Submission: Auckland Council Long Term Plan 2024 / 2034 (10 Year Budget) and Whau Local Board Proposals:

27th March 2024

Rosebank Business Association
Kim Watts – Executive Engagement Manager
Phone 09 820 0551 or 021 639 509
Email: kim@rosebankbusiness.co.nz

Stronger together

www.rosebankbusiness.co.nz

18 Jomac Place, Rosebank, Auckland 1026
PO Box 151190, New Lynn, 0640, Auckland, Phone: 820 0551

15 March 2024

Auckland Council Governing Body
Auckland Council
Private Bag 92300
Auckland 1142

akhaveyoursay@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

SUBMISSION TO THE AUCKLAND COUNCIL AUCKLAND COUNCIL LONG TERM PLAN 2024/2034 (10-Year Budget) AND WHAU LOCAL BOARD PROPOSALS

The Rosebank Business Association ('Association') - 'Rosebank – Gateway to the West' - welcomes the opportunity to make this submission.

The Rosebank Business Improvement District is a commercial and industrial hub of 650 + businesses located on the Rosebank Peninsula in West Auckland. It has direct access to the SH16 North-Western Motorway and when the Waterview tunnel was completed, it's traffic count increased to between 25 and 35.000 vehicles per day with immediate access and link to the SH20 Airport Motorway. Businesses in the area generate an estimated $1 billion in revenue, pay significant rates and employ about 9,000 FTEs. The predictions are that this workforce will increase to 20,000 by 2035.

There are currently 51 BIDs in Auckland, representing over 25,000 businesses with a combined capital value estimated at $72.7 billion.[1]

Our role in the Auckland economy is to improve the business environment of our areas, promote innovation, prosperity and employment as well as attract new businesses, customers and visitors.

We share this common goal with the Auckland Council group to promote Auckland's economic prosperity. The council group plays a pivotal role in providing efficient and effective core services for the city. Auckland must continually strive to attract more visitors, and bid competitively to host major events, as well as support economic development activities.

Overall, we cannot emphasise enough the need to find more savings and for there to be a much sharper focus on efficiencies and getting the 'basics' right, such as the delivery of core council services and the timely maintenance of essential infrastructure. We welcome the recent announcement of an overhaul of top management tiers at Council to streamline service delivery and cut costs.

[1] https://bid.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/

The Long Term Plan 2024/2034 sets out the council's priorities and how you will pay for them.[2] You are also consulting on a draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2024.[3] You are seeking feedback on a number of issues. Our responses will focus on:

(1) Overall Direction for the Long Term Plan
(2) Transport Plan
(3) North Harbour Stadium
(4) Major Investments (Auckland Future Fund)
(5) Port Land
(6) Changes to other rates, fees and charges
(7) What else is important to us
(8) Draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2024
(9) Local Board Priorities

(1) Overall Direction for the Long Term Plan

Here you have asked which option do we prefer for the overall direction for council's Long Term Plan 2024/2034? (Do less (reduce council services/ investment), lower rates increases and less debt); Proceed with the central proposal; or Do more (increase council services/investment), with higher rates increases and more debt.

We support the *central proposal* overall, but are opposed to discontinuing the Long Term Differential Strategy. In addition, we support that aspect of the *Pay More, Get More Scenario* to attract more visitors, bid for and host major events as well as supporting economic development activities. We wish to be assured Council is properly funding core infrastructure services.

As set out in your Consultation Document, the services and activities provided for in the *central proposal* are a capital investment of $39.3 billion and operating spending of $72.0 billion over 10 years. The Consultation Document says this will strengthen Auckland's physical and financial resilience, while tackling some big budget challenges. We agree.

Overall, the rates increases for the average value residential property will be: • 7.5 per cent in year one; • 3.5 per cent in year two; • 8 per cent in year three; and • no more than 3.5 per cent a year after that. We understand that rates for business properties will be around 1.5% higher for each of these periods. We note that this includes discontinuing the Long Term Differential Strategy, but your Consultation Document does not set out how continuing the Long Term Differential Strategy would affect these rate increases, especially for businesses.

The central proposal also includes establishing the Auckland Future Fund using the Auckland International Airport shareholding and the proceeds of an operating lease of Port of Auckland, along with a $50 million annual cost reduction target by year three for Auckland Council delivered services and a $30 million asset recycling target per annum ($300 million over 10 years).

