

Auckland governance reforms: political legitimacy, democratic accountability and sustainable development. Dr Bruce Hucker, senior lecturer, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland.

Abstract

Themes of the Auckland governance reforms are set out: radical change, historical discontinuity and the centralisation of power. These have influenced the design of the new Auckland Council and its associated institutions, and the sustainability provisions embedded in legislation. These are not likely to change soon, and constitute a given. The question is how successful they will be in practice and what further needs to be done if the hope placed in them is to be fulfilled over time. This will depend in large part on the linked achievement of political legitimacy, democratic accountability, and sustainable development. These will not occur naturally and will require considerable effort and the implementation of a series of actions that reflect cross disciplinary insights, theoretically- based understanding, and the exercise of practical and political wisdom (Aristotle's phronesis and politike). They include the adoption of an inclusive common good approach to the region and its parts, improving three particular relationships, and the detailed understanding of the context, shaped by the past, in which the new political network will operate. It will require a practical focus on how to grow the legitimacy of the new institutions, on aligning the network towards democratic accountability and sustainable development through its transitional and other stages, and making the structures and processes congruent with and responsive to the browning of Auckland. Nimble, responsive and rapid approaches are needed rather than the current plethora of plans with their emphasis on coordination rather than implementation. The Council Controlled Organisations need to serve the Auckland Council and the region's communities rather than vice-versa. A robust community development approach is required for strategic issues that require a people-centred approach, rather than engineering and technical solutions alone. Together these suggestions are a recipe for achieving earlier greater political legitimacy, democratic accountability and sustainable development.

Introduction

On November 1, 2010 a new set of political institutions will come into existence in Auckland. This is a result of the work of three bodies: the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance, the New Zealand Government and the Auckland Transition Agency.

The themes of the Royal Commission's recommendations emphasised radical change rather than evolutionary reform, historical discontinuity more than continuity with the past, and the centralisation of power rather than its devolution. Decisions by the National Government, have given, if anything, even greater play to the first of each of these polarities. The Auckland Transition Agency has worked within the parameters established by the government to produce workable designs for the new institutions, their relationships, policy and planning instruments, and transitional arrangements.

Institutional Design

While there is no reliable road map for the new super city there are initial descriptions backed by legislation of the formal structures, relationships and processes to be implemented. The key institution is the governing body, the Auckland Council, a unitary authority with a mayor elected at large, and twenty councillors elected from thirteen one or two member wards. The mayor and the mayoral office have significant powers. The mayor is the head of the governing body and will

- promote a vision for Auckland and provide leadership to achieve that vision

- lead the development of council plans, policies and budgets for consideration by the council
- ensure effective communication between council and Aucklanders
- appoint the deputy mayor
- establish the committees of the council and appoint the chairperson of each committee
(*Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009, Part 2, Section 9, Subsections 1-7*)

The Auckland Transition Agency has spelled out the relationships between the Auckland Council and its local boards and the need for links between the Council Controlled Organisations and the local boards. There are comparable suggestions for relationships with Maori, Pasifika, and other ethnic communities. ATA has also offered working examples of how the new system will operate, although there is a lack of detail on how to make the relationships work effectively for mutual benefit and how to achieve just and effective governance. The twenty-one local boards will have significant decision making roles. This is based on recognition of the complementary nature of the regional and local components of issues and decision making. This leads to a complementary approach to the relationship between the governing body and the local boards. The Auckland Council will focus on Auckland wide strategic decisions, providing one voice for Auckland nationally and internationally, and the local boards will focus on decisions around a wide range of services and will represent the diverse communities across Auckland.

The ATA, as well as focusing on a principle of complementarity, also suggests that the two complementary decision-making parts of the Auckland Council are non-hierarchical. While this may be in keeping with its design intentions, its accuracy is questionable (ATA, 2010, 2).

Another key institution in the network is the Council Controlled Organisations. Seven have been approved, with oversight provided by a committee of the Auckland Council. The largest, a statutory entity, is Auckland Transport, with extensive responsibilities which will consume a significant proportion of regional funds. Watercare, the provider of the region's water and wastewater services, will become a full CCO in 2015. The other five substantive CCO's are Auckland Council Investments Ltd (ACIL), Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development Ltd (TEED), Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA), Auckland Council Property Ltd (ACPL), and the Auckland Waterfront Development Agency (AWDA). More than 75% of regional expenditure will occur through the CCO's, mostly through Auckland Transport.

