

Auckland Council's Annual Budget 2023/2024

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Online Information Session #2

Q&A

Monday 13 March 2023

6.15pm – 7.45pm

Question

Response

For more information related to the Citizens Advice Bureau you can read the report from InfoCouncil:

https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2020/10/PAC_20201015_AGN_9759_AT_SUP.PDF

Has this budget's impact on Auckland's roadmap to reduce GHG emissions and adopt climate adaptation measures been assessed?

Implementing Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan and embedding climate change into the council's planning and decision-making process is part of this programme. Assessment is an ongoing process.

Will this Budget as proposed help or hinder Council achieving its targets under Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan?

We propose to partially reprioritise \$10.5 million of additional bus service expenditure that was planned to be funded by the Climate Action Targeted Rate (CATR) for the 2023/2024 year. Operational constraints mean that CATR funded bus services, originally planned for delivery in the first half of 2023/2024, are now planned for delivery in the second half of the year. This creates savings in the CATR bus services budget in 2023/24 that are now proposed to be used to fund the North West bus service improvements and bring forward funding for two new frequent bus routes in East Auckland. The proposal does not impact on the level of the CATR charged in 2023/2024 or the plans for CATR funded services beyond 2023/2024. The proposal ensures that we can continue to deliver the climate and service outcomes for which the CATR was established while helping manage the financial challenges that we are now facing.

Re the WQTR- wasn't the proposal that this brought forward a 30yr programme to be implemented in 10 years? And don't we really need to be prioritising our focus on water infrastructure and natural solutions to prevent the sort of impacts we had recently across the city?

While the proposal is to pause collection of two-thirds of the rate for one year, the work planned is continuing, utilising retained funds.

Please can we start fining land bankers for having noxious weeds on their land that spread around neighbourhoods, especially if the NETR is paused.

We welcome your feedback on this matter and encourage you to make a formal submission please at <https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/annual-budget-2023-2024>

Is the \$20 million for storm response enough for proactive and reactive response, and what will it buy in terms of infrastructure and maintenance?

The storm response fund is detailed on page 24 of the Supporting Information document. <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/externalcontentdelivery/consultations/budgets/annual-budget-2023-2024/annual-budget-2023-2024-supporting->

Have you considered ring fencing this as a targeted rate?	information.pdf As noted in the supporting information, as work is undertaken to define exactly what is required to prepare for future storm events the specific mix of proactive and reactive works will be developed and refined.
Why are we not introducing congestion charging to fund public transport? We have been talking about this for YEARS. https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/planning/process/trial-ip-toolkit/docs/road-pricing.pdf We now have a fiscal crisis, a traffic crisis and an environmental crisis. Now is the time to bring it in.	Congestion charging is not currently a part of the budget proposal but might be part of the mix in the future.
If rates don't increase what would the shortfall be?	The shortfall is \$295 million and the proposal is for a mixture of options, including a 7% general rates increase to bridge the shortfall. The rates increase is equivalent to \$150 million.
Is my maths correct on this - we would need to raise rates by around 15% to cover the \$295m budget shortfall?	To fill the shortfall by rates alone, the general rates increase would need to be 13.5%.
You are brazen liars! For years already my rates have been increased well above the figures that you've claimed. It's all lies! You got your increase when EVERY OTHER COUNCIL ACROSS THE COUNTRY held their rates increases as ZERO!	We welcome your feedback on this matter and encourage you to make a formal submission please at https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/annual-budget-2023-2024
No sorry rates increase really? I don't see what you're doing with them now! Where are the infrastructure improvements, especially in the north shore? All new builds contribute to infrastructure through levies, not seeing the evidence of that in any infrastructure shortfall.	Our Annual Report is a good source of information about the work we have done. It is available here: https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-annual-reports/Pages/current-annual-report.aspx
Shouldn't rates keep up with inflation, otherwise isn't the council effectively subsidising property owners?	The services of council are for all Aucklanders. Revenues currently are provided around 37% from rates with the remainder from other sources including fees, charges and central government funding.
Did the Governing Body look at approaching Central Government for support or funding to help address the shortfall?	Council is continually having discussions about options for funding activities that we believe should be provided with the support of central government.

