authorisation kind of... Ultimately the Governing Body approves it, but we have the authority to make the recommendation and to provide our rationale for that to the Governing Body. (LB member)

4.3.1 Facilitators of progress

Willingness amongst Waste Solutions to adopt and trial a new, more intensive approach was essential. The local board's Relationship Manager was also seen as playing an important role in facilitating a new way of working:

I think [the Local Board Services Relationship Manager] has been quite instrumental. He came from Waste Solutions so it's really helpful, he knew the people internally. And

I think between him and [Programme Manager] they sort of identified this as ... somewhere that we could start something really different and see how it goes. (Staff member)

As with the other case studies, the ability to use the existence of a pilot as leverage for convincing others to try something different was seen as important.

The local board identified it as an opportunity to test, to use the pilot. It's something that a lot of the members are passionate about, waste, and so I think they believed it was a prime opportunity to actually test [more local] decision making, which is what it's all about. (Staff member)

4.3.2 Challenges

While seen as a positive development, and offering potential long-term benefits, involving the local board has had workload implications for council staff:

It is, and has been, a lot of work. There are at least monthly briefings with the Chair about what's happening and we've had regular workshops throughout this whole process of sorting these contracts out. It's very new territory. (Staff member)

It was acknowledged that there are challenges with regard to remaining 'neutral', ensuring a fair and transparent process, and managing the needs of both the local board and council/procurement:

It's quite difficult to remain neutral in that situation because you want to please the local board but you want to follow council policy and procedure as well. (Staff member)

They [board] would like to see one [local community group] involved, if possible, but they understand that we have to go through the process. Its procurement and it has to be transparent and there are legal processes we have to follow. (Staff member)

5.0 Facilitators of progress

The evaluation has identified a number of factors which have facilitated the pilot's progress to date. These include the involvement of a dedicated programme manager, the opportunity to do things differently, senior management support, and an openness to change. These are discussed in more detail below.

5.1 Dedicated Programme Manager

The Programme Manager role was set up to lead the implementation of the Waiheke Local Board pilot project and to motivate and coordinate input from various parts of the council group to address a wide range of issues highlighted in the pilot proposal.

This position was widely viewed as having played a key role in the progress of the pilot to date. Both staff and local board members emphasised the benefits of having a dedicated person take the lead on driving and coordinating a response to issues. This had resulted in several projects being progressed more quickly, particularly those that previously had been unaddressed within council.

We get these things, they come in, and who progresses them? And once they start bouncing around from Community Facilities to Parks to you know, nobody says 'righto we're going to do this, this, this, this.' Yeah, and so that's [what the Programme Manager has been doing]. (LB member)

The real value of [the Programme Manager] position is that it is a dedicated resource to resolve those gnarly problems that otherwise don't have an owner. (Staff member)

[He is] the lubrication between the multiplicities of people you have to talk to, and he's good at that. (Staff member)

The seniority of the position was highlighted as fundamental to progress by some staff members, particularly with regard to 'making things happen' and the level of influence in relation to resourcing.

The role was really important because it sat senior enough in the organisation that he could pull strings that needed to pull. (Staff member)

I've definitely seen a cut through of a lot of the layers due to [Programme Manager's] role both in the pilot and the operations role ... Where you've got local board priorities that come in, it's quite hard to get an ear at that top level on some of those really complex issues or issues that require big budget shifts. So, I've definitely noticed that there's been a lot more acceptance of approving budgets and some of the decision-making being shifted over the board, which was a huge success. (Staff member)

The ability of the programme manager to act as a conduit between the local board and council staff – as well as the wider island community – was seen to be important. As can be observed in the interview excerpts below, this meant that staff were more informed about,

and able to respond to, emerging issues. This included knowledge of the board's stance on important matters:

He has got the ear of the Board, so sometimes it's hard to get a feeling or know what the Board's actually wanting or thinking. So someone like [Programme Manager] can actually bring that to us or we can ask him directly. (Staff member)

He's a trouble-shooter for us and he'll alert us early to something brewing that he knows about on the island so that we can get on board and help with that. (Staff member)

The attributes of the person employed in the programme manager role at the time of the research was viewed as a key strength of the pilot. Key aspects highlighted by interviewees included his long-standing connection with Waiheke, knowledge of council structures and processes, considered manner, and relationship-building skills:

He does I think have the personality for it. So, that was really good. So things like Wharetana Bay or ... negotiating with Auckland Transport, or whatever. (LB member)

I think with his manner and his knowledge, I've listened to him speaking at public meetings. I mean he's just quite a thoughtful speaker. (Staff member)

[Programme manager] knows the people, knows the residents, [...] understands council process, understands the bureaucracy that we have to go through. So can kind of bridge that gap to 'yes I want this, but okay actually I know this department, they still have to go through all of this to get there'. So yes, it's having that real wealth of knowledge. (Staff member)

At the time of writing, the Programme Manager had also been given a delegation from council's Chief Operating Officer to make decisions on agreed Waiheke operations matters. It was unclear how this role would play out.