As we set out below, while we support establishing the Auckland Future Fund with the Auckland International Airport shareholding, we do not support an operating lease of Port of Auckland.

In terms of the need for efficiencies and savings, we believe there should be a sharper focus on finding savings from the management of contractors by the Auckland Council group. We support a budget package that sharply reduces Auckland Council's group operating costs.

We also support borrowing more than the planned 'less than 270 per cent' of group revenue.

[2] Link Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Consultation Document Link ; Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Supporting Information Link
[3] Draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2024 Link

And, while we support Council working with central government on new funding tools to enable more investment into visitor attraction and economic development activities (as set out in the *central proposal*), in the meantime, we ask that a budget for marketing Auckland internationally, to attract visitors, bid for and host major events as well as support economic development activities be prioritised (as set out in the *Pay More, Get More Scenario)*. We are concerned that under the *central proposal* only the basic suite of events and minimum level of economic development projects will be delivered by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited. We also ask that the budget for local board-funded events, local economic development and town centre re-generation be at least maintained, but preferably increased. These activities are not only what makes Auckland a 'fun' place to live in, but offer an economic lifeline to small businesses with increases in visitor numbers.

<u>(2) Transport Plan</u>

Here you have noted that your budget proposes working with government to make progress towards an integrated transport plan for Auckland. It proposes a total capital spend of $13.4 billion for Auckland Transport over 10 years. This includes: • making public transport faster, more reliable and easier to use by investing in rapid transit network actions, such as making it easier to pay and introducing capped weekly public transport passes; • network optimisation, reducing temporary traffic management requirements and introducing dynamic lanes; • stopping some previously-planned initiatives, such as some raised pedestrian crossings and cycleways. You have asked what we provide feedback on this transport proposal. You have also asked if there is anything council should spend more or less on.

We agree that a key priority for transport should be to make the most of council's existing assets and planned spend, including the council's significant investment in the City Rail Link (CRL) and other large rapid transit network projects. But we ask that all transport projects are planned and implemented in close collaboration with BIDS. A key concern we have is the disruption caused to business from transport developments, including often excessive temporary traffic management. We ask this to be addressed.

We support the particular focus on renewals and maintenance to ensure roads and other network assets are kept in good order and there be a total capital spend of $13.4 billion for Auckland Transport to address these priorities. We also support a new focus on smaller-scale changes to more quickly improve performance of our roads and public transport services, including the provision of dynamic lanes and bus lanes.

Making public transport faster, more reliable and easier to use is also supported as is rapid transit investment, focused on busways (following the successful example of the Northern Busway). Transport investment for emissions reduction, such as the ongoing addition of electric vehicles to the bus and ferry fleets is also important to us. Getting more people on to public transport also helps reduce emissions.

Ensuring maximum value from every dollar spent is a given for us, as is driving efficiencies and managing operating costs.

One concern we have along with you is the recent government decision to cancel the regional fuel tax (RFT), ending the scheme four years early. We are concerned that this has resulted in a reduction in the level of investment in and re-prioritisation of transport projects in the Long Term Plan 2024/2034. We are keen to see the detailed plans for congestion charging/time of use charging so we can assess the implications for businesses.

Adding further complexity is the recent release of the draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024.[4] In particular, this reintroduces the Roads of National Significance programme (including for Auckland, Mill Road and the East West Link). The introduction of legislation for the fast tracking of consents for major infrastructure, including the Roads of National Significance and

[4] https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/strategy-and-direction/government-policy-statement-on-land-transport-2024/

rapid transit projects,[5] brings further opportunity, but an alignment of national and regional priorities needs to be established.

(3) North Harbour Stadium

In response to future investment needs of North Harbour Stadium, Council is considering options for the future of the stadium precinct. Council could keep the stadium precinct as it is now, and maintain it at a cost of $33 million over 10 years (Option 1). Or - Council could redevelop the stadium precinct to better deliver for the needs of the North Shore community, funded through reallocation of the $33 million, the sale of some unused stadium precinct land while retaining the existing community playing fields and any other external funding available (Option 2). Another option is to change the operational management of the stadium to ensure greater use by the community. Changes to operational management can be considered in addition to either Option 1 or Option 2. You have asked which options we support for the North Harbour Stadium.

