



RESPONSE to the Auckland Council

DRAFT LONG_TERM PLAN

Paper 052/12
Prepared on behalf of COMET trustees, 23 March 2012

Whakatauki

E kore e taea e te whenu kotahi
ki te raranga i te whāriki
kia mōhio tātou ki ā tātou.
Mā te mahi tahi o ngā whenu,
mā te mahi tahi o ngā kairaranga,
ka oti tēnei whāriki.
I te otinga
me titiro tātou ki ngā mea pai ka puta mai.
Ā tana wā,
me titiro hoki
ki ngā raranga i makere

The tapestry of understanding
cannot be woven by one strand alone.
Only by the working together of strands
and the working together of weavers
will such a tapestry be completed.
With its completion
let us look at the good that comes from it
and, in time
we should also look
at those stitches which have been dropped,
because they also have a message.

- Kūkupa Tirikatene

About COMET

COMET (City of Manukau Education Trust) is a charitable trust established by Manukau City Council in 1999 and created as a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) under the Local Government Act 2002. COMET became a CCO of the Auckland Council on 1 November, 2010. The Trust has an agreement with the Council to deliver analysis and advocacy for education; and the co-ordination and facilitation of projects that make a difference to education outcomes in the city.

Response to the Draft Long-Term Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Long-Term Plan

We would like the opportunity to present our submission and receive questions at an oral hearing.

Over-arching comment

The most frequent comment we have heard when discussing the Draft Long-Term Plan with our stakeholders has been that it is difficult to see the Draft Auckland Plan's focus on transformational shifts and on broad outcomes for people and communities reflected in the Draft Long Term Plan.

The Draft Auckland Plan had a strong emphasis on equity, and on actions to ensure the social and economic development required for the well-being of all Aucklanders. This was especially visible in the transformational shifts to “dramatically accelerate the prospects of Auckland’s children and young people”, and to “substantially raise living standards for all Aucklanders and focus on those most in need”. It was also clear in the strategic directions, targets and priorities, particularly those in Chapter 1, Auckland’s People.

In contrast, the Draft Long-Term Plan appears much more as “business as usual”. The measures do not seem to align with or even mention the targets in the Auckland Plan, and there are few mentions of people, learning, or even wellbeing. Without explicit mention in the LTP, it is hard to see how the bold directions and targets in the Auckland Plan will be realised.

One example is the Southern Initiative, afforded a significant section of the Draft Auckland Plan, but budgeted only \$1.4 million over ten years in the Draft LTP. Even with partnership from Government as described, this is not enough for Council to have a real input to transformational change in the South. One learning from the Tamaki Transformation Project is that a significant local resource, committed over the long term, is required in order to leverage real Government involvement beyond “business as usual”. We recognise that the Southern Initiative is still being shaped and that it is therefore difficult to budget for. However we are aware that if sufficient budget is not set aside, it will be impossible for Council to find the funding later.

Endorsements

We endorse the recognition that Council has a key leadership and enabling role in education and skills in Auckland. We see a number of reasons why Council’s role in education and skills is uniquely important:

- Education and skills are crucial drivers of economic and social development. Without a significant improvement in the skills of Aucklanders, Council's wider goals cannot be achieved.
- The Auckland population is changing in a number of ways that make it even more important to focus on education and skills here. The population is aging, so all working-age Aucklanders need to be able to be fully productive. Meanwhile, the proportions of Māori and Pasifika people within the population are growing. These groups have potential to contribute significantly to their own and the city's social and economic development, but they are currently over-represented among those with low educational attainment, low literacy and under-employment. It is therefore urgent that we ensure greater equity of access to learning for all Aucklanders.
- Auckland also has a large and growing population of migrants, many of whom contribute valuable knowledge and skills to our economy. However some migrants are unable to make full use of their skills due to language barriers. By advocating for increased provision of language support for migrants, Council can get quick gains in skills for our city.
- The Council is able to take a cross-sector view, bringing coherence across the silos that tend to exist between education sectors, and enabling a focus on both demand and supply, which is essential to ensure increased engagement in learning.
- Council is also able to take a very clear Auckland view, advocating for the needs of Auckland's diverse and growing population, which are different from those of other parts of New Zealand.
- The Mayor and Council are recognised figure-heads for Auckland. By publicly stating their support for education and skills as priorities for Auckland, and by showing that they take education into account in their decision-making, they can influence others to do likewise.
- Council land and facilities are often used by educational organisations, especially playgroups, early childhood centres, and adult education groups. By strategically seeking to make facilities available in areas with greatest need, Council can improve equity of access to education for Aucklanders.
- Council provides many services that are explicitly educational in nature, such as parks, libraries, museums and art galleries.
- Council has a goal to increase digital inclusion, and is working to increase access to broadband internet across the city. However digital inclusion requires more than widespread broadband. Internet access needs to be affordable and it needs to be paired with access to hardware and provision of learning opportunities so people who

have not previously used computers for productivity-related purposes can understand the potential value of internet access beyond recreation, and can gain the skills needed to make effective use of this facility. The Computer Clubhouse is an example of a learning model that successfully combines all these elements.