Maori and Pasifika and other ethnic peoples are also included in the institutional design. Maori will not have three seats around the Auckland Council decision-making table, as envisaged by the Royal Commission. Instead there will be a statutory Maori board to promote issues of significance for mana whenua groups and mataawaka of Tamaki Makaurau. The board must appoint a maximum of two persons to sit on each of the Auckland Council's committees that deal with the management and stewardship of natural and physical resources.

The Auckland Council will also be advised by Pacific Peoples and Ethnic Peoples advisory panels. These, however, are subject to a two year sunset clause, and their continuance depends on mayoral discretion.

The dominant policy and planning institution and instrument is the Auckland spatial plan. The purpose of the spatial plan is to contribute to Auckland's social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being through a comprehensive and effective long-term (20-30 – year) strategy for Auckland's growth and development. It will provide a basis for aligning the implementation plans, regulatory plans, and funding programmes of the Auckland Council. The Auckland Council must also endeavour to secure and maintain the support and co-operation of central government, infrastructure providers, the communities of Auckland, the private sector, the rural sector, and other parties in the implementation of the spatial plan. (*Local Government (Auckland Council) Amendment Act 2010, Part 6, Sections 79-80*).

The relationships between the 10 year Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), the district plan, and the spatial plan still require clarification and will be subject to imminent amendments of the Resource Management Act 1991. Also to be worked out in practice are the advisory forums, including the social forum.

Sustainability Provisions

The design of a network of institutions is one thing, the embedding of sustainability provisions another. The key legislation mandating sustainable development is the *Local Government Act 2002*. It is stronger than the sustainable management of resources integral to the *Resource Management Act 1991*. While the district and regional plans generated under the RMA 1991 provide opportunities for things to be done and constraints on what can happen, they do not make things happen. The Long Term Council Community Plan is a different animal. It is the cornerstone planning instrument for local government, with its base in the LGA 2002. The Auckland Council is subject to the provisions of this legislation.

The LGA 2002 has five primary features: an obligation to provide opportunities for Maori to contribute to a council's decision-making processes, a power of general competence, a pronounced emphasis on local democracy and public participation, a focus on sustainable development and the four community well-beings, social, economic, environmental and cultural, and finally the introduction of a ten year planning instrument, the Long Term Council Community Plan. (Hucker, 2009)

The Act provides for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach (*Section 3(d)*). This is elucidated further by applying this quadruple bottom line to the present and future, as one of the two purposes of local government (*Section 10(b)*). The most comprehensive account of this feature is outlined in this way:

‘in taking a sustainable development approach, a local authority should take into account –

- i. the social, economic, and cultural well-being of people and communities; and
- ii. the need to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment; and
- iii. the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations (*Section 14(1)(b)*).

The Long Term Council Community Plan links in one planning and policy document, strategic direction and financial strategy. It costs, prioritises and funds for a ten year period policies, programmes and projects (*Section 93*). A major review may be undertaken every three years (*Section 93 (3)*). The plan may be amended at any time but subject to a number of conditions (*Section 93 (4)(9)*).

It also provides the basis for the Annual Plan and Asset Management Plans. In a real sense the Annual Plan is the unrolling, year by year of the ten year LTCCP. It also allows for the adjustment of individual policies, programmes and projects, and more importantly the funding mix related to their implementation.

It is the connections between the institutional network, the integration of the five key features of the *LGA 2002*, and the sustainable development provisions that are critical. For they link different stages of the process of local government reform: the articulation of assumptions and values, the design of an institutional network, transitional arrangements, public participation, plan and policy development, implementation, monitoring the extent to which goals and objectives are achieved, and intended and unintended consequences.

The success of the Auckland governance reforms will depend among other things on how political legitimacy, democratic accountability and sustainable development are achieved together in practice. They are autonomous in terms of their essential characteristics, but are integrally related as links in a chain. Each will be difficult to achieve without the others. This argument is similar to that set out by Nicholas Stern on climate change. He describes the science and notes the links between a series of processes generating climate change and its effects and implications for this and future generations. He then maintains:

‘The two greatest problems of our times – overcoming poverty in the developing world and combating climate change – are inextricably linked. Failure to tackle one will undermine efforts to deal with the other; ignoring climate change would result in an increasingly hostile environment for development and poverty reduction, but to try to deal with climate change by shackling growth and development would damage, probably fatally, the co-operation between developed and developing countries that is vital to success (Stern, 2009, 8).’