There are a total of four major stadiums in Auckland. Three are owned and operated by the council: Mt Smart Stadium, North Harbour Stadium and Western Springs Stadium. The fourth is the independent Eden Park. The Auckland region faces substantial costs to maintain and operate the stadia in their current configuration and the current operating models are considered to inhibit optimal utilisation and decision making. Some of these venues are under-used and don't make enough money to cover their operating costs.[6] The *2020 Independent Review of Council Controlled Organisations* identified that Auckland has "four under-funded and under-utilised stadiums." The Review also identified that a single operator approach is important to maximise opportunities and efficiencies.[7]

A Political Working Group formed by council is assessing expressions of interest for a National Stadium based in Auckland. A future decision around Auckland's National Stadium may also affect how the regional stadia network operates collaboratively in the future.[8]

North Harbour Stadium is the least utilised facility in the Auckland stadium network. Attendance at commercial events and matches at North Harbour Stadium was approximately 10% of the number of fans who attended similar events at Mt Smart Stadium in the 12 months to July 2023. Sports organisations and concert promoters do not hire North Harbour Stadium for commercial events and matches as in their experience it has been that it is too difficult to attract fans to the venue – in comparison to other venues in the network.

Under this Long Term Plan 2024/2034, the council is consulting on two options for how to get the best community outcomes from the North Harbour Stadium precinct.

We support Option 2.

Under Option 2, it is proposed that Council redevelop the North Harbour Stadium precinct to better deliver for the needs of the North Shore community, funded through reallocation of the $33 million, the sale of some currently unused stadium precinct land, while retaining the existing community playing fields. We understand that other external funding will be necessary to achieve that. We also agree that the operational management of the stadium should be changed to ensure greater use of the facilities by the community.[9]

(4) Major Investments (Auckland Future Fund)

Council is proposing a diversified investment fund for Auckland (the Auckland Future Fund). The overall concept involves the transfer of council's shareholding of just over 11 per cent in Auckland International Airport Limited (AIAL) to the fund to enable the subsequent sale of any or all the shares by the fund manager. However, the Consultation Document identifies four more detailed options: (Option 1) Auckland Future Fund with AIAL shares

---

[5] https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/511069/government-unveils-plan-to-fast-track-infrastructure-projects
[6] Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Supporting Information, pages 157 and 652-675.
[7] Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Supporting Information, pages 157 and 652-675.
[8] Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Supporting Information, page 654.
[9] Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Supporting Information, pages 661-662.

and port lease proceeds; (Option 2) Enhanced status quo (no establishment of an Auckland Future Fund); (Option 3) Auckland Future Fund with AIAL shares only; (Option 4) Auckland Future Fund with AIAL shares and Port of Auckland (POAL) dividends. You have asked what is our preference.

Council is also considering changes to the way the Port of Auckland operates, which may also result in further investment into the Auckland Future Fund. You have also asked whether we prefer to continue council group operation of the port or lease the operation of the port for the future of Port of Auckland. And if the council group continues to operate the Port of Auckland, how would we prefer the profits and dividends to be used?

Overall, we support Option 3 - Auckland Future Fund with AIAL shares only. We do not support a lease of the Port operation.

We have previously supported selling all of Council's shareholding in Auckland International Airport Ltd ('AIAL'). Although you have considered in your Consultation Document using the cash from the sale of the remaining AIAL shares to reduce council debt, you have not formally progressed this as an option.[10] Although our preference would be to use the cash from the sale of the remaining AIAL shares to reduce council debt, the closest option we agree with in your proposals is Option 3 (Auckland Future Fund with AIAL shares only). You have described this option as establishing an Auckland Future Fund and transferring the council's remaining AIAL shareholding into the fund (as in the proposed Option 1), but POAL would continue to operate the port (as set out under the enhanced status quo option, Option 2). Under Option 3, those returns would not be invested in the Auckland Future Fund.

