

What exactly is happening to my local Council and when does the new Council come into effect?

All of the Councils in the region, including the Auckland Regional Council, will be merged into a new "Auckland Council" which comes into being on November 1 of this year. That will be responsible for the area stretching from Franklin in the South to Wellsford in the north.

So what happens in the meantime?

Your local Council and the Auckland Regional Council will continue to provide services as they always have right up until that date. If you have any queries or complaints, or want to speak to your Mayor or local Councillor etc you can continue to contact them through the normal channels.

Why are things changing?

The history of how and why the Government is creating a single council has its roots in the 2009 report of the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance. That report identified that bold change is required to make Auckland the most exciting, vibrant metropolitan centre in Australasia.

The Royal Commission recommended a number of changes to the local authority structure in Auckland. Those suggestions were then refined by the Government.

What is the Auckland Transition Agency (ATA) set up to do?

The ATA was established under legislation to oversee and manage the amalgamation of the Councils as well as establishing Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs). The ATA ceases to exist on November 1, when the new Council comes into being.

In my area we have different services from elsewhere. For example we pay for rubbish bags but in Auckland they have wheelie bins. And in Manukau they have free public swimming pools, but I have to pay to go to our local pool. Will things like that change?

Generally, no. Services such as rubbish collection and water supply will be uninterrupted and stay as they are until the new Council has an opportunity to review them. Libraries will stay as they are.

Will there still be a local Council office that I can go to?

Yes. What are known as Full Service Centres will deliver all Auckland Council services and some Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) services. The four full service centres will be located in:

- North (Takapuna)
- West (Henderson)
- Central/East (Central Auckland)
- South (Manukau)

In addition, Local Service Centres will be located in

- Orewa
- Waiheke
- Papakura
- Pukekohe

These offices will generally provide the services that are currently delivered out of them.

Neighbourhood Service Centres will be at the existing locations of Warkworth, Whangaparaoa, Huapai, Helensville, Great Barrier and Waiuku. The services currently provided at these locations will continue.

Where a local board area includes an existing service centre(s) the most appropriate one will be utilised by the local board for meetings, constituent appointments etc.

Work is underway identifying suitable locations and premises for the balance of the Local Board areas that do not currently have a service centre presence:

- Orakei (covering the Eastern Bays, Meadowbank and St Johns),
- Maungakiekie-Tamaki (Glen Innes, Pt England, Onehunga)
- Mangere-Otahuhu
- Manurewa (including Weymouth and Wattle Downs)
- Whau (includes New Lynn, Blockhouse Bay and Avondale),
- Albert-Eden (areas such as Pt Chevalier, Balmoral, Mt Albert, Mt Eden and Epsom)
- Upper Harbour (which includes Albany, Greenhithe, Hobsonville and Whenuapai)
- Kaipatiki (Beach Haven, Birkenhead, Northcote and Glenfield)
- Waitakere Ranges (includes Titirangi, Huia and Piha)
- Te Irirangi (Howick, Bucklands Beach, Pakuranga and Botany)
- Puketapapa (Hillsborough, Lynfield and Three Kings)

***Note:** the suburbs mentioned above are not an exhaustive list of those within each Local Board area. The intention is simply to provide some geographical reference points as working assumptions for development of the service delivery model.*

Services provided may include appointments with specialist staff, service requests (e.g. abandoned vehicles, graffiti etc) and rate rebate applications.

Additional Specialist Service Centres will operate as required. These include locations in the Auckland CBD (resource and building consents), Botany (building consents), Newmarket (Watercare) and an as-yet unconfirmed location for Auckland Transport.

What about phoning or making contact on-line?

There will be a new website (on www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) which will be up and running from July 1, 2010). While there will also be a single phone number for the new Council, all existing phone numbers and online links will still work.

Will my rates go up?

Rates will remain as they are until July 2011. That is when the new Council will finalise its budgets and set its rates for the 2011/2012 financial year.

Will I still be able to make payments to the new Council with my credit card, by cheque or on-line etc?

Any sort of transaction you are able to make now will be available after "Day 1" (November 1, 2010).

When are the elections? Do I still get to vote for a Mayor and local Councillors?

The elections will be held by postal ballot over a three week period in September/October.

People will be able to vote for a Mayor (elected across the whole region), Councillors in the ward in which they live, and Local Board members in the local board area in which they live.

Elections will also be held for District Health Boards and, where applicable, Licensing Trusts.

A timetable and elections factsheet is available on the Rodney District Council website under Your Council/Elections.

What will be the relationship between the Local Boards and the Auckland Council?

The ATA has released a discussion document with details on local boards and how they will work with the Auckland Council. It is available at www.discussiondocuments.co.nz

Local Boards will feed the views of their communities into the Auckland Council.

They will advocate for their local community and have input into the Auckland Council's plans for the region.

What is a council-controlled organisation (CCO)?

This is an organisation or company in which a Council controls 50% or more of the votes or has the right to appoint 50% (or more) of directors or trustees. All of the CCOs will be owned and controlled by the Auckland Council.

The council, in conjunction with the community, sets the objectives of the CCO and is accountable to the ratepayers for the performance of the CCOs.

The Government has determined that there will be CCOs dealing with: water (Watercare), transport (Auckland Transport), and the development of Auckland's waterfront. It is currently considering whether there will be other CCOs for Council investments, major regional facilities (such as the Zoo, Maritime Museum and North Harbour Stadium) , property holdings, and a CCO covering economic development tourism and events,

The ATA has released a discussion document on CCOs which contains more detail about what they are and what they might do. Go to www.discussiondocuments.co.nz

I live in Council-owned social housing (pensioner unit). What will happen to me?

Social housing for the elderly will remain under the Council's ownership and management. Social housing will be managed out of the Community Services section of the Auckland Council, as will other facilities such as community centres, libraries and so on.

Tenants will obviously have a different landlord (the Auckland Council), but materially nothing else will change.

What about things my Council has already agreed to do this year. Will they be stopped?

No. All projects and budgets that have been set by the various Councils will run through until July 2011 (the start of the first, full, financial year of the new Auckland Council).

For more background information on the planned changes visit the ATA's website at: www.ata.govt.nz