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Community Group Assistance Policy

Auckland City Council

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Introduction

Auckland City Council recognises the vital role that community groups play in developing a sense of belonging and engagement in the city. Through innovative programmes and the utilisation of local knowledge, community groups help ensure that Auckland's community issues are addressed, community needs are provided for and future challenges are met.

The Community group assistance policy outlines the various ways Auckland City Council assists community groups to help them achieve their goals, and provides guidelines for how this assistance is distributed. The policy will:

- define the purpose of the Community group assistance policy and how it relates to Auckland City Council's strategies
- outline the assistance mechanisms that sit under the policy
- outline the application process for community groups wishing to receive assistance from the council
- outline the accountability measures required of community groups once they receive assistance.

Strategic links

Assisting community groups fits well with Auckland City's strategic goals, as outlined in the following two strategies:

- the **Strong and Healthy Communities Strategy**: *having a city where there are independent, inclusive and resilient communities – a city that has a wealth of volunteers who invest their time in organising and participating in community activities*
- the **Lifestyle Choices Strategy**: *fostering a vibrant and sophisticated city that attracts people to live, work and invest.*

Strategy	Objective	How community assistance delivers
Strong and Healthy Communities	Fostering connected communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps improve the skills and participation levels of the community in volunteer work • subsidised halls, leases and loans provide space for community groups to meet • funding supports and encourages local groups, initiatives and projects • the strategic relationship fund encourages collaboration between community groups and council
	Foster a sense of pride and belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding supports community events that reflect Auckland's character • provides subsidised space that enables community and family events
	Make places for people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding helps groups meet their accommodation needs • provides subsidised places for communities to meet
	Support healthy communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports groups delivering recreational and sporting services to the public
Lifestyle Choices	A wide range of leisure opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports arts, recreational, cultural and sport groups • supports facilities that provide recreation and leisure services • funding supports community events that reflect Auckland's character

Purpose and objectives

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the provision of assistance by council to community groups. This policy will:

- provide clarity on the types of community assistance Auckland City Council offers, and the purposes of each
- provide clear processes for community groups wishing to apply for community assistance from Auckland City Council
- provide clear guidelines for the various accountability measures groups receiving assistance must undertake.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to:

- ensure a wide range of community activities, projects, programmes and events are supported at both a citywide and local level
- encourage innovative community programmes and initiatives
- encourage volunteers to organise and participate in community activities
- increase the capacity of community groups in Auckland city.

Policy scope

This policy covers assistance mechanisms that council provides to community groups.

A community group is defined as:

A non-profit organisation or association of persons with the primary aim of working to provide services and benefits to the community. Community group membership or participation in activities is available to everyone who wishes to join. Community groups may be special interest or advocacy groups for particular sections of the community, but community groups do not impose restrictions such as setting fees at a level that exclude most people who might want to participate.

Groups meeting the definition of community group are eligible to apply for community assistance through this policy. Other factors including alignment with council strategies, type of service provided and level of community need will be considered when assessing applications.

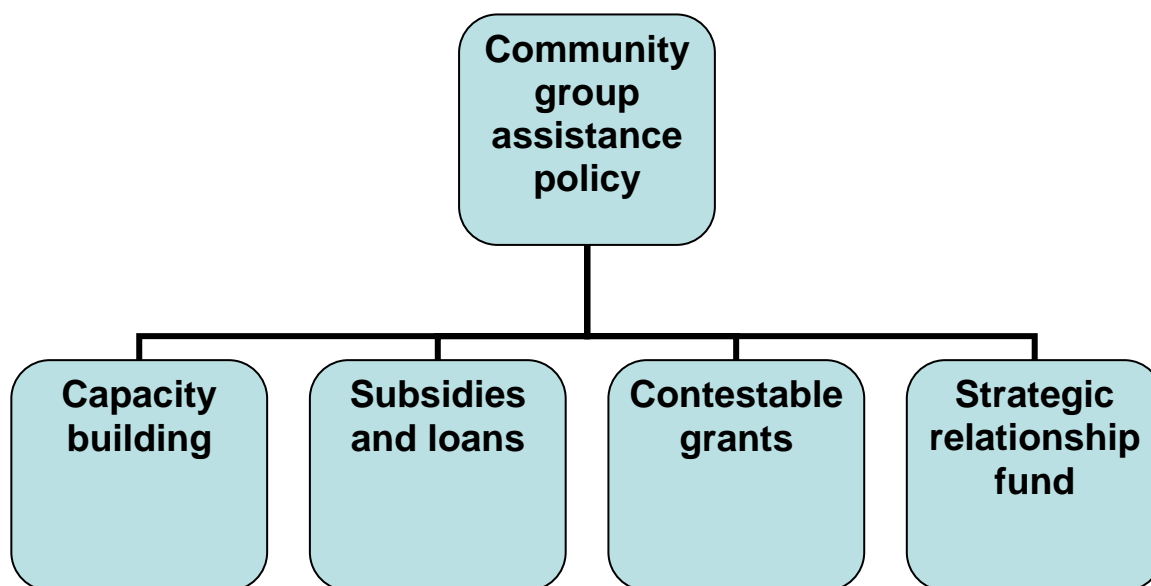
The policy excludes:

- assistance provided to non-community groups (e.g. regional institutions such as Auckland Philharmonia and Stardome)
- major facilities grants (which are covered by the Facility partnership policy)
- operational subsidies to community centres
- formal service contracts.