5.2 The pilot as leverage for trying things differently

Several interviewees spoke about the pilot giving staff permission to 'reset' and do things differently. This included reevaluating current practices, trialling new ways of working, and going beyond "business as usual".

What worked well was that it created an opportunity for everyone to change perspective and change focus and it invited a new way of working and an opportunity to put aside issues that had gone before and I think that was probably the key success factor, just starting it, definitely. (Staff member)

If I'm really honest, it changed the way people thought about, internally how we thought about Waiheke, it changed the energy around Waiheke and I would share gratitudes and internally I would recommend people for awards and those kind of things that had done work on Waiheke and if the board had thanked them personally in board reports and those sorts of things, I would share that with the CEO and their direct manager and

then put it into the intranet and those sorts of things. So people were getting esteem from working with Waiheke. (Staff member)

One interviewee highlighted that being asked to be part of a pilot that required collective development and input has reduced potential resistance:

And a pilot is also an interesting concept... Because if you're told 'here's a new model and this is how it will operate', perhaps there would have been resistance, but to be invited to be part of a trial by a pilot and help shape it and help develop it, also I think went a long way. The Governance Framework Review didn't just go 'rightyo, blah, blah, blah, and here's a new model that will be imposed on you and Waiheke'. It was more subtle. (Staff member)

Others spoke about using it as a lever to convince people to change. For example, one staff member recalled that she was able to 'sell' the pilot to colleagues by promoting the time-limited nature of the initiative and emphasising that it was associated with one local board only. As can be observed in the excerpt below, this provided some staff with additional reassurance when trying new ways of working:

Because I was able to say we don't have to do this for everyone else because Waiheke is special, they do have permission to do this differently, that enabled the freedom for senior managers to test the waters and to have that safety net that they could go it's the pilot, it's the pilot, we're doing this because of the pilot. So, it was a really helpful lever actually. (Staff member)

For local board members too, the pilot was an opportunity to reset the way they viewed council staff and engaged with them to get things done, as described by one board member below:

I think it's empowered us to ask, you know, that's been a good thing. As opposed to accepting [things as they are], with an air of defeat, it's empowered us to go, to ask the questions and to push. So it does change the acceptance internally on the board of the kind of merry-go-round of council bashing... It was endemic before, that everything could be excused because of one's knowing how frustrating it is and how they [council staff] never listen to us... All this laundry list of negative excuses for the behaviour of other people without having to step up and challenge the behaviour or, more importantly, get something done with them. So [it's now about] just driving through that and saying 'yeah you can, there's an opportunity here, just leverage it'. (LB member)

5.3 Senior management support

Findings from the research suggest that mandates from senior management within council (including AT) had played an important role in facilitating engagement from staff. Positive developments in relation to Auckland Transport, reported in Section 4.1, for example, were attributed in large part to senior leadership support. In some cases, it acted as a lever to encourage involvement.

It's something you can refer to, so I can say the Governing Body has agreed to do things differently on Waiheke, deliberately, with a view to testing what impact that might

have and you know we think this is something that fits within that outcome and we should try it. So it gives other people some, it gives them a mandate of sorts in that there is a formal direction to do things. (Staff member)

It's been calibre of the [Programme Manager], but it's also been a very clear organisational mandate that he has the authority to actually go out and get things sorted. So, I think those two things are important. (Staff member)

One council interviewee spoke about the impact of their manager emphasising the importance of the pilot. As evident in their comments below, this had meant that it became a priority for staff and they were mindful of the need to be involved, where possible:

It was really great for people like my leader [...] to mandate and say this is important. Right back from the beginning he made it, aware of us, we talked about it often, it was aware in our collective consciousness that this was happening, we need to keep an eye on it, we needed to understand it, we needed to watch it as it travelled through and learn from it. (Staff member)

5.4 An openness to change

The willingness of different stakeholders to engage in the pilot was highlighted by some interviewees as being key to its success. This included staff being open to changing existing work practices and novel approaches to resourcing.