This provides a parallel for regarding strategy and processes as links in a chain, a challenge faced by Auckland governance reforms. This is heightened by two additional features of the legislation adopted in 2009 and 2010. One is the provision for spatial planning, the other, the establishment of the seven Council Controlled Organisations.

According to the *Local Government (Auckland Council) Amendment Act 2010* the purpose of Auckland Transport is to contribute to an effective and efficient land transport system to support Auckland’s social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being (*Section 39*). The purpose of the spatial plan is to contribute to Auckland’s social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being through a comprehensive and effective long-term(20-to-30 year) strategy for Auckland’s growth and development.(*Section 79(2)*).

This purpose was reinforced in the next section.

The spatial plan will-

- a. set a strategic direction for Auckland and its communities that integrates social, economic, environmental, and cultural objectives.
- b. outline a high-level development strategy that will achieve that direction and those objectives;
- c. enable coherent and co-ordinated decision-making by the Auckland Council(as the spatial planning agency) and other parties to determine the future location and timing

of critical infrastructure, services, and investment within Auckland in accordance with the strategy;

- d. provide a basis for aligning the implementation plans, regulatory plans, and funding programmes of the Auckland Council.

As the dominant planning instrument the spatial plan will no longer, as was proposed earlier, give direction to and align funding plans like the LTCCP. Instead it will now just provide a basis for aligning them. For this reason the spatial plan adds an additional plan to the plethora of plans that are at present part of local authority culture. That culture has led to energy being concentrated on the formulation and co-ordination of plans at the expense of implementation and monitoring.

The strategy and process issues are heightened further by the creation of seven Council Controlled Organisations. There are forty CCOs already in existence. This indicates the extent to which they have been valued by local and regional government in the delivery of major public services and infrastructure to the region's people. They have proved to be effective vehicles for the common good. They have provided a sharper focus, allowed for more attention to detailed planning, design, and implementation, and an at-arms-length way for the councils to take a degree of commercial risk.

The CCOs have their origins in the LGA 2002 where they replaced Local Authority Trading Enterprises. This codified the case law on LATEs by including statutory obligations to be good employers, to exhibit a sense of social and environmental responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which they operate, and by endeavouring to accommodate these interests when able to do so (*LGA 2002, Section 59*).

The first issue is that the seven CCO's are far bigger in scale, complexity and powers than the existing ones. As Rod Oram observes:

'Auckland Transport, for example, will control all the way across road corridors from the property boundary on one side to the other, above and below ground. It will have the power to decide between competing uses such as roads, footpaths, cycleways, utilities, berms, trees, outdoor dining and recreation, also devising bylaws and handing out parking fines. Its operation will consume 54% of rates revenue raised by the Auckland Council (Oram, 2010)'.

The second issue is that at least for Auckland Transport and Watercare their expertise and strategic ability may not be matched in the Auckland Council. This raises the prospect of organisations that are meant to be council controlled actually controlling the new governing body. These issues will be explored further in a later section.

Naive optimism or realistic hope?

In introducing the third reading of the *Local Government (Auckland Law Reform) Bill*, on June 3, 2010 the Minister of Local Government, the Hon. Rodney Hide, commented:

'Auckland has had too many missed opportunities.... Today is the day Auckland's ratepayers get to win. The new Auckland Council will be more effective, more accountable and provide world class service to its residents.... Mr. Speaker, on November 1, day one, Auckland's potential will begin to be realised.... [T]he new Auckland Council will have the tools to take the vision forward – a united, prosperous and dynamic region that all New Zealanders can be proud of (Hide, 2010).

Political rhetoric aside, do these claims express a naive optimism or realistic hopes? What follows are some higher level frameworks and practical measures which can be used to critique the Auckland governance reforms, make recommendations as to how the super city might work more effectively, and identify barriers to be overcome.

Frameworks: issues, values and relationships

Transitions to sustainability will continue to occur in the Auckland city-region in a context marked by complexity, uncertainty, diversity and change. These are part of the region's fabric. They will not be removed by reforms in governance structures and processes. There is an opportunity, however, to respond to them more adequately. But that will depend on more than institutional design, organisational wiring diagrams, and the description of formal processes. Who fills the positions in the structures, how they fill them, and what they do and don't do, their purposes and the extent to which these are achieved or not achieved, and the people and communities they work with and for are more important. As Anthony Giddens has observed about the work of Max Weber, analysis should focus on social action rather than social structures. Ideas, values and beliefs have the power to bring about transformations. While structures should not be underestimated, they are formed by a complex interplay of actions (Giddens, 2009, 19-20).

