



Auckland City Centre Advisory Board Review 2019-2022

Kathryn Ovenden, Rachael Butler, Jesse Allpress

June 2022

Technical Report 2022/9





Auckland City Centre Advisory Board Review, 2019-2022

June 2022

Technical Report 2022/9

Kathryn Ovenden

Jesse Allpress

Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), Auckland Council

Rachael Butler

Independent researcher

Auckland Council

Technical Report 2022/9

ISSN 2230-4525 (Print)

ISSN 2230-4533 (Online)

ISBN 978-1-99-110156-3 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-99-110157-0 (PDF)

This report has been peer reviewed by the Peer Review Panel.
Review completed on 23 May 2022 Reviewed by two reviewers
Approved for Auckland Council publication by: Name: Dr Jonathan Bengé Position: Head of Research, Evaluation and Monitoring (RIMU)
Name: Kenneth Aiolupotea Position: General Manager, Democracy and Engagement Date: 10 June 2022

Recommended citation

Ovenden, K., R. Butler, J. Allpress (2022). Auckland City Centre Advisory Board review, 2019-2022. Auckland Council technical report, TR2022/9

The authors would like to acknowledge the contributions of participants who shared their experiences and the guidance received from the steering group.

© 2022 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

The Auckland City Centre Advisory Board (ACCAB) advises Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland Council on the alignment of the City Centre Targeted Rate (CCTR) investment portfolio to the needs of the city centre. It also provides advice on the council's strategies, policies, plans, bylaws and programmes in relation to city centre development, and on key issues and opportunities to support city centre outcomes. It is one of several advisory panels at Auckland Council.

This review of ACCAB for the 2019-2022 local government electoral term focuses on outcomes achieved for the city centre and operations of the board. The review had three phases.

1. Engaging with stakeholders to inform them of the review approach and scope.
2. Interviews and focus groups with ACCAB members, council staff, and Te Poari ā-Rohe o Waitematā / Waitematā Local Board.
3. Developing recommendations through a series of workshops with stakeholders.

The review found that ACCAB is considered to be an important stakeholder group with potential to provide a valuable contribution to city centre outcomes. ACCAB members are seen by council staff to be passionate about the city centre, and staff are eager to engage with them as city centre stakeholders. However, this review identified some issues which have negatively impacted ACCAB's ability to provide value and to achieve outcomes this term.

Three contributing factors contextualise the findings of the review.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruption for ACCAB's meetings and has impacted the issues being discussed (e.g. incorporation of physical distancing requirements in projects).
- The programmes and issues on which ACCAB advises are complicated.
- ACCAB members and council staff have diverse professional backgrounds and so may interpret terminology differently. Sometimes, this results in misunderstanding.

The review found there are mixed understandings and expectations surrounding fundamental aspects of ACCAB. There was consensus that the board's function was to 'advise', however, this was interpreted in diverse ways and has evolved over time. The scope of topics within ACCAB's remit was understood to be very broad by some participants, and not always accommodated by its membership (i.e. a scope inclusive of broad city centre issues, such as homelessness, without representation of such communities in ACCAB's membership). The level of advice provided by ACCAB was found to often be operational about specific projects, however, staff and some ACCAB members expected advice to be provided at a strategic level (e.g. long-term strategies, input at a programme level). The board's relationship with the Waitematā Local Board, and the role of elected members in ACCAB, was unclear for some participants.

The review found that defining the optimal membership mix for ACCAB was reliant upon clarity of its function and scope of overview. Overall, the membership is perceived to be of a high calibre, albeit socio-demographically homogenous. It could benefit from increased diversity.

Members receive minimal onboarding and access to training, have varied professional backgrounds and wide-ranging tenures as ACCAB members (ranging from a few months to over a decade). These differences result in varied abilities of members to perform their advisory role and to equitably participate in meetings. Providing comprehensive training and setting an appointment term could improve members' advisory capabilities and enable stronger participation.

Relationships were found to be generally positive between ACCAB members and between ACCAB members and staff.

Overall, meetings were found to be working well. A large staff resource investment in the coordination and management of ACCAB is contributing to high satisfaction amongst ACCAB members with how meetings are operating. Staff are involved in many pre-meeting activities (e.g. agenda setting and preparation of materials), facilitating meetings themselves, and post-meeting activities (e.g. disseminating minutes).

The role of the chair is critical to ACCAB's performance, through facilitating equitable participation in meetings and ensuring conversations are within scope. Performing the role of chair can be challenging for ACCAB members as it requires impartiality which, in practice, can prevent representing the perspectives of their stakeholders in discussions.

A series of interrelated recommendations have resulted from the review. Key recommendations include:

- clarifying and communicating ACCAB's function, scope of topics, and level of advice
- fostering the relationship between ACCAB and the Waitematā Local Board
- filling gaps and increasing diversity in ACCAB's membership
- providing comprehensive onboarding and ongoing training to ACCAB members
- appointing an independent chair.

Contents

1	Introduction and background.....	1
1.1	Purpose of the review	1
1.2	Background.....	2
2	How the review was conducted.....	6
2.1	Engagement with stakeholders.....	6
2.2	Primary data collection and data analysis	6
2.3	Development of recommendations.....	6
3	Contributing factors.....	7
3.1	The COVID-19 pandemic.....	7
3.2	The complexity of relevant programmes and issues.....	7
3.3	Varied interpretations of terminology.....	7
4	Perceptions of ACCAB's impact.....	8
5	Perceptions of the role and function of ACCAB.....	10
5.1	ACCAB's function to advise is broadly interpreted.....	10
5.2	Varied perceptions of ACCAB's scope.....	12
5.3	The level of advice provided ranges from strategic to operational	14
5.4	Calls for better partnership with the Waitematā Local Board	15
6	Membership.....	17
6.1	Need for clarification of the role of elected members.....	17
6.2	Some gaps identified in membership mix	18
6.3	Inconsistent ability among members to fully participate.....	19
6.4	Remuneration not required for members.....	21
6.5	Conflicts of interest are managed well.....	23
7	Relationships	24
8	Meetings and the role of the chair.....	26
8.1	Meetings working well, but some room to improve	26
8.2	The chair is critical to a well-functioning board.....	31
9	Recommendations.....	33

1 Introduction and background

The Auckland City Centre Advisory Board (ACCAB) is one of several advisory panels who provide advice to Auckland Council. A version of ACCAB has operated for some time. In 2004, the Auckland City Council established a 'Central Business District (CBD) Residents Advisory Group' and in 2008 established the 'CBD Board'. The 'Auckland City Centre Advisory Board' was formed following the amalgamation of local government in Tāmaki Makaurau and creation of Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland Council in 2010.

ACCAB advises Auckland Council on the alignment of the City Centre Targeted Rate (CCTR) investment portfolio with the needs of the city centre, provides advice on the council's strategies, policies, plans, bylaws, and programmes in relation to the city centre, as well as key issues and opportunities to support city centre outcomes.

This report outlines the findings from a review of ACCAB's effectiveness during the 2019-2022 term¹. The review was initiated by the Democracy and Engagement department which is responsible for advisory panels at council.

1.1 Purpose of the review

The review had two areas of focus:

- ACCAB's effectiveness on influencing outcomes for the city centre
- operations of the board.

The following aspects were in-scope²:

- board membership (including representation and the appointment process including chairs)
- functioning of the board (e.g. provision and distribution of advice, meetings)
- effectiveness of current working relationships and areas for improvement (e.g. between staff and board members)
- outcomes achieved
- role of ACCAB in relation to decision-making procedures for the council on city centre issues
- identifying areas and processes that are working well.

The review was undertaken by the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) alongside Rachael Butler (an independent social researcher). This report presents the review findings including recommendations

¹ Every term a review has been carried out with the demographic advisory panels as part of a practice of continuous improvement. Sector panels, including ACCAB, have not previously been reviewed. Informal feedback was gathered from sector panel members through an online survey during 2019.

² The City Centre Targeted Rate (CCTR) investment portfolio and associated work programme were out of scope.

for improvement. These findings will inform recommendations regarding ACCAB’s 2022-2025 term to the incoming mayor following the 2022 local elections.

