

Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund Framework FY 2026 – FY 2028



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Introduction

Purpose of this document

This document sets out the framework within which the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund will be administered during financial years 2025/2026 to 2027/2028. This framework provides a grant-delivery model which has two branches:

- A contestable funding process
- A targeted funding process

About the fund

The Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund (SRFIF) was established in 2019 to support the development of sport and active recreation facilities that create opportunities for Aucklanders to get active.

Auckland Council recognises the important role that non-council facilities play in serving Auckland's sport and recreation sector.

The Long-term Plan 2024 – 2034 allocated \$150 million over 10 years, with an additional \$35 million of funding over three years (FY26-FY28), making a total SRFIF budget of \$185 million.

The fund provides grant investment in non-council facility projects to:

- address sport and recreation infrastructure shortfalls.
- respond to changing participation preferences.
- deliver value-for-money by leveraging third-party investment.
- get more Aucklanders more active more often.

Between financial years 2026-2028, delivery of targeted and contestable SRFIF funding rounds will be guided by this framework document.

Auckland Council policy context

The Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund Framework is informed by the following Auckland Council policy and strategy documents:

The [Auckland Plan 2050](#) Belonging and Participation outcome, Focus Area 7: *Recognise the value of arts, culture, sport and recreation to quality of life.*

The 'Infrastructure' priority in the [Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan 2014-2024](#) (ASARSAP), notably initiative 7.2: *Provide quality fit-for-purpose facilities at regional, sub-regional and local levels for informal recreation and sport.*

The [Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-2039](#) (IAPISIP) which sets out the council's objectives and investment approach for sport over the next twenty years.

The ASARSAP and IAPISIP policy documents are intended to be superseded by a new policy, *Manaaki Tāmaki Makaurau: Auckland Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy*, which is currently in development. This SRFIF framework aligns with the strategic directions and investment principles in the draft strategy as it currently stands. The SRFIF Framework can be reviewed once the *Manaaki Tāmaki Makaurau: Auckland Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy* has been adopted.

The [Community Grants Policy 2014](#) guides the allocation of local and regional grants. The policy defines contestable grants, discretionary grants and out-of-scope grants. The SRFIF contestable process meets the definition of a ‘contestable’ grant, and the SRFIF targeted funding process is identified as ‘out-of-scope’ because it involves grants to capital development of key regional infrastructure and/or community facilities in partnership with community organisations.

Previous investment and leverage

Since its establishment in 2019, the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund (SRFIF) has allocated more than \$57 million to support 79 sports and recreation projects across Auckland.

In previous funding rounds, the SRFIF allocated the following sums:

- 2018/19 - \$5,000,000
- 2020/21 - \$9,933,940
- 2021/22 and 2022/23 - \$15,368,800
- 2023/24 - \$13,040,000
- 2024/25 - \$13,402,152

The allocation of council funds frequently empowers grant recipients to raise additional funds from third-party funders to meet their total project costs. To date, grants from SRFIF have contributed an average of 33 per cent of the total project costs for recipients. Attracting third-party funds remains a key focus of the SRFIF.

Long-term Plan 2024-2034

In June 2024, the Governing Body approved the Long-term Plan 2024-2034 which gave direction on changes to the SRFIF including:

- increase in the Sports and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund \$35 million over three years to address the deficit in indoor sports facilities in Auckland.
- Spend more strategically to achieve the necessary infrastructure improvements.
- Avoid spreading funding too thinly.
- Leverage additional sources of funding, prioritise key areas and facilitate aggregation.