Shares are income, aren't they? I don't agree with selling the shares if they bring in income.	The forecast dividends and savings from the airport shares are detailed on page 88 of the Consultation Document. As shown in a table on that page, there is a projected net benefit of \$48 million in the 2023/2024 financial year and \$187 million over eight years if the shares were to be sold and debt reduced.
Why do you even HAVE shares in the airport? It's a reflection of the ongoing failure of Auckland Council. That should have been sold years ago, and indeed should never have been purchased to start with!	The shares are legacy assets from the former council's that Auckland Council was formed from.
What was ROI on Auckland Airport prior to the Covid lockdown and the loss of tourism? Is the return of international tourism likely to have an impact on the value of this asset? Is this the right time to sell? Thanks	These issues are covered in the Staff Advice on the Mayoral Proposal. It is available here (From Page 31) https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/media/ghopmktl/2-embargoed-until-12-noon-staff-advice-to-support-mayoral-proposal.pdf :
Apologies if this has already been answered - just want to know where the airport interest costs are coming from, since my understanding is that council owns the shares outright	The proposal is to sell all of the airport shares and use the proceeds of that sale to reduce debt (estimated at around \$1.9 billion). The aim of this is to substantially reduce our annual interest costs we pay on that debt.
Do you realise that your proposed cuts are knee capping supportive community groups who have had a REALLY TOUGH time through 3 COVID-19 related years, and that once folded, these community groups will not be able to regenerate in your long term planning time frame? You're playing with people's lives!	We welcome your feedback on this matter and encourage you to make a formal submission please at https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/annual-budget-2023-2024
Oh come on! Who cares if CABs support something that is also relevant to central government? It's good value for the country, however you look at it. Why the focus on pointless penny-pinching?	We welcome your feedback on this matter and encourage you to make a formal submission please at https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/annual-budget-2023-2024
Is Council planning on engaging with the Public Service Association (the union for most Council staff) around these proposals?	Yes for proposals that directly affect our staff. The PSA was active in all former councils prior to the amalgamation and has been the main trade union within Auckland Council since its formation in 2010.
Hi, will the budget trimming include salary reduction of highly paid individuals? if yes, at what percentage and if not, then	We plan to make \$125 million through spending cuts across the group and with staff being a major component of our costs we can expect major impact there. Staff impacts will be carefully managed with a focus on

why can't we think of this as a potential source of revenue?	redeployment and managing staff numbers through attrition where possible.
Are you looking to take a pay reduction?	We plan to make \$125 million through spending cuts across the group and with staff being a major component of our costs we can expect major impact there. Staff impacts will be carefully managed with a focus on redeployment and managing staff numbers through attrition where possible.
You want to reduce OpEx? Then get rid of the thousands of employees on your payroll who do nothing aside from busy work. For example, the lot who covered the speed limit signs along Ti Rakau Drive and then, after more than 3weeks of social media and Stuff outcry and ridicule, removed the covers to re-instate the SAME speed limits! Why should we pay people to do this entirely useless busy work? This is just one of countless cases of wasteful spending. Make these busy-work people redundant. They add ZERO value to our city and cost us millions.	Higher wage pressure is largely unavoidable due to both a contractual commitment with unions and the need to attract and retain the necessary staff to deliver services to Aucklanders. These pressures represent a permanent, structural increase in the council's staff cost base. Offsetting this, of course, will be operating spending cuts, including both: • decisions already made in areas such as simplifying managing portfolios and structures, implementing group shared services and consolidating group policy and strategy activity, and • proposals in the Annual Budget 2023/2024 to save further costs across the Auckland Council group. We plan to make \$125 million through spending cuts across the group and with staff being a major component of our costs we can expect major impact there. Staff impacts will be carefully managed with a focus on redeployment and managing staff numbers through attrition where possible.
ON that matter of public servants, IMMEDIATELY remove the Rich List remunerations! It is completely inexcusable for ANY public servant to receive anything more than \$150k/year! These Rich Listers cost us millions and a saving there will be greater than curtting early childhood services!	We welcome your feedback on this matter and encourage you to make a formal submission please at https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/annual-budget-2023-2024
I think the council needs to have further restructures and remove some staff on high incomes well above the average NZ income. You need to take a good look internally before you push your bad accounting back on the rate payers.	We plan to make \$125 million through spending cuts across the group and with staff being a major component of our costs we can expect major impact there. Staff impacts will be carefully managed with a focus on redeployment and managing staff numbers through attrition where possible.
Compared to this year is it proposed that next year, Council spending as allocated to the Local Boards will be cut. If there is a reduction in the Local Board Income next year what is the expected reduction %age compared to this year,	As part of the Annual Budget 2023/24 currently out for consultation, this includes a proposed \$16 million reduction to total local board funding which is allocated out across the 21 local boards based on our Local Board Funding Policy. This reduction relates to operating expenditure available for local activities and makes up approximately 5% of the total amount that was available for 2022/23.