The context in which the new Auckland Council and its associated institutions will operate has also been shaped by historical factors. Three challenges it faces are the significant neglect of the region's infrastructure because of a failure to invest in its renewal. In the 1950s and 1960s different levels of government invested in major developments including the Auckland International Airport, the Mangere Sewage Treatment Plant, the Cossey's Creek Dam, the Auckland Harbour Bridge and the extensive motorway system. After that, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, central government inaction was compounded by more conservative control of local and regional political institutions, and an infrastructural gap opened up. Population has also increased at a fast pace. Auckland now expects two million people by as early as 2031, up from today's 1.3 million. This entails more, and more sustainable, provision of infrastructure to cater for this increased number of people. The third challenge is the composition and character of that growth. Auckland is now the home of about 190 different ethnic communities. This growing ethnic diversity is linked with a cross-cutting and burgeoning religious pluralism.

The values embedded in the design of the structures and processes are not the same as the espoused values articulated by the Royal Commission. It employed four principles for restructuring Auckland's governance: common identity and purpose, effectiveness, transparency and accountability, and responsiveness (Bazley et al., 2009).

What the Royal Commission failed to do was to analyse the history and theory of metropolitan reform in an international context. Cameron Wallace, after reviewing the literature, notes three different theoretical perspectives: the metropolitan reform tradition, public choice theory, and the new regionalism. (Wallace, 2010). The first is characterized by its emphasis on metropolitan consolidation and the centralisation of power. The second features a narrow concept of public goods and a wider concentration on private goods delivered through markets. It also articulates an exclusive approach to the distinction between public and private benefits. The third perspective, the new regionalism, seeks to provide a level of coherence to sprawling regions and provide them with the capacity to

address issues. This can be done in a variety of ways. The most important ethical contrast with implications for Auckland's proposed reform is that between a predominant regional interest and subordinated and distinct local interests on the one hand and an inclusive common good for the region which encompasses sub-regional and local well-being.

The latter generates when it is applied over time and to different places, checks and balances to prevent the sacrifice of those sub-regional and local communities for a wider good without genuine redress or compensation. It entails building checks and balances into the design of institutions and processes, that modify the consolidation of regional power and its centralisation. Power is balanced against power and the real costs are identified and paid for.

Relationships, as well as issues and values, are an integral part of the framework. The quality and character of a series of relationships can be used both to assess the institutional design and processes and to suggest how they may work more effectively.

As New Zealand's only global city-region of scale, Auckland is involved in a network of relationships. The new super city needs to continue to build relationships with other international cities beyond our shores, with central government, with other parts of New Zealand, and within the city-region itself.

Likewise it needs to continue to build high quality relationships between the public sector, business and markets, and civil society to promote the well-being of the wider community in an inclusive way at different scales and with different time frames, with a focus on sustainable development and its social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions.

It is clear that regional government cannot and should not do everything. It will need to develop partnerships with and for others. Otherwise it will not achieve its wider mandates. Nor will it be able to move down a pathway to a more sustainable future (Hucker, 2009; Hucker, 2010a; Ehrenberg, 1999; Edwards, 2004).

Partnerships are already in place in the Auckland local government scene: with central government, its ministries and departments; with businesses; with health, housing and educational institutions and with communities and community groups (Hucker, 2010a). Those already formed can be built on, and also opened up to others. There are two things to do: (i) to ensure that the partnerships are fit for purpose and (ii) that the partners are accorded equal consideration in the identification of issues and problems, and in the development and implementation of strategies and actions.

What then needs to be done?

1. *Focus on how to begin growing the legitimacy of the Auckland Council, its local boards and associated institutions.*

Legitimacy cannot be created by government *fiat* alone, or by legislation. It requires time; it depends on the way the new institutions actually perform; it relies on their capacity to sustain their authority by building up support and reducing antagonism.

Legitimacy grows out of the quality of the relationships and partnerships formed between the institutions and individuals, groups, and communities. If the new institutions are to encourage public participation they need to listen, reflect and act. From the standpoint of those who wish to participate they need to understand that they will be listened to and that their views will make a difference, even if they are not adopted *in toto*. If they conclude that

this is not happening, they will be less likely to participate in the implementation of policies, especially where a people focus is required, and a change in our behaviour, rather than technical or engineering or financial solutions alone.

Institutions are organisms and artefacts. They combine social tissue, experiences, relationships, habits, loyalties, loves and hates, and exist and change through time. They are also human creations, with organised structures, influenced by laws and accorded legitimacy by other institutions. Because they are organisms, the creation of new institutions is more difficult than it seems. Habitual behaviour embedded in culture and in practices and views of what is normal and expected is always hard to change.