Changes to the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund

Key changes

In response to the LTP direction, this new framework effects key changes to the SRFIF:

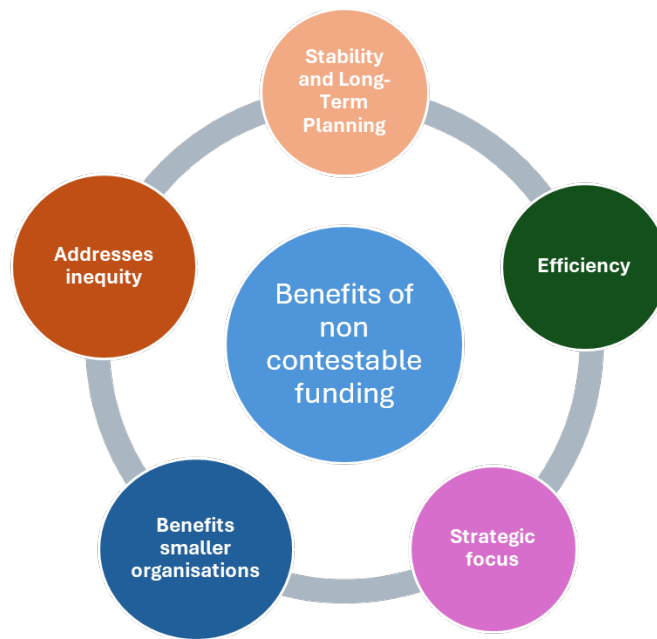
- Additional \$35 million from 2026 – 2028 to address the deficit of sports facilities in Auckland.
- Introduction of a targeted non-contestable funding element to the SRFIF alongside the existing contestable process.
- Community engagement to identify facility network shortfalls in priority areas to maximise community outcomes and develop strategic community partnerships.
- Prioritise partnerships with existing and future non-council facilities in the network (e.g. Ministry of Education and schools) to share facilities with the community.
- The Tāmaki Makaurau Sport and Recreation Facility Priority Plan will be used to help inform decisions on capital investment.

Many aspects of the SRFIF will remain unchanged from the previous funding rounds, including eligibility, priority outcomes and funding ‘gateways’. Decision-making on both the contestable and targeted funding processes will remain with the Community Committee.

Targeted (non-contestable) funding process

The new framework introduces a targeted non-contestable funding process to run alongside the contestable process.

A non-contestable funding model, where funds are allocated directly without competition, offers several advantages to the community and achieves the objective of getting more Aucklanders’ more active, more often outlined in the [Increasing Aucklanders’ Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-2039](#).



Stability and long-term planning: It provides projects with financial certainty, enabling sports organisations to plan for long-term development, raise funds from third-parties and invest in grassroots programmes and infrastructure.

Efficiency: It reduces administrative overheads associated with competitive funding, allowing organisations to focus more on core activities like training and outreach.

Strategic focus: Funding can be proactively aligned with broader goals, such as improving access to sports in communities of need or promoting diversity.

Support for smaller organisations: It ensures equitable support for smaller or less-established sports bodies, promoting growth across diverse sports.

Addressing inequity: Ensuring emerging sports and or communities of greatest need receive or have access to funding.

Community partnership development

The framework directs council staff to address facility provision gaps by proactively seeking partnership with community organisations.

Council will engage with the community to identify and develop key facility partnership opportunities. Communities that have significant needs for sport and recreation facilities and which are identified as high-priority areas with facility network shortfalls will be engaged with to build strategic community partnerships. These partnerships will assist potential projects (e.g. community-led, council supported projects, mana whenua, etc.) to navigate through the construction process to create beneficial outcomes.

Indoor court shortage and Ministry of Education partnerships

Currently, there is a significant shortage of indoor sports facilities in the Auckland region. As outlined in the [National Indoor Active Recreation and Sport Facilities Strategy](#), the current 'demand benchmark for full time indoor courts' (based on 1 court per 7,800 population) stands at 224 indoor courts. The Auckland region currently has 151 indoor facilities, which leaves a shortfall of 73 indoor facilities. This number will increase to a shortfall of 117 indoor facilities by 2038 based on current population growth projections.