1.2 Background

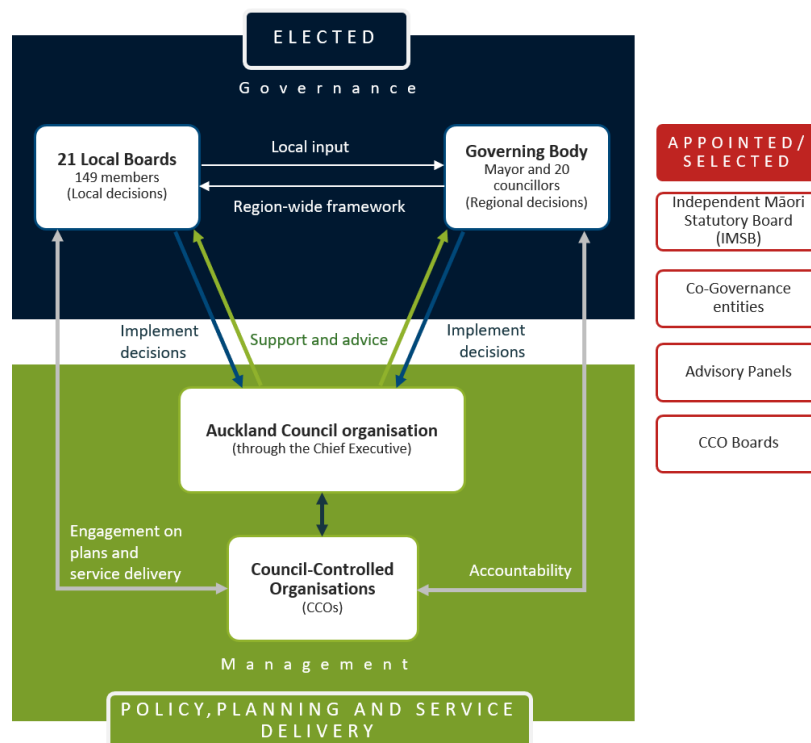
This section provides an overview of the broader governance and advisory context within which ACCAB operates and outlines its role and function in some detail.

Auckland Council’s shared governance model

Governance at Auckland Council is structured by a unique framework distinct to other councils in Aotearoa / New Zealand. The three pillars of shared governance are outlined in Figure 1.

- Governance – elected members who work together to develop and shape the vision for Auckland.
- Management – staff of Auckland Council and council-controlled organisations (CCOs) who work with Governance to execute the vision for Auckland.
- Appointed / selected groups – entities who are appointed or selected to advise actions done by Auckland Council. This includes advisory panels such as ACCAB.

Figure 1: Auckland Council's shared governance model



The Governing Body establishes committees and advisory panels in accordance with Section 9 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009³. This states that a role of the mayor is to ‘ensure

³ The Act can be found at: <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2009/0032/latest/DLM2044937.html>

there is effective engagement between the Auckland Council and the people of Auckland, including those too young to vote.’ The same section also states that the mayor has power ‘to establish processes and mechanisms for the Auckland Council to engage with the people of Auckland, whether generally or particularly (for example, the people of a cultural, ethnic, geographic or other community of interest)’. The current panels can be broadly interpreted as an engagement mechanism with diverse communities and peoples in Auckland. These are discussed in more detail below.

The Planning Committee is delegated the responsibility of ‘working with and receiving advice from the Heritage Advisory Panel, the Rural Advisory Panel and the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board to give visibility to the issues important to the communities they represent and to help effect change’⁴.

Local boards have a role in the development of plans, policies, strategies, and bylaws concerning their local board area. Local boards have annual work programmes consisting of local board activities funded by local board budgets. Te Poari ā-Rohe o Waitematā / Waitematā Local Board area encompasses the city centre and so inherently shares interests with ACCAB.

Advisory panels at Auckland Council

Auckland Council currently has six demographic advisory panels⁵ and three sector panels which includes ACCAB. Each panel operates under a Terms of Reference. All panels have three-year terms that mirror the electoral term. The total panel budget for the 2019-2022 term was approximately \$420,000 which covers the operations of all demographic and sector panels. Advisory panels are generally supported by a Lead Officer and a Deputy Lead Officer in addition to Governance Advisors and other council staff. All panels have a liaison councillor to provide a two-way communication channel to the Governing Body.

Demographic advisory panels have a membership of between 8-12 people. Members are selected through an expression of interest process to provide diversity of perspective. Demographic panels elect their own co-chairs.

ACCAB is one of three sector panels alongside the Rural Advisory Panel and the Heritage Advisory Panel. The Rural Advisory Panel is chaired by a councillor. There are between 15-21 members who are selected to represent key interest groups. Many members are appointed by the organisations they represent. The Heritage Advisory Panel has between 10-16 members. Members are selected following an expression of interest process which seeks a mixture of technical expertise and some community advocates. The panel elects its chair.

⁴ As stated in the Governing Body Terms of Reference: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/governing-body-wards-committees/Documents/governing-body-terms-of-reference.pdf>

⁵ The six panels are: Disability Advisory Panel, Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel, Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel, Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel, Seniors Advisory Panel, Youth Advisory Panel.

Role and function of ACCAB

The Terms of Reference⁶ for ACCAB in the 2019-2022 term states that its role is to:

- advise on council strategies and plans that impact on the Auckland city centre
- advise on the priorities of the City Centre Targeted Rate investment portfolio
- recommend any proposed changes to the Auckland City Centre Targeted Rate policy
- advise on issues and opportunities to support city centre outcomes and its success
- as appropriate, members may participate on behalf of the board, as part of stakeholder reference groups to provide feedback to city centre projects and initiatives
- work with the council group staff to achieve shared outcomes for the city centre.

ACCAB has between 15 to 21 members who are selected to represent key interest groups (as decided by the mayor). Some members are appointed by the organisations they represent. ACCAB's membership includes three elected members: a representative from the Waitematā Local Board, the Waitematā and Gulf Ward Councillor, and the mayor/mayor's alternate (who is a chair of a committee of the whole). The board elects its chair and elected members are ineligible to be the chair.

ACCAB meets monthly, which has alternated this term between business meetings and workshops. Business meetings are open to the public with agendas and minutes published on InfoCouncil⁷. Agenda items that require a resolution are included in business meetings and recorded in minutes. Workshops, which are closed to the public, are for the purpose of free and frank discussion between board members, elected members, and council group staff. An agenda item can first be discussed at a workshop before a resolution is recorded in a subsequent business meeting.

ACCAB also has 'City Centre in Focus' sessions which are optional workshop-style sessions to which the Waitematā Local Board is invited. These sessions are closed to the public and are scheduled as needed to discuss details of interest to a sub-set of ACCAB's membership.

Plans and strategies impacting Auckland's city centre

Several plans and strategies guide the vision for Auckland's city centre including the Auckland Plan 2050 and the City Centre Master Plan 2020. Descriptions of these plans and the portfolios they influence are outlined below. Implementation of plans through the delivery of investment programmes is achieved through rates funding, including targeted rates.

There are two targeted rates within the city centre. Properties⁸ within the city centre rating area⁹ pay the City Centre Targeted Rate (CCTR). A CBD targeted rate was first introduced in 2004 by the

⁶ Terms of Reference can be found at: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/advisory-panels/Documents/auckland-city-centre-advisory-board-terms-of-reference-2019-2022.pdf>

⁷ Can be found at: <https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/>

⁸ Property owners, rather than tenants, of commercial and residential properties are ratepayers.

⁹ A map of this area can be found at: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/property-rates-valuations/your-rates-bill/Documents/city-centre-rating-map.pdf>

former Auckland City Council. The Business Improvement District (BID)¹⁰ programme is an economic development initiative run by a business association and Auckland Council. Each BID has a specified targeted rate area and targeted rate funds are available for business associations to use on activities that promote economic growth in the area. The city centre includes two BIDs: Karangahape Road and Heart of the City.

The Auckland Plan 2050¹¹ is the long-term visionary plan for Auckland over the next 30 years. Six outcomes are outlined within the plan with which strategies, policies and plans are aligned such as Auckland Council's long-term plan (LTP, 10-year timeframe) and local board plans¹² (3-year timeframe). The process of deciding budgets for the LTP includes consideration of the CCTR and the investment programmes funded by this targeted rate. The CCTR was extended until 2030/2031 as part of decision-making for the 2021-2031 LTP. ACCAB provided support for the extension of the CCTR and the decision to extend was made by the Finance and Performance Committee.

The City Centre Master Plan 2020 (CCMP)¹³ is a key document for the council group that sets the strategic direction for the city centre over the next 20 years. It applies the Auckland Plan 2050 to the city centre through the alignment of 10 outcomes to be delivered through 'transformational moves' and Access for Everyone (A4E). A4E is a response to managing the city centre's transport needs and includes enabling a mode shift away from private vehicles¹⁴.

Auckland's Future in Progress¹⁵ is a portfolio of projects guided by the CCMP. Projects include, for example, Myers Park underpass, Aotea station, and Karangahape Road enhancements. Projects within this portfolio are delivered by the council group including Auckland Council and council-controlled organisations (CCOs, such as Auckland Transport). Projects within this portfolio receive funding from the CCTR and may also receive funding from other sources such as the Waitematā Local Board budget or general rates.

This report

This report contains the findings and recommendations from the review. The next section outlines how the review was conducted and the following sections discuss what the review found. Three factors that were found to contextualise findings are described first. The review explored several interrelated themes and sub-themes that constitute subsequent sections of the report. Recommendations are interspersed with the findings and listed at the end.

