

Cockle Bay Residents & Ratepayers Association Inc



www.cocklebay.co.nz

March 2024.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN COCKLE BAY?

YOUR RATES LEVELS FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS! Auckland Council is considering its funding requirements (your rates!) for the next 10 years. In summary their outline options are:

- i) Council does more, but you pay more
- ii) Council does less and you pay less
- iii) Council maintains present levels of service, and you pay accordingly.

We encourage individuals to make their own submissions on their preferences. The link is <https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/long-term-plan-2024-2034>. The closing date is 28 March 2024.

The table below gives a little more information. More details are in the Have Your Say submission form. You will note that all proposed rates increases exceed current inflation levels

Option	Opex ¹ \$ billion	Capex ² \$ billion	Rates Increase Per Year			
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Years 4+
i) Do more; pay more	52.0	75.6	14%	10%	10%	5%
ii) Do less; pay less	33.5	69.2	5.5%	3.5%	3.5%	Inflation + 1%
iii) Present service levels	39.3	72.0	7.5%	3.5%	8%	3.5%

Your Committee will be preparing a submission on the subject, but is interested in your views, so that we can reflect them in what we submit. **SO TELL US YOUR OPINION PLEASE!** An email to cbrassoc@gmail.com will let us know your views. It can be as simple as "Option ii" (or i or iii) or a more detailed commentary if you wish. If there is a clear majority viewpoint we will ensure this is reflected in our submission.

Other submission topics relate to the Howick Local Board budget; changes in waste management, including a move to fortnightly kerbside collections; Shoreline Adaptation policies for the Tamaki River and Bucklands Beach, including Cockle Bay and Howick Beach, and a separate consultation on increasing the numbers of representatives on the Howick Local Board to reflect population growth. If you cannot find the links to the consultation documents let us know and we will send them to you.

Sandspit Road apartments. The developer, through his planner, has successfully applied for fast track consenting under the Covid-19 Fast Track Consenting Act 2020. The application is for about 70 apartments. It will be considered by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), who have not yet appointed a Panel to hear the application. At that stage all Section 274 participants to the now discontinued Environmental Court application must be notified. This includes CBRRA. Participants will then have 10 days to respond to the application. At the end of last year we met with Damian Light, Chair of the Howick Local Board, who indicated that the Board remain opposed to the proposed development. If you want to know more about the EPA then their web site has a lot of information: <https://www.epa.govt.nz/>. Then look for Fast Tracking. We have not yet had the opportunity to study the incoming government's alternative Fast Tracking Bill..

Restoration Work at Cockle Bay Beach. We are pleased to report that the Howick Local Board has given us a further grant of \$6000 to enable us to continue the restoration and replanting work at the beach. We will continue to take out weeds and replant suitable species along the walkways up to Pah Road in order to restore and beautify the area. To date almost 800 hours of work have been devoted to this project, at no cost to Council. Special thanks to Julie Mitchell, Fiona Rankin and Barry Wood for leading this initiative, and to all the other many helpers. It might be worth adding that we successfully challenged the Landowner Approval Fee which Council wished to charge us as a condition of making these improvements.

¹ Operating Expenditure

² Capital Expenditure

Pedestrian Crossing at Litten Road. Last year Auckland Transport (AT) undertook a consultation process regarding plans to raise the pedestrian crossing at Litten Road; install a central reservation and tactile pavers. Because they did not indicate the costs or the numbers of accidents we requested this information prior to finalizing our views. They ignored our original request and eventually responded long after the consultation period closed. The cost of the proposal is put at \$272,544. In the past 5 years there was 1 minor accident involving a parked car; 1 non-injury accident and 1 minor injury accident nearby in Sandspit Road (not even Litten Road!). None involved pedestrians. AT state that of the 22 submissions they received, only 1 opposed the proposal; 2 requested more information; and 2 requested changes. We find this surprising. Equally surprising is the 2 almost identical submissions from people in Four Trees with children at both local schools who state that there is no safe way to cross the road – despite the fact that they must pass a pedestrian crossing on Paparoa Road and there is a traffic light controlled crossing on Sandspit Road. Access to both schools is available without needing to use the Litten Road crossing.

Parking on the beach at Cockle Bay. We have raised concerns with Damian Light, the Chair of the Howick Local Board, about people parking on the beach adjacent to the boat ramp at the southern end of the beach. Damian has undertaken to get the Board to investigate greater parking enforcement, in particular under the Pohutukawa tree Te Tuhi o Manawatere.

Howick War Memorial Hall: We remain concerned that 2 years after a very poorly designed bidding process there has still been no resolution on future operational management of this facility, and it would seem no readily available information is available on ongoing costs and current utilization. When we last discussed this with Damain Light in December there had been no significant changes in the status. Essentially this means that Council remains the venue organizer; it is a free venue for hire; but there is the possibility of making it a more “commercial” venue for hire at normal Council venue hire rates. We provided Damian what was intended to be a constructive Discussion Document outlining options and their feasibility. A copy is available on request. We hate to say it, but the whole ongoing process appears to represent systemic failures that symbolizes some of what is wrong with Council.

Paparoa Road Resurfacing: We are pleased to say that the contractor was required to undertake resurfacing at no cost to Council. Asphalt has been used on the section of the road by the cemetery with right angle parking, and chip seal elsewhere. Out of interest, last time we looked at national costs for the 2 approaches chip seal averaged \$5.70 - \$8.08 m² for single and 2 coat seal respectively and asphalt was \$41 m². Whole of life expectancy was only marginally less for chip seal.

Emergency Disaster Relief Planning: After the many problems encountered during early 2023 we can report that Auckland Emergency Management has appointed a new Community Planning and Readiness Manager and local Senior Community Planning and Readiness Advisors. A local Readiness and Response Plan is to be finalised by the 4th quarter of the Board’s financial year.

Pest Plants on private land. This issue is raised periodically by members. Unfortunately it seems Council has limited authority to require action, with the possible exception of when it is a health or fire risk. Pest Free Howick might be able to assist www.pfhw.org.nz But don’t forget they are to some extent dependent on volunteers!

Local Board Key Performance Indicators: We were very disappointed with many of the Performance Indicators proposed at the time of the Draft Annual Plan. We will pay particular attention to them in relation to the proposed budget.

Food Scraps Scheme: Given the relatively low numbers of food scraps bins we see put out each week (and with that number seeming to be declining) we asked Damian how successful the scheme is proving compared to expectations. At the time that we asked some 9 million kg of food scraps had been collected. The expectation was that 35,000 tonnes would be collected by June 2024 – slightly below the target of 40,000 tonnes. In view of the fact that an additional charge is being levied on rates to cover this service we will continue to monitor performance.

Scamming and Phishing: Despite information available on some banks web sites, this remains a widespread ongoing concern. At the AGM we explored the level of interest of members in a short workshop publicising what can be done to avoid “falling into a scamming trap”. We are talking to a bank about this and hope to get back to you soon.

Finally – feel free to contact us at any time if you have issues with anything to do with Auckland Council or Howick Local Board services.