Existing Ministry of Education (MoE) school facilities may not be fully utilised after school hours, or they may be planning to expand their indoor sports capacity. By partnering and pooling resources Auckland Council and MoE could maximise utilisation of existing indoor facilities and thereby reduce duplication, and / or the need for expensive capital expenditure (building new buildings).

It is unlikely that this shortfall in indoor facilities can be addressed by 2038, however by prioritising projects that include indoor facilities and identifying potential partnerships with Ministry of Education / school owned indoor facilities this could go some way to reducing the shortfall.

Funding process

The SRFIF funding process has two branches:

- contestable funding process – to ensure breadth of access to funding for community-led facility projects.
- targeted funding process – to expedite the highest priority projects

Both contestable and targeted processes are subject to the same:

- eligibility criteria (see below)
- priority outcomes criteria (see pages 9-12).
- achievability requirements
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi considerations
- climate and sustainability considerations
- funding gateways
- decision-making authority to allocate SRFIF grants will be made by the Community Committee (or relevant committee).

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility for the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund will be guided by the [Community Grants Policy Guidelines](#).

The following groups will be eligible to be considered for funding:

- Community groups with a sport and/or recreation focus, e.g., sports clubs, community facility trusts.
- National or regional sport and recreation organisations.

- Iwi, schools, universities or religious organisations (wanting to provide community access to their sport and recreation facilities).
- Commercial entities may apply for grants in certain circumstances (including where partnership investment can be leveraged, and community participation outcomes are significant).

To be considered for funding, all applications must meet the required eligibility criteria:

- The applicant is a formally constituted organisation with a recognised legal structure.
- The proposed facility delivers a community sport and/or active recreation outcome.
- An objective needs assessment has been completed that outlines a demonstrable need for the proposed facility.
- The funding request is for the purpose of facility planning or development.
- The proposed funding model to deliver this stage of the project is achievable.
- A project funding plan that includes estimated total project cost, cost per stage (e.g., per Gateway), funds already spent on the project, funds committed/secured, pending applications, potential funding sources.

Not eligible for this fund

The following will not be eligible for the fund:

- Facilities with no community sport and/or active recreation benefit.
- High performance or early childhood facilities (unless that component of the project is paid for by another funder and/or, is complimentary to community access outcomes and financial sustainability).
- Facility maintenance or staff costs.
- Events or programming costs.
- Retrospective funding of projects.
- Applications to undertake needs assessments.
- Debt repayment.
- Auckland Council and/or Council Controlled Organisations applying for council-owned assets.

Applications from groups using council-owned assets







Due to the varying ownership models of existing sport and recreation infrastructure, council may consider applications from organisations seeking the upgrade of, or extension to, council-owned sport and recreation assets they access, such as sports fields, pools, outdoor courts, indoor courts, water access, and other assets.

The merits of those applications will be considered using the same funding priority lens as applications for non-council assets (as set out below) with particular focus on: the impact on identified facility network gaps; addressing inequity in provision; availability of other council funding sources; and, the absence of funding leverage.




Priority outcomes criteria

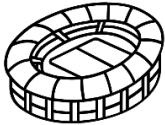
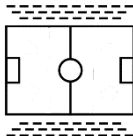
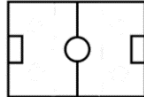
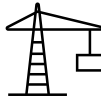








The fund applies a wide range of criteria to accommodate potential applications for the wide range of sport and recreation facilities required to serve Auckland communities. The intention is to ensure Auckland Council investment provides for the greatest number of people possible and meets the changing needs of the community. Investment will provide a basic level of provision of fit-for-purpose sport and recreation facilities to support community sport and recreation.

