

SUBMISSION ON THE AUCKLAND COUNCIL LONG TERM PLAN

22nd March 2012

Personal submission from John Gillon.

Please accept the below points (in no particular order of priority) along with the online questionnaire as my submission on the Auckland Council Long Term Plan:

Kaipatiki Local Board Projects

I support all projects in the Kaipatiki Local Board Agreement, particularly the following:

- Establishment of the Beach Haven ferry service
- Implementation of a walking and cycling track network across the Kaipatiki Local Board area
- Developing the Glenfield Town Centre
- Implementation of the Highbury Town Centre plan (including Viewing Platform project) and Northcote Town Centre plan
- Building the Glendhu footbridge in Bayview.

Dog Registration Fee

I do not support the ideological (and potentially illegal) argument that the Dog Registration fee must fund all, or a majority, of Animal Management (including the non-dog component). The total cost of Animal Management and the amount of money raised through the Dog Registration fee are unrelated and it is by forcing a relationship on ideological grounds that an unacceptable rise in the fee has been proposed.

The Dog Control Act (which allows the Council to collect a dog registration fee) states "All money received and retained by a territorial authority under this Act shall be expended only for purposes authorised by or under this Act." This means that all money raised under the act must be spent on dog control (not non-dog animal management). It does NOT say that all dog control activities must be funded from money raised under the act.

I believe that Auckland Council is leaving itself open for legal action against it by funding activities from dog registration fees which are not specified in the Act (such as taxis, office supplies, water, electricity, depreciation, bank charges, insurance, hireage expenses, food and beverages for events, rates, etc). To ensure legal compliance, Council should fund those activities out of general rates even if they are indirect expenditures related to dog control activities.

Pound fees are only allowed because they are specified in the Dog Control Act, yet the revenue raised is (apparently) being included in the general rate component of Animal Management when it should be specified as a specific income (projected to raise between \$20,000 to \$25,000) and tagged to dog control activities only. ie Pound fees cannot be used for non-dog animal management or any other non-dog activity.

Conclusion: I believe that there is ample room (and potentially legal justification) to lower the registration fee from what has been proposed by including pound fees and animal fines as income and ensuring that general rates fund aspects of animal management that the dog registration fee is not legally allowed to fund (or is at best ambiguous). The dog registration fee could be lowered further by removing the ideological goal of using it to fully fund Animal Management.

LTP 12/13 Draft Budget \$000 as at 5 March 2012		Auckland Council Animal Control	Includes
Staff & Contractors		9,344	Cost of permanent full-time, part time staff, casual staff, overtime, kiwi saver, ACC levies, training expenses, uniforms. Specialist expertise brought in to deliver day to day services. Contractor costs for delivery of service.
Professional Services		179	Specialist expertise brought in for defined unique/one off projects and for a specified period of time.
Office consumables		70	Office supplies, stationary, postage, couriers, printing and binding documents
Occupancy and utilities		67	Rates, security, refuse, cleaning, water and electricity expenses
Repairs and maintenance		91	Repairs and maintenance of plant, equipment, furniture and fittings
Depreciation and amortisation		73	Depreciation for property plant, equipment and vehicles
National dog database levy		117	Levies for National dog database
Entertainment and catering		1	Cost of purchasing food and beverages for events
Travel		9	Travel including taxis, flights and accommodation
Motor vehicle expense		79	Repairs and maintenance costs for vehicles including WOF fuel and oil
Advertising, marketing and research		85	Costs associated with public education, promotions and events. All costs associated with the promotion and advertising of facilities, assets, programmes, events and funding rounds.
Materials		100	Purchase of materials for running of programmes, classes, events and repair of assets
Court lodgements		90	Court lodgements fees
Other expense on activities		134	Hireage expenses, debt collection expenses, membership, signage and other expenses on activities
Internal charges		4	Internal charges - time, property rental, city parks services, other
Funding expenses		43	Interest for capital expenditure
Operating expenditure		10,486	Total operating expenditure
Corporate cost allocation		1,787	Corporate cost allocation, Bank charges, Legal, Insurance, Information systems and telecommunication, property related costs including minor fixed assets
Total Expenditure		12,273	Total expenditure
Licences and permits revenue		9,778	Dog registration, licenses and permits revenue for Animal Management

I also believe it is wrong to not give a discount to dog owners that have a Dog Owner Licence. But in order to rectify this, I do not support leaving the Dog Owner Licence levels where they are and raising the non-licensed fees!

Dog Park

I support the establishment of a "Dog Park" in the Kaipatiki Board Area as there are currently no public dog-specific activities. Dog Parks are fenced-off areas where dogs can run free and socialise on- or off-leash. They can be established relatively cheaply and include agility courses, tunnels, ramps, ponds, fresh water, etc.

There are good examples of dog parks in Christchurch:

<http://www.ccc.govt.nz/homeliving/petsanimals/exercisingyourdog/dogparks.aspx>

Sports Ground Artificial Turf

I do not support the conversion of grass sports fields to artificial turf for the following reasons:

- The combined installation and maintenance costs are higher over time for artificial turf than grass.
- Artificial turf must be fenced off which restricts free community access to the open space.
- Artificial turf fields result in increased use for private sports codes and less time for free public access. This disadvantages the poor and general community.
- Artificial turf cannot be converted back to grass due to the plastics killing organisms in the subsoil.
- There is a risk of toxic chemicals leaching from the artificial turf into the environment and nearby waterways.

Artificial turfs should only be installed on sites which are already concrete sites, such as abandoned building sites/car parks. As housing becomes more intensified and back gardens reduce in size due to subdividing, it is essential that as much land as possible is retained as free-access, open grass space.

Environmental Centre

I support the objectives of the Kaipatiki Project plan for developing an environmental centre. I support the proposed location in Eskdale Reserve.

Events

- I support an expansion of the “Movies in Parks” events. The Kaipatiki Local Board has had a reduction in movies screening than under North Shore City. This needs to be rectified and increased. It is a great community-bonding occasion.
- I support the retention of the three Kaipatiki ANZAC Day services.
- I support the retention of the Birkenhead and Glenfield Christmas Parades. However I believe that Council should pay for the traffic management plans as this is an “internal” cost and could result in Christmas Parades becoming financially unviable for community groups to run.
- I support returning the Wag ‘n’ Walk event to the North Shore.

Waste Water Charges

I oppose the introduction of user-pays waste water charges.

Harbour Crossings

- I support a tunnel for the third harbour crossing. This project needs to be brought forward so that it is in place before restrictions are required for heavy vehicles on the Harbour Bridge.
- I do not support tolls on the new or current harbour crossings.
- I support permanent and cheap pedestrian and cycling access across the Harbour Bridge.

Heritage Zones

I support the retention of the three North Shore heritage zones. I do not support intensification development within these zones.

Glenfield Town Centre

- I support the Glenfield Urban Design Plan being upgraded into a full Town Centre Plan.
- I support Council contributing funds towards restoring the Glenfield Mission Hall prior to its centenary in 2015.
- I support the development of an outdoor community space in the town centre.

Swimming Pools

I support free access for all Auckland residents to Council's swimming pools at all times. If free access is to be staggered, then I support a priority given to children and the elderly.

Airport Shares

I support the retention of the Council's Auckland Airport shares.

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