

Facility Partnerships General Policy Guidance

1. Facility Partnerships explained

A facility partnership is where Auckland Council invests in community facilities which are (or will be) owned or operated by others, to create a better facility network for all Aucklanders.

Facility partnerships bring the council together with community organisations, government agencies, business and/or philanthropic investors to deliver more of the quality facilities Auckland needs, faster and more cost-effectively than we can achieve alone.

They might be initiated by the council, or by one or more partners bringing a proposal to us. The council welcomes community-led ideas, but with limited resources available in a growing city, council will only consider partnerships to address pressure or gaps in the current facility network.

Facility partnerships are not 'one size fits all'. Some may be simple arrangements between the council and one community partner involving an existing property. Others may larger and more complex: for example multiple investors working together over several years to develop a major new facility for Auckland.

Because every situation will be unique, the [new policy](#) considers partnerships with different purposes, scales, structures and partners. The important thing is whether each partnership has the necessary ingredients to successfully and sustainably meet the community's needs. All partners will need to have a common vision for what the facility partnership will achieve for the community, and be willing to invest in delivering it.

2. Facility Partnerships are not new

Facility partnerships are not new for the council, or for the community – we've been working together to deliver facilities for Aucklanders for decades.

What is new is having a single regional policy that outlines our rationale for entering partnerships, and a clearer, more consistent approach to selecting, shaping and supporting them. There hasn't been a single policy or process for facility partnerships since local government amalgamated in 2010.

3. Many different facilities might be considered

The policy defines community facilities as ‘places and spaces where Aucklanders can participate, play, learn, share, improve their health and wellbeing, celebrate and belong’.

This could include community centres and hubs, youth centres, rural halls, libraries, arts centres, cultural centres, marae, recreation centres, indoor sports facilities and outdoor sports facilities (including outdoor courts).

There may be other types of facilities we would support that we haven’t listed here. The important thing is that the facility will deliver positive outcomes and benefits for the community, AND will either fill a gap in the council’s existing network of facilities, or will meet essential community needs that aren’t currently being met.

4. Facility partnerships are different from community grants or community leases

Facility partnerships are different from community grants or community leases. Facility partnerships are only one way the council supports community, arts and sports facilities. We also provide services directly, contract commercial operators, give grants for facility-based activities, and lease council assets to community groups.

Partnerships are a way of managing more complicated, long-term, mutually-beneficial investment relationships. Grants and contracts are better tools for short-term or more transactional funding arrangements. If we don’t need *new facilities* to deliver the benefits we’re looking for, then grants or contracts for events, activities and programmes will be a simpler option.

If organisations need access to a community facility for their own or their members’ use, we don’t usually need a partnership to manage the arrangement – in most situations a simple community lease or venue hire agreement will be sufficient.

The tables on page 15 and 16 of the policy show where facility partnerships fit in, and how they relate to a range of other key tools for delivering outcomes.

If the arrangement involves low risk, it might not be necessary to form a partnership to achieve the community outcomes. In most situations a simple community lease or venue hire agreement, and/or a grant will be sufficient.

5. The policy was adopted by Council in late 2018

The policy was adopted on 4 December 2018, by the Environment and Community Committee of Auckland Council. You can click [here](#) to view the final policy, or [here](#) to view the committee report.

We also reported the draft policy to local boards. Of Auckland's 21 local boards, 16 boards resolved to support the policy's adoption, and five resolved their qualified support. Eighteen provided additional feedback to the committee to inform their decision. You can read your local board's individual resolutions [here](#).

6. The public also provided feedback

Council staff sought feedback online and at six community consultation events during July and August 2018. We received 71 public submissions on the draft policy during the consultation period. Overall, public feedback was highly supportive of the draft policy.

A detailed summary of feedback is available [here](#), showing local board and public feedback and our response, including any changes made as a result.

7. The council sought feedback on the draft Sports and Recreation Investment Plan in March and April 2019

The council sought feedback on the Sports Investment Plan 2019 - 2039 ('Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport') in early 2019.

This plan proposes a new approach to planning and prioritising the council's investment in sports, including in sports facilities. Facility partnerships are only *one* of the mechanisms mentioned in the plan for how the council will invest.

Some of the language is similar – for example principles around achieving equity and ensuring sustainability – and both documents will be used at different points to help council make investment decisions relating to sports facilities.

However, the Sport and Recreation Investment Plan doesn't discuss facility partnerships in detail: this is the purpose of the Facility Partnerships Policy.

Link to the Sports Investment Plan [HERE](#)

8. The Facility Partnerships Policy focuses on relationships, principled investment and sustainability

The new policy supports:

- More investment in **relationships** for all partnerships, including council allocating a lead point of contact for every enquiry from the initial contact onwards. This will help to coordinate council expertise and advice to support partners and decision-makers, while helping council staff keep up to date with any developments at the partners' end.
- A commitment to apply the **Treaty Principles** when establishing and holding facility partnerships with Māori.
- **Tailored council processes** to reflect the scale, complexity and risk of proposals: this will mean more rigour around larger investments, and a simpler process for smaller, low-risk ideas.
- A more **transparent, contestable** selection process, ensuring partnership investment decisions align with clear criteria, and dovetail with the council's budgeting process.
- A strong emphasis on **informed and principle-driven** decision-making about facility partnerships, focusing on community outcomes, equity and sustainability.
- Future partnership proposals will have to include **strong evidence of need**, more comprehensive costings and a **viable funding model** to support long-term sustainability.

9. Proactive v Responsive Tracks

Partnerships can be initiated by either the council or the partner(s). The Track a partnership starts on will impact the investment available, and when and how proposals will be accepted.

Responsive Track:

Responsive Track partnerships are those where a partner identifies a gap or unmet need in their community or sector and approaches the council for support.

- A potential facility partner(s) approaches council, which triggers a tendering process OR
- A potential facility partner(s) approaches council, about an opportunity specific to them.
- Unbudgeted, in-kind or contestable funding support may be available Support from other investors may be required.

Proactive Track (Expressions of Interest):

Proactive Track partnership opportunities are aligned to network gaps identified by the council in the relevant network and investment plans.

- Council actively seeks potential facility partners through an open tendering process OR
- Council approaches a potential partner(s), with an opportunity specific to them.

10. Funding Facility Partnerships

The council already supports facility partnerships in a range of ways, both financial and non-financial, and this will continue.

Facility partnerships have the same funding envelope as before (this is set during the council's annual and three-yearly budgeting process). The new policy provides a clearer framework and process to guide decision-making on investments in facility partnerships.

The council created a new Sports and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund in 2018 as part of the council's Long-term Plan budget. Sports and Recreation Facilities are under significant pressure as Auckland grows and intensifies, and the new Fund provides some additional budget each year from 2018-2028 to support new sports and recreation partnerships.

Other partnerships will be funded through existing budgets unless further funding is allocated in future years.

11. The Governing Body and Local Boards will make decisions

Auckland Council has two complementary decision-making parts – a regional governing body and 21 local boards. The two governance arms each have distinct decision-making responsibilities for facility partnerships.

The governing body focuses on region-wide strategic decisions, in particular where and when the council will invest in the overall facility network to address gaps and respond to growth. The governing body also governs facility partnerships to develop regional facilities.

Local boards make most of the specific decisions about how the council will invest in the facilities in their areas, in line with the priorities they've set out in their local board plans and the budget envelope agreed with the governing body. Local boards also play a key role by governing local community leases, grants and funding agreements.

The governing bodies and local boards will make a decision twice a year on facility partnership proposals presented to them.

12. Existing facility partnerships will consider the policy at their scheduled review

The policy will only apply to new facility partnerships (i.e. negotiated after the policy takes effect, beginning in April 2019).

Existing facility partnerships that are on rolling arrangements or already have scheduled review dates are likely to be considered under the new policy at an appropriate point in the future. Council

staff will be in touch with any impacted organisations well in advance of the review date to explain what this will involve, and if needed, to help you prepare.

13. Contact details for more information

To speak to someone or register for updates about the new approach, email us at facilitypartnerships@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz, or phone the council switchboard on (09) 301 0101 and ask to speak to an advisor in the most relevant team for you (Community Places, Arts and Culture or Sport and Recreation).