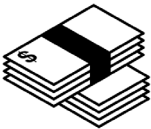




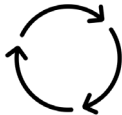
Multiple criteria will be considered to allow for a diverse range of projects to present themselves for SRFIF investment. It is expected that projects will present a mix of high medium and low-priority characteristics, but successful applications will need to align with multiple high-priority criteria within the tables below:

People & Community Priorities		
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
<p>Communities of greatest need I.e., Communities who have limited capability to access social and economic resources and opportunities compared to the general population.</p> 	<p>Communities of some need Communities who are able to access some social and economic resources and opportunities compared to the general population.</p> 	<p>Communities of least need Communities who can readily access social and economic resources and opportunities compared to the general population.</p> 
<p>Strong benefit to Māori Projects led by Māori, strongly supported by Māori and/or develop facilities that will help Māori be more active.</p> 	<p>Some Māori outcomes Projects that develop facilities that will help Māori be more active.</p> 	<p>No specific benefit to Māori Projects that develop facilities that deliver no specific benefit to Māori activity levels.</p> 

Inactive communities Projects that will have a significant impact on insufficiently active communities (low participation in sport and recreation), including but not limited to high deprivation communities, females, tamariki and rangatahi and disability groups. 	Insufficiently active communities Projects that will have a moderate impact on inactive/low-participant communities. 	Highly active communities Projects serving highly active communities that have a limited impact on inactive/low-participant communities. 
High participation High participation sports or, emerging sports with high growth potential. 	Medium participation Medium participation sports or, emerging sports with medium growth potential. 	Low participation Low participation sports or, emerging sports with low growth potential. 
Partnerships Projects involving partnerships between community groups with evidence of significant participation impact. 	Single use Investment in single code or single use facilities with evidence of significant participation impact. 	Limited access Investment in projects that deliver private benefits or, have minimal participation impact. 

Infrastructure Priorities		
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Core infrastructure Indoor facilities, courts, fields, playing surfaces, structures and lighting that is central to sport and recreation participation. 	Ancillary infrastructure Toilets, changing rooms, equipment storage and carparking that enables safe and sanitary access for participants and spectators. 	Incidental infrastructure Such as clubrooms and administration facilities that is not required for sports participation but exist for social and management purposes. 

Regional infrastructure Regional facilities offer specialised community sport and active recreation facilities serving the entire Auckland region. Usually, large facilities with sufficient capacity to serve regional demand. 	Sub-regional infrastructure Sub-regional facilities serve a significant number of users from a catchment of 10km or more. Often well-known destination facilities in their area, and/or are the only facility of their type in the area. 	Local infrastructure Facilities that are primarily used by users within a catchment of 10km. 
Construction Applicants seeking funding for the capital development stage of their project. (Funding Gateway 3) 	Design & consent Applicants seeking funding for the design and consent stage of their project. (Funding Gateway 2) 	Investigation & analysis Applicants seeking funding for the investigation (e.g. feasibility or business case) stage of a project. (Funding Gateway 1) 
Sustainable and low impact project Project has put in place several ambitious measures to prevent or reduce impacts on climate and the environment across the whole lifecycle of the project. The potential adverse effects of the project are likely to be mostly mitigated. 	Sustainability of the project could be improved Measures to prevent or reduce impacts on climate and the environment do not cover all key areas of impact (or are not proportionate to the size of the impact) and the project would still result in potential adverse effects on the environment. 	Poor environmental performance Project has not considered their impact on climate and the environment or, there are limited or no mitigations in place. 
Strategic & Financial Priorities		
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Strong strategic alignment Projects that have been prioritised in key national or regional strategies (e.g., local board plans, sport facility plans, etc.). 	Some strategic alignment Projects that are able to demonstrate significant potential impact where a key national or regional strategy does not exist. 	Little/no strategic alignment Projects that are not considered to be a priority in key regional strategies (e.g., local board plans, sport facility plans, etc.). 