Assistance mechanisms

Auckland City Council provides community assistance through capacity building, subsidies and loans, contestable grants and the strategic relationship fund. This section outlines the purpose of these mechanisms.

Diagram 1 – Community group assistance policy mechanisms



Capacity building

The purpose of this mechanism is to help community groups build networks and develop sustainable practices for the future. Auckland City Council provides advice, information, networking, advocacy and assistance to community groups through community advisors. Council also works to facilitate training opportunities for community groups through both internal and external training providers. Capacity building is available to members of the public wishing to provide a community service or pre-existing community groups wishing to improve their capacity. Examples include:

- Auckland City Council organised funding expos
- public information sessions
- funding application training for community groups.

Subsidies and loans

Three policies sit under the umbrella of the Community group assistance policy. They guide the provision of subsidised leases, hall hireage and community loans. Eligibility and criteria for subsidies are outlined in each of the policies attached as appendix one. The policies are the:

- **Community and recreation lease policy** – the provision of public land and buildings plays a vital role in the successful functioning of recreational and community groups. This policy guides the provision of leases to such groups.
- **Community halls fees policy** – this policy establishes citywide criteria and processes for setting fees for the hire of community halls.

- **Community loans policy** – this policy guides the assessment of community loans. The current loans pool stands at \$20,000,000 with a further amount available from the former Hillary Commission loans pool.

Contestable grants

Auckland City Council provides grants to community groups who meet its relevant strategic objectives and priorities. Grants are available through formal application processes and are allocated through the following three funds:

1. Community group assistance fund
2. Community group accommodation support fund
3. Community board discretionary fund.

Further information on each of these funds is provided below.

1. Community group assistance fund

The purpose of this fund is to assist groups, initiatives and events that make a positive contribution to communities at a citywide level. Priority will be given to innovative projects that have measurable outcomes, address an identified community need, align with council's strategic goals and are collaborative in nature. As this fund is outcome focussed, it does not support the purchase of stand-alone ITC equipment or furniture. The fund is not designed to support community groups already receiving a grant from the community group accommodation support fund. Groups seeking funding for school holiday programmes must be OSCAR accredited.

Community groups who benefit three or more community board areas in Auckland city, and who are seeking more than \$2500 but less than \$25,000 should apply to this fund.

Objectives

- ensure a wide range of community activities, projects, programmes and events are supported at a citywide level
- encourage innovative community programmes and initiatives
- encourage volunteers to organise and participate in community activities
- provide opportunities for communities and neighbourhoods to get together informally for celebration, social and recreational events.

Outcomes

- increased community participation in Auckland city
- increased capacity of community groups in Auckland city
- quality community events that reflect Auckland's character
- increased community well-being.

How we will measure the outcome

Council will consider a number of factors when determining whether the outcomes for this fund are achieved. These include:

- number of new groups accessing funding streams
- increased collaboration between community groups
- increased volunteering in Auckland city

- number of visitors to community events in Auckland city
- community group satisfaction levels.

2. Community group accommodation support fund

The purpose of the community group accommodation support fund is to provide financial assistance to community groups to help meet their accommodation costs. Providing financial assistance for accommodation allows community groups to focus on the delivery of their core services. This will lead to better community outcomes. This fund works alongside the Community halls fees policy and Community and recreation lease policy and is designed for groups who cannot access subsidised leases or who do not have access to community centres or halls. This fund is not designed to support community groups already receiving a grant from the community group assistance fund.

Community groups who benefit residents of Auckland city and who require support with their accommodation costs should apply for this fund. Funding granted will be between \$2500 and \$25,000.

Objectives

- support community groups so that their accommodation costs do not compromise their ability to deliver their services effectively.

Outcomes

- a wide range of community groups are supported
- increased capacity of community groups in Auckland city
- improved ability for community groups to focus on core service delivery.

How we will measure the outcome

- improved service delivery by supported community groups.

3. Community board discretionary fund

The purpose of this fund is to assist groups, initiatives and events that make a positive contribution to communities at a local level. The fund is allocated to community boards annually. Boards will use their local knowledge to recognise important initiatives and to build strong communities. Groups who benefit one or two community board areas should apply to their local community board for discretionary funding. There are no minimums or maximums for this fund.

Objectives

- ensure a wide range of community activities, projects, programmes and events are supported at a local level
- encourage the use of local knowledge to address the needs of the community.

