

Rodney First Community Empowerment Policy

'Working with the Community'



Key Objectives

- Leveraging of Local Board and Council budgets
- Community empowerment and ownership
- Ability to create new assets without waiting for a ratepayer handout
- Council budgets go further because they are not used up by bureaucracy

Overview

The Rodney Local Board area makes up 46% of the geographical land mass of Auckland, yet holds less than 4% of the population. This creates the obvious challenge of making a relatively very small rate take service the needs of future growth and existing under-investment in infrastructure. The current funding model by which the Local Board receives its budget is based on 90% population, and yet only 5% geography and 5% deprivation. Therefore a different approach to raising capital to provide for current and future facilities is needed.

Projects incur significant costs because of Council's project management fees and health and safety requirements that see contractors pass on large fees for H&S management. Some projects have had management and H&S fees add up to more than a third of the total project budget. We think supporting well organised community organisations that have the skills and experience to complete projects will show huge savings for ratepayers and get projects done quicker with higher levels of community ownership of the outcomes. This can be achieved by giving direct grants to organisations rather than completing work through Council procurement process.

Additionally, at a more grass roots level, local communities are keen to be involved in local projects such as construction of playgrounds, skate parks, cycle tracks, exercise stations, toilets, and walkways. By partnering with community groups who have the capacity to lead projects and provide financial contributions, expertise, sponsored materials and volunteer labour, we can get more done for less, and in a shorter time frame than going through purely Council processes. Local contractors will be employed, and communities will take ownership and pride in the asset, and feel confident in their ability to influence and shape their surroundings. Ugly cookie cutter facilities will be avoided.

Rodney First believes in allowing community and private enterprise to be given the opportunity to take initiative and lead the way. Rodney First means finding innovative solutions that other areas will look to and emulate.

Specific Areas of Focus 2016 – 2019

- Planned areas of focus over the next electoral term to address issues identified above

Rodney First will be focusing on ensuring the following areas are prioritised in the next LTP:

- Funds pegged for a pool in Warkworth in the next LTP and a targeted rate for this project identified.
- Adequate funds identified to complete the multi-sport facility at the Warkworth Showgrounds.
- Partnering with Sports Groups in Kumeu and Huapai to develop a multi-sports facility.
- Future infrastructure needs are identified and funded in good time.
- Grants for community facilities from playgrounds to buildings are paid directly to well organised and resourced community organisations can avoid the significant costs of Council project management fees and health and safety costs.

Rodney First will also be prioritizing advocacy to government and council on the following:

- Council to develop a clear mechanism to enable more public-private or community partnerships to provide facilities such as toilets, sports facilities, and footpaths
- Changes to policy to enable commercial activities by private enterprise to take place in Council owned facilities to help fund the operating costs of that facility (e.g. pool operator, sports facility café and shop etc.)
- A greater weighting placed on geographical mass when striking the funding model for the Local Board's budget.