



# Local Government Commission

## Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

### Determination of representation arrangements to apply for the election of Auckland Council to be held on 11 October 2025

## Introduction

1. All territorial authorities are required under section 19H of the Local Electoral Act 2001 (the Act) to review their representation arrangements at least every six years. Under Section 19R of the Act, the Commission, as well as considering appeals and objections against a council's final representation proposal, must determine all the matters set out in section 19H which relate to the representation arrangements for territorial authorities.
2. Having completed its considerations, the Commission's determination differs from Auckland Council's final representation proposal as set out below.

## Commission's determination<sup>1</sup>

3. In accordance with section 19R of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Local Government Commission determines that for at least the triennial general election of Auckland Council to be held on 11 October 2025, the following representation arrangements will apply:
  - a. As delineated on Plan LG-076-2025-W-1, Auckland will be divided into wards and will be represented by a Governing Body comprising the mayor and 20 councillors elected as follows:

Ward	Councillors	Plan delineating area
Rodney	1	LG-076-2025-W-2
Albany	2	LG-076-2025-W-3
North Shore	2	LG-076-2025-W-4
Waitākere	2	LGC-Ak-W4
Waitematā and Gulf	1	LG-076-2025-W-5

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<sup>1</sup> All plans referred to in this determination are deposited with the Local Government Commission.

Whau	1	LGC-Ak-W5
Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa	2	LG-076-2025-W-6
Ōrākei	1	LG-076-2025-W-7
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	1	LG-076-2025-W-8
Howick	2	LG-076-2025-W-9
Manukau	2	LGC-Ak-W10
Manurewa-Papakura	2	LGC-Ak-W12
Franklin	1	LG-076-2025-W-10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	

b. There will be 21 local boards, seven of which will be subdivided, as follows:

<b>Local Board / Subdivision</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Plan delineating area</b>
<b>Rodney Local Board</b>		LG-076-2025-LB-1
Northern Rodney Subdivision	2	LG-076-2025-S-1
Southern Kaipara Subdivision	2	LG-076-2025-S-2
Warkworth Subdivision	2	LG-076-2025-S-3
Kumeū Subdivision	2	LG-076-2025-S-4
Dairy Flat Subdivision	1	LG-076-2025-S-5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>Hibiscus and Bays Local Board</b>		LGC-Ak-LB2
Hibiscus Coast Subdivision	4	LGC-Ak-LB2
East Coast Bays Subdivision	4	LGC-Ak-LB2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>Upper Harbour Local Board</b>	<b>6</b>	LG-076-2025-LB-2
No subdivisions		
<b>Kaipātiki Local Board</b>	<b>8</b>	LG-076-2025-LB-3
No subdivisions		
<b>Devonport-Takapuna Local Board</b>	<b>6</b>	LG-076-2025-LB-4
No subdivisions		
<b>Henderson-Massey Local Board</b>	<b>8</b>	LGC-Ak-LB6
No subdivisions		

<b>Waitākere Ranges Local Board</b>	<b>6</b>	LGC-Ak-LB7
No subdivisions		
<b>Aotea/Great Barrier Local Board</b>	<b>5</b>	LGC-Ak-LB13
No subdivisions		
<b>Waiheke Local Board</b>	<b>5</b>	LGC-Ak-LB12
No subdivisions		
<b>Waitematā Local Board</b>	<b>7</b>	LG-076-2025-LB-5
No subdivisions		
<b>Whau Local Board</b>	<b>7</b>	LGC-Ak-LB8
No subdivisions		
<b>Albert-Eden Local Board</b>		LGC-Ak-LB9
Ōwairaka Subdivision	4	LGC-Ak-LB9
Maungawhau Subdivision	4	LGC-Ak-LB9
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>Puketāpapa Local Board</b>	<b>6</b>	LG-076-2025-LB-6
No subdivisions		
<b>Ōrākei Local Board</b>	<b>7</b>	LG-076-2025-LB-7
No subdivisions		
<b>Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board</b>		LG-076-2025-LB-8
Maungakiekie Subdivision	3	LG-076-2025-S-6
Tāmaki Subdivision	4	LG-076-2025-S-7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Howick Local Board</b>		LG-076-2025-LB-9
Pakuranga Subdivision	3	LG-076-2025-S-8
Howick Subdivision	3	LG-076-2025-S-9
Botany Subdivision	2	LG-076-2025-S-10
Flat Bush Subdivision	3	LG-076-2025-S-11
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board</b>	<b>7</b>	LGC-Ak-LB16
No subdivisions		

<b>Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board</b>		LGC-Ak-LB17
Papatoetoe Subdivision	4	LGC-Ak-LB17
Ōtara Subdivision	3	LGC-Ak-LB17
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Manurewa Local Board</b>	<b>8</b>	LGC-Ak-LB19
No subdivisions		
<b>Papakura Local Board</b>	<b>6</b>	LGC-Ak-LB20
No subdivisions		
<b>Franklin Local Board</b>		LG-076-2025-LB-10
Waiuku Subdivision	2	LG-076-2025-S-12
Pukekohe Subdivision	4	LG-076-2025-S-13
Wairoa Subdivision	3	LG-076-2025-S-14
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	

4. The ratio of population to elected members for each ward will be as follows:

<b>Wards</b>	<b>Population*</b>	<b>Number of members</b>	<b>Population per member</b>	<b>Deviation from average population per member</b>	<b>% deviation from average population per member</b>
Rodney	81,000	1	81,000	-5,965	-6.86
Albany	191,390	2	95,695	+8,730	<b>+10.04</b>
North Shore	150,110	2	75,055	-11,910	<b>-13.70</b>
Waitākere	187,000	2	93,500	+6,535	+7.51
Waitematā and Gulf	94,050	1	94,050	+7,085	+8.15
Whau	86,300	1	86,300	-665	-0.76
Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa	163,720	2	81,860	-5,105	-5.87
Ōrākei	86,130	1	86,130	-835	-0.96
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	84,100	1	84,100	-2,865	-3.29
Howick	157,700	2	78,850	-8,115	-9.33
Manukau	185,800	2	92,900	+5,935	+6.82
Manurewa-Papakura	186,700	2	93,350	+6,385	+7.34
Franklin	85,300	1	85,300	-1,665	-1.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,739,300</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>86,965</b>		

\*Based on Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2023 population estimates (2018 census base)

5. The population each local board will represent will be as follows:

Local board	Population*	Number of members	Population per member
Rodney	81,000	9	9,000
Hibiscus and Bays	117,200	8	14,650
Upper Harbour	74,200	6	12,383
Kaipātiki	91,500	8	11,438
Devonport-Takapuna	58,600	6	9,767
Henderson-Massey	131,400	8	16,425
Waitākere Ranges	55,600	6	9,267
Aotea/Great Barrier	1,050	5	210
Waiheke	9,420	5	1,884
Waitematā	86,700	7	12,386
Whau	86,300	7	12,329
Albert-Eden	99,500	8	12,438
Puketāpapa	61,100	6	10,183
Ōrākei	86,200	7	12,314
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	84,100	7	12,014
Howick	157,700	11	14,336
Māngere-Ōtāhuhu	89,200	7	12,743
Ōtara-Papatoetoe	96,700	7	13,814
Manurewa	110,900	8	13,863
Papakura	75,800	6	12,633
Franklin	85,300	9	9,478
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,739,570</b>		

\*Based on Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2023 population estimates (2018 census base)