Turning to the proposed lease of Port operations, under this option, you have said that Auckland Council or POAL would grant a lease of around 35 years over the port land and operations to an external private party to operate the port. The council would receive an upfront payment for this lease, and the private operating company would have the right to run the port, make capital investments and earn profits from these operations over the period of the lease. Council would not receive returns from the operations of the Port during the period of the lease. At the end of the lease, control of the port operations (and associated land) would transfer back to the council group. The underlying ownership of the port land and wharves would stay with the Auckland Council group throughout the lease. The lease agreement would also set out key parameters that would help ensure that the council's ownership objectives and lease conditions were met.[11]

There are several reasons why we do not support a lease of the Port operations.

First, the various reports commissioned on the future of the Port of Auckland have reached the same conclusion that the Port will outgrow it's present site in 20-30 years.[12] Also, the capacity constraints are not limited to the Port itself. The reports agree that the road and rail networks that service the Port will need significant upgrading to improve connectivity and integration. As a consequence, locking the Port into a lease of around 35 years does seem to align with the need to integrate transport links or shift the Port in 20-30 years, or provide the flexibility necessary for these decisions.

Further, in recent decades the city centre has transformed dramatically and the area around the Port has become an important commercial and residential centre in its own right. There are differing stakeholder aspirations for the area leading to tensions between the growth in freight volumes on the one hand, and increasing residential and recreational use of the waterfront on the other. One hundred per cent ownership of POAL and the land on the Auckland waterfront means council can better manage the differing stakeholder aspirations.

In addition, the privatisation of the Port will likely mean Auckland businesses would end up paying increased costs to deliver profits to a private port operator (who will have a monopoly). Major price hikes from private terminal operators have led to concerns recently in Australia. We have concerns that any financial benefits from the lease will be outweighed by increased costs for

---

[10] Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Consultation Document, page 60.
[11] Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Consultation Document, page 62.
[12] https://www.poal.co.nz/our-story/future

businesses and consumers. Moreover, the Port of Auckland has recently seen a major turnaround under new management.

(5) Port Land

Whether or not the operation of the Port of Auckland is leased, you have said that some land and wharves currently used for port operations could be transferred to Auckland Council and used for something else that provides public benefit. Captain Cook and Marsden wharves could be transferred to council within 2-5 years provided that resource consent can be obtained for work at the Bledisloe Terminal. The Bledisloe Terminal site could be freed up and transferred to council for use in another way within 15 years. You have asked what option we prefer for Captain Cook and Marsden wharves? And what option do we prefer for Bledisloe Terminal?

The council's strategic vision for the city centre waterfront involves improving public access to the waterfront for Aucklanders. The proposal in the Long Term Plan 2024/2034 to free-up wharves by consolidating the physical area of the port operations would support this objective.

Although Marsden and Captain Cook wharves could be freed-up for alternative use and transferred to Auckland Council with minimal impact on port operations or profitability, this would require that the port operations currently taking place on these two wharves be relocated to the Bledisloe Terminal. This would require construction work at Bledisloe North wharf and an additional vehicle handling building at the Bledisloe Terminal. These works are estimated to cost $110 million and would require resource consent approval. The Consultation Document says that it is likely that this could be achieved over a two-to-five-year timeframe.

Although releasing the Bledisloe Terminal for alternative uses could provide significant new public benefits, it would also substantially reduce the scale and value of the port operations. The Consultation Document says that this option is not considered viable in the short-term, but is an option council could look to implement within the next 15 years.

First, we do not fully understand how the proposal to lease the Port aligns with the proposals to free-up the Marsden and Captain Cook wharves. The Consultation Document says releasing these wharves would not materially change the amount of the prepaid lease, but less would be paid. However, removing the Bledisloe Terminal from port operations would reduce the lease prepayment the council would receive by up to an estimated $300 million.

Further, if the Bledisloe Terminal was no longer used for port operations, imports of bulk cargo like construction industry materials (such as steel and aggregate) and bulk food (such as banana shipments) would likely need to be unloaded at other ports and be transported to Auckland via truck (or possibly by rail). This would likely add cost to supply chains and increase road congestion and emissions.

In addition, the range of alternative uses for the freed-up Bledisloe Terminal land could be restricted because these other uses (such as for recreation or apartments) will be located alongside a working port that will be operating twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week with all the associated noise, lighting and traffic impacts. The implications for any new cruise ship terminal would also need to be considered.