I think the other thing is that there were a lot of personalities that were willing, and I think that you can't underestimate how powerful that is. (Staff member)

People have to be prepared to change the way they work and initially it's uncomfortable, but it wasn't uncomfortable for very long and I mean I was really enthusiastic about it, so I probably didn't feel that uncomfortable. (Staff member)

A commitment to working collaboratively with partners where there had previously been tension within the relationship was highlighted as important by a couple of staff members:

[The] community survey, which didn't paint any of us in a particularly good light, I think actually brought AT and the local board together. And we both kind of went 'hey we can't keep fighting each other, let's kind of move together, move forward together to improve the trust and confidence thing'. (Staff member)

Just the change [from conflictual to collaborative]. Just the straight change from 'what was asked, we need our protocols fixed, we can't do anything, ... you're rubbish', to 'we're partnering with this and we're doing this and...' It was just that remarkable change, it was just so powerful. (Staff member)

6.0 Challenges for the pilot

While there was strong consensus that positive outcomes were emerging as a result of the pilot, findings indicate that it has not been without its challenges. Moreover, both council staff and board members expressed disappointment that some matters had not progressed as expected. These findings are presented in the sections that follow.

6.1 Staff resistance and/or lack of buy-in

It is important to note that changes are not always immediate following political resolutions. Meaningful change requires staff and elected members to own any directive or resolution, and where the resolution relates to altering established ways of working, to work purposefully to bring about that change. Indeed, while there have been shifts and changes at the staff end in relation to the pilot, there still appears to be a sense that there is resistance or lack of buy-in in some areas.

Staff and Waiheke Local Board members talked about their need to repeatedly remind other staff across the organisation and other elected members alike of the pilot, and to convince them of its merit:

I think there's not, throughout the organisation necessarily an awareness of the pilot project and its implications. ... There is in some of the operational departments, such as I&ES [Infrastructure and Environmental Services] and CF [Community facilities], much more of an awareness and a willingness to go that extra step, but often some of the teams within the regulatory frameworks, they seem to have a great fear that the local board has any say in anything. (Staff member)

The reactions of some people have been surprising... people who, despite the fact that there is a Governing Body decision and a role created for certain explicit expectations, they're just not interested or don't see it as important or they don't think it's anything to do with them. (Staff member)

Resistance from other staff was attributed to a number of reasons, including a fear of change, a perception that the pilot may pose a threat to their position, and/or a lack of ownership of the problems that it sought to address. Some interviewees felt that colleagues were concerned about the potential workload and other implications to their role. Comments included:

People are sensitive to change and a suggestion that if someone else is coming in and putting their two cents worth in, does that mean that someone's saying they're not doing a good job? (Staff member)

I don't know whether they see it as a challenge to their role and position within council potentially. It may be a threat, perceived as a threat or as, you know, change. People can be resistant just because it's change and they're used to something. (Staff member)

6.2 Resourcing to support the pilot

A minority of staff spoke about a lack of – or limited – resourcing to support the work associated with the pilot. This was particularly the case for Auckland Council and AT employees who felt that the pilot had added to their usual duties. One interviewee, for example, spoke about having to rework existing budgets to accommodate the pilot; another referred to the potential tension that resourcing issues created with some staff:

There's no budget whatsoever. So, it's unfunded, we've had to source it internally from no budget. So, I've had to make cost savings to absorb what I've had to spend on this. (Staff member)

I met with [...] and his immediate reports and said we've got this pilot, the Governing Body, and their response was 'well that's great but we haven't got any budget or any resource to help you'. So straight away you've got this tension between the idea and the decision and the reality that the people who are going to be asked to support it in one way or the other, whether it's budget or work programme resource, whatever, are seeing that they've been given no extra resource to do it. (Staff member)

Managing expectations raised by the pilot was also highlighted as a potential risk if there was limited or no budget to support these:

Trying to advance what the council needs and also suits what the community wants is an inherent challenge because quite often they are inconsistent ... The local board is broadly expressing the community's aspirations and they might want something, for example a swimming pool ... but, ultimately, when you get to the end of the investigation, there's still no budget to build it. (Staff member)

While a lack of resourcing was highlighted as an issue, it was not necessarily viewed as an insurmountable barrier. As evident in the following comment, one interviewee highlighted that some individuals worked around this limitation and were successful in bringing about change:

So this [a lack of resourcing] is the kind of the tension that's playing out all along and requires people in the case of Auckland Transport like [...] who see their way through and find the right people and get to a point where yes someone says 'I can do that, right, let's do that', and then incrementally keep going. (Staff member)

6.3 It takes time

Staff reported that many of the issues or projects the pilot is looking to address are entrenched, complex, and potentially involve a wide range of people. Consequently, it was highlighted that due to the level of work involved, and the sometimes-convoluted nature of council structures and processes, a quick resolution was not feasible:

Some of these really intractable issues that [the Programme Manager] has been working on: number one that it takes longer than you think and number two, while it's been positive, many of those issues are actually nowhere near being solved yet. So,

eighteen months in, it just goes to show actually that these things aren't quick fixes. (Staff member)

The starting point [for trying to resolve any longstanding issue] is 'who do I need to talk to in council about it' and then there'll be maybe ten, maybe twenty people who might have a role because they have an interest. So then you've got to get them together, so it might take a month to be able to meet with people and then it might take another month to narrow down who the real people are and in the meantime they might have brought someone else on or said talk to this person. (Staff member)

Related to this, some staff spoke of the extra time involved in new ways of working. This included, for example, participating in workshops and/or extra administrative tasks:

The impact of the pilot has created more work for council officers and it's my understanding that this pilot could have the potential to be rolled out to other local board areas in terms of focuses such as encroachments, and that would create a huge impact in terms of resource. So, we already have a full work programme and this was something additional that was added to our programme. (Staff member)

It is quite rewarding but yeah, [it is a] big time commitment. I wouldn't recommend rolling something out like this without understanding what the implications are for staff, you know, having to commute to all these workshops and stuff it's not easy. (Staff member)

However, as noted by some staff members, the potential gains made it worthwhile:

I mean it's a big time commitment to be attending all these workshops with the local board, especially if we don't really need a decision from them and it's just an update, but I can see that there's definitely value in it. (Staff member)

So it is adding in extra steps, it is adding in extra work and extra reports but you know I can see the benefits in doing this and I know that the Waste Solutions team have, they've been quite open about, open to this opportunity and open to picking up extra work because they can see the benefits in the long run. (Staff member)

6.4 Ongoing frustration for the board

At the start of the pilot local board members talked about wanting the pilot to help them solve a number of long-standing issues on the island, to provide them with greater influence over transport and other council budgets, and to increase their formal decision-making powers.

The focus of the pilot (and of the Programme Manager in particular) has been on resolving issues and advocating for increased local board influence. Although there was some frustration among board members with delays to projects such as Matiatia, they recognised that, in many cases, external factors had caused those delays, and that, where possible, progress was being made.

Now that long-standing issues are getting some traction, the local board members' attention is turning to governance and legislative issues and what could be achieved in the second half of the pilot.

... we should be going 'okay by the next period these are the things that need doing'. I think it's [still] vague, there's a vagueness about securing more governance responsibilities, because that's what this is about. It's about governance responsibility for the local board. (LB member)

... what about all the stuff that we should be advocating for at Governing Body level? [...] I have spent huge amounts of time this year over freedom camping and the board has as well – and now the dog bylaws, dog and animal bylaws – fighting a council hell bent on making central decisions and not respecting subsidiarity. (LB member)

Some staff and board members highlighted the need to consider broader influence, including at central government level, in order to address some of the issues on the island.

The areas where I think we are not performing as well at – it concerns particularly where government rules, regulations, agencies [impact the island] – things like our tourism funding, recognising that Waiheke has a large load placed on its infrastructure which is unrelated to the residential population. That's an issue for council but it's also a bit of an issue for dealing with central government. Things like better management of the waterways where boats pull into bays or where they discharge their effluent, that type of thing. I get the impression that our elected representatives on Waiheke feel that we haven't performed as well in that area, in a managed advocacy area, changing either rules, regulations or approaches by other agencies and that includes government but also I suspect ferry companies and those sorts of things. (Staff member)

One board member expressed frustration with having to constantly push and fight for things to be done differently, including within the Governing Body:

They [Governing Body] shouldn't need handholding. They voted it in, but they don't seem to be wildly aware of it. (LB member)

The desire for the pilot to begin focusing on larger issues had resulted in some disagreement between board members and the Programme Manager as to where his efforts should be concentrated. The Programme Manager noted a tension between pursuing some of the higher level objectives of the board and ensuring the role results in tangible achievements within the timeframe of the pilot.

...the creation of the pilot and the view that it's got some clout, which it has, but you know, I'm not [the Chief Executive] ... but the expectations are raised and sometimes they're raised beyond [what I can achieve], and I could potentially put all my time and effort into some of these big things that [the chair is] thinking about at the expense of those [projects still to be resolved], but my judgment would be I won't really get anywhere here, we might have a plan of attack but we won't get it across the line. (Staff member)

There was a feeling amongst some board members that there was more the pilot could be achieving, but that the opportunities were still somewhat unclear. One member described the desire to take stock in the new term and to re-evaluate what the pilot should focus on:

I just keep thinking there is a feast out there and I can't see it on the table... I'd like to see the smorgasbord of opportunities and I'd like to say, 'let's have a crack at this one' and 'let's try that one' and 'over there, I would like a snack'. So, it's kind of like seeing what could be done and really testing and debate what's worth doing and what's worth going for and then going to have those discussions with the various parties and have [the Programme Manager] absolutely moving it forward. But I can't see the smorgasbord, it's opaque. (LB member)

The issues above highlight a need, in the new electoral term, to collectively re-evaluate what the focus of the pilot should be and what is achievable within the formal timeframes of the pilot.