6. The ratio of population to elected members for each local board subdivision will be as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Local board subdivisions	Population*	Number of members	Population per member	Deviation from local board average population per member	% deviation from local board average population per member
<b>Rodney Local Board</b>					
Northern Rodney	16,290	2	8,145	-846	-9.41
Southern Kaipara	17,450	2	8,725	-266	-2.96
Warkworth	17,910	2	8,955	-36	-0.40
Kumeū	19,750	2	9,875	+884	+9.83
Dairy Flat	9,520	1	9,520	+529	+5.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,960</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8,991</b>		
<b>Hibiscus and Bays Local Board</b>					
Hibiscus Coast	64,800	4	16,200	+1,563	<b>+10.67</b>
East Coast Bays	52,300	4	13,075	-1,563	<b>-10.67</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>117,100</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14,638</b>		
<b>Albert-Eden Local Board</b>					
Ōwairaka	50,200	4	12,550	+125	+1.01
Maungawhau	49,200	4	12,300	-125	-1.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,400</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12,425</b>		
<b>Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board</b>					
Maungakiekie	32,100	3	10,700	-1,314	<b>-10.94</b>
Tāmaki	52,000	4	13,000	+986	+8.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>84,100</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12,014</b>		
<b>Howick Local Board</b>					
Pakuranga	43,100	3	14,367	+39	+0.27
Howick	44,000	3	14,667	+339	+2.37

<sup>2</sup> Rounding practices mean that the total figures in this table differ slightly to the population figures in the table at paragraph 5 above.

Botany	27,840	2	13,920	-407	-2.84
Flat Bush	42,660	3	14,220	-107	-0.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,600</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14,327</b>		
<b>Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board</b>					
Papatoetoe	60,700	4	15,175	1,361	+9.85
Ōtara	36,000	3	12,000	-1,814	<b>-13.13</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>96,700</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13,814</b>		
<b>Franklin</b>					
Waiuku	16,350	2	8,175	-1,308	<b>-13.80</b>
Pukekohe	41,800	4	10,450	+967	<b>+10.19</b>
Wairoa	27,200	3	9,067	-417	-4.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,350</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9,483</b>		

\*Based on Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2023 population estimates (2018 census base)

7. Under section 19V(6) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Commission upholds the decision of the Council not to comply with section 19V(2) in respect of:
- The Albany and North Shore Wards, as compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by dividing communities of interest between wards;
  - The Hibiscus Coast and East Coast Bays Subdivisions of the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, as compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by splitting communities of interest between subdivisions;
  - The Maungakiekie Subdivision of the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board, as compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by splitting communities of interest between subdivisions;
  - The Ōtara Subdivision of the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board as compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by dividing communities of interest between wards and subdivisions and unite communities of interest with few commonalities of interest;
  - The Waiuku and Pukekohe Subdivisions of the Franklin Local Board, as compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by splitting communities of interest between subdivisions.

8. As required by section 19T(1)(b) and 19T(2)(b) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the boundaries of the above wards, local boards and local board subdivisions coincide with the boundaries of current statistical meshblock areas determined by Statistics New Zealand and used for Parliamentary electoral purposes.

## Background

9. Auckland Council (the Council) was established in 2010 by the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009. The Council was required to undertake its first representation review before the 2019 local elections. Subsequent reviews are required at least every six years, with the current review the second since the Council's establishment.
10. Under section 19H of the Act representation reviews are to determine the number of councillors to be elected, the basis of election for councillors and, if this includes wards, the boundaries and names of those wards. Representation reviews are to ensure fair and effective representation for individuals and communities.
11. Along with the requirements of section 19H additional aspects of the representation review process apply specifically to the Council:
  - The external boundaries of local board areas cannot change, aside from minor alterations.<sup>3</sup> Local boards may not be abolished nor newly established through the representation review process.<sup>4</sup>
  - The Council must consider the names and membership of local boards, and whether any subdivisions are required. If so, the boundaries, names, and number of members to be elected to each subdivision must be considered.<sup>5</sup>
  - The Commission must ensure that, so far as is practicable, local board boundaries coincide with ward boundaries.<sup>6</sup>
  - Community boards cannot be established.<sup>7</sup>
12. The inability to adjust local board boundaries through the representation review process other than in a minor manner creates tension between the legislative provisions applying to representation reviews. We are required to determine arrangements that provide fair representation for electors and effective representation for communities of interest. We also must ensure that, so far as practicable, ward boundaries coincide with local board boundaries.

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<sup>3</sup> Clause 141 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 limits local board boundary alterations to the lower of 2.5% of the board with the smaller population, or 2000 residents.

<sup>4</sup> Any changes to local boards aside from minor boundary alterations may only be made through the reorganisation processes set out in Schedule 3A of the Local Government Act 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Section 19H(1)(e) - (i) Local Electoral Act 2001

<sup>6</sup> Section 19T(1)(c) Local Electoral Act 2001

<sup>7</sup> Section 102 Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009



13. Since its establishment in 2010, the Council's population has grown by over 300,000 residents – almost equivalent to the entire populations of Wellington and Hutt Cities combined. Such growth has been rapid but uneven across Auckland. We understand these trends are likely to continue and may affect communities of interest.
14. As we go on to discuss, there is a growing need to closely examine local board boundaries due to uneven population growth. We understand the Council considered a local board reorganisation in tandem with the current review but ultimately decided not to do so.
15. At the outset of our determination of Auckland's representation arrangements we observe that there is a growing need for an in-depth consideration of local board boundaries.
16. We strongly encourage a local board reorganisation process be completed ahead of the next review, to ensure good governance and effective representation of communities of interest within local board boundaries.

### Current representation arrangements

17. The Council's current representation arrangements were determined by the Commission as part of the 2019 review. The Commission upheld the Council's final proposal, including several wards and local board subdivisions that did not meet the +/- 10% rule.
18. The Council's 2019 representation review used Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2017 population estimates (2013 census base). A notable feature of these was a +43.74% deviation for the Waitematā and Gulf Ward from the average ward population per member, commonly referred to as the '+/-10% rule'<sup>8</sup>
19. The deviation of the Waitematā and Gulf Ward from the +/-10% rule influenced changes to central ward boundaries, resulting in areas of non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries:
  - Parnell, Newmarket and Grafton moved from the Waitematā and Gulf Ward to the Ōrākei Ward but remained in the Waitematā Local Board
  - Eden Terrace moved from the Waitematā and Gulf Ward to the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward but remained in the Waitematā Local Board
  - Part of Ellerslie and St Johns moved from the Ōrākei Ward to the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Ward but remained in the Ōrākei Local Board

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<sup>8</sup> Section 19V(2) requires that the population of each ward or subdivision, divided by the number of members to be elected by that ward or subdivision, produces a figure no more than 10% greater or smaller than the population of the district or local board area divided by the total number of elected members. Section 19V(3)(a) sets out specific exceptions to the +/-10% rule.

- Part of Royal Oak moved from the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Ward to the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward but remained in the Maungakiekie Subdivision of the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board

20. The 2019 determination also confirmed:

- Adjustments to the Rodney Local Board subdivision boundaries
- Name changes for the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward and Aotea/Great Barrier Local Board.