If the Council retains ownership of the Port, removing the Bledisloe Terminal from port operations would result in lower profits from the port at some point after the 10-year period of this plan. Higher rates would then be required. There would also be a reduction in the value of Auckland Council's assets as the value of the port would need to be written down by the value of the lower profits.

The longer-term financial implications of the freed-up Bledisloe Terminal would depend on the nature of the alternative uses. Creating new public infrastructure or amenities would generally have a net financial cost to council, while residential or commercial development on the site should have a net financial benefit (after accounting for any necessary infrastructure development or remediation work). This would all likely occur outside the 10-year period of the Long Term Plan 2024/2034.

Overall, we agree to Marsden and Captain Cook wharves being freed-up for alternative uses, but not the Bledisloe Terminal (at least at this stage).

(6) Changes to other rates and fees and charges

Here you have noted Council's proposals to change business rates, targeted rates, fees and charges. You have asked what we think of these proposals and whether we have any other feedback.

Our overall feedback is that what businesses need most from council is a fair, transparent and stable approach to rates.

Long Term Differential Strategy (LTDS)

We are very concerned about your proposal to discontinue the Long Term Differential Strategy which has been gradually lowering the share of general rates paid by businesses and for business ratepayers.

We do not accept that a business differential should be applied to rates, especially for your reasons that "businesses place more demand on, and impose more costs on, the council's transport and stormwater services", or that "rates are more affordable for businesses" or because "businesses can also claim back GST on rates and expense rates against tax." These reasons do not justify the business differential, particularly for small businesses who make up most businesses in Auckland.

We ask that the Long Term Differential Strategy remain in place.

We are also very concerned about your proposal to increase the share that businesses pay of generally applied targeted rates (Water Quality, Natural Environment, and Climate Action Transport targeted rates) from 25.8 per cent (originally set at the same level of the end target of the LTDS) to the same share they will pay of the general rate, approximately 31 per cent.

While we agree that Auckland must improve infrastructure to save our harbours, beaches and streams and reverse the decline of biodiversity in the region, we do not accept that a business differential (especially at 31%) should be applied to these rates.

Watercare's increase in charges

To support a significant increase in capital investment over the next 10 years, Watercare's board of directors has proposed to increase water and wastewater tariffs by 25.8 per cent on 1 July 2024. We question whether the substantial increases in water and wastewater tariffs are reasonable.

(7) Do you have any other comments

Here you have highlighted whether we have any other comments, including on the Local Board Funding Policy and the Council Controlled Organisation Accountability Policy. With regard to the Local Board Funding Policy, your Consultation Document sets out the proposal to move to a different allocation of funding for local boards for their local community services. The new model proposes to distribute available funding based on population (80 per cent), deprivation (15 per cent) and land area (5 per cent). This is different to the current funding allocation which is based on assets in each local board area. In this Long Term Plan 2024/2034, you are proposing a staged approach (or the central proposal) to achieving this outcome.

Starting with the Local Board Funding Policy, we agree with the *central proposal*, which sets out a 50/50 combination approach (that is, reallocating some existing funding between local boards and providing some new funding ($20 million opex and $30 million capex) over the first three years of the LTP 2024-2034.

This will result in 18 local boards being within 5 per cent of their equitable funding levels (opex and capex) by year three of the LTP 2024-2034, with three local boards remaining funded above their equitable levels but to a lesser degree than current levels. Changes to funding levels will only take place from 1 July 2025 (year two of LTP 2024-2034). Staff would use year one of the LTP to prepare for this change.

We accept this proposal.

With regard to the proposed amendments to the CCO Accountability Policy to reflect recent changes in legislation as well as the new/updated council policies and plans, we support these amendments.[13]

In early 2023, Auckland experienced the Anniversary Day floods and Cyclone Gabrielle. These devastating events showed the effects of climate change are getting more frequent and more severe in Auckland. The Consultation Document says that these events have had big impact on the council's finances both in terms of storm response costs and the need to improve Council's storm response and resilience.

We would have thought the Council would have considered implementing a targeted rate in the Long Term Plan 2024/2034 to fund these measures (the 'Making Space for Water' programme).

(8) Draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2024

The draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2024 sets out Auckland's direction in managing and preventing waste. Your Feedback Form asks whether we support the direction of the draft WWP 2024? It also asks whether we support: (2A) Fortnightly rubbish collections; (2B) A focus on constriction and demolition waste; (2C) A focus on five priority waste materials; (2D) Advocacy on product stewardship schemes; and (2E) Advocacy for better legal tools to deal with litter.