We haven't got much further than the list [of projects for the Programme Manager to focus on] we had eighteen months ago ... So, I think it would be better to have tighter reviews of the activities on those lists... (LB member)

6.5 Ongoing frustration for some staff

A small number of staff expressed frustration that the pilot had not managed to address some of the previously identified issues. This included the slow pace at which decisions could be reached on small projects and a high turnover of staff. Staff members also highlighted that council systems could prove obstructive and did not always support the intention of the pilot.

The mechanics of getting things through and progressed in council doesn't just suddenly fall into place because the local board's in charge, because you still have to have a budget to do things, you still have to have things on a work programme, you still have to have someone leading. (Staff member)

I have to write a report to the local board on something fairly low level... and it has to go up through four layers of management to be spell-checked and approved before it then goes to the local board team to be checked. (Staff member)

An emergent issue in this stage of the evaluation was the impact of a board member's withdrawal from workshops and their subsequent requests for information discussed during these sessions. This had resulted in additional workloads for some staff, with one also noting that due to ongoing dynamics between different board members it felt like local board business meetings were "still on edge".

A board member hasn't been attending workshops and from a staff perspective, that's been a bit tricky because some of the stuff that we discuss in workshops is basically to get feedback from the local board and ensure they're updated on something, but then we have to duplicate efforts because we get a whole heap of email queries [from the board member who had not attended workshops] on stuff that was covered in the workshop or could have been covered in the workshop. (Staff member)

6.6 Delegations/allocations of decision-making

The pilot was initially set up to trial changes to allocations and delegations to the local board. Except for the delegation of decision-making over Matiatia, no formal additional allocations or delegations have been made to the board as a result of the pilot. No participants provided clear suggestions on which activities or decisions were obvious candidates to delegate to the board, however.

The Programme Manager and incoming local board may wish to consider whether there are any additional delegations they wish to secure in the second half of the pilot.

6.7 The role of the Programme Manager

The Programme Manager role was set up to lead the implementation of the Waiheke Local Board pilot project and to motivate and coordinate input from various parts of the council group to address a wide range of issues highlighted in the pilot proposal.

The focus and function of the role has evolved over the course of the pilot. Interviews with both board members and staff identified differences in opinion, and some confusion, as to the appropriate remit of the position. Some of these are discussed below.

6.7.1 What to focus on

As discussed in Section 6.4, there had been recent disagreement between board members and the Programme Manager as to whether the most effective use of his time should be large advocacy issues with a lower likelihood of success, or on more tangible projects or programmes of work with a higher likelihood of success within the timeframes of the pilot. A staff member expressed a similar sentiment:

[The Programme Manager] role ought to have been very much a determination of what powers ought to be delegated to the local board. It should therefore have been ... more of an analytical role of what powers are best residing with the local board, applying the principle of subsidiarity and trying to apply that, leaving the operational components to the Local Board Services staff and, if we need an Ops Manager, having a separate Ops Manager for that... My impression of the current situation is that somebody took a long list and simply said these are all the things that are important to Waiheke, wrote a two pager and said 'there that's what the pilot project will do'. (Staff member)

6.7.2 Confusing the Programme Manager with the pilot itself

Some of the debate over the role of the Programme Manager noted above and in Section 6.4 highlights a tendency amongst interviewees to confuse the Programme Manager with the pilot itself.

Given that the pilot is a push to do things differently, it needs to be owned by multiple parties to bring about change. Therefore, local board members, as well as council staff connected to the pilot, need to play an active role in ensuring the pilot has the intended impact. To date, many of the pilot-related improvements (e.g. AT relationship improvements, waste services contract) have been driven by local board members and other council staff, with the support of and/or oversight by the Programme Manager.

6.7.3 Operations Manager responsibilities

At the time of writing, the Programme Manager had also been given a delegation from council's Chief Operating Officer to make decisions in agreed Waiheke operations matters. This delegation resulted from an unsuccessful proposal by the Programme Manager to establish an operations manager position for Waiheke within the Operations Division. The proposal was that staff with Waiheke-facing operations roles would report to this manager when undertaking Waiheke work but retain existing line management relationships otherwise. This sought to maximise staff investment in achieving local outcomes while minimising structural change. The proposal was not proceeded with.