Outcomes

- increased local participation in community activities
- quality local community events that reflect Auckland's character
- increased community well being.

How we will measure the outcome

- increased participation in local events, initiatives and groups
- greater sense of belonging in the community
- community group satisfaction levels.

Strategic relationship fund

The purpose of this fund is to build relationships with community groups who provide services that support the delivery of council's strategic goals and community outcomes. The fund provides larger and longer-term grants that enable groups to plan and build sustainable initiatives for the future. It will also enable council officers to work closely with recipients to build capacity and identify networking opportunities. As such, the fund provides a wider range of assistance than contestable grants and includes elements of capacity building, advice and support.

Funding will be prioritised for groups who work collaboratively with other organisations, who develop innovative solutions to address identified community needs and outline clear measurable outcomes for achieving them. Recipients will typically receive over \$25,000 and will enter into multi-year agreements with council.

Objectives

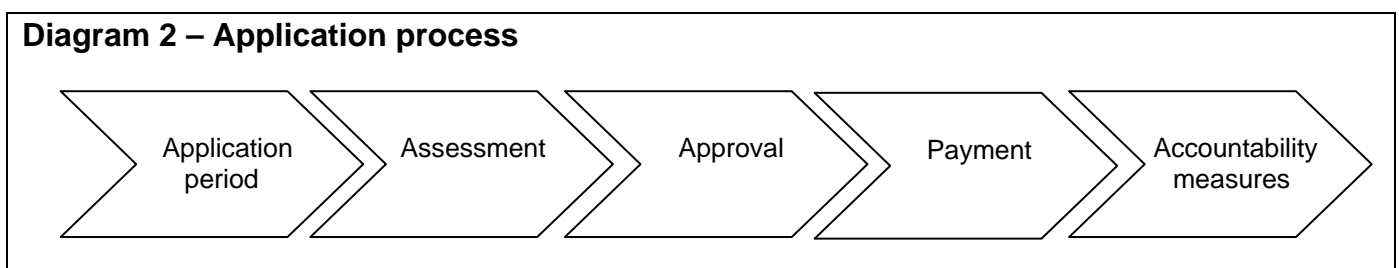
- building council relationships with groups that address identified community needs
- encourage collaboration between community groups
- better enable volunteers to invest time in organising community activities and provision of community services in Auckland city
- better enable long term planning to address community needs.

Outcomes

- outcomes for this fund will be relationship specific, and will depend on the community need being addressed.

Application process

The following diagram outlines the process for application rounds:



Community group assistance fund and community group accommodation support fund

There are two annual funding rounds open for the Community group assistance fund, running from January until June and July until December each year. The community group accommodation support fund runs in tandem with the second round (i.e. from July until December each year).

Once the application period has been closed, council officers will assess applications. Applications will be presented to a funding workshop, in which committee members can

offer feedback and ask questions. Feedback from the workshop is then considered by officers and recommendations made to the appropriate committee. Applicants will be notified of the committee's final decision. Successful applicants are obligated to fulfil accountability measures.

Community board discretionary fund

Applications for this fund can be made at any time. Groups apply directly to community boards in support of their application. Community boards are responsible for the assessment and final approval of each application and for setting its own deadline for decision-making.

Strategic relationship fund

The strategic relationship fund is designed to be flexible in order to encourage the development of relationships which meet council's strategies and objectives. A range of procurement methods are used, for example, council may identify gaps in community needs and request expressions of interest, or alternatively, groups may apply to council for funding. There is no set application period for this fund.

Accountability measures

In order to ensure that council's assistance is achieving positive results, recipients will be obligated to provide evidence that the assistance has been used for the agreed purpose and stated outcomes have been achieved. The following accountability measures are required by this policy:

Under \$10,000

- accountability forms proving that grants have been used for the right purpose and council assistance has been visibly recognised (e.g. in newsletters or signage)
- random audits of recipients.

For over \$10,000

- accountability forms proving that grants have been used for the right purpose and council assistance has been visibly recognised (e.g. in newsletters or signage)
- audits of recipients
- contract regarding agreed upon outcomes.

Community board discretionary fund

Each community board is responsible for the setting of accountability measures for local grant recipients. This will include ensuring that grants have been used for agreed purposes and that recipients achieve positive outcomes in the community.

Strategic relationship fund

As the strategic relationship fund is for longer-term and larger grants, a higher level of accountability will be required. This may include a business case for the development of a relationship, a staged draw down of funds, quarterly and annual reporting on milestones and annual audits.

Contestable grants funding calendar

The following diagram illustrates the annual funding calendar for contestable grants:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Community group assistance fund		Application period	Assessment		Approval by committee	Payment		Application period	Assessment		Approval by committee	Payment
Community group accommodation support fund							Application period	Assessment		Approval by committee	Payment	
Community board discretionary fund	Available throughout the year via direct application to the community board											