We support the focus of the draft WMMP on ways to reduce waste being created and sent to landfill, with actions aimed at the top of the 'waste hierarchy', e.g. redesigning, reusing or repairing items as well as recycling materials. We agree with the draft WMMP's goals that centre on keeping resources in circulation and minimising harm to the environment and communities from waste.

We agree with the focus of removing food scraps from general rubbish (which have made up 41% of the rubbish) through the weekly food scraps collection service in mainland urban areas. Now food scraps have been removed, you are proposing to introduce a fortnightly rubbish collection for most Auckland households from 2026, with options for a larger bin for households that need it. Cost savings will be passed on to ratepayers. We agree with this approach for households, but ask you ensure it is also fit for business ratepayers. We also support investigating options to divert other items from household rubbish, such as nappies and medical waste.

Your *Consultation Document* notes that waste from construction and demolition (C&D) activity makes up almost 40% of commercial waste in landfills. We agree that reducing this waste and making better use of materials from C&D should be a priority in the draft WMMP over the next six years to help reduce Auckland's total waste to landfill by 30% by 2030.

We also agree with your proposal to focus on five priority waste materials: • organics (including food scraps, green waste, timber and cardboard/paper); • plastics; • packaging; • textiles; • biosolids (the organic material resulting from sewage and wastewater treatment). We note that these are the materials that make up significant volumes in landfills, release greenhouse gases and are problematic when they break down – such as microplastics in the environment.

We agree with Council advocating to central government for a beverage container return scheme (CRS) and other mandatory product stewardship schemes as a key priority action within the draft WMMP. You say the CRS will ensure containers are returned for re-use and recycling instead of littering roadsides, waterways and town centres. You also believe this and other product stewardship schemes will shift the cost of waste disposal from ratepayers to producers, manufacturers and consumers, and drive higher rates of reuse and resource recovery. We would

[13] Long Term Plan 2024/2034 (10-year Budget) Consultation Document, page 19.

like to work with you to ensure the implications for business (especially small and medium-sized business) are fully understood.

We also agree with your focus on addressing litter and illegal dumping to protect public health and the environment, including advocating to the central government for better legal tools (e.g. instant fines) to deal with litter. We support the Council collaborating with communities and businesses on local solutions for hot spot areas.

(9) Whau Local Board Priorities

The Whau Local Board's key priorities (dependent upon funding) are to: • deliver Te Hono (the Avondale Community Centre and Library); • fund the Whau Aquatic and Recreation Centre; • acquire parkland (eg Avondale Racecourse, Crown Lynn Park); • complete the Te Whau Pathway. Priorities for advocacy include: • improved public transport; • open space acquisition (eg Avondale Racecourse); and • investment in projects that can adapt to and lessen climate impacts. You have asked what we think of your proposed priorities.

The Whau Local Board's key projects and activities include: • building climate/emergency preparedness, community resilience and community capability; • supporting volunteerism, especially around the Manukau Harbour, the Whau River and urban ngahere; • engaging with mana whenua and other west Auckland local boards; • working with BIDs; and • considering accessibility and inclusion.

Overall, we support all your key priorities, and especially: • delivery of Te Hono (the Avondale Community Centre and Library) and completing the Te Whau Pathway. We also support all of your priorities for advocacy.

We also support all your key projects and activities, and especially your desire to work with the local BIDs where possible, to support local economy and to realise shared goals around climate action, community connection and belonging.

<u>Conclusions</u>

As we enter another year where the resilience of small and medium sized businesses will be tested, we ask the Council to consider carefully the needs of these ratepayer businesses as it makes decisions about the priorities and proposed savings in the Long Term Plan 2024/2034.

We cannot emphasise enough that there must be a focus on providing core infrastructure services which grow the economy and support local businesses, especially in our town centres and industrial/commercial areas.

We fundamentally believe further savings can be made with a culture of efficiency being instilled across the council group. Now is the time for the council, and it's significant number of employees, to adopt a rate-payer mindset. But council must not lose sight of Auckland's ongoing economic prosperity.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Kim Watts
Executive Engagement Manager