The alternative delegation does not have line management responsibilities or budget, but is intended to bolster the Programme Manager's ability to progress operational issues on the island. There was mixed support for these new responsibilities, with some feeling it was a great development, and others worrying it might overwhelm the Programme Manager.

Now [the Programme Manager] has been made Operations Manager and I had a very solid discussion with the powers that be about whether that was a good thing or not, because I see it as using his resources [that should be focused on higher-level advocacy]. (LB member)

Operational staff, in general, were uncertain how the operations manager delegation would change current interactions with the Programme Manager. At the time of the evaluation a number of interviewees reported that they had been provided with minimal information about the new decision-making power:

The final evaluation will track how this additional responsibility has worked.

6.7.4 Differences between Project Manager and Local Board Services staff

There is some overlap between the Programme Manager role and the responsibilities of Local Board Services support staff, and there does not appear to be clear guidance on where the respective responsibilities of all parties lie.

So [for example, the Programme Manager] goes out to Wharetana Bay and he argues with people about a bund for planting that we put on the beach to try and shield the house from. Now these are important issues, they are legacy important issues, but I cannot see how that fits in the pilot project – if you're looking at the pilot project as an attempt to create a balance between the Governing Body and the local

authority. That ought to be something that [Local Board Services] or somebody within the ops space ought to have looked at. (Staff member)

In the case of the Waiheke pilot, it was reported that staff had navigated these overlaps professionally and productively. However, this lack of clarity is a significant risk for other boards should the approach of a programme manager be rolled out elsewhere.

7.0 Key risks and recommendations

This midpoint evaluation has documented significant progress for the pilot; however, there are some risks evident as the initiative enters its final 18 months. These are outlined below, alongside a series of recommendations to ensure its continued success. A final section outlines a series of considerations for applying lessons from the pilot to other local board areas.

7.1 Key risks

We consider there are a number of risks to the pilot at its halfway point. These are described below and relate to potential changes in personnel; the need to ensure agreement on the focus of the pilot, and the Programme Manager's responsibilities in particular; progress in relation to the AT Operations Manager role; and the involvement of Ngāti Paoa in Matiatia.

7.1.1 A change in key personnel

There may be a change in key personnel during the remainder of the pilot, either within the local board, or the broader council. For example, at the time of writing this report, the 2019 local elections were nearing. These elections may result in new Waiheke Local Board members, councillors and Mayor of Auckland.

Such a change poses a significant risk to the success of the pilot. Many of the successes to date have been built on improved relationships and a shared understanding of the pilot purpose. If a change in key personnel results in a regress of relationships, we consider the likelihood of the pilot achieving its aspirations in its second 18 months decreases.

So one of the things maybe with the pilot, there's going to be an important juncture with the new board ... I think some thinking needs to be done about so how do we turn up at the new board, how do we ... transition I guess? Because deep down there's a couple of projects which are still very vexatious which haven't probably reached a significant point in its life. (Staff member)

7.1.2 Disagreement over the focus of the pilot

People's aspirations for the pilot have changed as the pilot progresses, and we reported some instances of this occurring in Section 6.4 in relation to the activities of the Programme Manager. There is a risk that individuals diverge over time in terms of what they think the pilot should be focusing on and achieving, and that this results in a lack of coordination of efforts and therefore decreased effectiveness of the pilot.

7.1.3 Changes to the Programme Manager role

Section 6.7.3 outlined the additional operations manager responsibilities that had been delegated to the Programme Manager. Depending on the impact this has on the Programme

Manager role, there is a risk that these responsibilities may lessen the ability of the Programme Manager to respond to non-operational matters. One interviewee noted how busy the Programme Manager already is:

He can be very stretched and I think that he is still very much in operational mode at the moment, where he is a Project Manager. So some of these projects he's leading it, he's doing the notes, he's ringing the people, getting them together, going to have site meetings with the residents. There's quite a lot of involved in what he's doing at the moment. (Staff member)

It is important therefore to re-determine early in the new term what the focus of the Programme Manager role is to be for the second half of the pilot, as well as whether the role can draw on the assistance of others. Each focus area should be agreed alongside a clear assessment of the feasibility of success within the pilot timeframes.

7.1.4 AT Operations Manager

At the time of writing this report, the AT Waiheke Local Board Relationship Manager position was being combined with other responsibilities to create a Waiheke Operations Manager role, with decision-making over AT spending on the island. This is a crucial role for the pilot and significant delays would jeopardise the progress made in relation to the AT-local board relationship.

