

1 PRIORITY QUESTION

The system of local governance

How should the system of local governance be reshaped so it can adapt to future challenges and enable communities to thrive?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

What's needed to create a system in which all players can effectively work together towards common goals?

Individuals and whānau | Business | Iwi and Māori organisations | Community organisations | Local government | Central government

How do we create a system that is fit for a changing future?

What does it mean for a community to thrive?



Pointers

- » This question is about the system of local governance. It's less about the role of local government.
- » Good local governance = players working in an aligned way towards common goals.
- » Councils have a democratic mandate. They can articulate and represent the common goals of communities.

What's the situation right now?

- » Little involvement from communities in development of central government policy.
- » Central government doesn't take a place-based approach to policy. Takes a one-sized fits all approach.

Questions to ask yourself

- » When are decisions better made by local government than central government?
- » What are some of the key issues your council would most like to work with others to address, locally?
- » What is stopping your council from working in more aligned ways with individuals and their whānau, businesses, iwi/hapū and Māori organisations, community organisations and central government agencies?

Case studies

- » [The Southern Initiative](#)
- » [Edible Canterbury: Christchurch's Food Resilience Network](#)
- » [Dunedin City Council South Dunedin Future](#)

Further reading

- » [Locality – The Power of Community \(UK\)](#)
- » [Reinvigorating local democracy, LGNZ, July 2019](#)

2 PRIORITY QUESTION Roles and functions

What are the future functions, roles and essential features of New Zealand's system of local government?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Which current functions should local government retain?

Could any functions be carried out in collaboration with other players?

What new roles and functions should local government take on?



Pointers

This is about how roles and responsibilities are allocated between central and local government.

Roles and functions can be carried out:

NATIONALLY REGIONALLY LOCALLY

What's the situation right now?

Aotearoa New Zealand has never had a meaningful conversation about the allocation of roles and responsibilities between central and local government.

Councils have limited roles in:

HEALTHCARE HOUSING PROVISION

SOCIAL WELFARE EDUCATION

Councils are responsible for:

RECREATION & SOCIAL FACILITIES CULTURAL SERVICES*

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION WASTE MANAGEMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT

CIVIL DEFENCE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LOCAL ROADS

* libraries, museums, art galleries

Change is on the horizon:

- » Three waters
- » Land use planning

Questions to ask yourself

- » What new roles and functions would your council like to deliver for your communities?
- » What's stopping your council from delivering these roles or functions now?

Case studies

- » [Waitaki District Health Services](#)
- » [Hastings District Council Place-based housing partnerships](#)

Further reading

- » [New Local, a network of over 60 of the UK's most innovative councils](#)
- » [10 Reasons to Give Localism a Chance, LGNZ 2019](#)
- » [Decentralisation: does New Zealand measure up? Mike Reid, 2015](#)

3 PRIORITY QUESTION Treaty partnerships

How might a system of local governance embody authentic partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, creating conditions for shared prosperity & wellbeing?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

- How can local government and iwi/hapū become powerful allies?
- How can local authorities create culturally safe working environments?

- What does it mean to protect Māori rights, interests, manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga in local authority decision-making?



Pointers

Think about:

- » Ensuring iwi/Māori voices are heard in local government decision-making
- » Hearing from iwi/Māori about the effectiveness of existing relationship models
- » Giving voice to maata waka and taura here groups.

What's the situation right now?

- » The degree to which the Crown's obligations under Te Tiriti extend to local government can be unclear
- » Under the Local Government Act, councils are required to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making.
- » Councils use a range of mechanisms:
 - » Mana whenua representatives on council standing committees
 - » Memoranda of partnership between iwi/hapū and councils
 - » 35 councils have adopted Māori wards for the 2022 election

Questions to ask yourself

- » How could your council's existing iwi, hapū and Māori relationships be improved?
- » What would support you to improve those existing relationships? What's stopping you from doing that now?
- » What should local government's role in the Treaty relationship be?

Case studies

- » [Rotorua Lakes Council Te Arawa Partnership Model](#)
- » [Auckland Council Independent Māori Statutory Board](#)

Further reading

- » [Council-Māori participation arrangements, LGNZ 2017](#)
- » [Local government's Māori representation gap, Jack Vowles, Newsroom, February 2021](#)

4 PRIORITY QUESTION Responsive local leadership

What needs to change so local government and its leaders can best reflect and respond to the communities they serve?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

How can democracy better:

- » Provide for effective and meaningful community involvement in decision-making?
- » Ensure all communities and interests are more fairly and equitably represented in local authority decision-making?
Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples |
Young people | Renters | And others

Should we consider new models of community engagement and participation – including active citizenship approaches and participatory or deliberative models?



Pointers

Focus on the role of elected members and the adequacy of mechanisms for engaging with communities, thinking about:

- » The weight that should be given to elected members' roles
- » The role of mayors
- » Mechanisms for increasing diversity of elected members
- » Decision-making structures
- » Methods for engaging with communities – including deliberative and participatory models

What's the situation right now?

- » The profile of elected members is changing – with growing numbers of young and Māori elected members following the 2019 election.
- » But barriers to greater diversity include: remuneration, timing of meetings, mandate, cost of standing for election.
- » Increasing use of innovative engagement techniques – but still relatively low levels of community participation.

Questions to ask yourself

- » What needs to change so that a more diverse range of individuals are interested in standing for local government?
- » What changes would better enable your community to engage with your council?
- » What are some examples of decisions that could be made by communities themselves?

Case studies

- » [Wellington City Council Makara Beach Project](#)
- » [Western Bay of Plenty District Council transfer of ownership of Panepane Pūrākau](#)

Further reading

- » [Elected members' profile 2019 –2022, LGNZ October 2020](#)
- » [Rewarding, interesting, and frustrating: How elected members feel about their time in local government, LGNZ January 2020](#)

5 PRIORITY QUESTION Fiscal sustainability

What should change in local governance funding and financing to ensure viability and sustainability, fairness and equity, and maximum wellbeing?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Designing and sizing future local authorities in a way that ensures:

- » Financial viability and sustainability
- » Sufficient capacity to support or absorb shocks and respond to challenges
- » An ongoing contribution to community-led governance and local wellbeing.

Looking at the role of equity – both intergenerationally equity and between communities.

Mechanisms for financial planning, transparency and accountability.



Pointers

There are two key issues:

- » Ensuring local government funding is sustainable and sufficient.
- » Funding for local governance – which is wider than the institutions of local government.

There's an opportunity to look at other options for funding local government:

- » Revenue sharing – sharing taxes between central and local government.
- » Equalisation grants – grants made to councils representing lower socio-economic areas to support consistent service delivery across the country.

- » Rates lack the buoyancy of other taxes (the rates 'take' doesn't grow as the economy grows).

Questions to ask yourself

- » What additional funding and financing tools do you think should be made available to councils?
- » Should the Panel be considering some form of revenue sharing between central and local government? How could this happen?
- » What options are there to help councils serving low socio-economic communities provide good quality local services?

What's the situation right now?

- » High dependence on property taxes (rates). Rates make up approximately 60 percent of local government's operational revenue.
- » Rates are poorly related to ability to pay.

Further reading

- » [Local government funding and financing](#), Productivity Commission 2019
- » [Local Government Funding Review: A discussion paper](#), LGNZ 2015
- » [Overview of participatory budgeting from Involve](#), the UK's leading public participation charity