¹⁰ More details can be found at: <https://bid.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/>

¹¹ The plan can be found at: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/docsprintdocuments/auckland-plan-2050-print-document.pdf>

¹² The Waitematā Local Board Plan can be found at: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/local-boards/all-local-boards/waitemata-local-board/Documents/waitemata-local-board-plan-2020-english.pdf>

¹³ Can be found at: <https://www.aucklandccmp.co.nz/>

¹⁴ More details can be found at: <https://www.aucklandccmp.co.nz/access-for-everyone-a4e/>

¹⁵ More details can be found at: <https://progressakl.co.nz/>

2 How the review was conducted

A steering group was established to guide the project team (authors of this report) through the review. Steering group members consisted of council staff in the Governance and CCO Partnerships directorate, the Development Programme Office (DPO) and the Lead Officer for ACCAB. The project team informed the steering group of review progress and sought guidance on stakeholder engagement. The review involved three sequential phases, each discussed below:

- engagement with stakeholders
- primary data collection and data analysis
- development of recommendations.

2.1 Engagement with stakeholders

Informing stakeholders of the review's purpose and approach formed the first phase. Key stakeholders include the mayor's office, Waitematā Local Board, key council staff, and ACCAB members. Stakeholders were informed of the review through presentations or written memos.

Stakeholders were kept informed as the review reached key milestones.

2.2 Primary data collection and data analysis

Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were undertaken with stakeholders. These were facilitated by the project team and structured by a discussion guide. Using qualitative methods allowed the project team to gather a depth of information about participants' experiences, and enabled flexibility to investigate issues as they emerged.

Interviews and focus groups took place between November 2021 and February 2022. They were conducted over Microsoft Teams as COVID-19 alert levels and traffic light settings prohibited meeting kanohi ki te kanohi / face-to-face at that time.

In total, 36 people participated including ACCAB members, council group staff and the Waitematā Local Board.

Sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analysed thematically using NVivo. The themes uncovered in analysis form the sub-sections in this report.

The research was reviewed by Auckland Council's Research Ethics Advisory Group in August 2021.

2.3 Development of recommendations

A series of workshops were hosted with key stakeholder groups in March 2022 following the completion of data analysis. The findings of the review were shared by the project team at these workshops followed by discussion and refinement of draft recommendations.

3 Contributing factors

This review identified three factors which have contributed to ACCAB's performance this term:

- the COVID-19 pandemic
- the complexity of programmes and issues relevant to the city centre
- variation in use and interpretation of terminology.

3.1 The COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns have been disruptive throughout the 2019-2022 term, and impacts are likely to continue for some time. COVID-19 resulted in a shift to an online format for meetings and workshops and impacted the issues on which ACCAB was advising. Initial technological challenges were overcome, however, the shift to remote working impacted opportunities for relationship building between ACCAB members and between members and council staff.

In addition, the parameters and priority of some projects changed to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions which resulted in changes to the issues with which ACCAB engaged. For example, the Queen Street pedestrianisation project adapted to accommodate physical distancing requirements.

3.2 The complexity of relevant programmes and issues

The topics and programmes on which ACCAB is engaged are often significant and complex. ACCAB can be one stakeholder group amongst many providing advice to Auckland Council. It is difficult to ascertain the direct impact of ACCAB's advice within this complex system, which can contribute to perceptions of underperformance and disappointment for both council staff and ACCAB members. Efforts to close the feedback loop by tracking and communicating how advice is considered in decision-making could improve perceived performance and motivate continued engagement from ACCAB members.

3.3 Varied interpretations of terminology

Through our conversations with participants it became apparent that terminology has varied interpretations, which carries a risk of creating mixed understandings. The use of Auckland Council jargon and the meaning of terms is not always the same as those used by ACCAB members who come from diverse professional backgrounds. For example, the term 'project' is frequently used by participants (both staff and ACCAB members) to describe on what ACCAB advises. However, within Auckland Council's investment delivery framework a 'project' is differentiated from a 'programme' or a 'portfolio'. It is easy for divergent expectations to develop in this context. As such, careful consideration should be given to word choices in written materials (e.g. Terms of Reference, reports) and including a glossary in the Terms of Reference may be beneficial.

4 Perceptions of ACCAB's impact

Participants described a range of impacts that ACCAB achieved this term including projects in which the board's advice was incorporated (e.g. Albert Street¹⁶, Myers Park¹⁷, Queen Street¹⁸ and James Liston Hostel homelessness project¹⁹).

Myers Park underpass, we've [ACCAB] had a big impact on the design, and redesign, and redesign of that to get it right... Albert Street, we pushed and pushed and pushed last term and beginning of this term for a much better quality finished product... I think by and large, we're heard and you can see the changed design as a consequence. - ACCAB member

I think they've had a definite impact on the design and some of the aspects of Queen Street... I think that some of the points where they've given really strong feedback on specifics about the design, I think some of those have definitely been taken on board and been really useful. And interestingly also ended up lining up with some of the public feedback as well. -Staff

In contrast to impacts on specific projects, measuring the board's impact on long-term strategies or broader city centre issues can be challenging to identify. Such topics and the process of decision-making involved in addressing them is complicated and takes time.

Things that are quite tangible and you can have a discussion about 'well are the public toilets there or not' and 'are we going to put some trees outside the station entry here or not'... those are quite tangible things, but having a discussion about K' Road and what we think the future of that precinct is and what we'd like to see in K' Road, it's hard to know how far that feedback goes and how much of an impact it will have. - ACCAB member

One area of impact achieved this term, which is not related to a project, concerns improving the coordination of city centre developments. ACCAB's advocacy for a coordinated approach to the city centre developments is perceived by some ACCAB members to have manifested in the proposal for Eke Panuku to become the lead agency for city centre development. This proposal was considered, and the decision made to appoint Eke Panuku as lead agency, by the Planning Committee in November 2021²⁰.

¹⁶ More details can be found at: <https://www.cityraillink.co.nz/post-crl-projects-albert-street>

¹⁷ More details can be found at: <https://progressakl.co.nz/projects/myers-park-underpass/>

¹⁸ More details can be found at: <https://progressakl.co.nz/projects/wai-horotiu-queen-street-project/>

¹⁹ More details can be found at: <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2016/09/2-million-boost-to-housing-for-homeless/>

²⁰ <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2021/11/eke-panuku-to-lead-coordination-of-city-centre-development-programme/>

One of the longstanding pieces of advocacy actually for the board was to ensure we had holistic and connected planning across the council group... One of the key successes of the term was that council has now appointed one lead agency, Eke Panuku, to have overall leadership of the City Centre Masterplan implementation. So I think that's a good outcome. -ACCAB member

We've been asking for a holistic approach, a coordinated approach, a long-term future planning approach. We have been exhausting ourselves asking for [this] and then nothing ever seemed to happen, and I think it was probably happening but it takes a long time for enough people to hear it and believe it and then for the foundational changes to happen. -ACCAB member

Some members described disappointment in ACCAB's impact over this term. For some, this was tied to feeling like ACCAB was a 'talk shop', while for others it came from considering that the topics on which ACCAB was engaged were insignificant.

I can barely think of a substantive recommendation for endorsement that's gone to the Finance and Performance Committee in the last two years or year and a half. Part of the marginalisation is that we've been excluded from being asked to make substantive recommendations and maybe there was no call for them, but the stuff that we've been voting on [has been] very mundane. -ACCAB member

Staff expressed the importance of ACCAB as a group of city centre stakeholders. Some staff described receiving ACCAB's endorsement of approaches and ability to act as a 'temperature check' as being valuable. However, ACCAB members experienced frustration from being engaged in this way because decisions have been made and their advice is not being sought.

Because there's such a saturation of engagement throughout the council group with city centre stakeholders, there's not a lot of things that ACCAB has brought to us that we haven't already been aware of. [Where] I find ACCAB as being useful is as a good temperature check in terms of what are those key boiling issues. They often confirm to us what the urgent issues are, what the main issue of concerns [are]. -Staff

It's too late bringing it to us when the decision's already been made, and we have commented from time to time that this is not really the right place to be asking those questions of us. Sometimes I think council just wants a bit of reassurance [that] they're not going to be hung out to dry on something, which is probably fair enough. -ACCAB member

Some staff perceived ACCAB to be one group of city centre stakeholders amongst many with whom they engage, and they felt the quality of engagement was not always meeting their expectations. There were several factors behind this, including uncertainty of ACCAB's role within the council group, and differing understandings between (and within) staff and ACCAB members of the board's function, scope, and level of advice. These are discussed in the following sections.

5 Perceptions of the role and function of ACCAB

The review explored perceptions of ACCAB's role and function. Four key themes are discussed below relating to the board's function, scope of topics within its remit, the level at which advice is provided, and the role of ACCAB alongside the Waitematā Local Board.

5.1 ACCAB's function to advise is broadly interpreted

There was consensus amongst participants that ACCAB's function is to provide advice and that it is not a decision-maker. There are differing expectations surrounding the extent to which advice is binding and the solicitation of advice. Staff and ACCAB members both experienced frustration and disappointment when their expectations surrounding advice were not met.