7.1.5 Ngāti Paoa engagement with Matiatia planning

The appropriate development of Matiatia is a long-standing issue and a significant local board priority. While substantial progress has been made towards enabling the board to make meaningful decisions for the area, this has been slower than desired. One contributing factor has been difficulty engaging with Ngāti Paoa representatives over the last year or so.

There are a number of reasons for this, including the impact of internal dynamics within the iwi. However, continued delays may put progress on the project (if the board continues to wait for Ngāti Paoa engagement) or the ability for Ngāti Paoa to protect the cultural significance of the area amid new development (if the board decides to progress without full Ngāti Paoa engagement), at risk.

7.2 Recommendations

Overall, most participants did not suggest significant change to the pilot. For example:

My experience over the eighteen months that I have been involved in this is that good progress has been made; I have a sense of optimism. I would [...] not recommend any major changes. I think we make minor improvements, tweaks etcetera but there's nothing that I would suddenly stop being done. I think it is certainly working well in its current format. (Staff member)

Nevertheless, we recommend the following is considered, in order to avoid the risks noted above:

7.2.1 Re-establish the importance and direction of the pilot early in the new electoral term

It is essential that effort is made to re-establish and re-affirm the pilot with incoming local board and Governing Body members, both to ensure there is continued collective agreement on the importance of the pilot and to maintain momentum. This is also consistent with the AT MoU, which states that the “MoU will be actively reviewed within six months of the start of each board term”.

We recommend that Waiheke Local Board members, Governing Body members, senior managers and operational staff meet in-person as soon as possible at the start of the new term to re-establish the intent of the pilot and confirm ways of working. This may contribute to addressing some of the challenges identified, such as lack of buy-in from some staff.

This may be a single meeting in the form of a ‘Waiheke Summit’, or multiple separate discussions. The key consideration is that these meetings occur, and that they involve face-to-face discussion in order to maximise shared understanding, agreement and buy-in and also maintain the constructive working relationships that have been fostered through the pilot. One board member reflects below on how valuable this would have been at the commencement of the pilot:

...it would [have been] good to have a summit and maybe pool together the people, the critical people in an earlier meeting, in a summit to say this is the local board area, this is what it looks like, this is how it's made up, these are our biggest challenges, what approach might we take? And that could have delivered more value for Waiheke at this point. (LB member)

7.2.2 Re-establish pilot objectives and assign roles to achieve these

The conversations above should focus on:

- Taking stock of progress to date
- Agreeing the priorities for the pilot as it moves into its second phase, including ways to address the ongoing challenges. This process should include an assessment of the likelihood of success of each potential priority area within the time and resource constraints of the pilot.
- Agreeing what the Programme Manager should focus his efforts on over the remainder of the pilot, as well as a mechanism for formally reviewing those foci every six months, if such a mechanism does not already exist.
- Recognising the pilot requires people in addition to the Programme Manager to be actively involved and coordinated in achieving its objectives. This includes identifying roles for local board members and other council staff in advancing and supporting the pilot, and seeking an active commitment from each party to deliver on those roles.

One consideration, with regard to support by other teams, may be to identify discrete issue resolution matters, including administrative matters, that can be progressed with business as usual processes and allocate these to Local Board Services staff to manage. This would free the Programme Manager up to focus on the bigger issues and advocacy. In addition, we recommend that consideration is given to increased formalisation of the Programme Manager's role with regard to the current operations delegation.

One local board member suggested workshopping the pilot with the Governing Body to encourage them to take some ownership for the pilot's objectives.

The Governing Body should have [the pilot] as a workshop issue that would be led by the Mayor, in a workshop... It might come about with a review of where the governance pilot has got to but it might also be challenged to come up with some answers for itself on how things might be improved. (LB member)

7.2.3 Celebrate and communicate progress to date

It is easy to forget where we have come from, and to focus on what is still not working. This evaluation shows that considerable progress has been made as a result of significant staff and elected member effort.

We recommend taking this opportunity to acknowledge the progress made by all those involved and to update the community of the progress. For example, the baseline community survey showed a very low level of support and trust in Auckland Council and Auckland Transport, and it is considered unlikely that the broader Waiheke community are aware of recent developments. Consideration could be given to ways to inform the local community of the pilot's successes to date. Similar opportunities should be explored within Council departments and CCOs.

7.2.4 Investigate additional delegations

While the evaluation results have demonstrated the essential role of improving relationships and working more productively together to empower and enable greater local board influence, we recommend continuing to investigate areas where decision-making held at the regional level may be more efficient and effective if exercised locally.

This is needed to inform discussions about delegations from the Governing Body to the local board, as well discussions about the exercise of delegated authority by staff.