Significant leverage Partnership projects able to leverage over two dollars for every dollar requested, allowing more of the facilities Auckland needs to be built more quickly. <p style="text-align: center;">> 2 : 1</p>	Moderate leverage Partnership projects able to leverage over one dollar for every dollar requested, allowing more of the facilities Auckland needs to be built more quickly. <p style="text-align: center;">> 1 : 1</p>	Low leverage Partnership projects able to leverage less than one dollar for every dollar requested from this council Fund. <p style="text-align: center;">< 1 : 1</p>
Large scale Facility development projects with a total capital cost of more than \$2,000,000. 	Medium scale Facility development projects with a total capital cost of more than \$500,000. 	Small scale Facility development projects with a total capital cost of less than \$500,000. 
No subsidy Projects requiring no ongoing operational funding from Council. 	Start-up subsidy Projects requiring some operational funding or start-up funding from Council. 	Ongoing subsidy Projects requiring significant ongoing operational funding from Council. 

Investment Principles

Scoring of potential projects against the SRFIF priority outcome criteria is weighted according to the investment principles outlined in [Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-2039](#):

- Equity (40 per cent of assessment): ensures equity of outcomes across the population regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status or location.
- Outcome-focused (30 per cent of assessment): there is a clear 'line of sight' between the investment and the outcomes it delivers.
- Financial sustainability (20 per cent of assessment): projects need to be financially viable and affordable for the public.
- Accountability (10 per cent of assessment): investment should be efficient, effective, transparent and consistent.

Achievability

All projects will be assessed on their achievability – that is, the genuine likelihood of completion and delivery of the intended benefits to the community. This assessment is based on capability of the applicant relative to the project, a realistic fundraising plan, construction costs, operating model and ensuring the facility is fit-for-purpose.

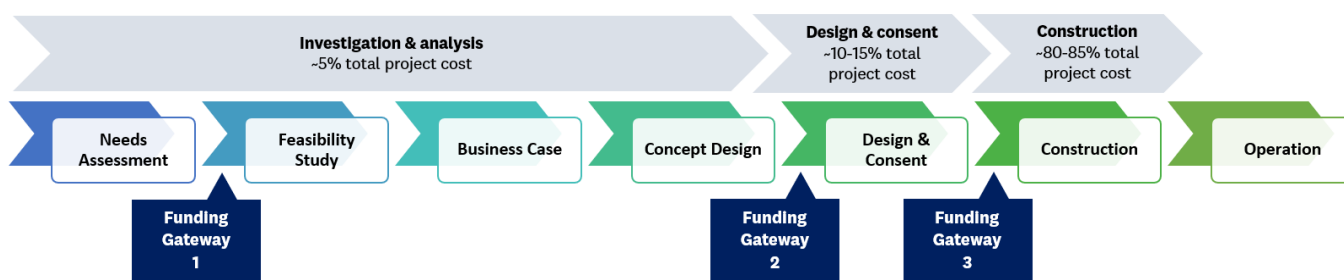
Funding gateways

There are three funding ‘Gateways’ through which projects can be considered for funding. These entry points are aligned with the key fundraising stages community groups must navigate when planning and developing a sport and recreation facility.

- Funding Gateway 1: Investigation & Analysis
- Funding Gateway 2: Design & Consent
- Funding Gateway 3: Construction

The intention of the gateways is to focus project proponents on completing necessary work at the right time and focus SRFIF investment into the work that needs to be done next.

The diagram below shows the phases and stages of any project.



Please note: SRFIF is not available for the initial stage (needs assessment).

Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations

Why this matters

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is our nation’s founding document and recognises the special place of Māori in Aotearoa. We are committed to engaging and working with Māori in ways that are consistent with Te Tiriti.

Auckland Council is committed to honouring our Te Tiriti obligations through respecting rangatiratanga, tikanga and mātauranga Māori and celebrating Tāmaki Makaurau’s unique Māori identity.

This investment approach will honour Te Tiriti and align with the draft *Manaaki Tāmaki Makaurau: Auckland Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy* by focusing on:

- **Rangatiratanga** – the duty to recognise Māori rights of independence, autonomy and self-determination.
- **Partnership** – the duty to interact in good faith with a sense of shared enterprise and mutual benefit.