Perceptions surrounding ACCAB's function have changed over time, which is contributing to current mixed interpretations. In previous terms, ACCAB was perceived to have a stronger decision-making function, and despite the most recent Terms of Reference clearly outlining ACCAB's advisory function, some longer-term members are still working under the assumption of occupying a decision-making role.

Under the old Auckland City Council, ACCAB was like the de facto decision-maker. They would make their decisions and that is what the council just accepted. -ACCAB member

Some members continue to want ACCAB to have a decision-making function. This was interpreted by participants to have come from a combination of experience acting as a decision-maker and/or an individual interest in having a decision-making function. Other members accept that ACCAB has an advisory function and lacks decision-making abilities²¹.

I know members of ACCAB would like to have more decision-making [power] and there's lots of tension around what they influence. -ACCAB member

We [have] got to get over ourselves here and just realise that this is an advisory board, it is in the name, we give advice and feedback. We aren't there to make [decisions]. -ACCAB member

²¹ The Governing Body Terms of Reference states that: 'the role of a panel is to inform and advise the council. They have no decision-making role.' <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/governing-body-wards-committees/Documents/governing-body-terms-of-reference.pdf>

Staff described the continuing transition to acceptance of ACCAB's advisory function as being challenging for some ACCAB members.

The board [is] an advisory board. They [can't] just ask the council to do stuff, they [are] there to advise on council matters, and they found that very, very difficult to accept. - Staff

Advice from ACCAB can inform decisions made by staff, the local board, or an Auckland Council committee. The ways in which advice from ACCAB and other stakeholders informs decisions can be varied and complex. In some instances advice may be followed and it could be (mis)interpreted that ACCAB 'made' the decision. In other instances, ACCAB's advice may be weighed against other considerations or advice from other stakeholders and will not be followed. This variation in how advice is used in decision-making appears to create some confusion and frustration for some ACCAB members.

On occasion they're [ACCAB] invited to give input which can inform officer decision-making or recommendations to elected members... They often get frustrated that they're not the decision-maker. -Staff

There are also mixed expectations surrounding the extent to which advice given by the board is binding. For some ACCAB members there was an expectation that advice was binding and would be acted upon, while others expected advice to be received and understood it to be non-binding. Staff generally considered advice from ACCAB to be non-binding.

The degree of influence ACCAB is perceived to hold over the spend of the CCTR varies and provides an example of these differing perspectives.

ACCAB is largely in control of the targeted [rate] spend. There's a programme of work against that so it's around governing where that spend is gonna be applied and we developed some criteria against that and managing or monitoring those projects through to fruition. -ACCAB member

They [ACCAB] were only advising on the city centre targeted rate. So they didn't have the final say on the spend of the city centre target rate finance performance total. And they found that difficult. -Staff

In addition to the provision of advice, some participants described ACCAB as performing a proactive advocacy function. Some ACCAB members described wanting to discuss and provide unsolicited advice to council on city centre issues, such as the Ports of Auckland. Some expressed disappointment that issues on which they wanted to advise had not been welcomed by staff, and similarly staff were frustrated to be receiving unsolicited advice and perceived some ACCAB members to be acting as a lobby group.

The Waitematā Local Board is the appropriate channel for constituents to advocate for city centre issues. Some staff expressed concern at ACCAB members lobbying for issues through ACCAB rather than through the local board. This was seen to be particularly problematic as there are elected

members on ACCAB, which could be perceived as providing ACCAB members with a direct channel for lobbying to elected members which is unavailable to other constituents. Consideration of the appropriate advocacy channel and mechanisms for redirecting advocacy are likely required as part of achieving clarity on ACCAB's function.

People on the board have now two channels of advocacy because of the elected members sitting in ACCAB... In my view, we have the Waitematā Local Board as the advocacy channel, and I'd actually be inclined to push the advocacy back to the Waitematā [Local Board]. -Staff

The review found:	It is recommended that:
<p>There are different interpretations of ACCAB's 'advisory' function. This is negatively impacting ACCAB's performance as well as satisfaction of staff and board members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCAB's function is defined as providing non-binding advice to inform decision-making by staff and elected members. • ACCAB's function is clearly communicated.

5.2 Varied perceptions of ACCAB's scope

The review explored feedback on the range of topics and issues the board were asked to be involved in during the 2019-2022 term.

The majority of participants identified that the core scope of ACCAB relates to the allocation of CCTR funding, as well as programmes funded by the CCTR or within the CCMP. Some remarked that when ACCAB was first established, its scope was closely associated with the targeted rate (i.e. the CBD targeted rate, a former version of the CCTR). Consequently they felt that the initial membership mix of the board was intended to represent city centre targeted ratepayers. Broader city centre issues, such as homelessness and safety — on which ACCAB occasionally provides advice — are beyond this core scope.

[ACCAB's purpose is] to provide advice to council on the development of the city centre and the implementation of the City Centre Masterplan and the allocation of the City Centre Targeted Rate. -ACCAB member

We [ACCAB] are there to advise the council on the expenditure of the targeted rate as well as advising on other issues that aren't directly in relation to the targeted rate that affect the city centre. -ACCAB member

ACCAB's role in advising on broader city centre issues requires consideration alongside the role of the Waitematā Local Board. A tension between ACCAB and the local board was described by some because of this overlapping scope (see section 5.4 for more details).

ACCAB's work programme plays a role in defining the scope of topics on which they advise. Work programmes are developed annually through workshops between staff and ACCAB. They are structured around themes which mostly align with the CCMP. However, some topics of interest which do not align with council priorities or are only of interest to some members are discussed in meetings. This extension of the board's scope of topics causes frustration for staff and some ACCAB members.

Our workshops and meetings have been framed around those themes [in the work programme] for the year and my sense is that they [ACCAB] have appreciated that because we're talking about the things that they think are important, but the counterpoint to that is that they're talking into the void... There's a complete disconnect between the priorities that ACCAB see and the priorities that Auckland Transport and Auckland Council have in our long-term plan and in our operational plan. -Staff

Some board members really want to push their own organisation's interests and have issues brought before ACCAB that really aren't of interest to others... Some of us [ACCAB members] are trying to make [these issues] 'ACCAB issues' and they really aren't. -ACCAB member

The review found:	It is recommended that:
The scope of issues that ACCAB have been involved in this term is varied, and it is not always clear what is, or should be, in scope.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACCAB's scope primarily focuses on CCTR-related items (e.g. funding allocation advice, strategic input into programmes)• broader city centre issues are secondary and considered in collaboration with the Waitemātā Local Board where overlap occurs• ACCAB's scope is clearly communicated to members and staff.

5.3 The level of advice provided ranges from strategic to operational

In this term ACCAB has provided advice on several matters ranging from long-term strategic advice to operational design details. There was consensus amongst participants that ACCAB should be oriented towards the provision of strategic (high-level) advice. However, for several reasons advice and conversations are often focused on operational issues. Differing expectations regarding the level of advice provided is resulting in disappointment and frustration for some staff as well as ACCAB members.

I would say over the last couple of years I've seen the focus change quite a lot into that more design advisory space and as a result my involvement has waned a bit because I don't put myself out to be a designer and I'm more interested in the governance side of the monies, making sure they're well spent. -ACCAB member

[The level of advice wanted from ACCAB is] definitely not over whether a bollard is pop up or pop down. It's over the concepts, it's over the implementation of those, how they've rolled out, it's not getting caught up in contracts or things like that... so it's at that higher level and some of those programmes are really important and we're missing that at the moment. -Staff

While there is consensus that operational design details shouldn't be ACCAB's focus, conversations at this level continue. Several aspects contributing to this outcome are outlined below.

The interests of individual board members can be in operational design details.

Issues in the past, for example, [have been] that they've [ACCAB] wanted to talk about the types of tree pits being used, the location of trees, the number of trees, the location of parking bays, the type of parking bays, whether street furniture's in a project or not, why there's a \$15,000 increase in the budget, these sorts of things. -Staff

Staff providing, and enabling conversation on, operational details.

They struggle to stay in a policy or strategy space as opposed to an operational space. They have been allowed to, and encouraged sometimes by staff, to get into the operational area. -Staff

Progress on programmes of work and strategies occurs over longer time periods than projects. The content of presentations reporting on progress at monthly meetings can focus on operational details because over short time periods these are the only details which have changed since the previous presentation. Appropriate spacing of project updates has recently helped to overcome this issue.

For some members, the level at which ACCAB is engaged has been impacted by the disestablishment of the Auckland Design Office (which was perceived to operate at a strategic level) and the high involvement of the Development Programme Office (perceived to function at an operational level).

Are we able to influence policy, strategy, city centre strategy? So there's two things: there's projects and there's strategy. The DPO, the Development Programme Office, is

very project focused cause that's literally their job, to get projects out the door. -ACCAB member

Efforts have been made by staff to lift conversations out of the operational details by reminding members of ACCAB's purpose, which has been appreciated by some members.