7.2.5 Consider mechanisms for central government and other advocacy

Interviewees noted that some of the issues affecting the island (e.g. ferry access, tourism pressures, and boat waste discharge issues) require solutions involving parties beyond council, such as central government.

We recommend investigating mechanisms for central government and other advocacy, possibly leveraging relationships held by individuals or teams in council who have to date not been involved in the pilot.

7.2.6 Consider how to bring on board departments that have been reluctant to engage

Some interviewees noted a reluctance of some departments to consider different approaches to working with the local board. This is more likely to be the case for departments that have had less contact with Waiheke Local Board, and/or are only intermittently involved with any local boards.

We recommend developing specific suggestions for ways these departments could improve their interactions with the local board, and addressing the reluctance at a senior management level. This evaluation may provide some evidence of the benefits of change.

7.2.7 Consider how to facilitate Ngāti Paoa involvement in Matiatia planning

Board members and council staff emphasised the importance of Ngāti Paoa's involvement in the development of a strategic plan for Matiatia. The Programme Manager's records show dozens of attempts to facilitate this involvement, with only partial success.

We recommend considering how to better facilitate Ngāti Paoa involvement. A rangatira ki te rangatira (leader to leader) approach may be required to enable this.

7.2.8 Investigate how to refine and improve the Auckland Council Operations Manager role

The evaluation identified differences in opinion, and some confusion, as to the appropriate scope of the Programme Manager position.

We recommend investigating how this role could be developed to ensure that its remit supports the intention of the pilot. This could also include revisiting the Programme Manager's work programme in the new term, to agree on areas of focus and what is achievable within the timeframe of the pilot.

7.3 Considerations for other local boards

At the time of conducting this evaluation there was some discussion as to whether lessons could be taken from the pilot and applied to other local boards. This stage of the evaluation has also highlighted that, while much of the initial rationale for trialling different ways of working on Waiheke revolved around the physical disconnection of the island from the rest of Auckland, many of the changes in relationships and board influence are unrelated to the notion that Waiheke is 'different'. They could, therefore, be applied to other boards where there is willingness on the part of local boards and staff.

Acknowledging that some initiatives are already being applied across all local boards (e.g. the integrated local board work programme) and noting that pilots create an environment with a high tolerance for risk in order to enable new and different ways to be trialled, we have outlined below some of the main implications⁹ when considering its wider application.

1. **Programme Manager role:** Someone resourced to progress this sort of initiative – such as the Programme Manager in the Waiheke Pilot – is essential. They need to have sufficient mana within the organisation to encourage change and resolve issues, and to be able to negotiate uncertainty and work well with others. It is also important to clarify the role of any Programme Manager or equivalent in relation to those of Local Board Services staff (e.g. LBS Relationship manager). The lack of clarity has not been an issue in this instance largely due to the ability of staff involved in the pilot to navigate the uncertainty professionally. This may not be the case in other areas.
2. **Area Manager approach:** There is general support amongst board members, and many staff, for an 'area manager' approach, where an individual has oversight over a range of activities within a given area.
 - a. While this wasn't fully implemented within the pilot, Board members appreciated the shift towards this approach because it gave them a consistent point of contact who knows the area as well as they do.
 - b. Such a shift does not appear to be a simple fix, however, and it has not been a focus of this evaluation to determine the viability of such an approach (e.g. consideration of its interface with other roles would be required).
3. **Appropriate resourcing needed:** The resourcing arrangement for the pilot has shown that a dedicated staff member such as the Programme Manager cannot do everything. It is important to explicitly assign responsibility to others – both elected members and staff. This can create resourcing implications - in staff time primarily, but budgets also - for the organisation. We anticipate that rolling out changes to other local boards is likely to require additional resources not currently budgeted for.
4. **Constructive and trusting relationship underpins success:** It is clear from the pilot that a constructive dialogue based on respect and trust is far more effective at facilitating positive change and influence. Face-to-face engagement appears to have been essential for this and crucial in encouraging collective ownership. There can be lessons in this for how we engage, and manage the interface with, other local boards.
5. **Empowering Council attitude:** Some of the improvements seen in this pilot are down to staff taking the board more seriously, working more intentionally to empower them, and changes in interpersonal relationships. For the most part, these changes have neither involved nor required formal delegations to the local board.
6. **Mandate required:** Some of the potential changes identified above may require a mandate (alongside resources). This would need to come from the Governing Body with agreement and cooperation of senior leadership.

⁹ This includes caveats, where known.

Find out more: phone 09 301 0101, email
rimu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or visit
aucklandcouncil.govt.nz and knowledgeauckland.org.nz