- **Active protection** – the duty to proactively protect the rights and interests of Māori.
- **Mutual benefit** – recognising that both Māori and non-Māori should enjoy benefits and share in the prosperity of Aotearoa. This includes the notion of equality in different areas of life.
- **Options** – recognising the right of Māori to choose their direction.
- **The right of development** – the active duty to assist Māori in developing resources and taonga for economic benefit.

What this looks like

- The Fund needs to be able to support kaupapa Māori facilities as defined and identified by mana whenua.
- Resourcing should be available to more broadly support mana whenua to self-manage the life of assets that are both mana whenua owned, and on council land where mana whenua has an interest.
- Resource is required to support mana whenua to navigate through the early project stages and council's consent/procurement process.
- We invest to ensure that Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau enjoy the same level of open space and sport and recreation opportunities as other Aucklanders.
- We invest to deliver on our existing commitments to mana whenua and mataawaka in Kia Ora Tāmaki Makaurau – Tā mātou anga hei ine i te tutukitanaga o ngā putanga Māori, our Māori outcomes framework.
- We respect rangatiratanga, including by investing in by-Māori-for-Māori solutions, actively building the capacity and capability of mana whenua and mataawaka, and continuing our commitment to co-governance and co-management under Te Tiriti.
- Partner with mana whenua to co-design our spaces and places to ensure they are welcoming and promote and protect tikanga, taonga, and mātauranga Māori.

Climate change and sustainability

Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan is our roadmap to a zero-emissions, resilient and healthier region that is better connected to our environment and able to thrive in the face of ongoing change and disruption. The SRFIF seeks to respond to the challenges outlined in the Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri, particularly under the Built Environment, Natural Environment, Transport and Communities & Coast Priorities.

SRFIF invests in sports facilities which are exposed to the risk of climate change and are hubs for activities which contribute to carbon emissions. Development of sport and recreation facilities can impact on carbon emissions through construction and demolition, embodied emissions in materials used, and ongoing operating of the facilities.

To minimise the impacts of investments on climate and ensure that facilities will be future fit, applications will be assessed against a sustainable and low impact design criteria. Additionally, the investments will be assessed against the five directions of the draft Manaaki Tāmaki Makaurau: Auckland open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy, if adopted. Directions include “Enhance our response to climate disruption” and “Protect and enhance our environment, biodiversity and heritage”.

Council will consider climate change in the investment into sport and recreation facility build projects through:

- Prioritising investment into projects which demonstrate future climate impacts have been considered and addressed (i.e. location of facility in relation to climate risks, such as in flood plains, coastal areas or close to cliff edges).
- Prioritising investment into facilities that include green technology and energy reduction and efficiency features (i.e. water tanks, solar panels, green roofs, fuel switching (e.g. gas boiler to electric heat pump) etc).
- Prioritising investment into facilities where there is a commitment demonstrated by the organisation that the activities it will house will not lead to an increase in emissions (i.e. reduced participant travel by private vehicles, electric vehicles or carpooling strategy etc).
- Prioritising investment into facilities that have considered the surrounding environment to the facility (i.e. tree planting, stormwater treatment devices etc).

Contestable process

In the contestable funding process:

- funding rounds will be advertised in advance,
- applications will be submitted within advertised opening and closing dates,
- any eligible organisation has an equal opportunity to be considered for a grant,
- clearly defined processes will be applied to all applications, and
- final allocation decisions are made by the Community Committee (or relevant committee).

The contestable process that has guided SRFIF investment into facilities since 2020 has significant benefits for applicants and Auckland Council. This process will continue to be used to:

- Identify projects that council was not previously aware of
- Fund renewals
- Undertake Investigation & analysis (Gateway 1) works
- Conduct Design & consent (Gateway 2) and construction (Gateway 3) works that are not considered for the targeted process funding (e.g. still indicate they are capable and the project is achievable)
- Identify high-priority projects that enter the pipeline and could be considered for future targeted process funding.