The review found:	It is recommended that:
Advice can be provided on a spectrum from strategic to operational. Most staff want to receive advice at a strategic level. Some members want to focus on strategic advice, while others are more interested in operational details. Board meeting conversations are often drawn into operational details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACCAB's advice is at the level of long-term strategy and input to CCMP/CCTR programmes• staff are assisted and encouraged to keep presentations and requests for advice at a strategic level• ACCAB members are supported to provide advice at a strategic level.

5.4 Calls for better partnership with the Waitematā Local Board

There is an overlap in interests of ACCAB and the Waitematā Local Board. While the local board has no governance role in relation to the City Centre Targeted Rate portfolio, it does have governance and advocacy interests in broader city centre issues, some of which ACCAB is asked by staff to provide advice.

The current relationship between ACCAB and the local board is relatively weak. Except for the local board liaison member, members of both boards expressed relatively low awareness of each other's roles and perspectives. Local board members recognised this was not optimal and expressed a strong desire to know more about ACCAB's work (through, for example, the ACCAB chair attending local board meetings on a quarterly basis), and to better work together (e.g. through shared workshops).

This conversation makes me think how useful it would be if actually we were in the room, even if only [the liaison local board member] gets to talk, it would be really helpful to be amongst other people who are interested in placemaking. -Local board member

To manage some of the overlap in interests, staff have adopted a convention of taking items to the local board the week prior to ACCAB. While this appears to have been successful in avoiding local board members feeling that they are out of the loop, it has not addressed a need or desire for greater collaboration.

One participant highlighted the potential for ACCAB to contribute to and influence the local board's strategic priorities, for example, through development of the Waitematā Local Board Plan.

It would be better if ACCAB could have direct conversations with the local board in terms of raising those matters and issues... and then the local board can take that onboard in terms of improving... their strategic documents such as local board plan or local area plans. -Staff

The review found:	It is recommended that:
There are opportunities for greater collaboration between ACCAB and the Waitematā Local Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="801 544 1442 696">• The ways in which ACCAB and the Waitematā Local Board work together are clarified and communicated with the council group.<li data-bbox="801 701 1442 1023">• Opportunities for collaboration between the Waitematā Local Board and ACCAB should be explored. This can include shared workshops and the ACCAB chair updating the local board on the ACCAB work programme. Mechanisms for collaboration could be included in the Terms of Reference.

6 Membership

The review explored several aspects surrounding ACCAB’s membership including the role of elected members and how well membership represents city centre stakeholders. This section describes findings related to these themes as well as the training and support provided to ACCAB members, remuneration and conflicts of interest.

6.1 Need for clarification of the role of elected members

ACCAB’s membership includes three elected members: the mayor (or delegate councillor), the Waitemata and Gulf Ward Councillor and a Waitemata Local Board member.

These elected members were generally seen as making a positive contribution to ACCAB, particularly in relation to helping other ACCAB members navigate the council organisation and processes.

I think it's really good to have that cross pollination happening between the two boards and the Governing Body. -ACCAB member

Several participants felt it was necessary to clarify what role elected members should play within ACCAB workshops and meetings, with some expressing concerns that elected members sometimes sought to influence ACCAB resolutions to achieve their own political outcomes.

It's a double-edged sword to be honest, because sometimes they bring their politics to the room. And at times that's been dispiriting. But then the upside of it is that they do bring more colour and insight into the thinking of the realities of the issue before council. On balance, I think it's better that they are there, than not. -ACCAB member

In general, there was support for elected members to adopt a more defined ‘liaison’ role within ACCAB, similar to that taken by elected members on Auckland Council’s demographic advisory panels. Liaison elected members provide important context about organisational and governance priorities, participate in the conversation but do not dominate it, and do not vote on resolutions at meetings.

The review found:	It is recommended that:
Elected members make a positive contribution to ACCAB, but their role needs to be clarified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elected members on ACCAB have a liaison role. This means more of a listening role and the removal of voting ability on resolutions.As part of their liaison role, elected members on ACCAB are to regularly inform ACCAB members of their governance priorities.

6.2 Some gaps identified in membership mix

Overall, ACCAB's current membership mix was viewed positively. Participants perceived it as representative of a range of city centre stakeholders — including residents, mana whenua, and businesses — and spanning a broad mix of relevant sectors (e.g. education, transport). While members were united in their passion for the city centre, this range of backgrounds meant that a diversity of views and standpoints was evident within ACCAB and seen to be a key strength.

I think the really important thing about the City Centre Advisory Board is that it represents the views of the widest group advising council and it covers planning, transport, people, entertainment, hospitality, tourism, finance. Because all of those people are on that advisory board. So on our agenda, we will cover the whole spectrum that Auckland Council is involved in. There is no other committee that does that, not one. -ACCAB member

The expertise of individuals on the board was noted, with participants highlighting that many were in senior roles within their field of employment, held specialist knowledge in their area of expertise and/or brought a valuable skillset to ACCAB.

The quality and the calibre of the members is such that they've all done this before and they're all intelligent and they know what they're talking about. And they've all got considered thoughts and opinions. -ACCAB member

They [ACCAB members] were obviously professional experts, they had a lot of depth of knowledge and information and I felt that we were very fortunate to have representation in that forum and that was positive. -ACCAB member

It was generally felt that the board is currently well served in terms of the scope and range of representation across its members. However, some participants highlighted a lack of diversity with regard to ethnicity, age and socioeconomic status. Specific gaps identified in the existing membership base included the social or community sector, a youth voice, students, arts sector, and Māori representation.

I just think 'where's the rangatahi forum or youth input?' There's no real social input, there's no social experts around that table that can talk to us about the social issues that occur in the city centre and the impact of these movements. -ACCAB member

I think we need to look really hard at Māori representation, be that Mātāwaka, be that additional mana whenua or be that actually Māori business and industry. -Staff

In addressing gaps within ACCAB's membership it was noted that it is already a large group, with some sectors or stakeholder groups with more than one representative on the board (e.g. tertiary sector and resident groups). As a result, some participants were reluctant to increase the number of members.

I sometimes wonder if there's too many of us but, that depends on what we're doing. I mean at least I suppose you've got a lot of input, I mean both universities have reps... Well I would say it's not unwieldy, but we do have a situation where maybe five or six of us do all the talking. -ACCAB member

The review found:	It is recommended that:
<p>ACCAB's membership represents a good range of sectors in the city centre. However, a scope of topics encompassing broader city centre issues highlights membership gaps including specific social groups (e.g. students, people experiencing homelessness) and sociodemographic diversity (e.g. age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to fill membership gaps, without increasing the number of members, be explored. This could include collaboration with demographic advisory panels and/or ad hoc collaboration with other stakeholder groups (e.g. Young Asian Leaders Association). • Barriers to participation faced by underrepresented groups, and options to remove those barriers, be explored. This could include consideration of remuneration and the time of meetings. • A diversity and inclusion lens is applied to future appointments and the Terms of Reference membership list.

6.3 Inconsistent ability among members to fully participate

There is no set appointment term for ACCAB members, which means that there is a wide range of tenures across the existing membership. At the time of the review, some had recently joined the board (approximately 2-months ago) and others had been a member for more than 10 years.

A lack of onboarding and/or training, as well as the variety in how long members have been on ACCAB, contributes to diverse abilities of members to fully participate in discussions. Newer members can feel less able to participate which can limit the discussion of new ideas or inclusion of diverse perspectives within ACCAB's advice.

Many members reported that they received little or no onboarding or training when they first joined the board. This was viewed as a shortcoming, given that some came to ACCAB with limited knowledge of its role or remit, how it operated, and/or council protocols and processes. Importantly,

this had negatively impacted some members' initial experiences of board meetings, limited what they were able to contribute at the outset, and/or set unrealistic expectations in relation to what they could achieve via their membership.

I didn't really have an induction so I've really had to sort of sit, observe, listen and see where value can be added from my perspective and who I'm representing... So I think that put me on the back foot for six to eight months. -ACCAB member

I wasn't entirely sure what the scope of the board was for quite some time — that we were an advisory board, that we couldn't actually make hard decisions and that sort of thing. So that's very important to really understand that right from the get-go. -ACCAB member

Staff acknowledged that new members did not consistently receive training or other support when they joined the board. Some described meeting over coffee with new members to provide background information and introduce key staff contacts. In some cases, it was perceived that offers of training were not taken up by members.

All sorts of offers were made in terms of what an advisory board does, council processes, how we run our meetings at council. And there's two things there — one of them is the fact that because they're busy people, a lot of them haven't got the time to do their thing. The second thing is, some of them are experienced and don't think they need it. -Staff

Participants made a range of suggestions for the type of information that would be useful for new members. This included the purpose and scope of ACCAB, an overview of Auckland Council structures and where ACCAB fits within that, the roles of council staff who support ACCAB, meeting protocols and processes, and an introduction to key documents or strategies. One participant suggested that a cultural induction should also be provided, including tikanga in meetings.

