

18th May 2012



**Community Funding Consultation
Auckland Council
Community and Cultural Policy
Private Bag 92300
Auckland 1142**

Submission to Auckland Council from Community Waitakere on Auckland Council's draft Community Funding Policy - May 2012

Introduction:

Community Waitakere is a Charitable Trust, dedicated to achieving our vision of a sustainable Waitakere with thriving, connected communities.

We have thirty years of history in Waitakere, working collaboratively with communities and local/central government to achieve positive social outcomes for our citizens, neighbourhoods and local community organisations.

We have been a strong, respected community leader and advocate for social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing, and have worked effectively in partnership with the Waitakere City Council (and now the Auckland Council) for the best outcomes for our citizens and communities over that time.

We are recognised locally, regionally and nationally as a key linkage between communities and central and local government at all levels. We work across the three Western Local Board areas, and have established positive relationships with them individually and as a "cluster", particularly in our roles of advocacy, leadership and connection. We also have well-established working relationships with Council officers at the local level.

1. The Community Funding Policy and the Community Development Strategy

- We are concerned that this draft Community Funding Policy has been developed and open for submissions in the absence of a comprehensive Community Development Strategy for Auckland.
- Along with many other organisations, Community Waitakere has made numerous submissions to Auckland Council for a Community Development Strategy for Auckland to be developed, in collaboration with communities across the Auckland region, before significant policies such as this one can be developed.
- The absence of any commitment in the Policy to "partnerships" gives us cause for concern that funding for communities will be solely for "things" (events; facilities etc) and not for the soft infrastructure that binds communities together through Council and communities working together in collaboration.

2. Consultation

- The consultation time for consideration of this important policy has been unreasonably short. Our previous submissions that the Auckland governance reform processes were fundamentally flawed have yet again proven to be correct. Having said this, we do

acknowledge the considerable stress placed on Council staff who are generally doing their best to make them work.

- The rushed timeframe is unfair as our community groups struggle with the implications, and have little time to consult or to plan effectively and therefore apply inefficiently.
- We acknowledge the Council's readiness to work in collaboration with Community Waitakere to distribute as much information as possible to communities through written information and the facilitation of community meetings, but from our experience communities need more time to digest the information and analyse its impact so as to be able to make informed decisions.
- Working in true partnership with communities does take time, but for Council this investment of time in sound process will pay off in the end.

3. Clarity of Information

- The draft policy lacks clarity and detail and appears to have been rushed through purely to satisfy political deadlines.
- It is not clear as to what the budget is for the policy, where money sits and how previously held long-term partnerships between Council and its communities will be supported. Therefore it is difficult to discern how significant the policy's scope and parameters are. We need to know clearly whether or not the Operational Services Contract funding is included in the budget of this policy or not.
- The differences between contestable funding and other funding are unclear. Many groups have longstanding relationships with funding included as part of normal operations. It is not clear whether, or the extent to which, these will become subject to the Community Funding Policy or not as there is little information on this issue beyond brief reference to Operational Service Contracts.
- It is not clear as to how the models of local board/multi-board and governing body funding fit together, nor does the criteria appear to take into account existing partnerships, the emphasis is more on agreements or contract funding.
- Under Policy Scope (pg6) there is some discussion of "operational service contracts" – but it is unclear how these contracts interact with the rest of the funding policy (eg local and multi-board funding).
- It is unclear what impetus the Local Boards will have to work together around "multi-board" funding. That needs to be clearly described so that the process is clear and transparent to the Local Boards and community groups who work sub-regionally.

4. Partnerships

- There is no information in the policy about the need or role of partnerships with Maori communities or respect for Te Ao Maori so as to align the policy with the principles of the Auckland Plan.
- The policy does not reflect the principles of collaboration and partnership nor acknowledgement of the diversity of Auckland and its communities
- The absence of a Community Development Strategy means that the principles of community development and collaboration are not incorporated into the Policy document.

5. Multi level funding

- Community Waitakere supports the idea of multi level funding in the new regional governance structure but clearly a lot more thought has to be given to how this would work without groups being disadvantaged.
- There are 21 Local Boards geographically and it appears that there are significant differences in the way they work with their local communities with some clustering cooperatively and others being quite fiercely independent.

6. Multi year funding

- Community Waitakere supports multi-year funding. We have worked in partnership with Local Government in this way over many years now. The stability of multi-year funding provides an opportunity for sound planning and a more cost effective investment for Council. However multi-year funding needs to be tied together with shared values and shared principles with an understanding of equal contribution, responsibility and accountability through a mechanism such as a Partnering Agreement. Contracts are generally one sided and top-down.

7. Partial Funding

- Community Waitakere believes partial funding is not a realistic option and will likely provide more of a barrier for local organisations because of the need to make several funding applications, the work involved in this and the uncertainty associated with it.

8. Decision Making

- It appears that the Governing Body has a governance role of strategic oversight of the funding and the Local Boards have more of a management role. This seems like a clear delineation. Local Boards are supposed to have a co-governance or shared governance role, not a management role. If this is so, there must be robust mechanisms in place to make sure that Council Staff retain the ability to manage their work and that funding will not be micromanaged by Local Boards.

In conclusion

- Community Waitakere urges that the finalisation of the Community Funding Policy be deferred until the Community Development Strategy is completed.
- In the true spirit of collaboration Community Waitakere is ready and willing to engage with Auckland Council in preparation of a Community Development Strategy.



Pat Watson
Chief Executive
Community Waitakere Charitable Trust