This entails that the creation of new political institutions and their associated bureaucracies is going to take time. Social tissue, loyalties and relationships take time to develop. Mutual respect and trust are a product of experience and need time to grow (Hucker, 2009).

2. Align the new political network towards democratic accountability and sustainable development through its transitional and other stages, and introduce political auditing as part of the process.

The new set of institutions, processes and relationships needs to be seen as a political network. Essential to a network is the interactions that occur between its different parts and the broader patterns that are formed as a result of these interactions. A network is dynamic. Nor can the patterns formed be predicted before the actual interactions take place. This is why norms of democratic accountability and sustainable development must be embedded in the political and administrative culture that will influence the overall direction of the network.

The transition from the present political network to that which develops from the interaction between the governance reforms and the context in which they are implemented is crucial. Transitional costs are often down-played or masked for political purposes. Auckland is no exception. At the very least, as Tony Judt argues, citing John Maynard Keynes's warning:

“It is not sufficient that the state of affairs which we seek to promote should be better than the state of affairs which preceded it; it must be sufficiently better to make up for the evils of the transition (Judt, 2010).”

The new political processes will remove familiar landmarks and points of access to the political process and serve as barriers to public participation. What is required is an intelligent and intelligible account of how much power will be exercised in the new arrangements, how it is concentrated, how it is distributed, who will exercise it, and how they can be held accountable.

The content of a political audit is not excessively complicated. It will however be contestable. There are three questions to ask: Who benefits, and to what extent? At whose expense, and to what extent? What interests are served and to what extent?

3. Make the structures and processes congruent with and responsive to the browning of Auckland.

The rejection of Maori seats and the two year sunset clause on Pacific and ethnic advisory panels is a missed opportunity in the new super city. It ignores two challenges. One is how in symbolic and practical ways we can continue to build a multicultural society on a bicultural base, with more respect for the dignity of difference, more tolerable harmonies,

more social cohesion, and an enriched sense of a more inclusive common good. The other is how to create governmental structures and processes that are congruent with the browning of Auckland (Hucker, 2009; Hucker, 2010 b).

The browning of Auckland is a metaphor pointing to New Zealand Europeans becoming a minority ethnic community in the Auckland region. About 190 different ethnic communities now make their home here.

There should be reserved Maori seats on the Auckland Council. The government has an obligation under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They would enable Maori to bring to the Auckland Council their authority over their resources and their values as a contribution to the common good. Maori are significant economic actors in the region and should not be restricted to issues related to environmental well-being. Nationally, according to a conservative estimate by Te Puni Kokiri, the growing Maori asset base is worth \$16.5 billion dollars. Even a portion of that committed to the region would be of major benefit (Hucker,2010b).

Many ethnic communities that have settled in Auckland for the advantages it offers. It provides opportunities to make money, remit it home, obtain jobs, get a better education especially for the next generation, to enable its members to move into professions and business. The diversity of ethnic groups and the energy generated by their interaction and clustering lend to their gaining a share of what Jeb Brugmann, the Canadian urbanist, calls urban advantage. Benefits of living in Auckland stem from its combination of density, scale, the networks of urban association and the base they provide to extend the strategies employed to other cities overseas (Brugmann,2009).This involves dealing with globalisation from the bottom-up. It also means that the presence of minority ethnic communities is a source of strength rather than of strife, a positive rather than negative influence on Auckland's sustainable development (Hucker, 2010b).

4. Modify the plethora of plans characteristic of Auckland's existing local and regional governance, in order to allow more nimble, responsive, and rapid responses to situations involving complexity, uncertainty, diversity and change.

Auckland's planning has given priority to formulation and co-ordination of plans rather than to implementation, monitoring and dealing with unintended consequences. The reform proposals militate against the development of a new political and administrative culture that is responsive to the changing needs of the region's communities. If this is to be achieved, more rather than fewer resources will be required for this task.

The recommended planning processes are still too inflexible to respond quickly to changes that are occurring. Black Swans are also becoming more frequent as our societies become more complex (Taleb, 2007). They lie outside the realm of regular expectations and are virtually unpredictable; they have an extreme impact; and we begin to understand them only after they have occurred. Examples are the international financial meltdown and the international recession, or the leaky homes syndrome.