What are the documents that we are using, the Auckland Plan, Master Plan etcetera? How is the meeting run? What are the expectations of you? How do you get help if you need it?... Actually a bit of knowledge around the City Centre Targeted Rate and how that whole thing works. So a bit of history and a bit of purpose, what are we there to do? -ACCAB member

Not everyone knows how council works. So it might be some use to have, not a detailed description, but just a real overview of, here's the elected council members, committees and councils, and officials or council officers. What the difference is between these people. -ACCAB member

In terms of broader support for new members, one participant suggested that an individual meeting with council staff would be useful.

They need some one-on-ones with council officers to talk them through stuff. I think walk them through some of the Terms of Reference. So what is this board for, and what is it not for, a good meeting looks like this. -ACCAB member

Another proposed a buddy system.

I would say a buddy on the board and a buddy in the council for that to be ideal... If it was me buddying someone, before the meeting, after I've read my minutes... I would talk to them and I'd say 'this is what I see coming up... these are the questions I'm thinking of asking, these are the things I'm thinking of making sure they're ticked off'... and then afterwards 'how did you find it?'. -ACCAB member

The introduction of a set appointment term was discussed with council staff and ACCAB members participating in this review. Their reactions to this idea were generally positive. It was viewed as an opportunity to introduce new members to the board and to provide an injection of fresh ideas and viewpoints.

You can get a bit set in your ways, and things change quickly out there... Look at any other committees, boards, and business... no one wants people to hang around too long. You want freshness and vitality, because you can get set in your ways. -ACCAB member

Participants emphasised that the length of appointment term would need to be sufficient to allow members to become embedded in ACCAB, and that it was important to ensure it did not introduce too many changes to the core membership at one time. The availability of other people within organisations represented on ACCAB to replace departing members was also an important consideration.

The review found:	It is recommended that:
Members lack comprehensive onboarding and have varied tenures and experience. The lack of onboarding has led some newer members to feel less able to represent their stakeholder perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members are supported to perform their role through:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing comprehensive onboarding which is delivered at the start of the new term• Providing on-going training on council processes, meeting protocols, city centre issues, and provision of strategic advice• Reviewing appointments after two terms (six years).

6.4 Remuneration not required for members

ACCAB members are not currently remunerated for their services to the board, and the review sought feedback on this. While acknowledging the time commitment of members, most participants — particularly members themselves — indicated a lack of support for receiving remuneration. Some felt

it would introduce an inappropriate financial incentive for participation or highlighted that they already received other non-financial benefits (e.g. networking opportunities). In addition, those who were participating as part of a paid role outside of ACCAB noted that they were already remunerated for the work.

We're an advisory board for targeted rates and that means not being paid by anybody. We are free to talk and say exactly who we represent thinks of that idea. You get paid and it's a completely different issue. -ACCAB member

It was argued by some staff, however, that remuneration for ACCAB members would bring it into line with other advisory boards, and could facilitate the inclusion of a broader mix of people on the board.

For some of the minority groups, or certainly for Māori in the past, funding has been one of the constraints. So if there was funding available, that might help to remove that constraint, or might help to encourage people to put their names forward. -Staff

The residents and a few select others are there in their personal time as a volunteer. And I don't think it's fair that they do that in an unpaid capacity, even if it's a token allowance, given the other advisory panel members are paid. Because it could be a barrier to us getting diverse voices to the table. -Staff

Some participants were supportive of the chair receiving payment for their role, in recognition of the additional level of work involved, and their potentially higher public profile.

Because I think there's a bigger workload they ought to [get paid]. They are going to need to work with officers to get the agenda together. But they also ought to be someone who cannot just run a meeting but can actually then take that out publicly and be an advocate for the city centre. -ACCAB member

The review found:	It is recommended that:
Remuneration for ACCAB members is not perceived to be needed. However, it was suggested by some staff as a possible barrier to participation for some underrepresented groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACCAB members continue to not receive remuneration• remuneration be considered as part of an exploration of barriers to participation faced by underrepresented groups.

6.5 Conflicts of interest are managed well

Participants acknowledged that conflicts of interest sometimes arose within ACCAB. These mostly related to recommendations on the expenditure of the CCTR which could potentially benefit organisations (e.g. business associations) or sectors (e.g. commercial) represented on the board. It also included situations where members were involved in other council activities being discussed by the board.

I think where members have got a direct interest in where the fund goes, and that is particularly with the business associations. Because a lot of the other reps on there, you've got someone representing transport, arts, but they don't actually belong to a formal organisation necessarily. So it's more an issue with the business associations. - ACCAB member

Participants also highlighted the inevitability of conflicts of interest within the board, given the high level of connection that members have with the city centre. Indeed, as evident in the following excerpt, this was viewed by some as a positive aspect, rather than a shortcoming.

If you had a bunch of people there who had no conflicts, you probably wouldn't have the same value out of the people that are in the room... Because I'm involved in the city centre every day as part of my job, I've got insights and knowledge that I think are useful to the overall thing. And so long as I don't abuse that, in terms of pushing our own interests, then I think it's more useful having people like myself there who understand all the issues better than having people who [have] no conflicts. -ACCAB member

It's [conflicts of interest] a fact of life, right, because they [city centre targeted ratepayers] need to be represented on there. It goes back to that point, you know, if they're paying part of the bill, then they've got a right to be represented. -Staff

Overall, it was reported that potential conflicts of interest were well managed within ACCAB by members stating these upfront and excluding themselves from discussions where appropriate.

I think that's a pretty well understood process, so if anyone's a potential beneficiary they declare a conflict of interest and they don't participate. So I think that's well managed from what I've seen. -ACCAB member

7 Relationships

The review explored relationships between ACCAB members and staff, as well as between ACCAB members. Relationships are generally positive, but some challenges are evident.

While the diversity of views present on the board was identified as a key strength, this can also pose challenges. Participants highlighted that there was a need for members to remain considerate toward those with differing opinions, particularly where individuals hold opposing viewpoints on contentious issues.

For the most part, relationships were reported to be functioning well, with people treating each other respectfully in meetings, and considerate of others' views where they differed from their own.

We're all professionals and we act professionally. And I can't think of any instance where there's been bad manners between board members, where there's been a spat or, the chair has had to go 'hang on, hang on' and intervene. -ACCAB member

I think the board itself works pretty well. There are different opinions around the table. But it's managed well, you know, its polite exchanges of views, people don't start getting personal and banging the table or any nonsense like that. People are polite and mature, and so that works well. -ACCAB member

However, while it was acknowledged that there had been an improvement in recent times, there were reports of previous poor behaviour (e.g. talking over others in meetings) on the part of board members, which included towards council staff. One participant indicated that they had been so embarrassed by the way in which staff had been spoken to that they felt the need to apologise on members' behalf, with others highlighting that these occurrences had impacted on the willingness of some staff to engage with ACCAB.

I've seen at times where there are two or three personalities who have, in my view, stepped over the line to make it personal about staff... rather than about the advice... They've pushed particular views that have looked like they're actually at times attacking, criticising, really quite critical. -Staff

I don't believe that some of the behaviour at the board has been very good, and not nice, and not how I would operate. -ACCAB member

ACCAB's Terms of Reference contains a Code of Conduct, of which there appears to be low awareness. Reviewing and adopting the Code of Conduct during a meeting at the beginning of a term will be a useful tool to support appropriate behaviour in meetings and assist with equitable participation of members.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on relationships between board members was highlighted as an issue by several participants. For example, the shift to online meetings had removed the

opportunity for kanohi ki te kanohi / face-to-face engagement and more informal networking before and after these events, which had curtailed members' ability to get to know one another.

Being able to talk to people in person and just the off-the-ball discussions, 'how was your weekend?' Those things all help and just you feel more at ease once you've got to know someone... You just don't get that in COVID and I think it's important as with any aspect of life or work again knowing the people, knowing what sort of person are they. It helps. -ACCAB member

It was reported that board members have previously engaged with one another outside of ACCAB meetings, and that this is valued as a way of building rapport and connecting on broader issues. Indeed, findings indicate that some members appreciated the opportunity afforded by ACCAB to build relationships with other stakeholders involved in city centre issues, with the potential for these to carry over into collaborations outside of the board.

It's fair to say that there's probably a lot of discussion between some members of ACCAB away from the meeting. They do have meetings away from the formal meeting sometimes and they also have their own conversations around coffee catch ups and things like that, which is fine. Perfectly healthy. Good network there. -Staff

One of the things I can get out of being on the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board is the networking and connections with other key stakeholders in the city... the important relationships that I make even though everything on the board might not be relevant [to my paid role]... It gives me the opportunity to pick up the phone and talk directly to someone who I know when there is a problem or an opportunity. -ACCAB member

The review found:	It is recommended that:
Relationships between ACCAB members, and between members and staff are generally positive. There have been a few instances of poor ACCAB member behaviour which have negatively impacted relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="809 1346 1362 1420">• The Code of Conduct in the Terms of Reference is reviewed and adopted.

8 Meetings and the role of the chair

Meetings and the role of the chair were considered in the review. In general, meetings were found to be working well, however, some issues with meetings were uncovered. The role of the chair was found to be critical.

8.1 Meetings working well, but some room to improve

The review found a high level of satisfaction, especially amongst ACCAB members, with meetings, workshops, and other forums, as these were perceived to be well planned and structured by agendas. There are many pre-meeting activities undertaken by staff which is contributing towards this high satisfaction.

It's [ACCAB] running a hell of a lot better than it was a couple of years ago. There seems to be much more structure and thought. -Staff

Pre-meeting activities are resource-intensive

At the beginning of each financial year staff from the Development Programme Office (DPO) work with ACCAB to develop an annual work programme. The work programme is structured by the CCMP outcomes and includes a theme for each monthly meeting. ACCAB members were appreciative of the structure provided by the work programme, and these themes are used as a starting point for staff in their development of meeting items. However, a large amount of staff resource is dedicated to preparing for meetings.

Tasks undertaken by staff in preparing for meetings include:

- identifying and scheduling presenters
- supporting presenters in the development of presentation content, pre-empting questions from ACCAB members and preparing responses, and planning how to best facilitate items
- writing and reviewing reports and accompanying materials
- briefing the chair on agenda items and how they will be facilitated.

Staff in the council group have varied interest in presenting to ACCAB. This results from different expectations surrounding ACCAB's function, scope, level of advice, and individual experiences engaging with ACCAB. For some council staff, their expectations and previous experiences have made them reluctant to present items at ACCAB meetings. This creates a challenge for staff involved in liaising with presenters as overcoming this reluctance requires additional staff resource to schedule presenters (i.e. repeatedly following-up and in some cases escalating the issue to the Lead Officer) and providing additional support to prepare presenters.

The whole council group which again is reluctant to attend [ACCAB meetings] but then [the Lead Officer] will make that push and then people will start to nod. It's a really

hard task and then the next minute you had to bloody do reports and scrambling and timeframes which is really difficult. -Staff

There are multiple sign-off points in the review process for reports and accompanying materials (e.g. PowerPoint presentations, plans or other documents). Working through this process and making amendments by presenters/report authors can take time.

Some staff involved in reviewing materials for several groups commented on the lower priority given to ACCAB-related materials.

Often the reports are like 'can you review this today please?' Which I don't usually let happen with things like committee reports, but honestly because they're not decision reports they do tend to come lower on the priority list. -Staff

Dissemination of materials prior to meetings can be delayed because of the involved process for preparing materials. While some members acknowledged that there had been improvements in the timing, they highlighted that receiving materials close to the scheduled board meeting left little time for review and impacted the level and nature of their subsequent contribution. This was particularly an issue when there was a substantial level of information provided.

We have had issues in the past where sometimes you don't get the papers until two days before [the meeting]... If you print them out, you're talking maybe 120 pages. And you go, 'Oh geez, now I don't have time to read this before the meeting. I'm going to have to sit up at night and just pour through this after dinner'. -ACCAB member

The history of staff getting reports into InfoCouncil on time is pretty poor. They have never ever to my knowledge had all the reports for a meeting in on time and so then I'm usually chasing on the Monday and the Tuesday, and the Wednesday morning. I have to get the agenda published on the website by Wednesday night. That's a legal requirement. -Staff

Dominant voices and online meeting format were key issues

Board members were generally complimentary about the role played by council staff in supporting and facilitating meetings, which were viewed as well-organised and efficiently run. This included adaptations that had been made in response to the pandemic which, following some initial challenges, were seen to have been managed well.

A widely reported meeting issue was that a small number of board members tended to dominate discussions, which limited the range of topics deliberated given that they steered these towards their individual interests. It was also noted that the contribution of other members was restricted as a result.

Some people I think have said very little, not that this is a criticism, but they've said very little at meetings and others who have to be told to wait their turn. -ACCAB member

Their voices aren't equal. So there are some who are louder than others, some who weigh in more than others. And maybe because there's a certain personality types as with all boards, but there's also, some have far longer tenures than others, so they feel more confident in speaking out than those who have just joined. -Staff

The shift to online meetings in 2020 because of the pandemic was reported to have resulted in some 'awkward' meetings initially, with reduced opportunities for in-depth discussions, and difficult interactions between attendees. While ACCAB have adapted to the new format, virtual meetings remained less favourable to in-person contact for some members.

You kind of get used to Zoom meetings and stuff but it's not the same as meeting in person. I just don't get as enthused and as excited. And you know people are looking at their phones and doing other stuff and tapping on their computers, and yeah sure they can do that in a meeting in person as well. But there's a commitment and an immediacy around being in a room together that drives that social relationship, that drives the interest and the passion. -ACCAB member

It's more difficult [with online meetings] I think to have... really constructive conversations. So around the table you can eyeball somebody and just say 'can you just expand on that, so what are the impacts if we do that?' It's really hard to do on Zoom or Teams... And you put your hand up and you'll write the question down there, but it's very mechanical. -ACCAB member

Other less frequently reported issues included the variable quality of presentations made by council staff (including some with a high level of operational detail) and a general lack of understanding of meeting protocols (e.g. standing orders) amongst some members.

What we seem to get now is we get the same council member reporting on their brief as opposed to some poor sucker who's getting dragged in to report a paper who doesn't know how to report a paper and starts reading things, and we just all get bored. -ACCAB member

The only thing I would say could be improved is sometimes the people coming in and speaking to us do labour points and we can take things as read and cut half the time out. And just that whole guidance around being really clear about what they're asking from the board and asking it, as opposed to just presenting information. -ACCAB member

Different meeting formats bring a mix of benefits and drawbacks

Participants' views of the two main meeting formats (workshops and business meetings) were explored.

Workshops were the preferred format for some ACCAB members and staff, who viewed them as less formal and who valued the opportunity they provided for more in-depth discussions (e.g. via breakout rooms). Some highlighted that the closed nature of workshops meant that they could be more open in expressing their views. Workshops were also seen to be more equitable in terms of facilitating broader contributions across the membership base, particularly compared to business meetings.

I'm totally used to that [workshop] format where you thrash things out, you have free and frank discussion in a workshop so that when you come to the business meeting, it's much more smoother... So I think that that's really beneficial. -ACCAB member

[DPO staff] started a different approach beginning of this year, whereby they tried to get feedback in a more workshop way, where they'd have breakout sessions... And that was a much more interactive way, and I think the members enjoyed that. It also avoided what was happening before whereby there were maybe four or five members who were dominating discussions and pursuing particular agendas. -Staff

Some participants felt workshops had several shortcomings, including that they lacked tangible outputs in terms of recorded resolutions, and were less transparent than business meetings. One participant described them as 'the poor cousin' of formats. Some members perceived workshops to be voluntary to attend, and due to the high number held (considered 'too many' by some) there were reports of poor attendance rates.

That was some feedback that we've heard earlier in the year. That workshops were just discussions, and the board didn't make any recorded decisions by way of resolutions. And so what was the point you know, why are we just here if it's just for a workshop? -ACCAB member

By comparison, business meetings were described as more structured (e.g. with an agenda) with the format leading to formal resolutions. Some participants highlighted that meetings had a role to play in ensuring transparency and public access to information.

You've just got to make sure the workshops aren't used as a way of keeping stuff out of [the] public where it should be discussion in public. -ACCAB member

It was recognised that there had been a reduced number of business meetings and increased workshops scheduled in the last year. For those who questioned the value of workshops — or were concerned that they resulted in a loss of publicly available information — this was viewed as a negative development.

Some ACCAB members also admitted that they were confused as to the difference between business meetings and workshops, with the distinction between the two formats not always clear. For some, it seems the distinction between a ‘workshop’ and a ‘city centre in focus’ session is also confused.

I've actually got really confused about what's a formal meeting that I have to turn up [to] because... I don't have a lot to share in a workshop in terms of design. So it gets quite hard for me to pick between what's a workshop that is probably voluntary and what's a meeting which I feel more obligated to go to. -ACCAB member

Some staff recognised that ACCAB members had varying preferences regarding the main meeting formats.

The board gets frustrated. Some of them are like ‘we’re not having enough meetings because we’re not being transparent enough’ and others are like ‘meetings are boring, we don’t get to talk about anything so we should have more workshops.’ -Staff

The review found:	It is recommended that:
<p>Staff do a lot of work in preparation for ACCAB meetings which is contributing to high satisfaction amongst members. The review process for meeting materials is complex and often materials are disseminated to members late.</p> <p>Member participation in meetings is varied with a small number of voices tending to dominate discussions. The chair plays a key role in enabling equitable participation.</p> <p>Staff can be reluctant to engage with ACCAB and presentations can be focus on operational details.</p> <p>Workshops are seen to have greater value for some relative to business meetings as they encourage free and frank discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to streamline pre-meeting activities are investigated with the change in lead agency for the city centre. • The work programme plays a stronger role in maintaining the focus of discussions (advisory function, strategic level, scope of topics). Agenda items could be explicitly tagged with the theme from the work programme to which they related, and the outcome sought from staff (e.g. to inform, to seek advice). • Provide guidance to staff presenting, or asking questions of ACCAB, to maintain conversations at the strategic level (e.g. Quality Advice training). • Consider increasing the proportion of workshops relative to business meetings.

8.2 The chair is critical to a well-functioning board

ACCAB has had two chairs in this term. A key finding from the research was the significance of the role of the chair within ACCAB. The approach to chairing strongly influences how well the board functions and, ultimately, its impact. This includes keeping discussions focussed at a strategic level, facilitating opportunities for all board members to contribute, and ensuring appropriate meeting protocols and processes are followed.

You need a good chair and a really strong chair. The fact is that there are a few individuals who advocate strongly, and the majority don't say an awful lot. -Staff

Participants acknowledged that chairing requires specialised skills and experience, is not an easy role to perform effectively, and brings with it a higher workload. The challenge of undertaking this role impartially while representing stakeholder views was also highlighted.

A lot of it is the effort you put in before and after the meetings, which is what we don't see. I mean being an attendee... it's relatively easy. You get your board pack, you read it, you turn up, you throw some comments... you close your file, you go home again. But it's the chair who needs to set that whole thing in motion... So it's a big task and to do it effectively you need some time to do it. -ACCAB member

Also ideally be capable of actually getting to the point of the issues when staff present, so that requires a bit of leadership to actually sort of cut through the noise and actually get to the crux of the issues. There are times when they need to present on behalf of the board... but they should faithfully represent the view of the full board and actually take off the individual hat that they bring. -Staff

The support provided to the chair by council staff was noted. This included pre-meeting briefings as well as guidance on meeting procedures or protocols.

Council officers provide good support to the chair. If the chair is not quite sure procedurally 'what am I supposed to do next' they'll just give quiet advice in one ear. So I think the chair is always well supported by council officers. -ACCAB member

Review findings indicate that different chairing approaches had led to both positive and negative outcomes for ACCAB. For example, it was widely felt that chairs can sometimes struggled to separate their stakeholder interests from the neutrality of the chairing position and can inappropriately advocated for their interests while in the role.

The option of an independent chair²² for ACCAB received a mixed response from participants. Those who saw it as a positive development highlighted a range of potential benefits, including the skillset (e.g. strong facilitation skills) and knowledge of meeting protocols they would bring to the role, as well as being 'neutral' and having no conflicts of interest. Others were of the view that an

²² This would involve someone with chairing expertise filling the role who would not participate as a board member.

independent chair's potential lack of connection to city centre issues, including 'political awareness', may weaken their overall effectiveness.

An independent chair removes that advocacy pattern from the situation, and it allows the meeting to just run and be well facilitated... I think it's somebody who's not wrapped up in the politics of the city centre. So maybe not a key stakeholder. So it could be maybe they're from somewhere else, maybe they're appointed. -Staff

Considering other findings from this review (such as varied abilities of members to participate and some relationship challenges), there are several potential benefits to the introduction of an independent chair who does not participate as a board member, including:

- removal of any possible or perceived conflicts of interest
- enabling all ACCAB members to represent their stakeholders in discussions
- providing extra capacity to prepare for meetings (e.g. liaising with staff, reviewing materials)
- providing extra capacity to foster relationships with the Waitematā Local Board through, for example, providing quarterly updates on ACCAB's work programme
- ensuring strong facilitation and moderation skills, including the facilitation of online meetings, to enable equitable and enjoyable participation for members and staff.

The review found:	It is recommended that:
The chair is critical to a well-functioning board as their role is to facilitate a discussion in which members participate equitably. It can be challenging for members to chair impartially while representing their stakeholders' views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• an independent chair is appointed.

9 Recommendations

Overall, this review found that ACCAB is perceived to be an important stakeholder group with potential to provide a valuable contribution to city centre outcomes. ACCAB members are seen by staff to be passionate about the city centre and council staff are eager to engage with city centre stakeholders. To ensure that this potential is met and that ACCAB can be of high impact in the next electoral term (2022-2024) this review includes a series of interrelated recommendations, as presented throughout the report and in full below.

The review found	Resulting recommendations
There are varied interpretations of terminology which can contribute to misunderstandings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Terms of Reference with careful consideration of word choices and the incorporation of a glossary of terms.
There are different interpretations of ACCAB's 'advisory' function. This is negatively impacting ACCAB's performance as well as satisfaction of staff and board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACCAB's function is defined as providing non-binding advice to inform decision-making by staff and elected members. ACCAB's function is clearly communicated.
The scope of issues that ACCAB have been involved in this term is varied, and it is not always clear what is, or should be, in scope.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACCAB's scope primarily focuses on CCTR-related items (e.g. funding allocation advice, strategic input into programmes). Broader city centre issues are secondary and considered in collaboration with the Waitemata Local Board where overlap occurs. ACCAB's scope is clearly communicated to members and staff.
Advice can be provided on a spectrum from strategic to operational. Most staff want to receive advice at a strategic level. Some members want to focus on strategic advice, while others are more interested in operational details. Board meeting conversations are often drawn into operational details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACCAB's advice is at the level of long-term strategy and input to CCMP/CCTR programmes. Staff are assisted and encouraged to keep presentations and requests for advice at a strategic level. ACCAB members are supported to provide advice at a strategic level.

The review found	Resulting recommendations
There are opportunities for greater collaboration between ACCAB and the Waitematā Local Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ways in which ACCAB and the Waitematā Local Board work together are clarified and communicated with the council group. • Opportunities for collaboration between the Waitematā Local Board and ACCAB should be explored. This can include shared workshops and the ACCAB chair updating the local board on the ACCAB work programme. Mechanisms for collaboration could be included in the Terms of Reference.
Elected members make a positive contribution to ACCAB, but their role needs to be clarified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected members on ACCAB to have a liaison role. This means more a listening role and the removal of voting ability on resolutions. • As part of their liaison role, elected members on ACCAB are to regularly inform ACCAB members of their governance priorities.
ACCAB's membership represents a good range of sectors in the city centre. However, a scope of topics encompassing broader city centre issues highlights membership gaps including specific social groups (e.g. students, people experiencing homelessness) and sociodemographic diversity (e.g. age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to fill membership gaps, without increasing the number of members, be explored. This could include collaboration with demographic advisory panels and/or ad hoc collaboration with other stakeholder groups (e.g. Young Asian Leaders Association). • Barriers to participation faced by underrepresented groups, and options to remove those barriers, be explored. This could include consideration of remuneration and the time of meetings. • A diversity and inclusion lens is applied to future appointments and the Terms of Reference membership list.

The review found	Resulting recommendations
<p>Members lack comprehensive onboarding and have varied tenures and experience. The lack of onboarding has led some newer members to feel less able to represent their stakeholder perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are supported to perform their role through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing comprehensive onboarding which could be delivered at the start of the new term providing on-going training on council processes, meeting protocols, city centre issues, and provision of strategic advice reviewing appointments after two terms (six years).
<p>Remuneration for ACCAB members is not perceived to be needed. However, it was suggested by some staff as a possible barrier to participation for some underrepresented groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACCAB members continue to not receive remuneration. Remuneration be considered as part of an exploration of barriers to participation faced by underrepresented groups.
<p>Relationships between ACCAB members, and between members and staff are generally positive. There have been a few instances of poor ACCAB member behaviour which have negatively impacted relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Code of Conduct in the Terms of Reference is reviewed and adopted.
<p>Staff do a lot of work in preparation for ACCAB meetings which is contributing to high satisfaction of meetings amongst members. The review process for meeting materials is complex and often materials are disseminated to members late.</p> <p>Member participation in meetings is varied with a small number of voices tending to dominate discussions. The chair plays a key role in enabling equitable participation.</p> <p>Staff can be reluctant to engage with ACCAB and presentations can be focus on operational details.</p> <p>Workshops are seen to have greater value for some relative to business meetings as they encourage free and frank discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to streamline pre-meeting activities are investigated with the change in lead agency for the city centre. The work programme plays a stronger role in maintaining the focus of discussions (advisory function, strategic level, scope of topics). Agenda items could be explicitly tagged with the theme from the work programme to which they related, and the outcome sought from staff (e.g. to inform, to seek advice). Provide guidance to staff presenting, or asking questions of ACCAB, to maintain conversations at the strategic level. Consider increasing the proportion of workshops relative to business meetings.

The review found	Resulting recommendations
<p>The chair is critical to a well-functioning board as their role is to facilitate a discussion in which members participate equitably. It can be challenging for members to chair impartially while representing their stakeholders' views.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent chair is appointed.

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