and is it then up to the Local Board to decide where they will make cost cuts?	Local boards will take into account public feedback and develop their work programmes for 2023/24 from May 2023. As part of this process each local board will prioritise local projects within their own budget envelopes and decide which projects are funded.
As some Boards have a lot of initiatives, programmes and activities it was not reasonable to select 3 wanted, or unwanted, particularly as we were unable to know if some of the initiatives listed over-lapped each other.	We welcome your feedback on this matter and encourage you to make a formal submission please at https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/annual-budget-2023-2024
Cutting services to local boards particularly in areas affected by the flood and cyclone will be very unpopular. Youth programs in these areas are very valuable. Especially with the level of crime and the number of ram raids.	We welcome your feedback on this matter and encourage you to make a formal submission please at https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/annual-budget-2023-2024
What cultural/wellbeing support is being provided to staff (esp Maori & Pasifika staff) who may be impacted by the proposed changes?	Auckland Councils People and Culture department are providing all staff with access to multiple channels of support including support through the hauora/wellbeing approach which includes Te Ao Māori perspectives and utilises Te Whare Tapa Wha (a holistic Maori well-being model) as a framework for defining hauora, which considers cultural wellbeing as well.
Any consideration of the impacts from the proposed on our Budget to achieving Council's objectives/goals for Maori, Pasifika, Gender Equity and Rainbow communities?	Further advice on the potential impacts of the proposals in terms of equity across communities, Maori outcomes and the environment will be provided to the Governing Body to support final decision-making in June.
Have you any metrics that gauge the impact of your proposed cuts on the community sector - especially the costs of astronomical increases to leases and charging exorbitant administration charges for these leases?	Further advice on the potential impacts of the proposals in terms of equity across communities will be provided to the Governing Body to support final decision-making in June.
We all know of the problems bored youth have caused recently. Have the social and cultural funding cuts considered the outlet they provide for youth and give them positive things to do?	Service level and community implications are noted in the Supporting Information document (pages 10-23) . We value further feedback on this.
Can you explain a bit more what the difference between local and central government CAB activities? I'm not quite understanding what that looks like	Auckland CABs receive around \$2m in Council funding each year. This funding provides the staff support, overhead costs, and local infrastructure to support the volunteers to deliver the CAB service. Central government funding supports all Auckland CABs through its funding of CABNZ, the national body of CAB. Central government funding

	enables the underlying infrastructure, including the IT system, intranet and knowledge base, that volunteers in Auckland use to deliver the CAB service.
Speaking about the homeless community, how does Auckland Council currently help those who have companion animals with them on the street (ie. dogs) and any basic veterinary care? If the homeless grant/budget is cut, what support (ie. vet care) can be offered to this community and their animals?	Auckland Councils work includes developing, monitoring and reviewing strategies that aim to improve social wellbeing outcomes, including more equitable outcomes for vulnerable populations. We commission research and engage with affected Aucklanders to understand their diverse needs and preferences. This shapes the development of effective responses to issues and opportunities.