- Council's goals to ensure the wellbeing of all Aucklanders and to strive for equity can best be realised by reducing poverty. Education and skills provide an important pathway out of poverty for individuals and families, while financial literacy programmes can help families take control of their finances and begin to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Many other Council services (e.g. transport and building consents) have indirect but significant effects on educational institutions, and on community access to these institutions. There is potential to consider decisions on these services in light of their effect on access to education.
- Through its education CCO, COMET, Council can engage with education stakeholders, enabling them to have input on Council plans, identifying ways that Council can facilitate access to education, and involving educators in collective effort to reach Council's education and skills goals for Auckland.

We also welcome Council's support for the plan to extend COMET's area of focus from Manukau to the Auckland region, including the need to re-settle as a new trust in order to do so. We note that no new funding has been provided for this extension in services. We endorse the additional funding for some specific actions within COMET's work to support Council's goals in the area of skills and economic development.

Recommendation: Collective Impact

To reach the transformational goals in the Auckland Plan, we need to bring about a step change in learning and skills for Aucklanders of all ages, and particularly for those whose social and economic wellbeing is currently limited by their lack of skills or qualifications. This step change cannot be achieved by educators alone; it requires coherent action from the entire community, including national government, local government, educators, employers, families and community members.

Collective impact theory¹ identifies a number of conditions that are required in order to bring about a community-wide change such as this. These conditions are:

- Establishing and working to a common agenda

¹ Kania, J. and Kramer, M. (2011). Collective impact. Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011, 36-41

- Setting up shared measurement systems, so all participants are tracking and working to the same outcomes
- Implementing mutually reinforcing activities, so that the efforts of different organisations and sectors build on one another
- Continuous communication among organisations
- Backbone support organisations which provide coordination and track and communicate outcomes.

COMET and Cognition Institute have been working with a small group of key education leaders to develop a framework for collective impact to shift education and skills for Auckland. This framework is “Learning Auckland”, and at its heart is an Accord, “Whakakotahitanga Te Ara Mātauranga”, which spells out a shared commitment to learning. The goals in Whakakotahitanga Te Ara Mātauranga have been aligned to the directions in the Auckland Plan.

Learning Auckland grew out of the Auckland Education Summit held in 2011. It aims to bring about a long-term, positive shift in educational achievement in Auckland by bringing together the efforts of many people and organisations towards a common goal: making a bigger difference to Auckland through learning.

Whakakotahitanga Te Ara Mātauranga will be taken out over the next few months, asking individuals and organisations to sign it and to identify an action they can take that will contribute to the Accord’s goals. All those who sign will receive a certificate, and will be kept informed of progress towards improving education and skills outcomes in Auckland, over the next ten years. There will also be opportunities to share actions that are proving particularly effective, so all those involved can learn from each other and can identify ways to create cohesive action.

We hope that the Mayor and Council will decide to sign Whakakotahitanga Te Ara Mātauranga, to show your commitment to education and skills in Auckland, and to publicly encourage others to commit to act towards the education and skills goals in the Auckland Plan.

[Recommendation: Southern Initiative](#)

We welcome the identification of the Southern Initiative area for more focused attention and investment, but we are concerned that the level of investment identified in the Draft Long Term Plan is not sufficient to achieve the changes needed.

Our work in the Southern Initiative area over the past 12 years confirms the picture painted by the data of an area whose potential is not currently being realized. The entrenched nature

of the social issues in the Southern Initiative area, along with the highly transient population, mean that change can only come from long-term investment. Achieving this will require continued commitment from each subsequent council and from successive governments.

Social issues in areas of high deprivation are generally highly complex, with multiple, interrelated causes. Such complex issues cannot be solved through simple interventions that focus on only one cause or driver at a time; rather, they need coherent action that addresses a number of root causes and drivers at once. In particular, interventions need to recognize that people are not isolated individuals, but members of families and communities.

The Southern Initiative can only succeed if the community is behind it, and if they have input to shape initiative plans from the very beginning. The community knows what the greatest needs are, and the underlying issues that need to be considered in order to address these needs. To date we are not aware of any community engagement in the initiative planning.

It is important that education and skills are considered as part of the plan. COMET is keen to contribute our expertise, evidence, coordination skills, contacts and implementation models to this work. Any contribution to the Southern Initiative would be outside our current baseline budget, and has not been included in the specific items indicated for additional funding within the Draft Long Term Plan.

If the Southern Initiative is to attract concrete investment from government across multiple departments, and from industry, a coordinating team needs to be set up, and given real authority and resourcing to enable them to influence high-level decision-makers within and outside government. This will require a much greater investment than the proposed level of funding as outlined in the Draft Long-Term Plan.

This submission has been assembled by the staff and trustees of COMET based on our own knowledge and experience, and on extensive discussions with education stakeholders.

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