21. The Council's current representation arrangements are as follows:

Wards	Population*	Number of members	Population per member	Deviation from average population per member	% deviation from average population per member
Rodney	81,000	1	81,000	-5,965	-6.86
Albany	191,600	2	95,800	+8,835	<b>+10.16</b>
North Shore	149,900	2	74,950	-12,015	<b>-13.82</b>
Waitākere	187,000	2	93,500	+6,535	+7.51
Waitematā and Gulf	79,800	1	79,800	-7,165	-8.24
Whau	86,300	1	86,300	-665	-0.76
Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa	165,400	2	82,700	-4,265	-4.90
Ōrākei	87,600	1	87,600	+635	+0.73
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	92,500	1	95,200	+8,235	+9.47
Howick	157,700	2	78,850	-8,115	-9.33
Manukau	185,800	2	92,900	+5,935	+6.82
Manurewa-Papakura	186,700	2	93,350	6,385	+7.34
Franklin	85,300	1	85,300	-1,665	-1.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,739,300</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>86,965</b>		

\*Based on Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2023 population estimates (2018 census base)

22. The current local board arrangements are as set out in the table at paragraph 6, aside from the Rodney and Howick Local Boards, the arrangements for which currently are as follows:

Local board and subdivisions (where applicable)	Population*	Number of members	Population per member	Deviation from local board average population per member	% deviation from local board average population per member
<b>Rodney Local Board</b>					
Wellsford	6,960	1	6,960	-2,036	<b>-22.63</b>

Warkworth	23,600	3	7,867	-1,129	<b>-12.55</b>
Kumeū	40,900	4	10,225	+1,229	<b>+13.67</b>
Dairy Flat	9,500	1	9,500	+504	+5.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,960</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8,996</b>		
<b>Howick Local Board</b>					
Pakuranga	43,100	3	14,367	-3,144	<b>-17.96</b>
Howick	44,000	3	14,667	-2,844	<b>-16.24</b>
Botany	70,500	3	23,500	+5,989	<b>+34.20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,600</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17,511</b>		

\*Based on Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2023 population estimates (2018 census base)

## Preliminary consultation

23. The Council's Governing Body delegated responsibility to the Joint Governance Working Party (JGWP)<sup>9</sup> to undertake early engagement on issues and options, develop the initial proposal, hear submissions, and develop a final representation proposal. The Governing Body retained responsibility for resolving the initial and final representation proposals.
24. The JGWP was also tasked with exploring options for a local board reorganisation alongside the representation review. However, in May 2024, the Governing Body decided not to proceed with a local board reorganisation ahead of the 2025 local elections.
25. Preliminary community engagement activities included online webinars, drop-in sessions, and a marketing campaign across radio and social media. Feedback sought, from mana whenua and mātāwaka representative organisations, Council-Controlled Organisations, and a range of demographic advisory panels.
26. Workshops were also held with local boards and the Governing Body to inform options for the initial representation proposal.
27. The JGWP identified the need for specific ward representation for the rural areas of Rodney and Franklin. Doing so resulted in one councillor per approximately 85,000 residents, extrapolated out to a proposal for 20 members elected by ward. In December 2023, the Governing Body endorsed a 20-member council.

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<sup>9</sup> The Joint Governance Working Party is made up of six councillors, six local board chairs across a geographic spread, the Chair of Houkura (formerly the Independent Māori Statutory Body) and the mayor as an ex-officio member.

28. Through its preparatory work, the JGWP considered realigning almost all ward and local board boundaries in the central wards and proposed new subdivision arrangement for the Rodney and Howick Local Boards. Minor local board boundary adjustments were also identified, to locate reserves entirely within a single local board.
29. To address non-compliance with the +/-10% rule, the JGWP identified two areas for potential transfer from the Albany Ward to the North Shore Ward:
  - A minor boundary alteration in the Bayview area, involving a small population transfer between the Kaipātiki and Upper Harbour Local Boards; and
  - The potential inclusion of Unsworth Heights in the North Shore Ward, that would have made the Albany Ward compliant with the +/-10% rule, with the North Shore Ward remaining slightly non-compliant, at -10.01%. It also would have resulted in non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries for Unsworth Heights.

### The Council's initial proposal

30. On 27 June 2024 the Governing Body resolved its initial representation proposal for a Governing Body comprising 20 councillors elected from 13 wards. The proposal confirmed the JGWP's recommendations, aside from moving Unsworth Heights from the Albany Ward to the North Shore Ward.
31. The Council's initial proposal included:
  - Boundary changes for central wards, to restore alignment between all wards and local board boundaries, aside from Eden Terrace (which remained in the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward but the Waitemātā Local Board);
  - Non-compliant Albany and North Shore Wards, to avoid splitting communities of interest, and retaining alignment between local board and ward boundaries;
  - Minor alterations to several local board boundaries, to prevent reserves being split across local boards. A small population transfer was proposed between the Kaipātiki and Upper Harbour Local Boards in the Bayview area, and reflected in the proposed Albany/North Shore Ward boundary;
  - An additional subdivision added to the Rodney Local Board, and other subdivision boundaries altered, to better reflect the interests of the rural community in Rodney;
  - An additional subdivision added to the Howick Local Board to reflect population growth, particularly in the Flat Bush area;
  - Six non-compliant local board subdivisions, to avoid splitting communities of interest or joining unrelated communities of interest.
32. The initial proposed ward arrangements were as set out at paragraph 4 above.
33. The proposed local board arrangements were as set out at paragraph 6 above, aside from the Rodney Local Board, the arrangements for which were as follows:

Local board subdivisions	Population*	Number of members	Population per member	Deviation from local board average population per member	% deviation from local board average population per member
<b>Rodney Local Board</b>					
North Rural	16,690	2	8,345	-646	-7.19
South Rural	17,050	2	5,525	-466	-5.18
Warkworth	17,910	2	8,955	-36	-0.40
Kumeū	19,750	2	9,875	+884	+9.83
Dairy Flat	9,520	1	9,520	+529	+5.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,960</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8,991</b>		

## Submissions

34. The Council notified its initial representation proposal on 8 July 2024 and received 2359 submissions by the deadline date of 8 August 2024, along with 19 responses from local boards.
35. Approximately 65% of submitters supported the Council's initial proposal, approximately 20% did not support the proposal, with remaining submissions not clearly indicating their stance.
36. Key themes in the submissions were:
  - a. Strong overall support for the proposal, aside from the proposed changes to the Waitematā and Gulf and Ōrākei Wards, and the proposed Rodney Local Board subdivisions.
  - b. There was majority support for the proposed Waitematā and Gulf and Ōrākei Ward boundary changes, with significant support from residents in these areas. However, a submission campaign led by the Newmarket and Parnell Business Associations supported keeping Newmarket and Parnell remaining in the Ōrākei Ward on the basis that the resident demographic was a shared community of interest.
  - c. There was mixed support for the proposed Rodney subdivisions, but clear opposition from residents of Rodney, who felt the proposed subdivision boundaries divided the Kaukapakapa community.
  - d. There was general support for the proposed minor local board changes.

- e. Few submissions commented specifically on the proposed non-compliances, however the Kaipātiki and Devonport-Takapuna Local Boards raised concerns with the proposed non-compliances of the Albany and North Shore Wards.
37. The JGWP heard from submitters and local boards in early September 2024 and deliberated on submissions on 13 September 2024. It recommended upholding the initial representation proposal, aside from:
- Changes to central ward boundaries, with Grafton included in the Waitematā and Gulf Ward, but Parnell and Newmarket remaining in the Ōrākei Ward. As a result, St Johns would remain in the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Ward rather than returning to the Ōrākei Ward;
  - Alterations to the proposed Rodney subdivision boundaries and names.
38. The remaining matters raised in submissions were rejected for the following reasons:
- a. Submissions supporting the inclusion of Parnell and Newmarket in the Waitematā and Gulf Ward were rejected as it was considered Parnell and Newmarket shared a community of interest with the Ōrākei Ward.
  - b. Submissions requesting further changes to the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary were rejected as it was considered the proposed ward boundary reflected communities of interest.
  - c. Submissions supporting the proposed Rodney Local Board subdivisions were rejected as it was considered the altered boundaries better reflected communities of interest. Opposition to rural subdivisions was rejected as it was considered they provided more effective representation for rural communities of interest.
  - d. Proposals for alternative representation arrangements were rejected as they did not recognise, or provide effective representation, for communities of interest.
  - e. Requests for alterations to local boards, alternative voting systems or Māori wards were considered out of the scope of the review.

### The Council's final proposal

39. On 27 September 2024 the Governing Body confirmed the JGWP's recommendation as its final representation proposal.
40. The final proposal was for a Governing Body comprising 20 councillors elected from 13 constituencies.
41. The final proposal included ward arrangements as follows:

Wards	Population*	Number of members	Population per member	Deviation from average population per member	% deviation from average population per member

Rodney	81,000	1	81,000	-5,965	-6.86
Albany	191,390	2	95,695	+8,730	<b>+10.04</b>
North Shore	150,110	2	75,055	-11,910	<b>-13.70</b>
Waitākere	187,000	2	93,500	+6,535	+7.51
Waitematā and Gulf	82,630	1	82,630	-4,335	-4.98
Whau	96,300	1	86,300	-665	-0.76
Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa	163,720	2	81,860	-5,105	-5.87
Ōrākei	94,240	1	94,240	+7,275	+8.37
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	87,410	1	87,410	+445	+0.51
Howick	157,700	2	78,850	-8,115	-9.33
Manukau	185,800	2	92,900	+5,935	+6.82
Manurewa-Papakura	186,700	2	93,350	+6,385	+7.34
Franklin	85,300	1	85,300	-1,665	-1.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,739,300</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>86,965</b>		

\*Based on Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2023 population estimates

42. The final proposal local board arrangements proposed were as set out in the table at paragraphs 5 and 6 above.
43. The final proposal included two wards<sup>10</sup> and six local board subdivisions<sup>11</sup> that did not comply with the +/-10% rule. The Council was, therefore, required by section 19V(4) of the Act to refer its proposal to the Commission for determination. In addition, seven appeals and 11 objections were received against the Council's final proposal.

### Appeals/objections against the Council's final proposal

44. The Council referred the appeals and objections to the Commission, in accordance with section 19Q of the Act.
45. All appeals and objections against the Council's final proposal were considered wholly or partially within the scope of the Commission's powers to consider. They were considered valid or partially valid and raised the following matters:
- Requests for Parnell and Newmarket to be included in the Waitematā and Gulf Ward rather than in the Ōrākei Ward.
  - Concerns about the lack of alignment between ward and local board boundaries in the central wards/local boards, with a strong preference for alignment.

<sup>10</sup> The Albany and North Shore Wards, as set out in the table at paragraph 41.

<sup>11</sup> The Hibiscus Coast and East Coast Bays Subdivisions of the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board; the Maungakiekie Subdivisions of the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board; the Ōtara Subdivision of the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board; and the Waiuku and Pukekohe Subdivisions of the Franklin Local Board, as set out in the table at paragraph 6.

- c. Suggestions for moving the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary northwards, with an emphasis on the importance of complying with the +/-10% rule.
  - d. Concerns that the proposed Rodney Local Board subdivisions did not provide effective representation for communities of interest.<sup>12</sup>
  - e. Concerns regarding the number of elected members and proposed ward structure across the city.
46. One appellant proposed alternative representation arrangements, as follows:
- A Council of 25 members plus the Mayor
  - Ward boundaries aligned with Parliamentary electorate boundaries across Auckland

## Hearing

47. The Commission met with the Council and the 11 appellants and objectors who wished to be heard at a hearing held in Auckland on 4 February 2025. In addition, the Commission invited representatives of the Hibiscus and Bays, Rodney, and Upper Harbour Local Boards, to appear at the hearing.
48. The Council was represented at the hearing by:
- Councillor Julie Fairey, Chair of the JGWP and Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward councillor
  - Member Angela Fulljames, acting Deputy Chair of the JGWP and Franklin Local Board Chair
  - Member Richard Northey, JGWP member and Waitematā Local Board member
  - Councillor John Watson, JGWP member and Albany Ward councillor
49. They were supported by Warwick McNaughton, Principal Advisor Governance, Libby Hetet, Senior Project Manager – Representation Project, Brian Osborne, Senior Statistical Analyst and Madeline Holland, Governance Advisor.
50. The following appellants and objectors appeared at the hearing:
- George Gillard
  - Gael Baldock
  - Parnell Community Committee, represented by Roger Burton

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<sup>12</sup> Appeals in relation to the Rodney Local Board raised concerns as to whether the proposed subdivisions provided fair representation for communities in Rodney. As the proposed subdivisions were compliant with the +/-10% rule, the Commission interpreted the appeals as raising concerns regarding the effectiveness of representation for Rodney communities.



- Councillor Mike Lee
  - Waitematā Local Board, represented by Chair Genevieve Sage and Member Alan Matson
  - Jo Malcolm
  - Concerned Ratepayers Herne Bay, represented by Peter Mars
  - Rock the Vote, represented by Michael Avenell
  - Devonport-Takapuna Local Board, represented by Members George Wood and Gavin Busch
  - Kaipātiki Local Board, represented by Chair John Gillon and Deputy Chair Danielle Grant
  - David Holm
51. In addition, the following local board representatives appeared, at the Commission's invitation:
- Hibiscus and Bays Local Board Chair, Alexis Poppelbaum
  - Rodney Local Board Chair, Brent Bailey
  - Upper Harbour Local Board Chair, Anna Atkinson

### *Matters raised at the hearing*

52. Councillor Fairey, supported by Councillor Watson and Members Fulljames and Northey, explained the Council's review process and final proposal, emphasising the following points:
- a. Ensuring specific dedicated representation for Rodney and Franklin requires a Governing Body of 20 members.
  - b. Two new single-member wards were considered during the 2019 review but received negative feedback. There was a concern that smaller wards may not adequately spread representation in the relevant areas, and therefore the existing ward structure was retained.
  - c. The population estimates for the 2019 review led to significant changes in the central wards, but the 2023 population estimates suggested many of these changes could be reversed.
  - d. It was comparatively easier to balance effective representation of communities of interest and the +/-10% rule in the central wards, due to higher population density and connectivity between suburbs.
  - e. Strong submissions from the Parnell and Newmarket Business Associations and Auckland Museum suggested that Parnell and Newmarket 'faced east' and had a stronger functional community of interest with communities of the Ōrākei Ward.

- f. Few submissions were received regarding Grafton, and the preference had been to realign ward and local board boundaries for Grafton.
  - g. Eden Terrace was proposed to remain in the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward, as it shared commonalities of interest with suburbs to the south.
  - h. Non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries is not necessarily problematic from the Council or local board perspective but could potentially cause confusion for residents.
  - i. The final proposal aimed to align ward and local board boundaries as much possible, without compromising communities of interest and the +/-10% rule.
  - j. The Council does not have specific structures in place for dealing with non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries, instead relying on relationships between local boards and ward councillors.
  - k. The JGWP considered altering the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary to improve compliance with the +/-10% rule, by moving Unsworth Heights into the North Shore Ward. However, the Governing Body disagreed based on Sunset Road acting as a natural boundary and Unsworth Heights having shared interests with other Albany communities.
  - l. No public consultation had been undertaken regarding moving Unsworth Heights or coastal communities into the North Shore Ward. The Council was wary of moving communities across boundary lines where consultation had not occurred.
  - m. Achieving the most appropriate ward boundaries was an art, rather than a science. The Council's final proposal had responded to submissions, but it accepted that the Commission may come to a different position.
  - n. In the 2019 review, the Commission had signalled the need to consider the Howick Local Board subdivisions during the current review. Population growth in the Flat Bush area had influenced the proposal to add a fourth subdivision and increase the local board membership by two.
  - o. In-depth consideration had been given to proposing Rodney Local Board subdivisions likely to achieve effective representation for communities of interest. The Council had responded to submissions and felt the final proposal provided effective representation, particularly for Kaukapakapa, Waitoki and Wainui.
  - p. For non-compliant local board subdivisions, it was felt that strongly identified communities of interest would be split to achieve compliance.
  - q. No consideration was given to adding additional members to local boards with non-compliant subdivisions, as early engagement with local boards had focused on a possible local board reorganisation that likely would have reduced the number of boards and/or members.
53. Appellants and objectors at the hearing raised the following points in opposition to the Council's proposal:

- a. Most submitters had favoured Parnell, Newmarket and Grafton returning to the Waitematā and Gulf Ward, due to strong commonalities and connections with each other, the central city and other city-ring suburbs. Inner city suburbs had specific issues and interests that city-ring communities often supported each other with.
- b. The Parnell and Newmarket Business Associations had encouraged template submissions to support Parnell and Newmarket remaining in the Ōrākei Ward. It was unclear whether template submitters were residents or ratepayers in the area.
- c. The previous review's population estimates had over-estimated the Waitematā and Gulf Ward population, leading to changes in the central wards. The 2023 population estimates allowed those changes to be reversed.
- d. Non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries creates confusion for residents and has a negative effect on voter participation.
- e. Several appellants considered that alignment of ward and local board boundaries should be prioritised ahead of compliance with the +/-10% rule. They would prefer all boundaries in the central wards area to align without exception, including Eden Terrace.
- f. With regards to the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary, the only option for compliance was to move the boundary northwards, as the North Shore Ward is bordered by the coastline on other sides.
- g. There are functional commonalities of interest between the communities on either side of the current Albany/North Shore Ward boundary. This is illustrated by shared school zoning, shopping centres, facilities and services, as well as shared local community publications.
- h. Compliance with the +/-10% rule is important to ensure fair representation of electors and is required unless doing so will split communities of interest. There are no good reasons not to move suburbs into the North Shore Ward to address the non-compliance.
- i. Moving the boundary would result in non-alignment of ward and local board boundaries, however a two-step approach is necessary to alter and realign boundaries. Local boards will continue to work with all relevant communities until a local board reorganisation can be completed.
- j. Population projections suggest that the population discrepancy between the Albany and North Shore Wards is likely to increase, and the non-compliance should be addressed now.
- k. The Governing Body's decision to remove Unsworth Heights from the North Shore Ward in the initial proposal removed the opportunity to hear from the community. The Upper Harbour Highway and Rosedale industrial area act as stronger natural boundaries than Sunset Road.

- l. The demands on councillors make them inaccessible to community members. Single member wards would likely be better understood by residents, potentially increasing voter turnout.
  - m. Aligning ward boundaries with Parliamentary electorate boundaries could reduce confusion and improve representation for residents.
54. Local board representatives appearing at the Commission's invitation raised the following points:
- a. Chair Alexis Poppelbaum, on behalf of the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, emphasised:
    - Arguments for moving the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary northwards focus on the +/-10% rule rather than communities of interest. School enrolment zones and public transport links do not indicate a strong functional community of interest between Cambells Bay, Mairangi Bay and Castor Bay.
    - No changes in the Campbells Bay area had been included in the initial proposal or otherwise consulted on. It would be inappropriate to move large number of residents into a different ward without consultation having been undertaken.
    - The Albany population was growing rapidly, suggesting that the boundary should be considered during the next review. However, any changes should be left until then and should be based on consultation with the relevant communities.
  - b. Chair Anna Atkinson, on behalf of the Upper Harbour Local Board, emphasised:
    - Sunset Road is a well-understood, natural boundary between communities. It was logical for the minor local board boundary alteration between the Upper Harbour and Kaipātiki Local Boards to align there.
    - Unsworth Heights shares strong functional links with Albany communities, including regular use of community and sporting facilities and easy transport links to the main Albany shopping centres. The Upper Harbour Local Board has invested heavily in improvements to Unsworth Heights, including cycle/walking paths linking with other Albany communities.
    - No consultation was undertaken with the Unsworth Heights community regarding a potential move to the North Shore Ward. Any review of local board boundaries should consider all options, rather than taking a piecemeal approach. Ad hoc changes moving individual suburbs to different wards without consultation would be confusing for residents.
  - c. Chair Brent Bailey, on behalf of the Rodney Local Board, emphasised:
    - The Rodney Local Board area covers 46% of Auckland's land area, with many small, dispersed communities within it. The size of the current subdivisions made it challenging for representatives to connect with their communities.
    - The population of Rodney is likely to grow, and subdivision boundaries may need to be considered again in future reviews.

- The Rodney Local Board strongly supported the proposed changes to subdivision boundaries in the final proposal, though not unanimously.
55. Following the hearing, we visited some of the areas raised in submissions, appeals and objections, to gain our own perspective on the arguments presented during the hearing.

## Matters for determination by the Commission

56. Section 19R of the Act requires the Commission, in addition to consideration of the appeals and objections against a council's final representation proposal, to determine all matters set out in section 19H relating to the representation arrangements for territorial authorities. This interpretation was reinforced by a 2004 High Court decision which found the Commission's role is not merely supervisory but requires it to form its own view on all the matters within scope of the review.
57. The matters in the scope of the review are:
- a. whether the council is to be elected from wards, the district as a whole, or a mixture of the two
  - b. the number of councillors
  - c. if there are to be wards, the area and boundaries of wards and the number of members to be elected from each ward
  - d. the names and membership arrangements for each local board, local board boundaries (to the extent that minor alterations can be made), and, if subdivided, the names, boundaries and membership arrangements for each subdivision
  - e. whether wards and local board subdivisions may be defined and membership distributed between them in a way that does not comply with the +/-10% rule
58. Appeals and objections to the Council's final proposal raise the following overarching issues for the Commission to resolve:
- a. Whether a 20-member Governing Body, and a ward structure based on the current pattern, provides effective representation of communities across Auckland;
  - b. Whether ward boundaries in the central wards are appropriately located, particularly with regards to Parnell, Newmarket and Eden Terrace;
  - c. Whether the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary is appropriately located, given that neither ward complies with the +/-10% rule; and
  - d. Whether the proposed subdivision boundaries for the Rodney Local Board provide effective representation for communities across the Rodney Local Board area.
59. Whilst not specifically addressed in appeals and objections, we also need to determine:
- Whether local board subdivisions that do not comply with the +/-10% rule should be upheld; and

- Whether the minor alterations proposed for local board boundaries should be confirmed.

60. We consider each of these issues in turn, against the key considerations set out below.

## Key considerations

61. Based on the legislative requirements, the Commission's *Guidelines for local authorities undertaking representation reviews* (the Guidelines) identify the following three key factors when considering representation proposals:

- communities of interest
- effective representation of communities of interest
- fair representation for electors.

## Communities of interest

62. The Guidelines identify three dimensions for recognising communities of interest:

- perceptual*: a sense of identity and belonging to a defined area, due to factors such as distinctive geographical features, local history, demographics, economic and social activities
- functional*: the area's ability to meet community needs for services such as schools, shopping, community and recreational facilities, employment, transport and communication links
- political*: the ability to represent local community interests, including non-council structures such as for local iwi and hapū, residents' and ratepayer associations and special interest groups.

63. All three dimensions are important and often interlinked. We note that there is often a focus on the perceptual dimension, being what councils, communities or individuals intuitively feel are communities of interest. It is not enough to simply state that a community of interest exists; councils must provide evidence of how a sense of identity is reinforced, or how a community is distinct from neighbouring communities. Such evidence may be found by considering, for example:

- how communities rely on different services and facilities to function as part of the wider district, city or region
- demographic characteristics of an area (for example age, ethnicity or deprivation profiles) and how these differ from other areas
- how particular communities organise themselves and interact with others as part of the wider district, city or region

## Effective representation of communities of interest

64. Section 19T of the Act requires the Commission to ensure that:

- a. the election of members of the council, in one of the ways specified in section 19H (i.e. at large, wards, or a combination of both) will provide effective representation of communities of interest within the district
  - b. ward boundaries coincide with the boundaries of the current statistical meshblock areas determined by Statistics New Zealand and used for parliamentary electoral purposes
  - c. so far as is practicable, ward boundaries coincide with local board boundaries.
65. 'Effective representation' is not defined in the Act. The Guidelines note that what constitutes effective representation will be specific to each local authority but that the following factors should be considered:
- a. avoiding arrangements that may create barriers to participation, such as at elections by not recognising residents' familiarity and identity with an area
  - b. not splitting recognised communities of interest between electoral subdivisions
  - c. not grouping together two or more communities of interest that share few commonalities of interest
  - d. accessibility, size and configuration of an area including access to elected members and vice versa.

### Fair representation for electors

66. Section 19V of the Act requires the Commission to ensure that electors receive fair representation. Section 19V(2), commonly referred to as the '+/-10% rule', establishes fair representation as a population per member ratio per ward or per local board subdivision that does not differ by more than 10% across the city (for wards) or local board area (for subdivisions).
67. Section 19V(3) of the Act provides that, despite subsection (2), if we consider one or more of certain prescribed conditions apply, wards and local board subdivisions may be defined and membership distributed between them in a way that does not comply with subsection (2). The prescribed conditions are:
- a. non-compliance is required for effective representation of communities of interest within island or isolated communities situated within the district of the territorial authority
  - b. compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by dividing a community of interest between wards or subdivisions
  - c. compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by uniting within a ward or subdivision two or more communities of interest with few commonalities of interest.
68. Section 19V(6) provides that on receiving a reference under subsection (4), the Commission must determine whether to:

- a. uphold the decision of the council, or
- b. alter that decision.

### Alignment of ward and local board boundaries

69. Section 19T(1)(c) requires the Commission to ensure that, so far as is practicable, ward boundaries coincide with any local board area.
70. The Act does not provide guidance as to the meaning of the phrase “so far as is practicable”. We interpret this to mean that there should not be needless deviation from boundaries and, where deviation does occur, there should be good reason for doing so relating to effective representation.
71. Considering all aspects together, we acknowledge that it has been impossible for the Council to achieve all key considerations. We face the same constraints in determining the Council’s representation arrangements. It is impossible to achieve both compliance with the +/-10% rule and full alignment of ward and local board boundaries in all parts of Auckland. Careful balancing of these requirements is necessary to ensure that representation arrangements provide effective representation for communities of interest across Auckland.

### Number of members and ward structure

72. The Council’s rationale for confirming a council of 20 members based on the current ward structure is outlined above at paragraph 52(a) and (b).
73. The appeal of David Holm seeks an increase in membership to 25 members, with single member ward boundaries aligning with Parliamentary electorate boundaries. Mr Holm’s rationale is based on supporting councillors to connect with their communities and improving voter turn-out by eliminating confusion between local and central government electoral boundaries.
74. Mr Holm correctly notes that the Council is no longer restricted to 20 members and may now consider arrangements with no fewer than five and no more than 29 elected members.<sup>13</sup>
75. We appreciate the principles that Mr Holm seeks to elevate through his suggested structure. However, we see significant practical barriers to the outcomes he seeks, including:
  - Different timeframes and parameters of the Representation Commission (which reviews Parliamentary electorate boundaries) and the representation review process, and the possibility that this may result in periods of time where the two types of boundaries might not align;

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<sup>13</sup> Section 52 of the Local Government Electoral Legislation Act 2023 amended 8(1)(b) of Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009, which relates to the number of members for Auckland.



- Whether Parliamentary general electorate boundaries can effectively represent Auckland's Māori electoral population, or do so in a manner that is likely to be compliant with the +/-10% rule, given that the Council has not established Māori wards;
  - Large deviations from alignment between ward and local board boundaries if a single member ward system were to be introduced along Parliamentary general electorate boundaries.
76. The Council's rationale to remain with 20 members was based on the need for specific rural representation for the Rodney and Franklin areas. We note this rationale supports the principle of fair representation for electors across Auckland.
77. Increasing the number of members would have likely required significant alterations in ward boundaries, resulting in large-scale non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries. It is questionable whether the benefits to be gained from additional elected members would have justified such large-scale non-alignments.
78. We uphold the Council's proposal for a 20-member council based on the current ward structure.
79. We have recommended that the Council ensure a local board reorganisation process is concluded ahead of the next representation review. Depending on the outcome of any reorganisation, it is possible that there may be greater scope for the Council to consider a different number of elected members in future reviews.

### Central ward boundaries

80. As noted in paragraphs 18-19 above, the 2019 review resulted in changes to central ward boundaries, due to significant non-compliance of the Waitematā and Gulf Ward. The 2023 population estimates indicate that almost all central ward boundaries can be realigned with their respective local board boundaries, whilst still meeting the +/-10% rule.
81. The Council initially proposed realigning all central ward boundaries to their pre-2019 locations, except for Eden Terrace, which was to remain in the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward to meet the +/-10% rule. Doing so achieved full alignment of ward and local board boundaries, aside from Eden Terrace.
82. In response to submissions, the Council adjusted the proposed boundaries in its final proposal, returning Grafton to the Waitematā and Gulf Ward, Ellerslie to the Ōrākei Ward, and parts of Royal Oak to the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Ward. However, Parnell and Newmarket were proposed to remain in the Ōrākei Ward, and consequentially St Johns was proposed to remain in the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Ward, rather than return to the Ōrākei War, in order to meet the +/-10% rule. Eden Terrace was proposed to remain in the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward.
83. The final proposal resulted in non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries in the following areas of the central wards:
- Parnell and Newmarket (Ōrākei Ward but Waitematā Local Board)

- St Johns (Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Ward but Ōrākei Local Board)
  - Eden Terrace (Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward but Waitematā Local Board).
84. The Council’s changes were influenced by submissions from the Parnell and Newmarket business communities which, while in the minority, were considered compelling by the JGWP. Such submitters argued that Parnell and Newmarket ‘looked east’, had strong functional ties with Ōrākei communities, and were geographically separated from the city centre by the Auckland Domain, Grafton Gully, and the motorway.
85. Appellants and objectors contended that Parnell and Newmarket had strong ties with the central city and surrounding communities. They emphasised the impracticality of, and confusion and frustration caused by, non-alignment of ward and local board boundaries, which they believed had contributed to some issues being poorly managed and reduced voter participation levels.
86. Following the hearing, we visited the Waitematā and Gulf and Ōrākei Wards. We observed:
- The city-ring communities of the Waitematā and Gulf Ward shared commonalities with heritage-style buildings, increased development levels, ‘high street’ community hubs and easy transport links to each other and the city centre. Parnell and Newmarket shared these commonalities, but they became less apparent as we moved through communities of the Ōrākei Ward.
  - The Auckland Domain, Grafton Gully, and, in this case, the motorway did not seem to us to be strong geographic boundaries separating Parnell and Newmarket from the central city.
  - Some parts of Parnell and Newmarket physically face east, however we felt that overall there were greater links with the central city and its surrounding communities, through key transport links such as Khyber Pass Road and The Strand.
87. Based on the material presented at the hearing and our site visits, we uphold the central ward boundaries as proposed in the Council’s initial proposal. This means that Parnell and Newmarket will return to the Waitematā and Gulf Ward, and St Johns to the Ōrākei Ward. Our decision aligns ward and local board boundaries for all areas in the central wards, aside from Eden Terrace.
88. Our decision has been particularly influenced by the following factors:
- Evidence from appellants and objectors of commonalities between Parnell and Newmarket and the other city-ring suburbs in the Waitematā and Gulf Ward, highlighting perceptual and functional communities of interest. We acknowledge there may also be a functional community of interest with Ōrākei communities, but we feel commonalities with Waitematā and Gulf communities are stronger.
  - Strong arguments from appellants and objectors that ward and local board boundaries should align, and that the non-alignment of such boundaries has caused confusion and frustration.

89. One aspect to consider in terms of effective representation is avoiding arrangements that may create barriers to participation. We are concerned that appellants and objectors have perceived non-alignment of ward and local board boundaries to be such a barrier. We do not consider there is good reason to deviate from alignment between ward and local board boundaries for most central ward boundaries.
90. Our decision also returns St Johns to the Ōrākei Ward. The retention of St Johns in Maungakiekie-Tāmaki appears to have been a consequence of including Parnell and Newmarket in the Ōrākei Ward. It is unclear to us the extent to which any potential impacts on the St Johns community were considered in doing so. While no appeals or objections were received on this point, residents of St Johns may not have been aware of this change in the final proposal outcome.
91. We acknowledge our decision maintains the non-alignment of ward and local board boundaries for Eden Terrace. Our reasons for doing so are:
- There appears to be a tacit acceptance that Eden Terrace has a closer relationship with communities to the south in the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward. Feedback from the Waitematā and Albert-Eden Local Boards did not raise concerns with Eden Terrace remaining in the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward.
  - Apart from concerns regarding boundary alignment, we did not otherwise hear strong arguments at the hearing for returning Eden Terrace to the Waitematā and Gulf Ward.
  - In the case of Eden Terrace, the motorway serves as a strong geographic boundary marker between Eden Terrace and the rest of the Waitematā and Gulf Ward.
  - We have recommended that the Council ensure a local board reorganisation is completed ahead of the next review. Doing so would allow consideration of including Eden Terrace with communities to the south. We consider there is a risk of confusion if Eden Terrace were to move wards now, only to potentially move again in the next review.
92. Given these aspects, we consider there is good reason to deviate from alignment of ward and local board boundaries for Eden Terrace.

### **Albany/North Shore Ward boundary**

93. As noted above in paragraphs 29-31, the JGWP recommended a minor adjustment to the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary in the Bayview area and a larger adjustment to include Unsworth Heights in the North Shore Ward as part of the Council's initial proposal.
94. While the Governing Body agreed to include the Bayview adjustment, it did not agree to the proposed change for Unsworth Heights. Consequently, there was no public consultation regarding the most appropriate location for Unsworth Heights.

95. Objectors argued that Unsworth Heights shares commonalities with Totara Vale, Glenfield and Sunnynook, to the south. They noted residents generally travelled south for schooling, day-to-day shopping and services, and the Upper Harbour Highway and Rosedale industrial area served as natural boundaries between Unsworth Heights and the rest of the Albany Ward.
96. In contrast, the Upper Harbour Local Board Chair stated that Unsworth Heights shared strong links with Albany communities to the north, including regular use of community and sporting facilities. The network of cycle/walking tracks provided easy access north, and good transport links existed to the main Albany shopping centre.
97. We visited Unsworth Heights and observed the points made by both parties. While Unsworth Heights faces north, the continuous residential area is to the south. While shopping centres and the primary school zoning is to the south, it is also easy to access sporting facilities and shopping centres to the north. Residents likely travel both north and south to access schooling, services and community facilities, indicating commonalities with both the Albany and North Shore Wards.
98. The difficulty we face is that there has been no direct engagement with the Unsworth Heights community through the representation review process. Without hearing the community voice, it is difficult to assess the most appropriate ward location. In this regard, the Governing Body's decision to exclude Unsworth Heights from the North Shore Ward in the initial proposal could in hindsight be considered a lost opportunity to be able to test the perceptual and functional links of Unsworth Heights with communities to the north and south.
99. Where councils propose electoral subdivisions that do not comply with the +/-10% rule, our expectation is that all reasonable options for compliance should be explored. Where one or more compliant options appear to appropriately group communities of interest and provide effective representation for them, we consider it important that specific engagement be undertaken to test such options. Such engagement could occur prior to or as part of the initial proposal.
100. In the current situation, the JGWP's early engagement focused on a potential reduction in local board numbers. We understand engagement was more likely directed at commonalities between the Kaipātiki and Devonport-Takapuna Local Boards, rather than at considering boundary changes to the north.
101. The Governing Body's decision to exclude Unsworth Heights from the North Shore Ward in the initial proposal was made on the same day as the decision not to proceed with a local board reorganisation process. This timing limited the Council's opportunity to engage with the Unsworth Heights community. However, the lack of community engagement leaves us with limited evidence supporting moving Unsworth Heights into the North Shore Ward at this time.
102. Another option to achieve compliance would be to move one or more of Campbells Bay, Mairangi Bay and Murrays Bay from Albany into the North Shore Ward.

103. The JGWP considered these coastal suburbs at an early stage, albeit not as extensively as Unsworth Heights. We heard arguments regarding commonalities of interests for Campbells Bay, Mairangi Bay and Murrays Bay both north and south, however we are again conscious that no community engagement has been undertaken. We are likewise concerned as to the level of evidence supporting the movement of any of these communities.
104. Our preferred position is to maintain the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary as per the Council's final proposal. To do so, we must be confident that one of the legislative exceptions to the +/-10% rule applies in this case, specifically, whether compliance would limit effective representation of communities of interest by dividing a community of interest between wards.
105. There are apparent commonalities of interest for Unsworth Heights and the coastal bays communities both north and south. However, a boundary alteration would potentially result in non-alignment of ward and local board boundaries for:
- Almost 6,500 Unsworth Heights residents; and/or
  - Between approximately 5,900 and 14,000 residents, depending on which coastal bay suburbs were to move into the North Shore Ward.
106. At the hearing, both the Kaipātiki and Devonport-Takapuna Local Boards noted that any non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries should be seen as temporary, until a local board reorganisation occurs. They assured continued advocacy and support for all communities within their areas, and we have no reason to doubt that this would occur.
107. On the other hand, the Upper Harbour and Hibiscus and Bays Local Boards emphasised that ward boundary changes should be undertaken in a considered manner with community engagement, rather than being ad hoc.
108. During the hearing, appellants and objectors in the central ward areas highlighted the negative effects of non-alignment between ward and local board boundaries. We have already determined that almost complete alignment of ward and local board boundaries is preferable for that area.
109. We are concerned that moving the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary northwards could have a similarly unsettling effect on communities that find themselves split between wards and local boards. We do not wish to endorse arrangements that may potentially act as a barrier to participation.
110. Considering all information before us, the strongest arguments favour grouping communities of interest within their current local board areas. We are concerned that moving the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary northwards would divide either Unsworth Heights or one or more of the coastal communities of interest between wards.
111. Accordingly, we uphold the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary as per the Council's initial and final proposal.

112. However, we heard that the population of Albany is growing at a faster rate than the North Shore, potentially increasing the non-compliance of both wards in the future.
113. We strongly recommend that the Council focus on the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary in the next review. As already indicated, we consider a local board reorganisation should be undertaken ahead of the next review, which should allow ample opportunity for in-depth engagement.

### Rodney Local Board Subdivisions

114. Three of the four current subdivisions of the Rodney Local Board do not comply with the +/-10% rule, with the non-compliances ranging from -12.55% for the Warkworth Subdivision to -22.63% for the Wellsford Subdivision. The Council's initial proposal addressed these by proposing a new five-subdivision model, including two subdivisions focused on the more rural parts of Rodney to better reflect the interests of the rural community.
115. Over 1000 submissions related to the proposed subdivisions. In response to these, the Council's final proposal confirmed the overall subdivision pattern but altered subdivision names and boundaries.
116. Two appellants raised concerns largely about the processes followed by the Council, but also regarding the fairness of representation for communities of interest. We cannot base determinations on matters of process. As the proposed subdivisions met the +/-10%, we interpreted the appellant's concerns to question whether the proposed subdivisions provided effective representation of communities of interest.
117. Neither appellant appeared at the hearing. We invited the Rodney Local Board to speak, and heard that Rodney spans a large area, with smaller, dispersed communities. Some are more urban in nature, like Warkworth, whereas other areas could reasonably be described as rural in nature.
118. The number of submissions received indicates to us a high level of engagement from the Rodney community with the review process. However, there were only two appeals, suggesting wider community satisfaction with the Council's final proposal.
119. Nevertheless, we have considered whether the proposed subdivisions will provide effective representation for communities of interest. The new subdivision pattern ensures a spread of representation across Rodney, with specific representation for rural communities in the north and south, as well as for urban areas.
120. We are satisfied that the proposed arrangements will provide effective representation for communities across Rodney. Accordingly, we uphold the subdivisions and membership arrangements as per the Council's final proposal.

## Non-compliant local board subdivisions

121. The Council proposed six non-compliant local board subdivisions from four local boards in both its initial and final proposals. We understand submissions on this point were limited. The non-compliant subdivisions, and the reasons for non-compliance, were recorded by the Council as follows:

a. Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

- The non-compliances are minor, at -10.67% and +10.67%. Achieving compliance would require moving population from the Hibiscus Coast Subdivision to the East Coast Bays Subdivision.
- A large rural area separates the two subdivisions, and a large geographic shift would be required. This would take the boundary between subdivisions close to the Whangaparāoa Peninsula, splitting communities of the Hibiscus Coast Subdivision that share commonalities of interest.

b. Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board

- The Maungakiekie Subdivision non-compliance is minor at -10.94%. Achieving compliance would require moving population from the Tāmaki Subdivision to the Maungakiekie Subdivision.
- The Maungakiekie Subdivision is largely bounded by the Southern Motorway, aside from the southern reaches which have industrial and residential areas. Transferring population would split a residential area from the Tāmaki Subdivision and move it across a vast industrial area, thereby splitting communities of interest in the Tāmaki Subdivision.

c. Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board

- The Ōtara Subdivision non-compliance is slightly higher, at -13.13%. Achieving compliance would require moving population from the Papatoetoe Subdivision to the Ōtara Subdivision.
- The Southern Motorway forms the boundary between the subdivisions for almost the entire local board area. Achieving compliance would require the Ōtara Subdivision to reach across the motorway to include part of the Papatoetoe Subdivision. This would split communities of interest in the Papatoetoe Subdivision and join unrelated communities of interest in the Ōtara Subdivision.

d. Franklin Local Board

- The Pukekohe Subdivision non-compliance is minor, at +10.19%, while the Waiuku Subdivision non-compliance is slightly higher, at -13.80%. Achieving compliance would require moving population from the Pukekohe Subdivision to the Waiuku Subdivision, a largely rural subdivision.
- The rural nature of the Waiuku Subdivision means a large portion of the Pukekohe Subdivision would need to be transferred, either including communities that associate more closely with Pukekohe, or transferring areas where geographic features and transport links connect the

communities back to Pukekohe. Such transfers would likely split the Pukekohe communities of interest.

122. We note that the non-compliances could have been resolved by adding:

- One additional member to the Hibiscus Coast Subdivision of the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, bringing the total membership to nine;
- One additional member of the Tāmaki Subdivision of the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board, bringing the total membership to eight;
- One additional member to the Papatoetoe Subdivision of the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Subdivision, bringing the total membership to eight;
- One additional member to the Pukekohe Subdivision of the Franklin Local Board, bringing the total membership to 10.

123. At the hearing, the Council confirmed that no consideration had been given to adding additional members to each local board to resolve the non-compliances.

124. We reiterate our expectation that all reasonable options for compliance should be explored during representation review processes, including specific engagement to allow analysis of potential consequences of compliant options for effective representation of communities of interest.

125. We acknowledge that, when the JGWP was considering options for local boards, it was focused on a potential reorganisation that may have reduced the number of local boards, and the overall number of local board representatives. In this context, we understand why increasing the number of local board representatives was not considered. The timing of the Governing Body's decision not to proceed with a local board reorganisation also limited further exploration of this matter.

126. While adding members to each local board appears a neat solution for resolving the non-compliances, we recognise that doing so may have consequences for effective representation of communities of interest. We do not think we have sufficient evidence regarding the potential impacts on each local board, without engagement on this point having been undertaken. The appropriate membership of local boards can be considered as part of any future local board reorganisation process and/or representation review.

127. We have evaluated the justifications provided by the Council for each non-compliant subdivisions and examined maps and the explanations provided at the hearing.

128. We agree with the Council's reasoning that moving population to address non-compliant subdivisions would likely limit effective representation of communities of interest, either by dividing communities between subdivisions or uniting communities with few commonalities of interest. We therefore uphold the non-compliant local board subdivisions as per the Council's initial and final proposal.

## Minor Local Board boundary alterations



129. Section 19JAA of the Act allows unitary authorities to propose new boundaries for local boards, provided the population transfer does not exceed the lower of 2.5% of the board with the smaller population, or 2000 residents.
130. The Council proposed five minor local board boundary alterations. Three do not involve any population transfer and aimed to include specific reserves entirely within a single local board. They could be considered as correcting anomalies in the meshblock pattern when the Council was established. These are:
- The Upper Harbour and Kaipātiki Local Board boundary, to include all of Saunders and Kereru Reserves in the Upper Harbour Local Board;
  - The Puketāpapa and Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board boundary, to include all of Taumanu Reserve in the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board.
131. We are satisfied that these proposed local board boundaries will enhance democratic local decision-making and enable equitable provision for the well-being of communities of interest, by allowing more efficient management of the reserves in question.
132. The other two local board boundaries involve the transfer of population each way between the Upper Harbour and Kaipātiki Local Boards in the Bayview area, to provide a clearer boundary along Sunset Road. The population transfers involved are well within the permitted limits.
133. We have already upheld the Albany and North Shore Ward boundary, which includes these minor local board boundary changes. We are satisfied that encompassing all of Bayview in the Kaipātiki Local Board and providing a clear boundary line will support democratic local decision-making and enable equitable provision for the well-being of communities of interest. We therefore also uphold these minor local board boundary alterations as proposed by the Council.

## Commission recommendations

134. Throughout this determination we have observed that the continued scale of development and population growth in Auckland is likely to impact on the shape and scale of communities of interest, and to the extent to which electoral areas comply with the +/-10% rule. These are matters that future reviews will need to address.
135. In addition, we have pointed out the desirability of the Council considering specific matters in the future. Accordingly, we strongly recommend that the Council:
- Undertakes a comprehensive review of local board representation arrangements and ensures a local board reorganisation process is completed ahead of next representation review. Both processes should be completed prior to the same local election, to minimise the potential of confusion for voters.
  - Explores all reasonable options for compliance where non-compliant wards or local board subdivisions exist or are proposed. This includes specific engagement allowing analysis of any consequences for the effective representation of communities of interest.

- As part of the next review, focus on the appropriate location of the Albany/North Shore Ward boundary, ensuring that in-depth engagement occurs with all relevant communities.

## Conclusion

136. We have made this determination pursuant to section 19R of the Local Electoral Act 2001 having considered the information before the Commission and the requirements of sections 19T and 19V of the Act.

### **Local Government Commission**

Commissioner Brendan Duffy (Chair)

Commissioner Sue Bidrose

Temporary Commissioner Gwen Bull

14 March 2025