People do not sing in the shower about spatial plans, LTCCPs or district plans. They do not perceive them as touching their daily lives. Issues however do have an impact. How to deal with questions like global warming, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, reducing economic inequalities and unemployment, child poverty, youth at risk and public safety and

crime, and the quality of education in local schools have greater potential to engage the public imagination.

5. The Council Controlled Organisations need to serve the Auckland Council and the region's communities, rather than vice-versa. The reduction of the scope and duties of Auckland Transport is an urgent legislative priority.

Auckland Transport, as described earlier, is too big, too comprehensive in scope, and there are inadequate checks and balances on its powers. As Rod Oram observes:

‘...while the Auckland Council is tasked with devising the transport strategy it is far from clear it will have the resources to do the job. As the governance design stands so far, most of the skills and staff to devise those plans will be in the CCO not the council. This means the CCO will not simply be the deliverer of council strategy, as the government portrays it, but rather a semi-autonomous body with considerable power to dictate what transport we get (Oram, 2010).’

In this situation two things are required. A range of functions of Auckland Transport should be devolved to the local boards. The skills and numbers of staff involved in transport in the Auckland Council should be strengthened and increased to ensure it is able to perform its strategic and monitoring roles adequately. Devolution to local boards will require further legislative change because Auckland Transport is a statutory CCO.

In order to deal with issues of conflict between the seven CCOs, any provisions of the spatial plan and the co-ordination and prioritisation of their funding plans, the first step lies with the Auckland Council. It will need to ensure that its monitoring roles are strengthened. This means employing staff adequate to the task with specialist knowledge, for example, in water and transport industries, as well as with generic skills to hold the CCOs publicly accountable. CCO power must be balanced by the power and capacity of the Auckland Council. Elected representatives will need to learn more about how to exercise indirect political control through planning, reporting and monitoring instruments. This will enable them to use the accountability provisions already laid out in the *LGA 2002* and the ability through more current legislation to impose additional accountability requirements.

A final accountability check and balance requires further legislation authorising the creation of an independent regulator for water and transport. This could be a statutory office funded jointly by the Auckland Council and central government.

6. Pursue a robust community development approach and apply it to the different levels of the region, including communities, geographical areas, interest groups and to local and regional political institutions.

Community development is:

- a problem solving tool for dealing with strategic issues that require a people-centred approach and a change in our behaviour, rather than engineering and technical solutions alone;
- a means of building relationships in the medium and long term to encourage increased respect for the dignity of difference and greater social inclusion;
- a way of encouraging the participation of individuals, groups and communities in the public arena to help create a flourishing local democracy;
- a means of building stronger communities, more effective networks, and trust at different levels of our districts, cities and region;
- a method of linking community services, community education and community empowerment(Hucker, 2009, 69).

Essentially community development is about working with people rather than simply for them. The new Auckland Council could use this approach to help identify its strategic priorities, and choose timeframes for action, remembering that earlier successes can contribute to later successes, and that momentum and tipping points are critical. It might also ask to what extent the issues chosen affect people and their relationships, appeal to their imagination and mobilise their energy to participate actively.

Conclusion

The design of the new Auckland Council and its associated institutions along with the application of the sustainability provisions embedded in legislation is the given starting point of this analysis. These will not change soon and have been influenced by the primary themes of the governance reforms: radical change, historical discontinuity and the centralisation of power. The question explored is how successful the reforms will be in practice and what further needs to be done if the hope placed in them is to be fulfilled over time. It has been argued that this will depend in large part on the linked achievement of political legitimacy, democratic accountability and sustainable development. These will not occur naturally but require a series of actions based on cross disciplinary insights, historical experience, theoretical understanding, and the exercise of practical and political wisdom (Aristotle's *phronesis* and *politike*).

They include the adoption of an inclusive common good approach to the region and its parts, and the checks and balances that generates; improving important relationships involving the city-region as have been outlined; and detailed understanding of the context, shaped by the past, in which the new political network will operate. A practical focus is required on how to grow the legitimacy of the new institutions, on aligning the network towards democratic accountability and sustainable development through its transitional and other stages, and making the structures and processes more congruent with and responsive to the browning of Auckland. Nimble, responsive and rapid approaches are needed rather than the current plethora of plans with their emphasis on coordination rather than implementation and monitoring. The Council Controlled Organisations need to serve the Auckland Council and the region's communities rather than vice versa. A robust community development approach is needed for strategic issues that require a people-centred approach, rather than engineering and technical solutions alone. Together these suggestions are a recipe for achieving earlier than would otherwise be the case, greater political legitimacy, democratic accountability and sustainable development.

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