Guidelines for each contestable funding round will be published on the Auckland Council website prior to applications opening. These guidelines will set out all the dates, criteria and processes applicable to that funding round.

Targeted process

The targeted funding process will be used to align SRFIF investment with projects that Auckland Council has identified as highest priority.

The targeted process will prioritise projects that have strong strategic alignment, particularly those specifically referenced in the below plans:

- Local Board Plans
- Local Board Sport and Active Recreation Facility Plans
- Tāmaki Makaurau Sport and Recreation Facility Priority Plan
- Auckland Regional Code Facility Plans
- A key national or regional strategy plan (or equivalent strategic document)

Entry to the targeted funding process will be by invitation. There are three pathways for identifying which projects should be included in the targeted process:

Entry Pathway 1

Projects identified by Auckland Council, that have previously received SRFIF funding and have completed obligations as per their funding agreement. The project must also continue to align with the funding priorities and criteria.

Entry Pathway 2

Projects, identified by Auckland Council, that have not previously applied to the SRFIF, but align with the funding priorities and criteria, and are also engaged in partnerships of significance. For example, Ministry of Education, marae, etc.

Entry Pathway 3

A community of need, identified by Auckland Council and/or sector partners such as Aktive, that meets the investment priorities in this Framework. Council will work with community groups and mana whenua to develop a partnership to navigate through the early project stages and council's consent/procurement process and ensure our support is catered to the needs of the groups.

Invitation to the targeted process is not itself a guarantee of funding. A separate resolution from the Community Committee (or relevant committee) will be required to allocate a SRFIF grant. Council staff will work closely with these targeted projects to support them through the phases of development and make funding recommendations to the Community Committee.

Future funding rounds

The allocated LTP budget includes the additional \$35 million over financial years (FY) 2026-2028, phased over the following years:

	FY26 (\$m)	FY27 (\$m)	FY28 (\$m)
SRFIF	\$13.8	\$14.1	\$14.3
<i>Additional \$35m</i>	<i>\$10.0</i>	<i>\$10.0</i>	<i>\$15.0</i>
Total per year	\$23.8	\$24.1	\$29.3

Distribution of funds between the contestable process and the targeted process

The Long-term Plan 2024 – 2034 (LTP) provides direction on targeted investment and leverage “*while the council cannot fund the entire network of sports facilities required by Aucklanders, it should avoid spreading its funding too thinly. Efforts should be made to leverage additional sources of funding, prioritise key areas, and facilitate aggregation*” (LTP 2024-2034, Vol 2, Pg 279)

Aligned with this direction, the contestable and targeted process portions of funding will be assessed and distributed based on need and priority and will be distributed strategically to achieve the necessary infrastructure improvements and priorities of council.

The targeted process will most likely target large scale projects, that will have significant impact on the sports facility network and therefore the larger proportion of the budget will be allocated to the targeted process.

The amount allocated through the targeted process is expected to vary from year to year based on the needs and priorities of projects ready to receive funding. The intent is to allocate approximately 70% of the available budget. The remaining funds will be designated for the contestable process.

All projects will be expected to leverage additional sources of funding and use the SRFIF as a part-funder for the total project costs, often as ‘cornerstone funding’.

There is also a need for financial flexibility between funding rounds based on the timing of high-priority projects that will be assessed on a round-by-round basis.

Decision-making

Projects will be presented to the Community Committee (or relevant committee) on an annual basis for final funding decisions.

There will be two funding allocations each financial year: one for the targeted process and one for the contestable process. All elements of the SRFIF (contestable and targeted) will follow a rigorous process to ensure risks are mitigated and funding is allocated to projects aligned with the priorities and outcomes outlined in this framework.

Both contestable and targeted processes will include the following steps:

