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The promise of spatial planning in Auckland’s new ‘Super-City’:

Rhetoric and reality

Mark Nairn Davey

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Auckland

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Abstract

This thesis examines the application of spatial planning in the Auckland region, New Zealand. Auckland is New Zealand’s largest city-region comprising over one third of the total national population and contributes an even greater proportion of GDP. On November 1, 2010, central government initiated wholesale governance reform in the region establishing a single unitary authority, a ‘super-city’, with a mandate to undertake spatial planning in the hope that this would resolve many longstanding governance failures. Previously, central government had instigated a number of piecemeal neoliberal interventions in the region seeking a ‘joined-up’ governance approach to resolve the ad-hoc planning and decision-making which was occurring affecting the regions development. By the second half of the 2000s, buoyed primarily by rising local dissent, central government had become frustrated with the negligible improvement these approaches were making to the governance and planning arrangements in Auckland. By this time it was widely reported that the region’s population was forecast to increase by an extra one million people in the following 30 years. Reform and the introduction of spatial planning ensued.

The research uses a qualitative grounded theory methodology to examine the case of spatial planning under the new Auckland ‘super-city’. The data were drawn from 66 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and experts involved with governance and planning in the region. The interpretive approach taken allowed for rich insights to be gleaned from a new and un-researched case of spatial planning and governance reform.

It was found that the inception of spatial planning coupled with institutional restructuring signified a remarkable neoliberal spatial governance experiment in New Zealand for only the second time in history. Underpinning this neoliberal experiment, a re-territorialisation was occurring. It was an attempt to reconceptualise the role of government and state-market relations in the region to bring about a new way of working. However, the process and outcome was and continues to be beset by contradictions, tensions, and conflict. As a result, spatial planning and the new institutional frameworks are unlikely to be as successful as first envisaged by their
proponents. Unless the actors involved recognise the deficiencies and accept further change is required then the neoliberal project, with spatial planning at its core, will remain a job ‘half-done’.

**Keywords:** spatial planning, growth management, economic development, neoliberal spatial governance, regionalism, Auckland, New Zealand, grounded theory method.
Acknowledgements

This thesis documents a critical period in the history of the Auckland region. The story involves radical governance reform and the creation of new institutional structures and relationships. These revised structures were intended to provide a platform for new policy trajectories and advanced means to manage the rapidly growing region. The actors involved must now come to grips with this new way of working and the new complexities and challenges created. The outcomes of this experiment are yet to be proven. This thesis provides insights into the efficacy of this new model.

To be able to understand and tell this story I am indebted to all those who kindly gave up their time and provided invaluable, and at times sensitive, first hand-knowledge drawn from many years’ personal experience working in, with, studying, and observing Auckland. I would like to sincerely thank: Ree Anderson, Leigh Auton, Dr. Shaun Awatere, Leslie Baddon, Hon Dr. Michael Bassett QSO, Dr. Lee Beattie, Harry Bhana, Dr. Roger Blakely, Alan Bradbourne, Mayor Len Brown, Dr. Graeme Campbell, Jan Crawford, Bill Darnell, Evan Davies, Alan Dormer, Jane Douglas, Peter Fuller, Hamish Firth, Rob Fisher ONZM, Johnnie Freeland, Mike Foster, Joy Grant, Gary Gordon, Dr. Arthur Grimes, Phil Gurnsey, Greg Hill, Hans Huizing, Colin James, Hugh Jarvis, Mitchell Jefferson, Campbell Jensen, Bryce Julyan, Hon. Nikki Kaye, Kerry MacDonald, Dr. Phil McDermott, Damien McGahan, John Mackay, Louise Marra, Assoc. Prof. Caroline Miller, Brian Monk, Neil Olsen, Rod Oram, Brian Putt, Noel Reardon, Dr. Mike Reid, Kathleen Ryan, Hon Peter Salmon CNZM, Robert Scott, Stephen Selwood, Craig Shearer, Hon Dr. Nick Smith, Conway Stewart, David Taipari, Gary Taylor, Connal Townsend, Ken Tremaine, Michael Tucker, Phil Twyford, Martin Udale, Bill Wasley, Vern Warren, David Wilson, Peter Winder, Adrienne Young-Cooper, and Ernst Zollner.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

This thesis investigates the emergence of spatial planning in Auckland. Auckland is New Zealand’s largest city-region, home to more than 1.5 million people, a third of New Zealand’s total population and contributes more than 37 per cent of New Zealand’s GDP (Auckland Council, 2012a). Auckland is projected to grow by an extra one million people by 2040, requiring an additional 400,000 dwellings (Auckland Council, 2012a).

Since Auckland’s founding in 1840 the region has faced significant growth-related issues and challenges that various institutional arrangements have not been able to adequately address. As a result, planning and the management of the region’s development have been poor (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). The latest response to these failing structures came on November 1, 2010, when the eight local authorities in the region were unified into one (refer figures 1-3). The reform process included the mandate to develop a spatial plan for the region: a non-statutory, high-level, strategic plan.

This research inquires into and critiques spatial planning and the new ‘super-city’ arrangements in the context of their ability to address the issues and challenges facing the region.

1.2 The context

The following sections provide a brief background to planning and governance issues in Auckland prior to central government’s reform in 2010. This provides the basis upon which the research problem and the research questions are developed.
Planning in Auckland

Town planning has existed in New Zealand legislation since 1926 under the Town and Country Planning Act and since then planning has been a key role of local authorities in New Zealand (Beattie, 2011). The legislation, which was significantly strengthened in 1953, then further consolidated in 1977, requires local authorities to develop and implement land use plans and strategies (Palmer, 1984). In 1991 the Resource Management Act replaced the Town and Country Planning Act (1977), applying a rational-conformance based planning model (Beattie, 2010; Laurian, Crawford, Day, Kouwenhoven, Mason, Ericksen, Beattie, 2010; Laurian, Day, Berke, Ericksen, Backhurst, Crawford, Dixon, 2004). Further planning functions have since been mandated under the Land Transport Management Act (2003) and the Local Government Act (2002).

The goal of the Resource Management Act (1991) is to ensure the sustainable management of natural and physical resources through effects-based regulatory planning; thus avoiding, remedying and/or mitigating adverse effects on the environment (Gleeson, 1994). Given its biophysical focus some viewed the Resource Management Act (1991) as not performing well in responding to urban issues and delivering the outcomes sought (Aasen, 1992; Grundy, 1995; Memon & Perkins, 1993; Murray & Swaffield, 1994; Perkins & Thorns, 2001). The Ministry for the Environment recently suggested that this was a matter of interpretation as opposed to an underlying fault with the legislation itself (Ministry for the Environment, 2012a). The Resource Management Act (1991) requires regional councils to produce regional policy statements (plans) which hold statutory weight, setting out the high level regional issues and how, through the integrated management of natural and physical resources, solutions will be achieved. The city and district councils, under the same legislation, are then required to produce district plans (also effects-based) to meet the regional plans. The legislation also enables the development of national policy statements and national environmental standards by central government in order to direct lower order Resource Management Act (1991) plans. However, it was not until 2008 that the first national policy statement was released. At the time of undertaking this research a total of only four exist.
Additionally, the Land Transport Management Act (2003) requires regional councils to develop regional land transport strategies every six years for a 30-year period; the Local Government Act (2002) requires every local authority to have a Long-term Plan (LTP), which sets out the strategic direction for the local authority and its jurisdictional area over a 10-year period. The LTP is required to specify activities in which the local authority will engage. This includes setting out the community outcomes which are sought and the resource (funding) allocation necessary to deliver them.

These three statutes resulted in a proliferation of plans and strategies at the local and regional level (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). Moreover, these three statutes and the planning functions which they mandate are largely disconnected from one-another – they lack legislative linkages both horizontally and vertically between the planning documents themselves and the institutional structures which drive them (Dixon, 2005). This has culminated in poor plan integration, conflicting agendas, and inefficiencies in the plan development and investment phases.

**Governance in Auckland**

Since the founding of Auckland in 1840 the region has experienced ad-hoc governance and a lack of regional cohesion in its growth and development (Auckland Regional Council, 2010a; Bassett, 2013; Bush, 1971, 2008). This has been exemplified by how the region has grown, the sporadic and piecemeal investment in regionally significant infrastructure, and poor plan implementation (Memon, Davies, Fookes, 2007; Bush, 1988, 2008; Beattie, 2010). It has contributed to, for example, various failings of public transport, water, and power infrastructure, poor economic productivity, high housing unaffordability, inefficient public sector spending, and high levels of social deprivation and poverty in parts of the region (Frame, 2008; Memon et al., 2007; Murphy, Friesen, Kearns, 1999).

In the 1920s the need for ‘regionalism’ was advocated and by the 1950s the solution of having a single agency charged with managing the growth and development of the region was being pushed. In 1963 the Auckland Regional Authority emerged: an authority required to undertake regional planning. The Auckland Regional Authority
yielded a range of statutory and non-statutory plans but with limited success of implementation (Bush, 1971, 2008; Memon et al., 2007), partly because prior to 1989 it was tasked with aligning more than 40 local authorities and special purpose boards across the region. Following the local government reform of 1989 the number of local authorities was reduced to eight in the Auckland region (seven territorial authorities and one regional council) but the new structures still did not provide the cohesion necessary for the effective management of growth and development in the region (Bassett, 2013; Bush, 2008, 1990) (refer figures 1 & 2).

**Figure 1.** Auckland Region Local Authority Boundaries Pre 1989  
Source: Adapted from the Local Government Commission, 1972; Auckland Regional Authority, 1985; Bassett, 2013.

1 Auckland Regional Master Plan (Auckland Regional Authority, 1967) Regional Planning Scheme (Auckland Regional Authority, 1974), Auckland: alternatives for future regional growth (Auckland Regional Authority, 1975), Auckland Regional Planning Scheme (Auckland Regional Authority, 1988).
The 2010 Auckland local government reform

In 2007 central government responded to on-going problems with governance in the region. It appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance to report back to central government on the issues facing Auckland and how to resolve them. The Royal Commission’s report in 2009 highlighted the issues of ad-hoc governance and how this had led to a failure to carry out integrated planning and decision-making in response to the issues facing Auckland (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). The report recommended governance reform and the development of a spatial
plan to achieve integrated planning and decision-making in the region i.e. ‘joined-up governance’. On November 1, 2010, central government, through legislative reform, established the new Auckland Council termed the ‘super-city’, a unitary authority for the region with the mandate to develop a spatial plan (refer Figure 3).

The final form of the Auckland Council varied significantly from what the Royal Commission had recommended favouring a scale economies approach towards the provision of services in the region (Bassett, 2013).

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Figure 3. Auckland Region Local Authority Boundaries Post 2010
Source: Adapted from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009.

---

2 New Zealand has a unicameral parliament and local government is provided its powers and authority through legislation – the Local Government Act (2002).
1.3 The writer’s perspective

I have always followed closely the socio-economic and socio-political processes at the local and national level. I am fascinated by the outcomes these processes yield and the new trajectories they set for cities, regions, and nations. As a planning practitioner and educator in planning, with a keen interest in politics, I found it difficult not to be engaged by the case of Auckland. The region is unique in the New Zealand context given its historical transformations in relation to governance, culture and society, the role it plays in the national economy, its size and growth as a conurbation, and the lack of resemblance it bears to anywhere else in the country. This makes a ‘special case’ and somewhat of a testing ground for new initiatives.

What further inspired me to undertake this study was the lack of in-depth research looking critically at how Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city-region is managed. An auspicious time to engage in such a piece of research seemed to be within the first three year electoral term following wholesale reform. I deemed key actors and stakeholders involved in the management of the region, past and present the best foundation upon which to build a critique.

1.4 The research problem

Auckland’s history, in relation to governance and planning, is defined by institutional structures and management which have been unable to support the implementation of a coherent and integrated regional approach to manage the growth and development in the region (Bush, 2008; Miller, 2002). A unified governance model combined with a spatial plan in 2010 was viewed as the panacea to these historical shortcomings (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009).

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3 During the 1990s 76 per cent of New Zealand’s total population growth occurred in Auckland (ARC, 2010) and over the decade of the 2000s its growth continued at a rate exceeding 2.3 per cent (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011). Its population is now 1.5 million and forecast to grow by an additional one million by 2040 (Auckland Council, 2012a).
The creation of a unified local authority of the size and scale of the Auckland Council accompanied by a ‘spatial plan’, a foreign concept until this time, is unprecedented in the history of New Zealand. The reform, combined with the requirement to develop a spatial plan, provided a significant opportunity and juncture point for those tasked with managing Auckland to begin to address the issues plaguing the region in new ways.

The broad research problem derives in part from a lack of knowledge and understanding about the ability of this new institutional arrangement and planning tool to effectively govern the region. Two secondary problems also exist. First, it is not clear what spatial planning is in the context of Auckland (i.e. how is it characterised); and second the degree to which this new unified governance structure and spatial planning can be effective in overcoming the growth related issues and challenges facing the Auckland region?

There are two major lines of inquiry to this research problem. First, the research investigates how spatial planning is characterised in the context of the Auckland region. Second, the research examines the constraints on the effectiveness of a unified governance model in Auckland to carry out spatial planning and effectively manage the region’s growth and development. Similar questions to these have been posed by Mouat & Dodson (2013).

No extensive research has previously been undertaken into spatial planning in both the context of Auckland, and in New Zealand (Beattie, 2011; Huijbers, 2011). Additionally, at the time of undertaking this research, limited research had been undertaken which considers the new Auckland ‘super-city’ and the robustness of the new governance structures to address the issues and challenges facing the region, the premise upon which reform in 2010 was based.
1.5 The research question

To address the research problems and provide answers the following research question was posed:

*How has spatial planning in Auckland been conceptualised?*

The research has two objectives. First, to understand what spatial planning is intended to achieve. The second objective is to critique the operationalisation of spatial planning in the context of Auckland under the reconfigured governance arrangements.

1.6 Method

A review of academic literature in the field of spatial planning has been undertaken positioning it within the processes of neoliberalism. This review provides the general basis for the research investigation. To understand spatial planning in the specific context of the Auckland region relevant literature regarding the history of governance and planning in Auckland and the emergence of spatial planning in this context was also reviewed. The latter review has enabled the identification of longstanding governance and planning issues that face the region. By identifying the salient governance and planning issues in the Auckland region provides a basis for developing the rationale and explanation for why spatial planning and governance reform in Auckland occurred.

Central government cabinet papers further clarify what central government sought from the concept of spatial planning and its application in the case of Auckland.

To inquire into the effectiveness of spatial planning and these new institutional arrangements the research adopts a naturalistic paradigm using the qualitative approach of grounded theory method. The data were gathered from 66 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders who have been involved with Auckland’s governance, planning and development as far back as the 1960s.
1.7 Scope

The scope of this research is to examine spatial planning and the unified governance model in Auckland, New Zealand. The research focuses on spatial planning under the new Auckland Council as this is the nexus of the reforms: integrated planning and decision-making was sought; the spatial plan provided the tool and the new Auckland Council was the vehicle for achieving it. The research also draws on relevant literature relating to spatial planning, the history of planning and governance in Auckland, and the reform process in 2010. On account of the interpretive qualitative approach the research draws significantly on data that is gathered from interviews with stakeholders.

This critique of spatial planning in the context of the new Auckland Council is limited to the first electoral term. However, the preceding developments which led to the emergence of both the new Auckland Council and spatial planning have a significant bearing on this study and are likely to have influenced stakeholder perceptions. These are taken account of in Part I of the thesis. A further limitation is that the study is unable to evaluate the suitability of the Unitary Plan (the regulatory land use plan) which is supposedly informed and designed in order to achieve the outcomes of the spatial plan. The development and implementation of the Unitary Plan will span over a 15 year period which formally began in 2013.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the research in relation to context, research problem, research question, research method, and the scope and limitations of the research. Following this chapter the thesis is divided into three parts. Part 1 covers the key background information including relevant literature from chapters 2 to 5. Chapter 2 presents the literature review of spatial planning. The overview of the context of Auckland in relation to governance and planning is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides details regarding the New Zealand Government’s interpretation and characterisation of spatial planning and the adoption of spatial planning in the Auckland
context. Chapter 5 addresses methodological considerations before detailing the methodology and method that has been applied in this research inquiry.

Part 2 includes chapters 6 to 10 which present the main body of findings drawn from the data. Chapter 6 presents the participants’ perspectives on what spatial planning means in the context of Auckland, to create a contextual backdrop to the five themes discussed in Chapters 7 through to 10. Finally, Part 3 encompasses the broader findings of the research, the implications for theory and practice, conclusions, and outlines the contributions to knowledge and areas for future research. This part includes chapters 11 to 13 (refer Figure 4. Chapter Structure – below).
**Figure 4. Thesis structure**
Part I

Context and research methodology
Part I of this research addresses primarily the key background and contextual details relating to the case study under investigation. First, a literature view is presented focusing predominantly on spatial planning in the context of neoliberal projects. Second, the history of governance and regional planning the Auckland region is discussed followed by specific details regarding the 2010 governance reforms and the emergence of the concept called spatial planning. Lastly, this chapter presents the research methodology which is adopted to undertake this research study.
Chapter 2

Literature review

2.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 set the research scene and identified the research problem and objectives. This chapter provides a background on how spatial planning has been characterised, and the ideas which inform the concept. It argues that it is best understood through the lens of neoliberalism.

This chapter will first consider how and why spatial planning emerged as a process of neoliberalism. International experience of spatial planning from the United Kingdom is then drawn upon to illustrate this argument. Following this the emergence of spatial planning is discussed in light of the economic and socio-political environments which have led to its inception. Three core elements of spatial planning are then addressed. These include; how it may be viewed as a new way of working; why spatial planning processes are often linked with the re-territorialisation of space; and lastly, the notion that spatial planning is an attempt to broaden the purview of planning.

2.1 The nature of spatial planning

Planning has traditionally, “been a process or tool of defined and boundaried states and geographies, associated with administrative and political functions, namely central or local government” (Tewdwr-Jones, Gallent, Morphet, 2010, p. 242) (refer also: Smith, 1995, pp. 60–61). The “Interconnectedness of places and the effect of sometimes distant factors on spatial development within a plan area” (Nadin, 2007, p. 50) have highlighted the shortcomings of prescriptive place-based planning approaches. The complexity of spatial relations therefore calls for new approaches to manage urban
change and ways of grappling effectively with spatial un-bounded-ness at various scales. This view has also been strongly influenced by economic imperatives of neoliberal globalisation which embodies the concepts of ‘integration’ and ‘co-ordination’ (Wetzstein, 2008).

Spatial planning has had far reaching adoption worldwide (Albrecht, Healey, Kunzmann, 2003; Friedman, 2004; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010) and “is a phrase that now resonates throughout many planning systems across the globe” (Friedman, 2004, p. 239). In 2001 the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) deemed the development of spatial planning as an international phenomenon due to governments being “hungry for new policy ideas” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 240).

At a cursory glance the widespread adoption of ‘spatial planning’ merely represents a ‘fad’ amongst politicians, policy makers, and planners. At a more theoretical level its emergence represents response to the perceived shortcomings of market-led neoliberalism. The neoliberal paradigm of the 1980s (seen for example in Australia, United Kingdom, and New Zealand) largely replaced Keynesian state-market approaches and signified a shift away from social democracy. This new politico-economic model reflected a reduction of state intervention, the unravelling of the state-informed developmentalist approaches, including a move away from strategic planning and comprehensive planning (Albrecht, 2011; Beattie, 2011; Challies & Murray, 2008; Gleeson & Low, 2000a; Searle & Bunker, 2010). The processes of neoliberalism and globalisation led to increased flows of capital into many cities and regions that had adopted this new free-market model. A subset, deemed neoliberal urbanism, emerged as these cities and city-regions began to compete nationally and internationally for capital flows (Florida, 2002; Rowe, 2005; Theodore, Peck, Brenner, 2011). The market-led approaches of the 1980s, which had largely reduced planning to solely a regulatory land use function resulted in the hollowed out state-model being incapable of responding to the demands now being placed on regions to perform economically (Albrecht, 2004; Gurran, Austin, Whitehead, 2014; Morphet, 2011a; Peck, Theodore, Brenner, 2009; Tansan-Kok, 2012; Vigar, Healey, Hull, Davoudi, 2000). The importance of regional governance in capitalist societies therefore quickly became a critical vehicle for capturing the increased flows of capital which pass through a region: regions often
became centres for co-ordination and accumulation of economic flows (Florida, 1995; Jessop, 1998; Wetzstein, 2008). At this point land use regulation came under attack with commentators arguing that, “land-use models... have done little to enhance the future-oriented, strategic mission of planning” (Couclelis, 2005, p. 1353) because during this time plans have, “only been able to identify what needs to be done but then has had to rely on others” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 258) for implementation, illustrative of a ‘hands-off’ role by governments.

By the end of the 20th century, state-led strategic approaches to planning were beginning to be undertaken again in Europe. The European Union introduced the term spatial planning (Albrecht, 2011, 2006, 2004, 1999; Albrecht et al., 2003; Healey, 2007; Salet & Faludi, 2000; Searle & Bunker, 2010). These new strategic planning approaches depending on the prevailing state-market ideology present at the time, had become either used for market-led initiatives or social democratic initiatives aimed at promoting urban spatial development for city-regions (Peck et al., 2009). For example, spatial planning has been cast by Allmendinger and Haughton (2013) as a contributor to neoliberal spatial governance attempting to stimulate market activity (by various means) in order to deliver ‘wellbeing’ (refer also: Baeten, 2012; Haughton, Allmendinger, Oosterlynck, 2013; Tasan-Kok, 2012; Tewdwr-Jones, 2004). Spatial planning’s success “will be measured by the extent to which it can deliver more effective public service investment at the local level which supports the attainment for wider objectives for the area” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 21). This suggests that it could be used also in pursuit of Keynesian inspired policies.

Some resented what the term spatial planning represented in this neoliberal context. It was argued to be “little more than a cosmetic veil to hide the growing disparities in Europe” (Albrecht, 2011, p. 92) and only led to further “economic stagnation... intensifying inequality, interlocal competition, coordination problems and social insecurity” (Tasan-Kok, 2012, p.2). Allmendinger and Haughton (2009a) pointed out that there is “little common understanding what this [spatial planning] means in practice” (p. 2544) (refer also: Royal Town Planning Institute, 2007). As a result, the

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4 Refer the: European Regional/spatial Planning Charter: Torremolinos Charter (Council of Europe, 1983).
term has been referred to as “ambiguous” (Faludi, 2002, p. 4), “vague” (Wong & Watkins, 2009, p. 481), “fuzzy” (Stead & Meijers, 2009, p. 329), “generic and slippery” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 239). Others describe it as “jerky” and nothing much more than a legalized conflict resolution tool (Healey, 2007, p. 261). Neuman & Hull (2009) caution that the inability to define spatial planning may pose as a “curse on those who attempt comprehensive understanding” (p. 777). Spatial planning might therefore be best thought of in diverse ways and should not be confined to one idea or practice (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 253). It is:

not a single concept, procedure, or tool. In fact, it is a set of concepts, procedures, and tools that must be tailored carefully to whatever situation is at hand if desirable outcomes are to be achieved (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1121).

There have been claims of spatial planning occurring elsewhere in the world outside of the United Kingdom and Europe under different labels, for example in India (Vidyarthi, Hoch, Basmajian, 2013), Australia (Dodson, 2009), South Africa (Breetzke, 2008), Hong Kong and Canada (Friedmann, 2004). These examples have had scant attention whereas the UK and European examples have been sophisticatedly articulated. It is now appropriate to outline spatial planning’s position within the processes of neoliberalism.

Spatial planning and neoliberalism

To briefly outline how the term neoliberal is being referred to in this discussion it is important to note several points. First, liberalism is a political philosophy which embodies the values that everyone has an equal right to life, liberty, and property, founded by John Locke (Barry, Osborne, Rose, 1996; Wolin, 2004). It is however, a “complex, multifaceted phenomenon” (Jessop, 2002, p.453) and best understood as a principle of economic, political, and social organisation. Second, neoliberal theory emerged as a response to the social and economic events of the 1930s which highlighted the weakness of capitalism under a liberal paradigm. Neoliberalism rejected the laissez-faire approach of classical liberalism accepting the need for state rules and regulation to be in place to avoid the marginalisation that market-led economies can cause (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Harvey, 2005; Moody, 1997; Peck & Theodore, 2012).
Accordingly, some deny that neoliberalism holds any particular form; it is instead variegated in nature and constantly reinvented in attempts to better respond to market forces (Brenner, Peck, Theodore, 2010; Goldstein, 2012; Jessop, 2013; Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, Maringanti, 2007; Peck, 2010). It is this same view which is held in this research. The term ‘neoliberal governance’ has emerged since the 1980s (Ferguson, 2010) to describe the “dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose market rule upon all aspects of social life” (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p.352), also referred to as the ‘regulatory state’, in order to counteract the shortcomings of entirely self-regulating markets or problems associated with socialist systems (Moran, 2002). To the detriment of the term neoliberalism some political opponents of market-led policy have adopted the term as a signifier of solely market-led reform processes as evidenced in New Zealand and Australia (Beer, Clower, Haughton, Maude, 2005; Gleeson & Low, 2000b; Larner, 2000; Tonts & Haslam-McKenzie, 2005). This is contrary to how the term was first envisaged as a way of describing reform processes either socially democratic inspired or market-led. The term is used here simply to describe the processes of state-market restructuring.

While for the purposes of this thesis I have emphasised the state-market economic restructuring elements of neoliberalism it is important to point out that discourses other than the economic are associated with this phenomenon. These include globalisation, governmentality and entrepreneurialism, each of which work themselves out in association with the regulatory state mentioned above and provide frames of reference that shape the nature and direction of neoliberal reform processes and their policies. These frames of reference influence the perspectives of the actors undertaking the reform, whether they be, for example, market-oriented or socially democratic, which determines necessary changes to existing systems in order to fulfil the particular outcomes being sought. For example, over the 1980s–2000s capitalist restructuring has also occurred creating new institutional arenas and spatial scales (Amin, 1997; Bourdieu, 1998; Gill, 1995; Isin, 1998; Jessop & Stones, 1992; Peck & Tickell, 1994). This has often led to the reworking of state-market relations through institutional restructuring. These neoliberal projects and experiments have not only occurred at the national level but also at the regional level. This fluidity of neoliberalism supports the claims of Jessop (2013)
and will later be illustrated in the case of Auckland. The re-structuring of “governance associated with capitalism all tends to encounter contradictions, tensions, and obstacles” (Jessop, 2002, p.470). This is why spatial planning as a tool to achieve certain outcomes is being constantly re-fashioned and with it too the architectures of governance.

Spatial planning has been born from these processes of ‘rolled-out’ neoliberalism as a vehicle for implementing the associated policy agendas. Spatial planning approaches therefore require “robust connectivity between vision and delivery” (Adams & Tiesdell, 2010, p. 187) requiring often “a combined approach to bring together public sector investment” (Morphet, 2011a, p. 289). This has meant spatial planning has had to take a lead in the

harnessing... [of] actors and social groups likely to have an interest in territorial
promotion... [whereby] spreading ownership of a strategy among those with a
role in investment and regulation (Healey, 2006a, pp. 537 – 538).

The processes of neoliberalism in the United Kingdom have spawned re-conceptions of planning and its role (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2013; Gurran et al., 2014). In some instances this has led to closer government engagement with market actors to deliver outcomes (Adam & Tiesdell, 2010; Albrecht, 2008) prompting “innovation in the ways in which the market and civil society interact with the state” (Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p. 401). In other instances it has resulted in “direct [involvement] in the development market” (Adams & Tiesdell, 2010, p. 195). This should be viewed as normal:

In an era of neoliberal reform, emphasis on competition and market-based
policy is often associated with efficiency, productivity and new forms of

Spatial planning, regardless of how it is constituted, represents a re-working of state-market relations in order to deliver new forms of governance through which greater economic efficiency and productivity can be gained. Spatial planning is a neoliberal experiment marked temporally and spatially (Peck, 2010) by either the roll-out or rol-back and either the de-regulation or re-regulation of the state (Peck & Tickell,
Spatial planning constitutes “rolled-out neoliberalism’ and purposeful state intervention aimed at economic innovation and competitiveness” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2547). The integrative element of spatial planning demonstrates a shift from governments providing solutions to problems, to governments having the “capacity to substantiate the search for creative and territorially differentiated solutions to problems, challenges and opportunities” (Albrecht, 2011, p. 91) i.e., engaging further with the market to deliver desired outcomes. Spatial planning merely demonstrates the roll-out of market supportive state functions signifying neoliberalisation attempts by governments (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, 2013; Morphet, 2011b).

The inability to define spatial planning on account of its changing nature is reflective of “continuously reformulating the role of the state in relation to the market and civil society” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2013, p.111) by actors in order to deliver improved economic gains, with which spatial planning is associated. Proof of this argument is now revealed by examining the emergence of spatial planning in the United Kingdom.

2.1 Spatial planning in the United Kingdom

Spatial planning in the United Kingdom serves as a well-documented and rich case of a neoliberal project of spatial governance reform: the predominant body of literature related to spatial planning is derived from the United Kingdom. The approach to spatial planning in the UK has relevance for the situation in New Zealand for historical and constitutional reason (Gurran et al., 2014). New Zealand was formerly a British colony and operates under the Westminster System of government and operates under similar doctrines, and both the UK and New Zealand have a common law system which has led to some commonalities between the two. Additionally both nations experienced significant state and private sector reforms in the 1980s marked by a strong swing in favour of free market ideology involving privatisation, de-regulation and re-regulation with reduced state involvement.

The term spatial planning was introduced into the United Kingdom during the late 1990s as a response to the devolution of responsibility to local authorities and the re-
territorialisation of space. It was envisaged as a mechanism to align and integrate various service providers within a particular geographic locality (a new way of working): spatial planning was “primarily concerned with devolution, policy integration, effectiveness, and policy delivery” (Olesen, 2012, p.910). The British Government adopted spatial planning from the European Union experience “as a source of ideas for the development of their own strategies, a process in itself that extended... the ideas of spatial planning and development” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, pp. 246 – 247). The broader drivers for spatial planning in the United Kingdom stemmed from: the increasing acknowledgement of the complexity of spatial relationships; the political shift to New Labour priorities; the policy goal of more environmental sustainability; and the European discourse on spatial planning (Nadin, 2007, p. 49). This story highlights spatial planning’s genesis within neoliberal experiments.

In the late 1990s the Ministry for Planning in England argued that land use function and funding allocation had to be more closely aligned, efficient within budgetary confines, and needed to better facilitate implementation (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010). To enable this, appropriate governance arrangements had to be in place to allow joined-up government to, “achieve critical economic and social outcomes and to avoid the costs of non-coordination” (Nadin, 2007, p. 57). This necessitated “individuals and groups... to be engaged... and their programmes and investments brought in line with a vision shared by a range of partners” (Gallent & Wong, 2009, p. 354).

Reform began in 2000 when the Local Government Act (2000) was passed which devolved authority and responsibility to local authorities as well as the mandate to promote economic, social and environmental well-being (a broadening scope of planning and the role of local authorities). The reforms sought “‘holistic local governance able to deliver on several fronts and effect comprehensive and positive change in local communities” (Gallent & Wong, 2009, p. 353). The changes led to a “sweeping modernization of government... [and] tended to affect planning much less than other services” (Nadin, 2007, p. 44) because it required “local strategic partnerships intended to promote and coordinate local stakeholder, community and business involvement in local decision-making (i.e. take a central role in place shaping)”

5 Part 1, Section 4 of the Local Government Act (2000).
(Gallent & Wong, 2009, p. 353). Nonetheless, it necessitated a “more pluralistic and diverse approach to land use policy practices” (Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p. 402). Despite the reform to the Local Government Act the legislative planning mechanisms had remained largely unchanged and did not provide the means to carry out this coordination and a more holistic approach to planning (Gallent & Wong, 2009; Cullingworth, 1997; Couclelis, 2005; Nadin, 2007; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a). Consequently, the “fitness for purpose of the [planning] system in the face of vastly changing conditions and higher aspirations” (Nadin, 2007, p. 44) came under scrutiny due to its “limited influence on the factors that are shaping spatial development” (Nadin, 2007, p. 57).

The structuring dynamics combined with production flows (organized by other actors), that ‘shape a place’ and influence the vibrancy of its economy; generate social mix; or sustain environmental quality – cannot be steered directly by this form of [land-use] planning (Gallent & Wong, 2009, p.354).

A common free-market sentiment was held: land use planning was stifling economic productivity (Morphet, 2011b, p. 20). The general view was that, “the broad forces of globalization and shifting relations between the state and the market” (Nadin, 2007, p. 49) were making the planning system unfit for purpose in this new economic climate. Research examined these issues (Morphet, 2011b; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a). The government took the view that the planning system “was not delivering on political imperatives” (Nadin, 2007, p. 45) and nor did it have the capability to make quick decisions with democratic legitimacy to provide the outcomes sought by the New Labour project (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a). Faced with unrelenting growth the New Labour government sought major infrastructural and housing investment drawing on the public and private sector (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2000). But, the new administration was faced with a system of governance and planning incapable of addressing issues which fell between administrative boundaries and between policy sectors (Cullingworth & Nadin, 2006). To complicate matters, the new projects required acceptance by communities and politicians, planning processes which ensured good outcomes, and skilful management of the system: all factors that were deficient. From here; “it was only a short leap to the

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idea that ‘spatial planning’ should play a more central role in influencing the actors... [and looking] to new ways of ‘shaping places’” (Gallent & Wong, 2009, p. 353). The term ‘spatial planning’ soon became the signifier for this new endeavour focused on changing the nature of planning and how cities and regions are managed.

In 2004 the British Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act mandated spatial planning in order to facilitate and promote “sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development. Rather than operating through a narrow technical perspective” (Royal Town Planning Institute, 2007, p. 6). It was borne from a “[n]ew Labour government [which] was deeply dissatisfied with planning and the profession” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2546). Spatial planning led to the broadening of planning practice in the United Kingdom. The change was:

very ambitious... [it] put planning at the centre of the spatial development process, not just as a regulator of land and property uses, but as a proactive and strategic coordinator of all policy and actions that influence spatial development (Nadin, 2007, p. 43).

The emergence of spatial planning in the United Kingdom moved planning “away from the rather narrower practice of land use planning to a more strategic approach of coordinating, mediating and integrating the spatial dimension of wider policy streams” (Wong & Watkins, 2009, p. 481). The Office of the Department of the Prime Minister stated: “Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes” (ODPM, 2005, pp. 12 – 13). Morphet (2011b) explained how spatial planning assumed the role as a key tool in delivering change; working with a range of public and private organisations, “at the nexus of vertical and horizontal integration” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 45).

Spatial planning offers a tool by which to achieve more coordinated governance and delivery at all levels of government. In some jurisdictions this has seen it established as “a central delivery mechanism with some political clout” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 45) with

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7 Refer: Nadin, 2007, pp. 54 – 55 for a differentiation between land use planning and spatial planning.
the central role of “harnessing of existing underused resources – people, property, investment and places” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 20). Spatial planning provides a more flexible way in which to “coordinate public and private strategies around development across administrative boundaries” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p. 807). The, “opportunity to develop innovative solutions tailored to local conditions” (Nadin, 2007, p. 53) was met with “energetic effort” (Healey, 2009, p. 439) enabling,

- Greater national and international visibility of their localities;
- The coordination of project initiatives;
- Coordination of interventions in different parts of the urban areas (often in different jurisdictions); and

Spatial planning has since been referred to as a “loose coalition of interests” seeking to provide a panacea to the “problems of fragmented governance in an era of economic globalisation” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2546). It has been described as “radical reform” (Nadin, 2007, p. 44) so as to bring about a, “rebranding of planning] in order to gain renewed political legitimacy” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2546) (refer also: Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Newman, 2008) and a “re-casting of the planning system into a ‘neo-traditional’ structure and form” (Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p. 402) which suggests a shift towards a “regionalised unitary state model” (Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p. 401) having the effect of:

developing a new set of discourses around spatial planning [which] has offered an opportunity to rebrand planning in a way that highlights its positive attributes and sets out to allay fears arising from some of the negative perceptions of planning by portraying them as part of a previous approach (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p. 805).

In the eyes of some, spatial planning promoted “feel-good notions” and “intuitively ‘felt right’, generating... warm fuzzy feelings” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2544). This signalled “reshaping ideas on the role and scope of the land use planning system” (Nadin, 2007, p. 55) and an evolution of the planning system creating “an additional and complementary approach to land use regulation” (Nadin, 2007, p. 55). Tewdwr-Jones et
al. (2010) described it as a “metamorphosis” shifting planning from its deterministic state to one which is more, “open, multiple and relational activity that can adjust to the fluidity of politics” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 243). Others referred to it as a “quantum leap from previous approaches” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p.801) because it was viewed as reinvigorating the planning system in the United Kingdom (Nadin, 2007, p. 43). Unfortunately, before the outcomes of this new approach could be seen the new Coalition government undertook further planning reforms which abolished regional spatial strategies (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2013, 2012; Gurran et al., 2014).

In summary, the term spatial planning in the United Kingdom is being used as a way to “describe the processes of planning reform, modernization, policy integration and strategic governance that politically are now required to make planning fit for purpose in the twenty-first century” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 240). Spatial planning offered increased expectations for delivering at various spatial scales, crosscutting boundaries, providing continuity and offering a real change from previous practices (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2007; Inch, 2012; Morphet, 2011a; Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 2006; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010). At a broader level there is a realisation that the planning system as it existed prior to reform would be unable to respond to the neoliberal projects (Third-way policies) being undertaken by the New Labour government (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 244). Thus, spatial planning was introduced as a broader, hopefully more flexible, concept. Because of this it meant it was interpreted as part of a broader project to reframe the role of the state and engender a new way of planning.

2.2 Reframing the role of the state: A new way of working

Spatial planning has been closely associated with the reconceptualisation of how central and local governments work together. Spatial planning is a new form of neoliberal spatial governance which has the central aim of integrating the various components of the urban system: it is “a tool of integrated policy making, something which brings diverse policy communities together in a holistic approach to area development” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p.805). It provides a “reference frame for those with
the resources to deploy, and over time they come to shape urban futures” (Healey, 2009, p. 453) and could otherwise be understood as “integrated public service planning” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 287). Some commentators caution policy integration becoming an end in itself but instead “a way of achieving practical outcomes that simultaneously fulfil the goals of more than one sector or tier of government” (Stead & Meijers, 2009, p. 330). It is therefore not surprising that some viewed spatial planning as a revival of integrative and holistic approaches to planning “[which] integrates its policies and decisions within architectures of governance and has the main role of the delivery of the investment programmes” (Morphet, 2011a, p. 286).

Spatial planning is a corporate cross-sectoral exercise of policy integration and strategy development with wide ownership (recognizing that this will also be happening at the regional level) (Nadin, 2007, p. 55).

Policy integration in the United Kingdom is argued to have “four, often overlapping, dimensions” (Vigar, 2009, p. 1572) which include: co-alignment of strategies and policy; policy (re)framing; connecting policy and action; and co-operation among actors (refer also: Buser & Farthing, 2011 and Healey, 2006a). The outcomes of this include, the enabling of integration and co-ordination of strategy making for the resolution of policy conflict, the broadening of the ‘policy frame’ enabling a broader and increased range of issues to be confronted at once, and the linking of actors and sharing of knowledge across institutional boundaries allowing for stronger partnerships to overcome institutional barriers (Vigar, 2009).

The integrative role of spatial planning enables it to provide for “widening the potential sphere of influence of planning” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p.805). Consequently, it has been labelled as a Third Way approach and highly interventionist thereby facilitating state-led growth (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2013). The economic language associated with spatial planning illustrates its relationship with neoliberal projects (Larner, 2005).
Integration, multi-scalar, meta-governance

As noted above the literature relating to spatial planning consistently involves the notion of ‘integration’ (Albrecht, 2011; Cullingworth & Nadin, 2006; Healey, 2006a; Stead & Meijers, 2009; Vigar, 2009). It is suggested here that this has come from the well-established body of literature regarding the theory of economic integration (Baldwin & Veables, 1995; Rodrik, 2000; Sapir, 2011; Scharpf, 1997). The theory of economic integration is focused on creating economies of scale (Sapir, 2011). Although equally fundamental to creating economic integration is political integration, otherwise known as political unification (Sapir, 2011). Whilst some argue, for instance in the case of the European Union, that economic integration can exist without political integration (Jovanović, 2013) it has long been held that political integration is a vital component of an effective governance framework (Balassa, 1961a, 1961b). The process of economic integration has been widespread throughout the world economy occurring at times of institutional restructuring, often with decentralising tendencies linked with ‘neoliberal projects’ (Kellogg, 2007; Stegarescu, 2009). A subset of economic and political integration is the theory of regional integration (Haas, 1961) which responds to “common needs experienced by all participants, often in defence against some outside force” (p.385). Institutional restructuring and decentralisation of governance are processes closely linked to ‘European Integration’ (Gilbert, 2012). From this we can begin to see how spatial planning is intertwined with these broader theories.

Furthermore, the multi-scalar, multi-level, and meta-governance terms associated too with spatial planning describe the integrated, intergovernmental, networked relations which are undertaken in order to respond, coordinate, and regulate economic and social policies (Brenner, Jones, 2008; Davies, 2005; Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Jessop, Rhodes, 2007; Peters & Pierre, 2000; Pierre & Stoker, 2000). Under the guise of spatial planning these processes work within territories and across territories, assisting in drawing together sometimes disparate policy sectors (Albrecht, 2010 & 2011; Healey, 2004). Spatial planning could therefore be seen to provide an obvious tool and solution to the costs of fragmented governance whilst legitimising the role of planning in the 21st century (Healey, 2006b; Nadin, 2007). As Tewdwr-Jones et al (2010, p.257) put it:
The spur for changes comes from an awareness of the need for a spatial dimension in the task of joining-up government in order to achieve critical economic and social outcomes...

In this context, a recurring function of government systems is to integrate disparate agendas, activities, and actors to deal with issues as they play out (Healey, 2006b). Spatial planning offers “a way of linking different types of government intervention; overcoming the fragmentation of area and development-based policy initiatives and the competition between individual projects; linking policy with delivery” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 248) or alternatively “the fusing of powers to effect direct control over the physical environment” (Gallent & Wong, 2009, p. 353) to facilitate change. Healey (2006a) agrees, arguing that meta-governance approaches allow for the accumulation of “force” by capturing those who “control resources and regulatory powers at higher and lower tiers” (Healey, 2006a, p.537) in order to achieve outcomes. Cullingworth & Nadin (2006, p. 91) go so far as to refer to spatial planning as meaning the “coordination or integration of the spatial dimension of sectoral policies through a territorial-based strategy”. This approach embodied in spatial planning is suggested to have stemmed from

...a ‘Third Way’ style emphasis on the importance of networked, relational forms of governance, and the need for multiscalar sectoral integration and collaborative forms of local governance (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p.806).

However, political integration is no mean feat as it requires traversing multiple tiers of government. Therefore, this is likely to be fraught with difficulty (Albrecht, 2006; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009b). Brenner (2004) argues this can be achieved only through ‘state spatial projects’ when internal coherence and functional coordination of state apparatus occur. Allmendinger and Haughton (2013) also agree that multi-scalar attempts will always be fraught with difficulty as they are often highly politicised and ‘crude’: United Kingdom experience of planning has seen the continual de-regulation, re-regulation, and market reorientation (rescaling) by the state, resulting in the
institutional workings rarely having the time and capacity to work out their new role before further change occurs.

There are growing concerns by some that spatial planning is becoming merely a tool to deploy certain political agendas and institutional reform (Jessop, 2004; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010). These agendas include, for example, that spatial planning is becoming too strongly implicated as a tool for meta-governance: “if spatial planning is viewed as a process of shaping and delivering more place-based strategies and investment, there are clear implications of it being appropriated for both territorialization and centralization claims” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 241). This view is supported by Healey (2006a, p. 537) when explaining how spatial planning episodes have recently been coupled with changes to how the state interacts with the market. This highlights the realisation that spatial planning is becoming more and more a signifier of the processes of neoliberalism and neoliberal planning (Baeten, 2012; Tasan-Kok, 2012). Allmendinger and Haughton (2013) agree, deeming it to be part of the rolling out of ‘neoliberal spatial governance’. This signals a move beyond spatial planning as merely an integrative policy mechanism (Morphet, 2011a; Stead & Meijers, 2009) to more of a ‘meta-governance’ tool (Jessop, 2002; Vigar, 2009). Spatial planning as a meta-governance tool allows for the amalgamation of spatial expressions from various policy silos into one common vision: the “integration or coordination of sectoral policies... frequently considered as one of the main objectives of contemporary spatial planning” (Stead & Meijers, 2009, p. 329). For spatial planning to fulfil a meta-governance role in relation to integrating often disparate policy agendas and stakeholders requires mutual agreement and sign-off (Kidd, 2007; Vigar, 2009).

**Political intervention**

In order to reach consensus on spatial strategies and achieve integration spatial planning is viewed by some as a political tool to strategise political vision (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; Inch, 2012; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010). Given spatial planning’s “vagueness” it makes “it amenable for reappropriation in support of various potential new policy directions” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2547). Healey (2006a) and Scott (1998) support these claims, referring to how the state mobilises certain ways of
‘seeing’ or, “perspectival synthesis on which to base collective action” (Healey, 2006a, p. 526). Spatial planning provides the forum for this synthesis to occur, whilst also enabling solidification of visions which encourage momentum towards certain directions as opposed to others.

Allmendinger & Haughton (2009a) urge people to “see spatial planning not simply as a process or state of mind: it is also a political project that additionally reflects the normative bias of some of its proponents” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2547). They see it as “simply the latest manifestation of the reworking of the rationales and scope of planning to fit with contemporary political thinking” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p.806) (refer also: Graham & Marvin, 2001). In the United Kingdom spatial planning has been viewed as “yet another transformation and re-politicization of planning through the governmental, institutional, professional and legal frameworks” (Tewdwr-Jones et al, 2010, p.250) (refer also: Inch, 2012) and a “political mobilization with place visioning, coupled with planning technique, that will have the power” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 249). Healey (2006a) agrees suggesting that governments who adopt spatial planning only do so to accumulate necessary ‘force’ to deliver on their particular policy agendas. For example, a key outcome of spatial planning in many jurisdictions is to facilitate economic development (Bennett, Fuller, Ramsden, 2004; Healey, 2009; Morphet, 2011b): this has been experienced in Britain, Europe and North America (Fainstein, 1991). Allmendinger and Haughton (2010, p. 809) describe how:

> spatial planning could now be seen as a range of political and rhetorical practices that mask the role of economic power through legitimizing the claim that economic growth is compatible with narrowly prescribed set of environmental and social objectives.

This highlights how spatial planning may be being re-appropriated by governments as a tool to deliver certain outcomes and agendas representing processes of neoliberalism: neoliberal planning (Baeten, 2012).
Partnerships, leadership, and institutional culture

Political will alone cannot achieve integrated political and economic agendas under the guise of spatial planning despite some being fearful of this (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012). Robust partnerships, strong on-going leadership, and institutional culture fit for the task is required. Spatial planning should be viewed as not simply a physical framework but one which is also relational (Booher, 2008), collaborative (Baker & Wong, 2013; Albrecht, 2010; Baker, Hincks, Sherriff, 2010; Peck & Tickell, 2002), and about “partnership and coordination” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2547). As Healey (1998) identified, the improvement of planning outcomes is heavily reliant on the appropriate governance capacity to deliver. As she notes this capacity rests in the local policy cultures and institutional competence. Vigar (2009) emphasises this point when referring to the success of spatial planning and policy integration hinging upon the “the soft institutional infrastructure of everyday practices, informal rules and cultures” (Vigar, 2009, pp. 1572 – 1573), a reference to the work and involvement of day-to-day actors. Spatial planning’s strength, if realised, falls outside of a solely mechanistic view of the world (Albrecht, 2008; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010; Booher, 2008; Healey 2006a, 2008, 2007; Searle & Bunker, 2010).

Spatial planning therefore provides a “supportive and facilitation or choreographic role to a range of public and private bodies” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 254) seeking a more synergistic approach to regional governance and relationship building (Morphet, 2011a; Turok, 2009). This might be predicated on the basis that to achieve outcomes, spatial planning relies on fostering, “agreements about common interests and goals across policy sectors and its ability to achieve consensus about the nature of problems and solutions” (Stead & Meijers, 2009, p. 330). This inherently places “stronger focus on the significant spatial relationships and drivers that cut across boundaries” (Nadin, 2007, p. 50). These spatial relations are critical in enabling planning processes and policy sectors to integrate and align together whilst also being reliant on the role of market actors and stakeholders (Wong & Watkins, 2009, p. 482). However, little attention has been afforded to the cultural change within institutions which will allow spatial planning to be achieved (Shaw & Lord, 2007; Stead & Meijers, 2009). As the regional systems and their architectures change as governments pursue more seemingly productive means of
organisation and management, the value of institutional culture is, as Keating (2001) noted, invoked by those studying these phenomena rather than examined. This neglects a more in-depth understanding of the ‘soft’ spaces (Haughton et al., 2013) which drive these new institutional workings.

Consultation is “a central element” of spatial planning which has received slightly more attention than institutional culture and capability (Morphet, 2011b, p. 122). Spatial planning is an act of “co-production” (Albrecht, 2011, p.92) which aims to capture the attention of a wide range of actors and in doing so builds joint capacity to act (Nadin, 2007, p. 50). This form of “civic engagement facilitates the use and understanding of the full complexity of places” which heightens the ability to deliver outcomes (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1126). Collective action and mutual learning processes are fundamental to the success of spatial planning (Faludi, 2000; Healey, 2009; Newman, 2008). Healey’s (2008) and Albrecht’s (2008) view on civic engagement is to:

Promote transformative structural change in order to improve individual and collective potential, to respond to problems, needs, opportunities and challenges, and to take... an active part in the processes of decision making, plan making and implementation (Healey, 2008, p. 411).

Spatial plans themselves provide a frame of reference to shape discussion and thinking (Albrecht, 2010, p.1120; Healey, 2007; Searle & Bunker, 2010; Stead & Meijers, 2009) in “an ongoing, enduring process of managing change, by a range of actors” (Tewder-Jones, 2004, p. 591). For example, European spatial strategies “attempt to integrate actor-actant networks at various levels, focusing on critical juxtapositions and connectivities” (Searle & Bunker, 2010, p.9). This allows for the building of trust, understanding, and confidence by the actors in the process and between other actors which can sometimes be contractual (Albrecht, 2010; Morphet, 2011a).

Another key determinant of successful spatial planning is leadership particularly in times of reform. However, this point, as with institutional capability and culture, has been seldom discussed within the spatial planning literature (Albrecht, 2006). In the field of management, when radical organisational change occurs, leadership is acknowledged as a central research issue given the importance of understanding the political, leadership,
and regulatory impacts on new institutions (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). Quinn’s (1980) seminal research argued that organisational leadership is a key determinant in evaluating a strategy’s effectiveness. Quinn also noted other factors including alignment to organisational culture/attitudes of senior managers, resource availability, clarity of the new strategic direction, and motivational impact. Following this, others noted the importance of senior level managers and the drawing together of key decision-makers within the organisation (Bryson & Roering, 1996; Kunzmann, 2000; Mintzberg, 1994; Poister & Streib, 1999). By way of reinforcing the importance of this dimension in the study of spatial planning, Albrechts et al., (2003) drew on the example of Hanover, Germany. They attributed the success of spatial planning in Hanover to the pragmatic political culture and leadership coupled with “well-qualified and integrated professional administrative elite” (Albrechts et al., 2003, p.116) within its governing authorities. It was argued that this was a main contributor to Hanover administrations being a world leader in regional planning culture.

What is now being observed and championed in some spatial planning literature is the move away from a linear, ‘mechanized’ approach to what Healey calls the Euclidean approach (Healey, 2007; Booher, 2008). This supports those developing spatial plans and engaging in this field of study to no longer limit their purview to solely governance capacity; vertical and horizontal integration; cross cutting governance relations; but expand them to encapsulate the often intangible aspects and ones on which planners have seldom focused, for example the role of leadership and institutional culture in planning. Furthermore, the relationships concerning the market and the wider society also need to be given greater credence. This might in turn spur the acknowledgement and acceptance for considering relational complexity (Healey, 2006a).

**Issues concerning integration**

Institutional culture is vital for the success of spatial planning, but so too is quality of the inter-governmental and private sector partnerships. A key challenge for effective spatial planning is therefore relationship building and the ability to mediate fragmented interests across public and private organisations and between various tiers of government (Booher, 2008; Healey; 2009; Newman, 2008; Vigar, 2009). As already
discussed, this requires coordination and integration across sectors in what are often “contested spaces” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 217; Stead & Meijers, 2009). Newman (2008) presented three specific hurdles in regards to this challenge: ‘collective actor capacity’; entrenched viewpoints; and strategising what may be detrimental to some players’ vested interests. This can be experienced with politicians and policy makers who have “deeply embedded... existing administrative and sectoral arrangements” (Nadin, 2007, p.57). Nadin (2007) went on to argue:

The integration challenge for planning cannot be met without also successfully ‘engaging’ stakeholders in building new ‘policy communities’ around issues defined in a new cross-sectoral and territorial way (Nadin, 2007, p.57).

On these grounds it has been argued that further cultural change is required among stakeholders if integrated spatial planning will move beyond rhetoric (Vigar, 2009, p. 1573). Governments applying spatial planning as an integrative tool will only recognise its benefits once fragmented interests are reconciled and, a range of public and private actors collaborate and foster ‘dense’ decision-making networks (Parker, 2007).

The Scottish experience of spatial planning and policy integration showed that one of the hurdles was maintaining existing relationships and co-ordination (Vigar, 2009, p. 1587) because when other actors and stakeholders came on board it “magnified the difficulties” (Vigar, 2009, p. 1587). Communication becomes “essential to policy integration” (Stead & Meijers, 2009, p. 329). This example showed that over time entrenched organisational perceptions gradually shifted. Eventually, greater appreciation was afforded to spatial planning as “a legitimate way of bringing together policy agendas” (Vigar, 2009, p.1586 – 1587). For spatial planning to gain this legitimacy the benefits have to be demonstrated and the costs of poor integration or non-coordination exhibited (Stead & Meijers, 2009). Nadin (2007) cautions that governments and planning authorities must be explicit about the direction and depth of integration which is being sought. The success of the policy integration movement in Scotland was due to the revealing of mutual benefits accrued through the co-alignment of strategies. This helped to “bring regulatory and investment nexuses together” (Vigar, 2009, p. 1587). Policy integration requires “an understanding of how the other sectors
work and, critically, how they interrelate to produce development outcomes” (Nadin, 2007, p. 57).

In the United Kingdom the scale of the policy integration is significant at a time when “the capacity to respond is arguably shrinking... due to the rigidity of administrative and political borders, the stability of departmentalism and strength of sectoral interests and preferences for small-scale solutions” (Stead & Meijers, 2009, p.329). English experience has shown how the horizontal and vertical integration of spatial planning has been a challenge (Albrecht, 2011; Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Kidd, 2007; Morphet, 2011a). Despite these hurdles, spatial planning has been a driver for policy integration spanning organisational and territorial boundaries in the United Kingdom. This has brought with it a widespread shift away from planning as a “land-use-focused, regulatory activity towards a more holistic “spatial planning” that integrates a number of policy concerns” (Vigar, 2009, p. 1572). Policy integration and implementation requires: political involvement; resource allocation; policy integration mechanisms; and institutional conditions (Stead & Meijers, 2009). Scottish experience has shown how all four are critical factors (Vigar, 2009).

Turok (2009) maintains: “city regions are held to offer considerable potential for integrated development strategies for places that are functionally coherent rather than arbitrarily defined” (p. 846). The barriers presented above highlight the importance of relationships and coordination amongst actors and institutional structures to achieve spatial planning and policy integration. For this coordination to occur the traditional boundaries of administrative jurisdictions have to be traversed. This requires either formal or informal re-territorialisation of established institutional norms.

2.3 A re-territorialisation of space

As Graham and Healey have observed, “we live in a world of tumultuous economic, social, cultural, technological and physical change” (Graham & Healey, 1999, p. 623). The flows of people, products, and wealth have undergone radical change (Albrecht & Mandelbaum, 2005; Castells, 1999). The place-based nature of communities within
bounded and secular regions, states, and nations are becoming unbounded (Healey, 1997, p. 123).

Space is confirmed but in fluid and dynamic dimensions: space-bound realms interweaving with and conditioned by flows and currents of people, capital, ideas, information and goods (Searle & Bunker, 2010, p. 8).

The issues being faced in city-regions “do not necessarily reflect the boundaried administrative entities of the state or match the pre-existing planning framework” (Tewdwr-Jones, Gallent, Morphet, 2010, p. 242). This is compounded by the growing complexity brought on by these new spatial flows of people, wealth, and goods (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1115; Breheny, 1991; Castells, 1996; Couclelis, 2005; Gleeson, Dodson, Spiller, 2012; Nadin, 2007; Neuman & Hull, 2009).

Neoliberal institutional restructuring and the re-territorialisation of space has been a response by states to try to manage more effectively the complexity of the forces at play (Basu, 2007; Brenner, 1999; Tasan-Kok, 2012). In New Zealand this first occurred during the 1980s and continued into the 1990s with wholesale reforms to local government occurring in 1989 centred on improved management and service provision (Bassett, 2013; Wetzstein, 2008). In 2010 local government was again reformed in New Zealand, this time only in Auckland, illustrating a second wave of re-territorialisation. Issues borne from market-led economics began to emerge and so too did state-led solutions: often referred to as, third-way inspired approaches seeking to balance social democracy with neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005). Those developed nations who have pursued this type of approach include the likes of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and now New Zealand. These aforementioned markets can be labelled as ‘regulatory markets’ as opposed to ‘developmental states’ where state provision of services in certain sectors were provided and others were left up to the market, for example, Japan and New Zealand prior to 1984 (Ferguson, 2010; Moran, 2002; Tasan-Kok, 2012).

The shortcomings of regulatory land use planning in new economic climates, discussed earlier, gave rise to the need for holistic, coordinated, and integrative planning and governance responses to manage and capture capital flows (Florida, 1995; Jessop, 1998; Mouat & Dodson, 2013). Calls came for a ‘proactive reaction’ due to the “unabated
pace of change driven by the (structural) developments and challenges” (Albrecht, 2011, p. 75). From this point it was only a short step to argue that the change “demands a rescaling of the territories of government intervention” (Nadin, 2007, p. 49) (refer also: Albrecht & Mandelbaum, 2005; Brenner, 1999; Nadin, 2007). The underpinning philosophy behind this as noted by Albrecht (2010) and Hames (2007) is that “society as a whole has to accept that it lives in a world in which much of what it does and how it does it simply cannot continue” (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1116). Hence, the current planning approaches have to evolve to be more amenable to what Couclelis calls the “excessively complex, uncertain, open, pluralistic, and turbulent social and political environments of Western societies” (Couclelis, 2005, p. 1358). They must be more adept at managing and capturing the flows of globalised capital.

At this point planning in the broader sense became an acceptable activity to assist in meeting the societal challenges faced when competing in this globalised, market-led environment: “planning is a prerequisite for neoliberal urban development” (Tasan-Kok, 2012, p.1). However, previous mechanistic land use approaches to planning were no longer sufficient. New planning approaches are required to meet the structural problems moving away from the “bureaucratic [regulatory] approach towards a more strategic, implementation-led, and development led approach” (Albrecht, 2011, p. 76).

[The] current challenges are central and structural and cannot be tackled by means of traditional approaches... or by keeping to vested interests, concepts, discourses and practices (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1116).

The emergence of spatial planning signifies this new approach to planning as a response to these dilemmas. It offers a potential solution to the complexity and the uneven and rapid development patterns occurring (Albrechts, 2004; Healey, 2004; Tasan-Kok, 2012). Spatial planning symbolises an alternative approach to neo-liberal individualism and a turn toward a joined-up, direct, and holistic approach to confronting the issues and problems being faced in the 21st century within a normative planning context (Morphet; 2010, 2011a). Searle & Bunker (2010) and Beck & Willms (2004) describe it as a turn to ‘reflexive modernization’ and ‘cosmopolitan democracy’. Others simply argue it is;
[a] belated acknowledgement...that the traditional approach... to problemize,  
plan and strategize geographies within bounded entities has never really  
worked, nor is such an approach suitable for a twenty-first century (Tewdwr-  

The question of “how can we best conceptualize the dynamics of places and the role of planning action in shaping them?” (Graham & Healey, 1999, p. 623) may be being answered in part by the emergence of spatial planning. It has been suggested that it may not only be “just a contingent response to wider forces” but “it may also become an active force in enabling change” (Albrecht, 2006, p. 14).

**Institutional (Re)Design**

Spatial planning is often born from new government administrations seeking to change and adopt new ways of working. Hence, whilst some episodes of spatial planning have been undertaken in ‘soft spaces’ (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009b; Haughton et al., 2013; Olesen, 2012) institutional design remains critical to enabling new ways of neoliberal planning (in this case spatial planning) because it involves rescaling for implementation to occur (Albrecht, 2010; Tasan-Kok, 2012). Optimised urban management, in this case under the auspices of spatial planning requires, “an explicit metropolitan governance structure” (Gleeson & Spiller, 2012, p.396). Institutional restructuring therefore prevails as a hallmark of neoliberalism and associated experiments (Harvey, 2005).

Governance is increasingly a feature both of the statutory and of the non-  
statutory workings of planning, as part of a pervasive rationality to improve  
partnership working (Haughton et al., 2013, p.223).

Transformational strategies are born out of, “collective governance effort and they “work”... because they become embedded in the governance culture of a locality” (Healey, 2009, p. 441). If the institutional environment is not conducive to collective governance approaches to planning then they are unlikely to be successful. Poor implementation of spatial planning in the United Kingdom has been due to a lack of supporting mechanisms and functions within the architectures of local government
Neoliberal institutional restructuring has led to both centralised and decentralised models of governance (Tasan-Kok, 2012). For example, after periods of decentralisation of governance frameworks where power relations are “diffused”, the greater becomes the need for bringing them together in order to deliver satisfactory outcomes (Healey, 2006a, p. 537). This often devolved control to small bodies of government which then developed plans in their own “administrative space or ‘island[s]’ disconnected from the reality of networks” (Nadin, 2007, p. 49) are often incapable of understanding the “nature and drivers of spatial development for the authority” (Nadin, 2007, pp. 49 – 50).

Similar issues have been encountered when neoliberal planning agendas have been superimposed on existing governance structures without considering the structural requirements (Dodson, 2009; Tasan-Kok, 2012). For example, regional planning in Auckland between 1989 and 2010. Spatial planning has been viewed as an alternative for addressing the structural challenges “in a constructive and progressive way” (Albrecht, 2011, p. 92). As raised earlier, it remains confronted by the “political and professional boundaries and allegiances [which] are very firmly established along different lines” (Nadin, 2007, p. 55).

English experience showed that when the governance landscape was not suited to spatial planning endeavours (Healey, 2006a; Morphet, 2011a; Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p.397; Vigar, 2009) they struggled to be implemented. Spatial planning therefore remained reliant upon “a new governance institutional framework” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 249).

**Transformative role of spatial planning**

Following periods of significant institutional restructuring often new agendas and new found energy is born. Spatial planning has been argued as a beneficiary of this new vitality providing transformative opportunities (Albrecht, 2011, 2010, 2006; Healey, 2009; Newman, 2008). This has been referred to by Healey (2009) as ‘transformative strategy making’ opportunities and “episodes of policy formation with transformative power” (Healey, 2006a, p. 529). The transformative element of spatial planning relates
to the re-territorialisation of space, changing state-market relations, and the broadening scope of planning strategy to accommodate various policy arenas. Transformative processes “refuse to accept that the current way of doing things... they break free from concepts, structures, and ideas that persist” (Albrecht, 2011, p. 83). Occurrences of spatial planning, or neoliberal projects, are attempts to resolve perceived structural failings in how society operates i.e. the role of the state in ensuring well-being (Albrecht, 2008; Healey, 2008). In undertaking these re-structuring exercises provides for transformative opportunities (Healey, 2009):

Transformative practices focus on new concepts and new ways of thinking that change the way resources are used, (re)distributed, and allocated, and the way regulatory powers are exercised (Albrecht, 2011, p. 83).

The shifts in institutional configurations and state-market relations are reflective of the perceived challenges facing society (Albrecht, 2010). As institutional reform occurs changing how cities and regions operate and relate to one another requires different planning within these new spaces (Healey, 2008). Evidence shows that “more of the same” in relation to both governance and planning frameworks “is not suited to provide the answers needed” (Albrecht, 2010, p.1124). Herein lies the “plea for a transformative agenda [that] challenges existing knowledge, conventional wisdom and practices, and the attitudes and skills of planners” (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1125). Newman (2008) therefore supports Albrecht (2010) calling for a change to traditional forms of interacting and dealing with spaces. They argued that such transformative practices rely on “non-strategic... day-to-day work of actors tactically pursuing interests, perceiving constraints and calculating opportunities that may have limited horizons” (Newman, 2008, p. 1375). The ability to achieve these transformative agendas will depend on the malleability and creativity of people, processes, and structures and their will to change.

Devolution and the blurring of responsibility

In many nations the decentralisation of institutional structures and the privatisation of state services have led to a blurring of planning function and a split between the state and the market causing issues for implementation (Alexander, 2009; Morphet, 2011b; Tasan-Kok, 2012). Although, for example in Australia the pitfalls of this approach have
been counteracted by a national planning agenda being put in place (Ruming, Gurran, Maginn, Goodman, 2014). Moran (2002) describes the conflicting responsibilities emerging from these governance changes as creating “uncoupled systems of self-steering” (p.391). This results in local government development agendas running contrary to those for the same region at a national level.

From English experience, a key hurdle to implementing a spatial plan was its linkages to investment and delivery programmes (Morphet, 2011b, p. 217): these remained detached from the spatial plan. It has been argued that successful spatial planning is more likely to occur in small states where the scale of institutional organizations and their arrangements are smaller, less complex, delivery arms, more aligned and easier to manage (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011; Albrecht, 2008; Healey, 2008). This has been particularly evident in cases where municipalities’ exhibit “devolved administrations... where a combination of smaller size, political devolution, and greater financial control have allowed spatial planning to develop in new directions” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2548). Scottish experience illustrated that smaller nations and municipalities are much more likely to achieve successful spatial planning (Vigar, 2009). This is on the premise that smaller governments tend to be “less tied to the ideological baggage and regulatory apparatus of planning and more aligned to the corporate processes and infrastructure investments of the new governments” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p. 2548). The case of spatial planning in Scotland highlighted that reduced scale worked positively to enable the achievement of better integration and obtainment of planning goals (Vigar, 2009, p. 1587). Spatial planning in Scotland also showed signs of “impacting on the structures, administrative arrangements, and day-to-day processes of the traditional land use planning system” (Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p. 396). According to Bannon, the Northern Ireland experience of spatial planning, similar to that of Scotland, provided a mechanism which enabled planning to operate more coherently and more effectively (Bannon, 2007, p.308).

To achieve effective spatial planning it is still argued that there is a need to require a “‘rescaling’ of issue agendas down from the national or state level and up from the municipal and neighborhood level, the kind of multi-level governance” (Healey, 2008, p. 411). This requires alterations to hierarchical and often entrenched structures of policy
design and implementation, thus shifting it to a middle ground (Albrecht, 2001; Healey, 2006a; Salet, Thornley, Kreukels, 2003) referred to by some as ‘entrepreneurial spaces’ (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010). The creation of these new spaces is representative of re-territorialisation. Episodes in spatial planning frequently display “multi-governance” characteristics as formalised structures in a specific jurisdiction rarely exist (Healey, 2006a, p. 537). As illustrated in the following chapters, the governance reforms in Auckland have seen the rare establishment of a formalised space.

In the United Kingdom varying levels of entrepreneurial spaces exist. Morphet (2011b) sees the attention of spatial planning endeavours in England shifting to the sub-regional scale or space, because this is where “spatial planning’s integrating role” can become “a central part of the sub-regional project” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 264) (refer also: Deas, 2006). Allmendinger & Haughton (2010) agree that the most optimal is at the local and regional levels. These views further support the link between spatial planning and the re-territorialisation of space.

Governments have begun to look toward the development of city-regions and territories in a more integrative and strategic fashion seeking, “transformation” and “modernization” initiatives (Healey, 2006a, p. 536). This has in turn led to a re-conceptualization of the “appropriate territory and territorial dynamics around which policy initiatives should focus” (Healey, 2006a, p. 537). Herein lies the neoliberal restructuring processes of “reengineering of the existing system” (Nadin, 2007, p. 56) to enable new ways of working which are multi-scalar and integrative (Tasan-Kok, 2012). This can be viewed as an attempt to “create both new arenas of governance organization and new foci of governance attention” (Healey, 2006a, p. 537). Although, it should be cautioned that the “search for an ideal or institutionally coherent strategic spatial planning tends to overlook the often slow pace of institutional development” (Newman, 2008, p. 1375). The two are often coupled together: “episodes of strategic spatial planning... [are] often caught up in a whirl of ongoing institutional changes, reflecting a variety of conceptions and criticisms of governance purposes and modes” (Healey, 2006, p. 526). Healey (2006a) identified that when the “devolution to sub-national levels of government” has occurred, those governments have been “more responsive to demands from the economy and the society, and coordinating...
government interventions around territorial development objectives” (p.529). Newman (2008) and Vigar (2009) warned against becoming ‘neophilic’ with devolution and reform actions suggesting instead that the answers may lie in such areas as funding structures and budgets, institutional ‘work’, and whether support for projects will endure.

2.4 A broadening approach to planning

The purpose of this section is to show how the emergence of spatial planning is illustrative of a shift in the role of planning due to the processes of neoliberalism. Post-war state planning has been described as an ‘applied science’ (Sandercock, 2003); or as ‘rationally comprehensive planning’ (Couclelis, 2005, p. 1358). The regulatory nature of land use planning practice has meant that it has been less strategic and instead more controlling (Faludi, 2000). This can be labelled as one aspect of the ‘regulatory state’ and a conflict that has arisen with the growth of neoliberal projects or de-regulation (Moran, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Gradually, planning has adopted more intrinsic and intangible aspects such as public participation and collaboration (Couclelis, 2005; Healey, 1997, 1998, 2008; Ploger, 2001; Sandercock, 2003). This has taken place because planners had been mostly concerned previously with “strategies, their politics, power, coercion, implementation and delivery, within fixed territorial limits” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 243). The consequence of this was that non-economically derived interests were ill-served (Allmendinger, 2002; Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010).

Spatial planning signals a step away from the mechanistic planning practices towards a more fluid form which requires planners to “forge new forms of collective action” (Newman, 2008, p. 7). It demands a broad grasp, a sensitivity to a plurality of issues and concerns, and what Healey calls “an awareness of the detail of experience and of what it takes for a strategic idea to shape the flow of ongoing activity” (Healey, 2009, p. 441). In normative terms “a more flexible and negotiable strategic planning process will do more to encourage such and property market dynamics” as opposed to “a rigid and regulatory land-use planning process” (Tasan-Kok, 2012, p.2).
The changing nature of planning practice in the United Kingdom has led to significant challenges for planners (Healey, 2009; Royal Town Planning Institute, 2007; Vigar, 2009). It has required, “a paradigm shift in planning practice as well as in the substance of the planning task” representing “a cultural shift for planners and those who work in the planning system” (Morphet, 2011b, p.175). Planners are now required to improve the evidence base and skills base, and change their approach from siloed thinking to holistic and integrative thinking (Morphet, 2011b; Vigar 2009). In the United Kingdom spatial planning has not been well understood by planners. It requires them to “extend their informal, negotiating and networking skills in order to ensure that they are effective in operating the spatial planning system” (Morphet, 2011b, pp. 258 – 259). Planners must therefore re-conceptualize their role now as the ‘facilitators’ of other market actors (Adam & Tiesdell, 2010; Faludi, 2000).

Broadening the role of the planner beyond solely regulation, as a result of spatial planning, has been welcomed by many in the profession (Royal Town Planning Institute, 2007). Spatial planning has aided in “helping to reposition planners as providing high level leadership in place-making at a variety of scales” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p. 6) because until its inception “in many market economies, the role of the planner is ambivalent” (Bannon, 2007, p. 308). Consequently, the changing nature of planning practice away from its regulatory core has been welcomed by practitioners as a means of engaging directly with the delivery and implementation of planning outcomes (Morphet, 2011b, p. 59).

Spatial planning has been cast as “a dynamic activity that seeks out approaches and solutions to the challenges that it confronts from a variety of locations” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 239). It focuses on the “dynamics through which larger urban regions evolve” (Healey, 2009, p. 440) becoming a, “key component and facilitator of delivery” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 249). Spatial planning encourages long-term strategic visions, provision of the spatial dimensions of policy, and improved integration through engagement with stakeholders and the public (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010). The role of the planner is changing as a consequence of spatial planning’s focus on “framing decisions, actions, projects, results, and implementation, incorporating monitoring, evaluation, feedback, adjustment, and revision” (Albrecht, 2011, p. 80). Unlike
regulatory land use planning, spatial planning is characterised as a “transformative and integrative public-sector-led socio-spatial process” (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1119). It is a tool for “vision setting, the alignment of planning strategies with those public bodies that possess resource allocations” with the ambition to achieve more successful “policy formulation and implementation and delivery” (Tewdwr-Jones et al, 2010, p. 254). A comparative analysis between the types of spatial planning approaches being applied in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England found that despite all having varying timeframes and names some key themes and characteristics existed (Morphet, 2011b, p. 238):

- Primary focus on the economy;
- Identification of national infrastructure and how to implement;
- Varying levels below the national level spatial scales emerged as so called ‘operational levels’ such as national/regional, sub-regional, and local;
- Emphasis on delivery throughout all scales;
- Integrated delivery models are sought;
- Monitoring and assessment is carried out in a more transparent manner – inquisitorial; and
- Increased horizontal integration at the local decision-making level.

These factors demonstrate how the characteristics which make up spatial planning are situationally dependent i.e., contextually and temporally bound (Dimitriou & Thompson, 2007; Dodson, 2009; Morphet, 2011a;). They also display the variations of spatial planning from previous regulatory land use planning approaches.

Contradiction in spatial planning

There has been conjecture as to whether or not spatial planning represents a new planning model or simply a return to strategic planning (Albrecht, 2010, 2006, 2011; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; Healey, 2006a; Morphet, 2011a; Newman, 2008; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010).

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8 Refer also: Nadin, 2007, p.50
9 Wales – Wales Spatial Plan (WSP); Northern Ireland – Regional Development Strategy (RDS); Scotland –National Planning Framework (NPF); England – Local Development Framework (LDF) (Morphet, 2011a)
It is not presented as a model, but as a guide to provoke thinking about how planning might change and what the implications are for practice (Nadin, 2007, p. 53).

This debate surrounding the nature of spatial planning illustrates divergent and contradictory perspectives and trajectories of neoliberal experiments by states and other stakeholders on how cities and regions should be planned and developed: including the role of the state in this process (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Jessop, 2002, 2013; Lewis & Moran, 1998; Peck & Theodore; 2012). For example, Vigar (2007) and Cullingworth & Nadin (2006) question in regards to episodes of spatial planning whether or not it is a new planning model or if it is just “performing an integrative, metagovernance role” (p. 1573). Peel & Lloyd (2007) suggest spatial planning might be invoking a more holistic discourse involving “connectivity, scale, and territorial cohesion” (p. 401). Allmendinger & Haughton (2009a) argue that spatial planning offers a renewed emphasis on inter-territoriality, and delivery on various scales where landuse planning has failed (refer also: Healey, 2009; Nadin, 2007; Peel & Lloyd, 2007). These views illustrate that the outcomes sought from episodes of spatial planning may only differ slightly from what was sought prior.

The contradictory nature of neoliberal planning is further exemplified by Allmendinger & Haughton (2009a) arguing that spatial planning is “planning by another name – it is what planning always was” (p.2544), with its origins being traced back to Christaller’s central place theory of the 1950s (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010; Kunzman, 2006). Others agree, arguing that comprehensive planning in the 1960s and 1970s sought to integrate a range of factors similar to what spatial planning seeks to do now (Albrecht, 2011, 2004; Morphet, 2011b, p. 178; Perloff, 1980). It bears “all the hallmarks of aspects of the United Kingdom planning system that were endemic in the 1945–1979 period, prior to the deregulation of planning” (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010, p. 250). The commonly held view is that planning in its traditional form has always held a duality of responsibility across different sectors, working at varying institutional geographies, and looking beyond the immediate jurisdiction by which it is bound (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; Peel & Lloyd, 2007).
This is reflective of neoliberalism. Institutional restructuring can never impose an entirely new form of either governance or planning framework on account of already existing and embedded politico-institutional contexts and power relations within democratic societies (Peck et al., 2009; Tasan-Kok, 2012). This leads to fragmented implementation of neoliberal policies and only ever allows for incremental change (Harvey, 2005). Spatial planning could therefore be considered not a new approach to planning, (Couclelis, 2005; Nadin, 2007) but a method for, “creating and steering a (range of) better future(s) for a place on the basis of shared values” (Albrecht, 2010, p. 1118). It might signal a “re-assertion of the ethos or culture of planning so as to reflect the relatively more explicit pluralistic environment in the context of modernisation” (Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p. 402) and “an attempt to engender an ideological transformation in the planning ethos” (Peel & Lloyd, 2007, p. 398). Ultimately, all that spatial planning is, is “a return to ‘planning with vision’” (Gallent & Wong, 2009, p. 354). Tewdwr-Jones et al (2010) takes an even more reductionist view of spatial planning, calling it a “revised label” (p. 254) for pre-existing practices and ideas which have been around for many decades. However, in light of the contemporary economic, infrastructure and development conditions a renewed emphasis on these has emerged (Peel & Lloyd, 2007). This demonstrates the path dependant nature of neoliberal experiments that have gone before often resulting in new attempts only being able to bring about incremental change (Jessop, 2013).

2.5 Summary

Spatial planning, as argued here, is born from the broader drivers of neoliberalism. Spatial planning is a market-enabling or market-creating activity (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2013) and a form of neoliberal spatial governance (Tasan-Kok, 2012). The concept has now globalised to be deemed a worldwide phenomenon in western capitalist societies (OECD, 2001). This can be attributed to a range of factors. The main reasons argued here are due to the increased capital flows and rates of growth occurring in market-led economies. These ‘regulatory states’ often have hollowed governments which lack the apparatus beyond tools such as land use planning
regulation to manage the growth and accumulate wealth (Moran, 2002; Albrecht, 2004; Peck et al., 2009; Tansan-Kok, 2012). An integrative, multi-scalar, meta governance tool like spatial planning provides a solution. Spatial planning practices more specifically are “often rooted in [a] desire to improve planning delivery” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010, p. 809; Morphet, 2011b, p. 260) and therefore the wealth accumulation of that given locality (Baeten, 2012; Jessop, 1998). As experienced in the United Kingdom it has often been intertwined with neoliberal projects which restructure institutional working and state-market relations in order to meet burgeoning challenges.

The adoption of spatial planning in varying contexts has led to its interpretation and reinterpretation, leading to contradictory understanding and application of the term (Tasan-Kok, 2012; Tewdwr-Jones et al, 2010). The ambiguity surrounding spatial planning is symbolic of its re-appropriation by capitalist societies in their pursuit of new forms of neoliberal spatial governance frameworks (Baeten, 2012; Haughton et al., 2013). Spatial planning has become “relational in its local definition and application” (Morphet, 2011b, p. 239). Albrecht (2006) holds that spatial planning offers: “a more coherent and coordinated long-term spatial logic for land use regulation, for resource protection, for action-orientation, for a more open multilevel type of governance” (Albrecht, 2006, p. 1153). Given the institutional restructuring in which spatial planning lies, it is unlikely to completely fulfil the role initially envisaged by it (Harvey, 2005; Peck et al., 2009; Stead & Meijers, 2009; Tansan-Kok, 2012). Spatial planning will remain a spatially and temporally bound process due to the unique socio-political and socio-economic climates in which neoliberal projects are undertaken.

The emergence of spatial planning signals a break with the past regarding how planning is envisioned and conceptualised. It is a signifier of broader neoliberal agendas, typically of capitalist states seeking new state-market and spatial governance relations to better accumulate wealth. Neoliberalism and spatial planning are synonymous with institutional restructuring processes in order to facilitate this change. Chapter 3 presents the history of governance and planning in the Auckland region which highlights the shortcomings of the institutions and the neoliberal projects which in turn gave rise to new conceptualisations of how regions can be managed.
Chapter 3

The history of governance and regional planning in Auckland

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature relating to spatial planning. Particular attention was given to its association with neoliberal spatial governance. To exemplify spatial planning and neoliberal spatial governance experience from the United Kingdom was drawn upon. The aim of this chapter is provide an historical overview of the development of the Auckland region in relation to governance and planning. This overview will provide the context within which governance reform and the emergence of spatial planning has occurred.

First, it is important to note that there is a strong reciprocal relation between central government and local government in Auckland. Central government spends nine dollars for every one that local government spends in Auckland per annum (OECD, 2011). Furthermore, local government is provided with its power and authority through legislation set by central government. This legislation affords Auckland’s governance arrangements and others throughout the country and gains them the authority to rate, set policy, plan, and provide services to the region. There is planning of a different kind at central government level.

3.1 The beginning of Auckland

Auckland was founded in 1840 by Governor Hobson following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Grainger, 1953) at which time the population was 2,500 (Auckland Regional
Council, 2010a). In 1841 Auckland became the capital of New Zealand and dramatic population growth occurred (King, 2003). In 1865 Auckland relinquished its title as the capital city of New Zealand to Wellington (Bush, 2008).

The dramatic population increase in Auckland during the 1840s resulted in the division of Auckland into administrative units whereby roads and other local works were undertaken. This marked the beginning of formal governance in the region (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.114). By the mid-1840s the New Ulster Government was carrying out public works for the region. This lasted until 1851 when the Governor of New Zealand, Sir George Grey, campaigned for Auckland to be granted self-governance powers (Bush, 1971, p.33). This immediately presented difficulties since the Auckland City Council lacked any legislative framework, a rating base, formal structure, or candidates for office, resulting in its failure (Bassett, 2013; Bush, 2008). In 1853 a second attempt was made by the Auckland Provincial Council to set up a city council which again failed largely due to conflicting personal politics and community resistance to rates levies (Bush, 2008, p.4).

In 1867, under the Municipal Corporations Act, the Auckland Provincial Council, and in 1871 the Auckland City Council came into being (Bassett, 2013). Through legislation the new Auckland Provincial Council was granted far reaching responsibility in terms of the provision of police, schools, and hospitals, over a land area of approximately 5,600 square kilometres (New Zealand Government, 2013a). This resulted in discontent amongst the smaller boards and boroughs in relation to resourcing and the threat of amalgamation. Successive mayors of the Auckland City Council between 1905 and 1925 moved for amalgamations but in 1928 when the idea of a new metropolitan regional body was proposed it was turned down (Bassett, 2013). Over the next 45 years Auckland experienced, “rampant urban expansion” and population growth “51,000 in 1891, 62,000 in 1901, and 102,000 in 1911” (Bush, 2008, p.8). Within the Auckland City Council area this placed significant pressure on infrastructure provision, particularly the roads boards which were faced with an “uphill struggle dealing with burgeoning urban problems” (Bush, 2008, p.5).

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10 An agreement between Maori and British settlers concerning the rights of sovereignty over New Zealand.
Fledgling governance arrangements under the Auckland Provincial Council were a hallmark of the institution from the 1850s – 1870s (Bush, 2008). In 1876 further governance reforms took place abolishing the six provinces throughout New Zealand (Municipal Corporations Act 1876). This resulted in the Provincial Council roles being devolved to counties and roads boards throughout the country (Bush, 2008). This changed the governance structures across Auckland; by 1895 there were 600 authorities serving a population of approximately 700,000 across the whole country (Bassett, 1995).

As growth occurred, the small villages within Auckland transitioned into contiguous suburbs (Chalmers & Hall, 1989) becoming known as the Boroughs (and City) of Auckland, existing alongside the ad hoc or special purpose boards). The introduction of the Municipal Corporations Act 1876, governed conditions relating to subsidies and loans introduced in 1885, and limited lending rules to counties in 1886 promoting the division of counties into smaller local government bodies (Local Government New Zealand, 2011, 2013a; New Zealand Government, 2013a). This led to a “complex net of local government which significantly limited coordinated planning on a metropolitan scale” (Chalmers & Hall, 1989, p.85). Auckland’s governance throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century was typified by ad hoc single or special purpose boards, each managing a particular service or infrastructure element (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2008). The predominant issue with this arrangement (of both local boards and service boards), which continued through most of the 20th century, was the small size of the institutions and funding compared with their breadth of functions (Bassett, 2013; Bush, 2008).

Consequently the idea emerged of a single regional authority between the 1920s and 1963 when the Auckland Regional Authority was established (Bush, 1971). Meantime, select committees of the House of Representatives (1889, 1890, 1938 and 1944-45) sought to consolidate local government within the Auckland region (New Zealand Government, 2013a, p.11). Then between 1945 and 1984 several Local Government Commissions were empowered to recommend amalgamations within the region. All of them failed (Bush, 2008; Jansen, 1992; Rouse & Putterill, 2005). During this time town planning legislation was also evolving. In 1926 the Town Planning Act set out for the
first time regional planning as a voluntary function; and encouraged local bodies to work more collaboratively with each other (Bassett, 2013; Palmer, 1984).

This early history of Auckland depicts a piecemeal and unclear model of governance, as well as inadequate attempts to solve this problem. It illustrates how, despite growth pressures and recognition of the need for a broader regional approach to Auckland’s growth and development, the largely autonomous boards and boroughs were unwilling to relinquish power for the greater good of the region.

3.2 The post war period – an acknowledgement of a problem

The notion of regional governance and planning gained ground after the Second World War, when Auckland was faced with further growth and development pressures.

In mid-1954, the mayor of Auckland City Council, John Luxford, introduced a proposal for a two-tier local governance system (Bush, 2008). This led to the establishment of the Metropolitan Council as a tier above the Auckland City Council and the numerous smaller boroughs and ad hoc boards. Coupled with central government, the Auckland City Council and the advisory Metropolitan Local Bodies Association initiated investigations into regionalism and local body arrangements in Auckland (Bush, 2008, 1988). The investigations initially lacked adequate resourcing. However, in October 1959 Dove-Myer Robinson was elected Mayor of Auckland City Council and through his strong civic leadership he began to confront the issues of regional development and the need for regional governance in Auckland (Bush, 1971, p.409). This marked a period of time when significant infrastructure investment was made towards regional services to meet population growth and demand – the population surpassed 500,000 in 1965 (Auckland Regional Council, 2010a). Major infrastructure developments arising during this period of the 1950s to 1960s included Auckland International Airport, the Mangere Sewage Treatment Plant, the Cossey’s Creek Dam, the Auckland Harbour Bridge and the extensive motorway system.

Mayor Robinson also led the Auckland Regional Authority Establishment Committee urging a form of regional governance. In March 1961 the committee reported back to
the local authorities governing Auckland and to central government identifying regional planning as one of the key priorities for a successful region (Bush, 2008). Central government at the same time also established a Local Bills Committee of Parliament to enquire into whether the current form of local government was capable of meeting the needs of a rapidly growing population (New Zealand Government, 2013b). These enquiries led to the introduction of a Bill in 1962 which;

Proposed the establishment of a regional authority which would carry out regional works and services over the districts of 32 municipalities and counties and which would, in the process, assume the functions of most special-purpose authorities in the region. It proposed that the regional authority be also the regional planning authority for the region (New Zealand Government, 2013a, p.1).

The Bill was passed in 1963. It resulted in the establishment of the Auckland Regional Authority, designated as the body to carry out these functions. The Auckland Regional Authority was the first formal institutional arrangement for the administration of the Auckland region (Bassett, 2013; Bush, 2008; Chalmers & Hall, 1989).11 Prior to 1963 regional governance in Auckland was defined by “fragmentation and parochial ambition” (Bush, 2008, p.6). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the Auckland Regional Authority matured as a regional governing body (Bush, 2008). Its effectiveness was impeded by a large number of territorial authorities within the region (refer Figure 1) and the election of mayors to the ARA (Auckland Regional Authority) as it became known. Furthermore, the regional planning that occurred over this time, undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act (1953) did:

No more than outline vague policies and the broadest of strategies. The key planning issues at regional level... the structuring and programming of development into efficient yet satisfying patterns and forms, and the maintenance of a balance between intensity of land use and the availability of physical amenities and services... have seldom been dealt with successfully or

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11 The Auckland Regional Authority’s jurisdictional area encompassed 31 territorial local bodies comprising, four counties, four cities, 22 boroughs and one town district.
Some proponents of regionalism argued for further reform (Bassett, 2013). After the 1960s local politicians failed to provide regionally significant infrastructure to meet the growing population demand. These infrastructure problems arising from conservative control of Auckland’s local and regional political institutions were compounded by central government inaction (Hucker, 2010). This became most evident through the 1970s and 1980s because during periods of high inflation local politicians kept rates increases lower than the rate of inflation culminating in the neglect of Auckland’s infrastructure system. This occurred despite the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act (1977) requiring ministerial ‘sign-off’ on regional planning schemes and the ability for the Crown to contribute towards the cost of regional planning and development (Palmer, 1984).

The effects of poor regional governance and planning resulted in a lack of investment in the region’s infrastructure. This was typified by the 1947 and 1994 water crises, the electricity crisis of 1998 (BBC News, 1998; New Zealand Government, 2013c), severe motorway congestion, conglomeration of state housing on peripheral areas of the city leading to significantly spatially intense social deprivation issues, and Auckland being ranked 69th out of 85 for metro regions by the OECD (Auckland Council, 2012a, p.369; Auckland Regional Council, 2010a).

3.3 A regional approach to the problem

The most significant event in these unfolding developments was the 1989 reform of the Local Government Act (1974). It culminated in the reduction of local authorities in Auckland and the establishment of the Auckland Regional Council (refer Figure 2). Further reform continued to occur in this area. In 2002 an entirely new Local Government Act was introduced. Private sector dissatisfaction with the lack of coordination and regional oversight of Auckland’s issues in the early 2000s led to the development of the One Plan in 2005, and the appointment in 2007 of a Royal
Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance. This section discusses these events in light of what they meant for the Auckland region in terms of planning and governance and the emergence of spatial planning.

The 1989 reforms

Significant public sector reforms occurred in New Zealand during the 1980s. These reforms marked a clear shift from social democratic policies to those which relied more strongly on the market allocation of resources (Easton, 1989; Rouse & Putterill, 2005). The government at the time adopted the objectives of improved economic management and efficiency, greater accountability, transparency, and market contestability (Rouse & Putterill, 2005; Scott, 1995). The changes had far-reaching ramifications across all sectors, both public and private. In the second term of the 1987-1990 Labour government;

Attention shifted to local government performance management. By this time both central and local government servants were well versed in the techniques deemed appropriate for the new managerial climate, e.g. outsourcing, and accountability requirements organised around outputs and inputs (Rouse & Putterill, 2005, p.439).

In March 1989 the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) was enacted resulting in the reorganisation of functions and boundaries which reduced around 800 units of local government to 94 across the country (King, 2003; Myers, 1998). Earlier, in 1987 the Auckland City Council had already pushed for unification but failed to gain support from the other local authorities (Bassett, 2013). Some commentators at the time questioned why ‘one big city’ for the whole region was not being proposed (New Zealand Herald, 1988).

In Auckland, the 44 authorities (29 territorial local authorities and a number of ad hoc authorities) which had comprised local government in the region were reduced to eight
(Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). This sought to address the *ad hoc* factions of local government in Auckland which had high levels of autonomy and poor integration of planning and decision-making functions. It created one regional council tasked with planning and service delivery functions with seven city and district councils below it. These governance arrangements remained in place up until their disestablishment on November 1, 2010. All eight authorities in Auckland held planning duties mandated under of the Resource Management Act (1991).

As noted in Chapter 1, the Resource Management Act was enacted on October 1, 1991, signalling abandonment of the Town and Country Planning Act (1977) to an effects-based approach to planning which was predicated on environmental sustainability (Memon, 1991; Memon & Gleeson, 1995; Memon & Perkins, 1993). Similar to the Town and Country Planning Act (1977), the Resource Management Act (1991) required planning documents to be prepared by local authorities. First generation plans under this new legislation came into effect throughout the 1990s. The Act also included a requirement for regional councils, in this case the Auckland Regional Council, to develop regional policy statements (replacing the regional planning schemes). The intention was that these would provide an overarching policy framework to inform the lower level district plans, developed and implemented by the city and district councils.

The 1989 governance reforms, by reducing the units of local government in Auckland, resulted in the centralisation of power and diseconomies of scale favouring those units which held the majority of the rating base (Bush 1990, 2008; Jayne, 1989; Rouse & Putterill, 2005). In the case of the Auckland region this favoured the four city councils. The 1989 reforms consolidated the centres of competing power but the internecine power struggles between local authorities continued despite the existence of the Auckland Regional Council, to the detriment of regionalism (Bassett, 2013).

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12 The eight local authorities in Auckland were: Papakura District Council, Franklin District Council, Rodney District Council, Manukau City Council, Waitakere City Council, North Shore City Council, Auckland City Council and Auckland Regional Council (ARC).

13 Part 4, section 31

14 Auckland Regional Council duties were set out under Section 30.

15 Previously they were set out under the Town and Country Planning Act (1977).

16 Enacted in 1926 adopted from the United Kingdom.

17 Regional policy statements (RPS), regional coastal plans, and new district plans.

18 Auckland City Council, Manukau City Council, North Shore City Council, Waitakere City Council.
The Auckland Regional Council and planning

The Auckland Regional Council between 1989 and 2010 experienced several key shifts in how it planned and delivered regional services. In 1992 a big change occurred eroding its function as a regional authority. The then Minister of Local Government, Warren Cooper, did not understand the benefits of regionalism and thought that regional councils created an unnecessary tier of government (Bassett, 2013). The Auckland Regional Council henceforth was restricted to regulatory functions and had most of its assets removed which were valued at one billion (Bassett, 2013; Bush, 2008). Ostensibly this was to enable improved management of the assets and a later sell down which never occurred (Bush, 2008). The work of the 1989 reforms, led by the Minister of Local Government Michael Bassett and Brian Elwood of the Local Government Commission, which had created for the first time a single authority tasked with the region-wide issues of planning, investment, and development was undone. They had envisaged that the Auckland Regional Council would evolve into Auckland’s paramount council, and with Cooper’s changes this now became considerably harder. The issues associated with the split of the Auckland Regional Council and the creation of the Auckland Regional Services Trust in 1992 gradually prompted a belated realisation that integration was required. These shifting governance arrangements to institutions tasked with the management of the region occurred at an inopportune time which was cause for concern; Auckland experiencing 76 per cent of New Zealand’s total population growth (1991 – 2001) (Auckland Regional Council, 2010a). This was compounded by an

19 The service functions were shifted to the Auckland Regional Services Trust (ARST).
20 The Ports of Auckland, The Yellow Bus Company and Watercare Services Ltd (the predominant potable and non-potable water provider for Auckland).
21 ARST refused the asset sales intended by central government and instead transformed these assets into well performing financially viable entities. In October 1998 the assets of ARST were transferred to Infrastructure Auckland with the objective of moving away from solely managing the assets to actively investing, borrowing and expanding and improving the infrastructure – another significant step. The commercial arm of the ARC in July 2004 changed to Auckland Regional Holdings (ARH) – instigated by the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004. In April 2010 ARH reportedly held $1 billion worth of assets and in the previous financial year had made a net revenue of $31.7 million (R. Smith, 2010) for the ratepayers of the Auckland region. This history demonstrates the ability for public owned assets under the stewardship of local government agencies to deliver and expand infrastructure to meet the needs of the ratepayers within the Auckland region. Under this delivery model it reduced the risk of non-delivery of core services from private sector service providers and insured that any revenue stream accrued from such assets would be reinvested in the Auckland region.
unwillingness of the combined local authorities to engage in any cost sharing of regional facilities (Bassett, 2013).

The establishment of the Mayoral Forum and the Regional CEO’s committee sought to provide a mechanism for integration, although both were informal institutions lacking legal status (Hucker, 2000, p.2). However, in July 1998 both gained legal standing, resulting in the establishment of the Auckland Regional Growth Forum and the Auckland Regional Land Transport Committee (Hobbs, 2000). These bodies produced the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) and the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy (Auckland Regional Council, 1999b), released in draft, 1998 and finally approved in 2003. These marked the first formal collaborative regional planning exercises in Auckland which had legal standing and multi-stakeholder buy-in (Auckland Regional Council, 2010a).

The Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) was a unique, and initially non-statutory, planning approach in New Zealand tasked with setting. A vision for the way the region would accommodate population growth by

fostering the benefits of growth as well as managing its adverse impacts on the

environment, infrastructure and communities over the next 50 years (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 2007a, p.4).

The Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) took a broad, visioning approach. It viewed regional issues in an integrated manner and was written in collaboration with the other Auckland local authorities. Although this was not deemed to be a spatial plan it did provide a concept for how growth would be managed in the region (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.5). This

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22 Local Government Act (1974) s37SG
23 Local Government Act (1974) section 37SE
24 The ARGS deals with growth boundaries, areas for new urban development, urban redevelopment, business land, and important city-shaping infrastructure. It also deals with the need for and priority of infrastructure investment. Areas for protection such as coastal landscapes and native forested are identified as constraints to urban growth. However it is a spatial concept, rather than being a spatial plan (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.516).
view was supported by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009). Despite the best intentions of the Auckland Regional Growth Forum the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) failed to deliver a strong mandate for the integration of land use and transport policies exemplified by their own evaluation of the strategy (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 2007b). It identified key barriers to successful implementation:

- Limited tools and practices to allow comprehensive development in centres and corridors;
- Uncertainty around the sequencing and nature of the future growth at centres;
- A hands off regulatory regime with high costs and delays relating back to the challenges faced when preparing and/or change the statutory documents which burdens growth and development;
- High density growth not occurring in the centres where it was anticipated;
- Infrastructure projects which support intensification are not occurring due to the lack of funding, effective mechanisms and the coordination of providers and funders;
- Better alignment of policy, funding and implementation across the councils and with central government along with better collaboration with the community development sector;
- Growth in the rural hinterlands and coastal areas which it was trying to avoid;
- Poor community buy-in and acceptance of growth management and sustainability; and
- Lack of up to date information on growth, delivery and infrastructure (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 2007b, pp. 5 – 7).

These weaknesses were later reiterated by the Office of the Minister for the Environment (2009b) which cited the “weak legal relationship between the ARGS and other plans, including RMA plans, funding plans and other plans” (p.6) to deliver regional services in an integrated manner. The poor legal relationship resulted from the wording in the Local Government Act (1974)\(^{25}\) and the Resource Management Act (1991).\(^{26}\) The legislative mandates lacked adequate strength to require the content of district plans to adopt the same direction as set down in the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050

\(^{25}\)ss 66(2)(c)(i) and 74(b)(i)

\(^{26}\)prior to the Resource Management Amendment Act 2005.
A second regional planning document came in the form of the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (Auckland Regional Council, 1999a), required under the Resource Management Act (1991). It was first notified in May 1994 but took until August 1999 to become operative on account of legal disputes predominantly in relation to the use of the metropolitan urban limits as an urban growth management tool. The aim of the Auckland Regional Policy Statement was to achieve “integrated management of its natural and physical resources” [sic] (p.5) within the Auckland region and to “maintain a quality environment... and at the same time, maintain and enhance opportunities for the region’s future growth” (Auckland Regional Council, 1999a, p.5).

The Resource Management Act (1991) required that regional and district plans must not be ‘inconsistent’ with the regional policy statement. This resulted in varying levels of ‘consistency’ between the regional plans and district plans as it became a matter of legal interpretation and highly contestable (Berke, Backhurst, Laurian, Day, Crawford, Erickson, Dixon, 2006; Laurian et al., 2004).

2002 Local Government Act reforms

In 1999 a new Labour administration came to power which acknowledged the issues facing Auckland and recognised that central government leadership was necessary given the scale of the issues and challenges. First, it invested heavily in the renewal of Auckland’s infrastructure (Auckland Regional Council, 2010a). Second, it addressed local governance through the enactment of the Local Government Act (2002) applied across the country. The focus of the new Act was on sustainable development, inter-generational responsibilities, and the four community well-beings: social, economic, environmental and cultural. It provided local authorities with the ‘powers of general competence’ and with it encouraged, long-term planning, and exhorted councils to work together collaboratively and with central government (Guerin, 2002; New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2012). This broadened the roles and responsibilities of local

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(Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) i.e. failing to bind legislatively the lower order regulatory plans concerned with implementation.

27 Every region had to have a regional policy statement so as to act as an umbrella like policy document for environmental planning and policy development throughout the region.
authorities in Auckland without addressing the real issues (Craig, 2006, 2004) and led to an average annual rates increase across New Zealand of 6.8 per cent between 2002 and 2012 (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2012; N. Smith, 2012a). At the same time through the Mayoral Forum the government was supporting increased spending by local authorities for initiatives in the region. Central government was now contributing more money than it had done in past but wanted a more secure platform for coordination to occur, hints that pointed towards amalgamation in the future (Bassett, 2013).

2004 Local Government Act amendments

The Local Government Act 2002 was followed two years later by the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004). It brought two key changes in terms of the governance and planning in the Auckland region. It required “…the integration of transport and land use planning throughout the region” (Bell Gully, 2010, p.1) and reinforced the Auckland Regional Council’s role in providing regional and strategic oversight by requiring local authorities to adhere to their regional strategies and plans (McDermott, 2008). The reforms meant that the district plans were now required to ‘give effect’ to the plans above them, strengthening the hierarchical structure (Batistich & Jungen, 2010; Carruthers, 2011).

Prior to the enactment of the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004) and the Resource Management Amendment Act (2005) there was no requirement for other planning documents to give effect to the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999). Despite the requirement for the Auckland Regional Council to develop an Auckland Regional Policy Statement (Auckland Regional Council, 1999a), and for district plans to be in line with it, the integration was poor. This was partly as a result of the ineffectual wording: “district and regional plans shall

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28 Section 40(1)(a) of the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004) required local authorities in Auckland to publicly notify their planning documents by, March 31, 2005, to align with the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999). The Auckland Regional Council began instigating plan changes, such as Proposed Plan Change 6, to the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (Auckland Regional Council, 1999) which effectively sought to improve the integration between land use and transport planning in Auckland.

not be inconsistent with the ARPS”. This did not require adequate uptake of the strategy into the lower level district plans since it was not clear what was considered “inconsistent”. The changes sought to provide a hierarchical policy framework. The intent was for the Auckland Regional Council to produce the ‘big picture’ policy through documents such as the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) and the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (Auckland Regional Council, 1999a) and for local authorities to then be in accordance with these. What the changes did was reduce the autonomy of the local authorities in terms of what could be contained within their district plans: they were required to be accountable to regional planning policies and to give effect to these in their district plans (McDermott, 2008). Bell Gully (2010) argued that the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004) had not been successful in achieving integration and alignment between local plans and region-wide strategy, they cited two factors. First, the litigious and time consuming district plan change process in New Zealand to alter statutory plans. Second, the reluctance on the part of the local authorities themselves to adopt, in entirety, the strategic direction set by the Auckland Regional Council. The legislative changes under the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004 to the statutory plans are yet to take effect: plan changes to the district plans are now going “...through to the appeal stage... [but] will be some years in the resolution” (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.516). The changes to legislation at this time may have technically provided a solution, but in real terms the outcomes are mixed.

The Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004) also resulted in the reorganisation of the planning, funding, and service delivery of passenger-transport services in Auckland. This led to the establishment of the Auckland Regional Transport Authority (Bassett, 2013) which too gained its direction from the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) in terms of planning and development of the land transport system. Whilst increased funding was now provided to these regional entities it only served to exacerbate rivalries between the

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31 The ARGS was released November 1999 out of a Regional Growth Forum comprising 10 elected representatives (mayors and councillors) from the eight Local Authorities in Auckland which were involved in a three year process of consultation, technical analysis and political input to produce a growth strategy as mandated for under the section 37SE Local Government Act 1974.
local authorities and it did not repair the model created in 1989. This was predominantly illustrated through the negotiations and disputes over waterfront land ownership and redevelopment (Bassett, 2013).

In summary, the 2004 reforms manipulated the existing regulatory planning system, attempting to require local authorities to give effect to the regional vision and integrate land use and transport functions. Given the timeframes involved in carrying out plan changes to existing district plans and the poor monitoring of outcomes, it is difficult to determine whether or not the regional policies were being given effect to any more than they were prior to the 2004 amendments.

**A private sector response to Auckland’s woes**

In 2000 a collective of private sector stakeholders in Auckland, concerned with how the Auckland region was performing economically came together and formed a Trust, Competitive Auckland (McDermott, 2008). They were concerned with Auckland’s competitive advantage and economic progress:

> Competitive Auckland highlighted the need for a “world-class” city in which the business and educational sectors were fully engaged, and for cost effective and efficient infrastructure, especially in transport (McDermott, 2008, p.7).

The Competitive Auckland Trust later formed a committee to further their interests by taking a partnering and advocacy role. It was centred on delivering better economic outcomes focused on regulatory and infrastructure performance of the local authorities in Auckland, and advocating for regional approaches to economic planning and development targeting particular projects. From this the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategic Leadership Group was established in late 2001. It was set up as an informal coalition between Competitive Auckland, district, city and regional councils, Maori, education sectors and other stakeholders. It received its funding from local authorities and Industry New Zealand following a model reflecting that of the Auckland Regional Growth Forum: a group comprising key stakeholders across Auckland strategising and bringing about positive change (McDermott, 2008). In October 2002 the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategic Leadership Group released the
Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy. The strategy was a collaborative effort between stakeholders in Auckland signalling that, “This is where we want to go; these are the issues that need to be addressed” (Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy, 2002, p.2). Internal governance issues i.e. its legitimacy, informal relationships and on-going buy-in regarding funding and implementation led to the failure of both the group and the strategy. The Auckland Regional Council stepped in, forming a standing committee called the Auckland Region Economic Development Forum which invited members/representatives on to the committee:

It is against this history of independent industry [Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategic Leadership Group] and council initiatives fusing into a focused, regional initiative that the call for a metropolitan economic strategy was made. The Auckland Regional Economic Development Forum initiated the Metropolitan Auckland project to “bring to life a shared vision for the Auckland city-region’s economic future”. This project expanded to engage all councils in the region, tangata whenua, and business and other interest groups. Expert briefing papers, stakeholder consultation, and an international team of experts contributed to the deliberations (McDermott, 2008, p.366).

It was set up on July 1, 2005, and tasked with the stewardship, implementation, monitoring and review of the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy and the development of the Metro Project Action Plan – an implementation plan for the former. The ‘Metro Project Action Plan – Implementing the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy’ was released, October, 2006. The Action Plan was a unifying, collaborative and transformational approach [which] provides an unprecedented opportunity to turn this situation around for Auckland and New Zealand. This is a truly nation-building project because Auckland’s success will be New Zealand’s success (Auckland Regional Economic Development Forum, 2006, p.3).

The attempt by the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy Leadership Group and the production of the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy (2002) raised the attention of central government. They realised that “a whole-
government approach is essential for the Auckland region to achieve its economic potential” (Tizard, 2002, p.1) and without change these plans would not be implemented. This was a sign of the more ‘third-way’ inspired policies of the new centre-left Labour-led government of 1999-2008 which recognised the importance and value of regional economies (Dalziel & Saunders, 2005; Pratt & Lowndes; Schollmann & Nischalke, 2005).

In summary, the process of development of the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy exemplified a high level of private sector stakeholder concern and motivation to address and resolve Auckland issues during a time of unprecedented growth and development. However, the informal nature of the strategy meant that it failed to be implemented as with the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999). This is yet further evidence of the need for appropriate legislative mechanisms and institutional structures in place to develop and implement strategies of this nature.

The ‘One Plan’ approach

In early 2006 (as noted above) the Auckland Regional Economic Development Forum initiated the Metro Project. The Auckland Regional Council, under which these groups are situated, in October 2006 released the Metro Project Action Plan (Le Heron & McDermott, 2008). The purpose of this plan was to implement the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy (2002) thereby improving the economic prosperity of Auckland and promoting it as a world class city for doing business (McDermott, 2008, p.366). The Metro Project Action Plan (Auckland Regional Economic Development Forum, 2006) recommended the development of a One Plan. It also identified options for altering the governance arrangements in Auckland to ensure effective implementation of the ‘One Plan’. The two options consisted of: first, a stronger regional authority (a ‘Greater Auckland Council’) and second, joint powers between the seven local authorities and the Auckland Regional Council with binding decision-making responsibility. This was met with varying levels of agreement by the eight territorial local authorities (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2007, p.3). In the end, the former was agreed upon in principle (a ‘Greater Auckland Council’) by the eight
territorial local authorities and the ‘Greater Auckland Council’ would take responsibility for implementing the One Plan. In 2006 this proposal was translated into the Strengthening Auckland’s Regional Governance Proposal which then went before Parliament in January 2007 (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2007). It highlighted some of the key concerns which the group had such as:

1. There is generally adequate strategy but this is not fully integrated or aligned with an overall direction that indicates the region’s priorities [and]
2. The region fails to deliver on strategy because of fragmented powers and accountabilities for funding, service delivery, and the commitment to fund (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.104).

In July 2007 central government and the affiliated government departments endorsed the report and the recommendations for the development of the One Plan and the establishment of the Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum (2008a). The fact that central government bought in to the project was a significant achievement. On September 24, 2007, the Auckland Regional Sustainable Development Forum32 was set up as a standing committee of the Auckland Regional Council which was a “collaborative political body comprising representatives from central, regional and local government” (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2008a, p.1). It was “constituted as a successor to the Regional Growth Forum” (McDermott, 2008, p.10) and its task was to, “take a leadership role in the ongoing stewardship of the Auckland Sustainability Framework33, Regional Growth Strategy and will oversee development of One Plan for the Auckland region” (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2008a, p.1).

These relationships which evolved were described as an, “unprecedented partnership between local and central government, with a commitment to coordinated and

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32 This forum was a partnership between the eight territorial local authorities in the Auckland region, the adjoining regional council to the south (Environment Waikato) and north (Northland Regional Council), five central government departments/agencies’ (Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry for Social Development, Ministry for the Environment, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) and Tangata Whenua.

33 A high level non-regulatory regional strategy spanning the four well-beings developed in partnership between the eight local authorities to set and overarching sustainability framework to guide other plans in the region, statutory and non-statutory (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 2007b).
integrated planning and implementation across the region” (Hewison, 2008, p.20). This was borne out of mounting community pressure, “to turn the region's strategies into action and to bring an improved regional focus to decision-making” (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2008b, p.1). The Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum varied from the Auckland Regional Growth Forum due to the level of engagement and collaboration it had with the eight territorial local authorities and key central government agencies.

The One Plan’s aim was about “delivering better on existing decisions and commitments and setting a clear direction for how the region plans to achieve its aspirations for sustainable development” (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2008c, p.1). The first One Plan, heralded as “Auckland region's first single framework and plan of action for a sustainable future” (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2008a, p.1) was endorsed by the Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum on October 10, 2008, and was adopted by the Auckland Regional Council on October 28, 2008. The high level of commitment given to the Auckland One Plan stemmed from the failure of such things as the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy, previous ad hoc attempts at regional planning and secular thinking by local authorities at the cost of a more holistic and region-wide perspective. However, at the time of the One Plan (version 1) projects were limited to those already programmed for delivery (Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum, 2008b). The One Plan looked more towards obtaining optimal outcomes for those projects as opposed to visioning and decision making on new projects. The establishment of Auckland Regional Sustainability Development Forum and the One Plan exercise was not well capitalised on as a uniting and mobilising force for responding to the issues and challenges facing Auckland in any substantive manner (Le Heron & McDermott, 2008).

These processes seeking improved management of the region during the 2000s occurred at a time when the Auckland region was experiencing approximately 2.3 per cent population growth per annum (OECD, 2011). This growth rate is considerably higher compared to other North American and Australian cities.
The above forums display informal and reactionary attempts to plan and manage the region’s development in the face of inadequate governance structures and planning frameworks which were not able to deliver on the issues and challenges being faced. The plans and strategies these forums yielded suffered due to their informal and involuntary nature, limited statutory weighting and no on-going certainty of funding.

3.4 Summary

The history of planning and governance in Auckland is distinguished by poor plan implementation; opposing agendas due to *ad hoc* governance throughout the region; a lack of regional oversight in terms of growth, development, and investment; and a lack of central government intervention and leadership to help resolve the situation. These factors have compromised the ability of the institutions in Auckland to adequately manage and respond to growth-related issues and challenges in a coordinated and integration fashion. Despite incremental neoliberal projects which have attempted to re-configure institutional arrangements and state-market relations the regional attempts to plan, adequately manage growth, respond to change, and resolve the challenges and problems in the region have consequently failed (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). At best rare instances of partnership, investment and change in the region, has been seen despite the recognition by government of the importance of these factors to improve economic development. The Auckland region’s history of plan implementation is thus marked by “voluntary joint recommendations” and “missed opportunities with few tangible results” (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.105).

The following chapter outlines central government’s reaction to Auckland’s governance issues; namely the appointment of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance in 2007 that led to the establishment of a unified local government structure in Auckland, the Auckland Council (super-city) with the mandate to develop a spatial plan.
Chapter 4

The emergence of spatial planning in Auckland

4.0 Introduction

The last chapter presented an historical overview of planning and governance in the Auckland region up until 2009. This chapter focusses on how spatial planning was mandated for the Auckland Council the new unified local body established in Auckland on November 1, 2010, by central government (refer Figure 3). The chapter provides important contextual information regarding what central government sought from the concept of spatial planning in the Auckland region and highlights some shortcomings regarding legislative linkages, buy-in, and sign-off.

4.1 A Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance

This section briefly outlines the role the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance played in the lead up to governance reform in Auckland in 2010.

In October 2007 a Labour-led central government appointed the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (the Commission). This signalled frustration by central government regarding Auckland’s issues and the inability to overcome them. The Commission was given the following terms of reference:

- to receive representations on, inquire into, investigate, and report on the local government arrangements (including institutions, mechanisms and processes) that are required in the Auckland Region over the foreseeable future in order to maximise, in a cost effective manner - the current and future well-being of the region and its communities; and the region’s contribution to wider national
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objectives and outcomes (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.43).

The report was received by a National-led central government in March 2009. The Commission’s view in relation to governance and planning in Auckland was that:

Resource management and planning are core functions of local government in New Zealand, and those functions are particularly important in Auckland because of the scale and complexity of the city and region, and its rate of population and economic growth. Different local government arrangements have the potential to contribute to or detract from the current and future well-being of the region and its communities, and may be more or less cost-effective (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.513).

The report recommended a number of changes to the governance structures which included a single Auckland Council, with six councils below it with reduced powers, one mayor elected at large and a spatial plan to guide the growth and development of the region. These recommendations aimed to achieve integrated planning and decision making in Auckland. Not all of the recommendations of the Commission’s report were accepted. Cabinet deviated from the Commission’s recommendations opting for a highly centralised local/regional governance model. One single overarching governing body, the Auckland Council, 21 local boards, and seven council-controlled organisations were created. The recommendation of the Commission’s report which was adopted in its entirety was for the development of a spatial plan as a mechanism to achieve integrated planning, decision-making, and investment (refer figures 5 & 6).
The government was criticised for their deviation from the Commission’s recommendations. A Labour MP argued that they were ‘cherry-picking’ the ideas which they liked while disregarding others, centralising power, severely weakening local democracy and concentrating the power in the hands of few with no check and balances thereby undermining the Royal Commission’s findings (New Zealand Parliament, 2009, p.1). A similar criticism was levelled both at the time, and subsequently by the former Minister of Local Government, Michael Bassett (Bassett, 2013).

The changes did represent a centralisation of power to the new mayor and the Governing Body of the Auckland Council. The Royal Commission identified the need for moderate centralisation to address regional issues and challenges whilst keeping a strong secondary tier. The new highly centralised structure with a relatively weak second tier has provided for the ease of developing local and regional strategies and implementing them i.e. avoiding further negotiation. The below figure illustrates the hierarchy of plans which emerged.

**Figure 5.** Auckland Council structure. Source: Adapted from Auckland Council, 2013a.
The Commission recommended: one long term council community plan, one district plan, one rates bill, one rating authority, one regional transport authority, and one water and wastewater operator. These recommendations were largely accepted by the government. The changes to Auckland’s governance were passed in Parliament, in September, 2009. The Act outlined the roles, functions and duties which the new Auckland Council would assume. Central government and the local authorities in Auckland then worked in collaboration with the newly founded, Auckland Transition Agency which oversaw the amalgamation process. This partnership eventually produced the institutional make-up of the new Auckland Council.

4.2 The emergence of spatial planning in Auckland

The use of the phrase ‘spatial planning’ in New Zealand was first introduced by the Royal Commission in 2009. One of the key recommendations of the report was that the new Auckland Council should,

operate a hierarchical and integrated planning framework... There will be a new regional spatial plan and one district plan [unitary plan] for Auckland (Royal

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The Royal Commission’s recommendations for this were based on,

Having an integrated spatial plan and plans for strategic regional infrastructure prioritised by the Auckland Council (which would generally hold the regional purse strings) means that there would be a singular clarity of direction, with a wide range of methods by which to achieve strategic regional outcomes (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.536) [author’s emphasis].

The Royal Commission’s motive for such a plan coupled with a unified governance structure stemmed from the historical issues relating to governance and planning, as highlighted in the previous chapter, specifically:

The multitude of existing plans and associated regulation at local and regional level has led to calls for region-wide spatial planning, control of greenfield and brownfield development, and a coordinated approach to urban renewal (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.84).

This also included avoiding the “friction” that would occur between various local authorities in relation to planning and investment priorities (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.536). A call for integrated planning and governance by the Royal Commission (2009) offered a potential solution:

Environmental and social goals can no longer be seen as being in competition with economic goals, but must all be viewed as part of an integrated strategy essential to Auckland’s prosperity (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.148).

The recommendation for integrated planning and governance stemmed from a number of issues seen to be hindering Auckland’s development. The Royal Commission divided these into three categories: complexity in the planning system; consistency and diversity – the community role; and problems associated with integrated growth management (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.513).
With respect to the first point, ‘complexity in the planning system’, the Royal Commission (2009) argued that this has been borne out of the large number of decision-makers who exercise resource management powers over Auckland, compounded by overlapping jurisdictions and the proliferation of plans and rules, which resulted in costly, time consuming, and overly complex processes. The Commission argued that existing governance arrangements in Auckland were inefficient and not delivering suitable outcomes. The Royal Commission recommended: a reduction in the number of local authorities; fewer district plans and regional plans/policy statements; common standards to be adopted in district plans throughout the region; removing unnecessary overlaps in jurisdiction; and providing for a single planning agency for growth areas of regional significance (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, pp. 519 – 520).

On the second point, ‘consistency and diversity – the community role’, the Royal Commission suggested that a ‘one size fits all’ model for planning across the region would not work due to the diversity of communities and environments within the region. To address this issue the recommendation was for a variety of land use zones tailored to each particular area so as to recognise the diversity which exists in Auckland.

The third point, in relation to complexity of planning in Auckland regarded integrated growth management. The Royal Commission acknowledged that “Auckland has its own methods for developing policy to manage regional growth” (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.527) but suggested also that:

These methods while commendable have fallen short when it comes to implementation... [due to a] lack of synchronisation between the regional council, the territorial authorities, and major infrastructure providers, all of which have various planning instruments, growth policies, and investment plans at different stages of development (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.527).

One of the issues signalled was the lack of policy alignment between authorities which frustrated the regional partnerships (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). To resolve this, the creation of a unitary authority for Auckland was
recommended (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.531). It also suggested a number of steps to resolve the problems of integrated growth management. Some of these included:

- an agreed vision for Auckland;
- the production of a spatial plan with a 30-50 year timeframe;
- work between the existing local territorial authorities on the above two points prior to the inception of the new Auckland Council;
- the identification of an MUL [metropolitan urban limit] and development opportunities within it;
- an infrastructure investment plan to support the spatial plan, identifying projects, timing, priority and funding where appropriate; and
- That all existing plans such as the RPS [regional policy statement] give full effect to the spatial plan (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, pp. 532 – 533).

The Royal Commission also saw significant gains to be made in relation to the Resource Management Act (1991) processes as a result of having a region wide plan administered by one unitary authority. It would avoid litigation between authorities which had existed between the local level and the regional level (as outlined in the previous sections). Creating this single, region-wide plan, it was argued would contribute to better institutional working and allow for more focus on outcomes:

[It] maximises the opportunity for an integrated approach to be taken to the management of natural resources and environmental values, integrate land use planning with infrastructure investment across the region, producing better environmental outcomes (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p. 539).

To achieve integrated governance and planning Auckland required “a hierarchical system of plans, which are few in number and closely interlinked” (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.347). To instigate such an approach required two elements, as recommended by the Royal Commission (2009). First, the region
required one unitary authority to be formed so as to avoid the proliferation of plans and avoid the subsequent legislative issues these plans might encounter from local government and private sector; and allow for the unification of roles between both local and regional authorities in terms of policy, funding, and implementation. This provides the platform for a single strategic vision for the region. Second, the new unitary authority had to have a means by which to set out a vision for the future i.e. a regional spatial plan:

Governance reforms, including the requirement for an Auckland spatial plan, provide an opportunity to address this, and also provide a new context for the relationship between central government and the Auckland Council (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a, p.3).

The Royal Commission’s recommendations for creating structures which improve integration and coordination, spatial planning included, respond strongly to the longstanding issues of governance and planning in Auckland as highlighted in the previous chapter. Emphasised within the literature review also, was the need for integration, an outcomes focus, and the alignment of key service providers within a redesigned institutional structure to enable spatial planning.

**The Government’s view**

Central government largely agreed with the Royal Commission’s recommendations for a spatial plan. It argued that a:

Multi-party mechanism is necessary for getting the economic and environmental results we expect from our largest city. The Government expects the spatial plan to be about the creation of value, rather than just managing the impacts of growth on natural resources (N. Smith, 2010a, p.1).

The Minister for the Environment suggested that “Spatial planning presents an opportunity to agree how best to use incentives to drive change rather than rely on rigid rules” (N. Smith, 2010a, p.1). The government saw spatial planning as a departure from previous prescriptive, rigid and rules-based planning approaches. Spatial planning offered a more simple, integrated and fluid approach to growth and development.
Furthermore the government recognised that “for too long have high level plans for the development of Auckland been devised, only to then flounder at the implementation stage” (N. Smith, 2010a, p.1). These issues were highlighted again in 2011 by the government:

Planning and infrastructure investment in Auckland have struggled to match and capitalise on its scale and rapid growth. This is partly because of an inability to set and implement regional strategic direction as a result of the previous, fragmented local government structure (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a, p.3).

This highlights two initial characteristics sought from spatial planning in Auckland: first that it is high level and integrative, and second, it has a strong focus on implementation. On this basis, spatial planning in Auckland would:

- agree and set an overarching strategic direction;
- implement that direction through its plans and funding;
- implement that direction through its subsidiary bodies (e.g. CCOs);
- agree with other actors (e.g. central government, infrastructure providers), what they will deliver, when and where; and
- ensure that all this happens in a coordinated way (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.3).

The Minister for the Environment suggested that:

spatial planning could tighten the overall urban planning system for Auckland... reducing the number of strategic plans required by legislation. I see no reason for so many plans and planning processes. One strategic level plan that integrates across infrastructure, land use, housing, business and other functions should be all that’s needed. We are also looking at how to ensure the agreed spatial plan is delivered through lower level plans and decision making. This will be critical to delivering results on the ground (N. Smith, 2010a, p.1).
The Cabinet Implementation of Auckland Governance Reforms Committee, Spatial Planning Options for the Auckland Council (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a), outlined the existing issues relating to the statutory frameworks and governance structures in Auckland which would have to be resolved first. The report highlighted: the lack of consistency between plans, fragmented among multiple parties who individually plan and invest for growth; various pieces of legislation forming the planning frameworks resulting in multiple legal purposes, processes and criteria; and the absence of decision-making mechanisms to enable agreement on, and then implement a consistent strategic direction across all plans to address growth related issues across broad ranging objectives. Spatial planning could offer a solution to these however the necessary legislative apparatus was not in place resulting in:

- limited ability for the Auckland Council to implement a strategic direction consistently through its plans and decision making – there are currently no legislative linkages\textsuperscript{36} between strategies and plans; \textit{and}
- no basis/mechanism to engage with and inform other parties so as to agree the type, scale, timing or location of investment decisions, to better coordinate activities (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.4).

If spatial planning was mandated for under these conditions there would be “no guarantee to central government as to what the scope and direction would be” (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.4). From these findings it was clear that at least central government officials accepted that legislative reform was necessary for spatial planning in Auckland.

\textsuperscript{36} The term “legislative linkages” refers to the spectrum of legal strength of relationship between plans, which provides the legal basis for the spatial plan and its strategic direction to influence other plans. This spectrum spans a range of legal threshold tests from high (e.g. recognise and provide; give effect), medium (e.g. not be inconsistent), to low (e.g. have regard; take into account; be informed by). This affects the contestability of decisions in the Courts (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009b, p.4).
A cabinet committee

In the year prior to the establishment of the Auckland Council, central government developed legislation that would enable the council to function. The Prime Minister set up the Cabinet Committee on Implementation of Auckland Governance Reforms (the Cabinet Committee) with the terms of reference:

To consider all matters relating to the development and implementation of the government’s response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance, and the transition to the new Auckland Council, including the development of the Auckland spatial plan [sic] (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2012, p.1).

On April 6, 2009, the Cabinet Committee (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009b) met and determined that the functions of Auckland Council, as per the Royal Commission’s recommendations, would include the development of a single spatial plan for Auckland. This was on the basis that integrated planning was a key factor to overcoming the issues facing Auckland’s economic performance (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a).

On May 13, 2009, the Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill was introduced to Parliament. The Bill was the first to set out the governance structure for the new council, and the roles and functions of the mayor, councillors and local boards.

On July 30, 2009, the Cabinet Committee determined that an investigation into spatial planning and integrated planning in Auckland was required. The Cabinet Committee invited the Minister for the Environment to consider these matters as part of the Phase Two Resource Management reform process (urban work stream) (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009b). The Cabinet Committee requested to be advised on:

- whether or not a spatial plan should replace existing strategies;
- the legal relationship between spatial plans and other plans;
- the relationship between spatial plans and national planning documents (i.e. National Policy Statements, Government Policy Statements and National Infrastructure Plans); and
consultation and appeal rights for the implementation of such a plan.

On September 4, 2009, the Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill was reported back to Parliament. It contained no mention of a requirement to develop a spatial plan for Auckland. Then, following this on September 17, the Cabinet Committee sought further information on:

1. comparable international examples of planning jurisdictions;

2. the plans in Auckland and how they relate to each other;

3. the appropriate legal status of a spatial plan in Auckland in relation to the other plans in existence; and


The Minister for the Environment, in consultation with the Ministry for Transport and the Department of Internal Affairs, was to report back on October 15, 2009, with a report outlining these matters. In the interim the Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill was assented on September 22, and passed into law on October 29, 2009, containing no requirement for the development of a spatial plan.37

Legislative provision for the Auckland spatial plan

On October 15, 2009, the Cabinet Committee met, received the ‘Spatial Planning Options for the Auckland Council’ (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a) (the Report). The Report argued that a spatial plan for Auckland would provide high level, forward looking, regionally significant direction to other plans, while leaving the detail to be contained in lower level implementation plans (e.g. the District Plan). In particular, this direction would enable effective management of rapid growth in the region, and integrate and target land use planning and infrastructure investment, and sequence

37 Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009
development and investment over time to maximise benefits (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.1).

The Report provided five options in relation to how spatial planning might be adopted as a key function of the new Auckland Council. The preferred interim option was “A statutory spatial plan with no additional or strengthened legislative linkages to other planning, under the Auckland legislation (third Bill on Auckland governance)” but that consideration should be given to replacing the “existing strategic plans, legislative links, appeal rights, and consultative procedures through the phase two resource management reform process” (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.10). This was on the basis that it would provide:

sufficient certainty for the ATA [Auckland Transition Agency] and existing councils to guide preparatory work for the new Auckland Council. Addresses risks of the new Council coming into an unclear planning environment. This option provides for further exploration of other options... without predetermining the outcomes of further work. It addresses the risk of unintended consequences from rushed work to meet the short timeframe for inclusion in third Bill on Auckland governance (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, pp.10 – 12).

The rationale for this (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a) (option 5) was unclear. At one point in the report it stated that more time would allow;

proper consideration of how a spatial plan could further simplify and make the planning framework more effective... potentially replacing existing strategic plans, establishing legislative linkages between plans, and establishing appropriate appeal rights (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.13).

But at the same time the author(s) accepted that:

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38 Mandating for the production of a spatial plan for Auckland prior to fully understanding how it would be integrated both within the existing planning frameworks and within legislative frameworks which set out both the statutory requirements for the development and implementation of such plans.
A voluntary plan, or a statutory plan without effective legislative linkages, would not necessarily overcome the issues associated with implementing an overarching strategic direction through all council plans and decision making (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.8).

The Report also acknowledged from past experience that implementation often fails without legislative linkages:

In Auckland, there is only a weak legal relationship between the ARGS and other plans, including RMA plans, funding plans and other plans. As a result, implementation of the ARGS has been weak (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.6).

The Report then contradicted itself stating that “it is important to note that it has not been established that legal links are definitely required to ensure sufficient implementation of the Auckland Council’s strategic direction” (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.17). Although no additional and/or strengthened options for how the Auckland spatial plan might be provided a legislative framework were put forward. The only solution offered was that these considerations would be made as part of the Phase Two Resource Management Reform process.

...related issues including considering whether a spatial plan should replace other existing strategic plans, legislative links among plans, appeal rights, and consultative procedures would be considered through Phase Two of the resource management reform process (urban work stream) (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.2).

This statement showed that the Minister and officials saw little urgency in creating legislative frameworks to support the spatial plan in the interim period, prior to the Phase Two Resource Management Reform process taking place even though the Auckland Council would have a spatial plan without legislative linkages. Furthermore, the Minister seemed to take limited regard to the fact that even the Phase Two Resource Management Reform process might not provide legislative linkages for the
The emergence of spatial planning in Auckland.\textsuperscript{39} The report, despite acknowledging the importance of legislative linkages to achieve implementation also signalled a lack of urgency as it called for extended timeframes to allow further analysis:

In order for a spatial plan to give direction and guidance to other plans, it needs to have influence. Further analysis is required on the appropriate statutory basis for providing a consistent and clear legal relationship (legislative linkages) between plans prepared under different statutes, to enable the direction from the spatial plan to feed through other plans, and decision making (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.9).

The Cabinet Committee on October 15, 2009, accepted the recommendations of the Report choosing option five as explained above (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009b). This meant avoiding the need for “[d]etailed, comprehensive analysis and assessment”, but yet allowing a quick fix in relation to future visioning for the new institutional arrangements (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.13). The Cabinet Committee determined that:

- a statutory spatial plan with no additional or strengthened legislative linkages to other planning be provided for within Local Government (Auckland Law Reform) Bill (Option 5 above), with the following attributes:
  - 7.1.1 be a function of the Auckland Council;
  - 7.1.2 set out the strategic direction for the Auckland region;
  - 7.1.3 be part of the planning framework for the Auckland region;
  - 7.1.4 be available to inform other Auckland Council plans with the strategic direction;
  - 7.1.5 be developed using the special consultative procedure contained in the Local Government Act 2002;

\textsuperscript{39} As at October 2009 it was not publicly known as to the timeframes with which the government was working towards in regard to implementing Phase Two Resource Management reforms. This adds further doubt over when these reforms may come to fruition and concern over the status of the Spatial Plan in the short – medium term.
7.1.6 replace the requirement for Auckland Regional Growth Strategy under the Local Government Act 1974 (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009b, pp. 3 – 4).

It appeared at this time (prior to the inauguration of the Auckland Council on November 1, 2010) that the government was concerned primarily with a mandate for the development of a spatial plan but not with providing the necessary levers to ensure implementation. This meant that the new Auckland Council would be unable to implement the Auckland (spatial) Plan in a statutory context. The spatial plan void of any legislative weighting means that it cannot inform: resource consent decisions; Environment Court decisions; or lower order district plans, or regional policy statements. Additionally, the Minister for the Environment in May 2009 acknowledged that the Phase Two Resource Management Reforms would take time to come to fruition “Due to the detailed and complex nature of the second phase of the RMA reform programme, work will progress at a more modest pace” (Smith, 2009, p. 1). The Minister indicated further that:

the legislative vehicle for making any subsequent changes to legislative links to other plans or for replacing other plans will be investigated as part of Phase Two of the resource management reform process. There may be a need to amend legislation, possibly the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 to establish legislative linkages between the spatial plan and other plans... any Bill to achieve this would not be before Parliament until early 2011, maybe later, delaying establishing or strengthening legislative linkages. Risks caused by delay will need to be monitored (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.13) [author’s emphasis].

Cabinet too, in 2010, identified the legislative vacuum in which the Auckland spatial plan would be developed and implemented if changes were not made, but it noted that options for the Resource Management Stage Two Reforms would not be delivered until March 2011 and legislative changes enacted in June 2011 (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b). In fact, only by December 5, 2012, was the Phase Two Resource Management Reform Bill released.
The Bill contained only one reference to the Auckland spatial plan. It set out that when the hearings panel was deliberating over the new Unitary Plan for Auckland (the replacement regulatory plan across the entire region) the panel “must ensure that regard has been had to the spatial plan for Auckland” (Section 140(3)). This reflected a change in central government’s attitude regarding the importance the spatial plan. The requirement in legislation for ‘regard’ to be given raised the ascendency of the spatial plan both statutorily and in the view of central government demonstrating potential increased policy alignment between the two tiers of government in the region.

**Use of existing legislative linkages – an opportunity**

The decision was made to put on-hold legislative changes to provide the spatial plan in Auckland statutory effect. When this was decided it appeared that political parochialism or expediency intervened resulting in limited regard being given to the opportunities which existed under the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004) (which had provided the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) with legislative linkages). This section briefly outlines the opportunity that the 2004 Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act could have provided had it not been repealed.

The Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) was developed under the Local Government Act (1974) (s37SE). This, like the Auckland spatial plan now, lacked legislative linkages to regulatory plans developed under the Resource Management Act (1991). Central government had recognised this shortcoming, and on June 1, 2004 enacted the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act. This provided legislative linkages between the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) and the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (Auckland Regional Council, 1999a) and the district plans (the former two being plans written under the Resource Management Act (1991). Previously the latter documents were required to ‘have regard’ to the growth strategy; it now required them to ‘give effect’ to it. Section 40 (1) (a) of the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004) also required land transport and land use changes to Auckland planning documents whereby, “giving effect, in an integrated manner, to the...
growth concept in the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy prepared under section 37SE of the Local Government Act 1974”. The change only required existing plans to give effect to the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (1999) i.e. placing no requirement on subsequent regional growth strategies to be given effect to (s39(1)): “[It] did not require future plan changes to implement subsequent regional growth strategies; nor did it set up an ongoing legislative linkage between the RGS and plans prepared under the RMA” (Carruthers, 2011, p.17).

These provisions were repealed by the Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act on November 1, 2010.40 However, sections 80 and 81 of the Act remained requiring the Auckland Council to give effect to the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) until the spatial plan had been adopted by the Auckland Council “The regional growth strategy has no effect once the Auckland Council adopts the spatial plan”.41 This suggests that central government at the time did see the spatial plan as the successor to the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999).

Under the provisions of the Resource Management Act (1991) the current spatial plan is classified under “management plans and strategies”42 due to it being prepared under “other Acts” which Auckland Council in its planning and decision-making processes “shall have regard to”. This results in less weight being afforded to the spatial plan than for example if the wording of the legislation was ‘give effect to’ or ‘not be inconsistent with’. The legislative linkages under the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act (2004) for the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) could have provided the Auckland (spatial) Plan with sufficient legislative linkages. It was stated by the Office of the Minister for the Environment in 2009 that:

Statutory provision also provides a strong basis to support the needed shifts in focus and practice through the spatial plan that will help make the changes in the local government structure for the region more effective (Office of the Minister for the Environment, 2009a, p.13).

40 s113(1)
41 s80(3)
42 s61(2)(a)(i); s66(2)(c)(i); s74(2)(b)(i))
Central government was aware of the risks posed in terms of implementation of a plan which had weak legislative linkages. Central government chose not to utilise these existing legislative frameworks. Why this was the case remains unclear, particularly given that the spatial plan was replacing the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) – as outlined above and that an Urban Technical Advisory Group had been appointed by the Minister to provide expert recommendations in this area.

What the Urban Technical Advisory Group recommended

The Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010) recommended mechanisms to be put in place to enable implementation of the spatial plan. Ultimately, the government did not accept these recommendations.

On January 28, 2010, the Minister for the Environment announced that there was ‘New work underway on Phase II of RMA reforms’ in the form of two Technical Advisory Groups (infrastructure and urban) on the basis that:

There are major question marks over the way the Resource Management Act is working in urban areas... I don't think we have the incentives right for developers to do the best urban design in our largest cities. There are also questions about the policy of metropolitan urban limits, the effect they have on section prices and the negative flow-on effects to the broader economy. Nor do we have a good track record of having the right infrastructure in place at the right time for supporting urban development... These are complex issues that require careful deliberation and expert input (N. Smith, 2010b, p.1).

The Minister recognised the ‘broader economy’ in which Auckland plays a vital role. He highlighted two key challenges which Auckland faces; urban growth and infrastructure provision, arguing that if these can be resolved through the proposed legislative reforms then Auckland’s economic performance can be improved. The scope provided by the Minister for the Urban Technical Advisory Group was to look at:

the merits of tools currently available for implementing urban planning and design... It will also look at integrating and align[ing] planning statutes and
The emergence of spatial planning in Auckland

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Planning mechanisms (specifically the RMA, Local Government Act and Land Transport Management Act) (N. Smith, 2010b, p.1).

The report was released in July 2010 (Urban Technical Advisory Group, 2010)\(^43\) providing recommendations across five key themes. Two of the five themes are outlined below in Figure 7.

| Greater voice for central government: |
| Terms of reference: | (a) achieve a greater voice/role for central government on a project or place specific level, particularly in respect of projects for which central government is largely the funder; |
| | (b) make provision for a greater degree of central government direction. (UTAG, 2010, p.13) |

**Figure 7.** The Urban Technical Advisory Group recommendations: Greater voice for central government. Source: Urban Technical Advisory Group, 2010.

This would require the new Auckland spatial plan to have government sign-off prior to it being adopted by the Auckland Council. This recommendation signalled a desire to link planning and policy direction between local government and central government so as to give central government a greater voice in Auckland given central governments level of influence on Auckland related matters (noted in Chapter 1). The Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010) went on to provide 11 recommendations specifically regarding spatial planning as set out by Minister’s terms of reference (refer Figure 8).

\(^{43}\) ‘Report of The Minister for The Environment’s Urban Technical Advisory Group’
Spatial plans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms of reference:</th>
<th>(a) What role can a spatial plan fulfil?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) How should the key planning instruments under the RMA, LGA and LTMA be better aligned? Is there a better way to bring the different plan processes together?</td>
</tr>
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**Figure 8.** The Urban Technical Advisory Group recommendations: Spatial plans. Source: Urban Technical Advisory Group, 2010, p.33.

These recommendations are summarised below:

1. Require a Government Policy Statement [GPS] setting out Crown (or national) objectives for Auckland to be prepared prior to the preparation of a spatial plan;

2. Require Crown endorsement of the GPS objectives in the spatial plan prior to final adoption by the Council;

3. Integrate the Regional Land Transport Strategy into the Spatial Plan, and replace the Regional Policy Statements and District Plans with a single Unitary Plan;


5. Require the spatial plan to be reviewed every 3 years;

6. Government develops mechanisms to direct its entities, agencies and departments, and funding agencies to give effect to GPS for Auckland and to be consistent with the adopted spatial plan;

7. Remove the requirement for the preparation of a separate Regional Land transport Strategy;

8. Require statutory linkage with the Long Term (funding) Plans;

9. Include within the GPS for Auckland specific provisions on urban growth management requiring the provision of suitable land for urban development for at least 20 years; and
10. Require Crown endorsement that the GPS objectives have been met in the spatial plan prior to final adoption by the Council.

These recommendations further emphasised the need for integrated central government and local government policy and planning work so as to overcome the issues and challenges facing Auckland. The recommended means by which to solve this perceived problem was to require central government (Crown) to sign-off on the Auckland spatial plan including legislative linkages to simplify the range of regional strategies in place. These two steps were viewed as vital to ensuring the spatial plan’s implementation. In September 2010 the Minister for the Environment\(^4\) agreed, stating that:

> Spatial planning is about getting those main decision-makers involved in the development of a region, collaborating to achieve a long term vision. This will necessitate negotiation and agreement between central and local government, the private sector and other key stakeholders on what we are all trying to achieve (N. Smith, 2010a, p.1).

On July 15, 2010, the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act was amended, ‘to require the Auckland Council to adopt a spatial plan for Auckland’.\(^5\)

### 4.3 A mandate for a spatial plan emerges

This section addresses central government’s response following these recommendations. In October 2010 the Ministry for the Environment responded to the Technical Advisory Group reports. For the first time the key characteristics of spatial planning were set out. The plan must be:

- multi-party – a tool for collaboration between the key decision-makers;
- focused on the long-term development of cities and regions and improving investment certainty;

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\(^4\) Hon Dr. Nick Smith

\(^5\) Part 1, section 3 (e).
• a guide to the location and timing of future infrastructure, services and investment that can be used to provide for the co-location of infrastructure where this is appropriate;

• evidence based;

• integrated across sectors – e.g., transport, land use, housing, education, funding policy and regulatory policy – to achieve broad outcomes (economic, social, environmental, cultural);

• strategic – provides direction to regional funding policy, regulation and other; and

• implementation plans (e.g., transport, economic development) (Ministry for the Environment, 2010a, p.23).

In their view spatial planning is not, “prescriptive regulation” or “only about land use” (Ministry for the Environment, 2010a, p.23) and instead it:

- presents the opportunity to maximise the value of investing in costly, long-lived, infrastructure, including leveraging greater productivity gains by coordinating investment decisions, where appropriate (Ministry for the Environment, 2010a, p.44).

By applying such a concept the Ministry for the Environment (2010a) argued that it would allow the urban planning system the opportunity to: improve productivity; enable development; get value for money from infrastructure investment; deliver quality built environment; and achieve desired social, cultural and economic outcomes. For this to be achieved, as outlined by the Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010), changes to the legislative frameworks would be required and to do so this demanded “careful consideration of how the Auckland spatial plan fits in with, and relates to, New Zealand’s broader planning and infrastructure investment framework” (Ministry for the Environment, 2010b, p.22). The following options were presented:46

1. Retain the current spatial planning legislation, which provides flexibility for the Auckland Council in developing and implementing the spatial plan.

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46 ‘Building competitive cities: Reform of the urban and infrastructure planning system – A Discussion Document’
Alternatively:

2. Simplify the planning framework for Auckland by:
   i. Using the Auckland spatial plan to incorporate either the:
      a. the Regional Land Transport Strategy and Auckland Regional Policy Statement or
      b. the Regional Land Transport Strategy [UTAG recommendation]
   ii. replacing RMA plans (ie, regional policy statement, regional and district plans) for Auckland with a requirement for a single unitary plan [UTAG recommendation].

3. Improve the effectiveness of the Auckland Spatial Plan by giving it an appropriate level of statutory influence on regional and local RMA, LGA and LTMA plans by requiring these to either:
   i. ‘give effect to’ the Auckland spatial plan or
   ii. ‘be consistent with’ the Auckland spatial plan [UTAG recommendation] or
   iii. ‘having regard for’ the Auckland spatial plan
   iv. consider the Auckland spatial plan on a voluntary basis (Ministry for the Environment, 2010b, p.24).

These alternatives lacked the same strength as those recommended by the Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010). These suggest that Cabinet and government officials, despite recognising the potential a spatial planning mechanism could offer Auckland, were wary of providing too much power. The government remained conscious that it had to make key decisions about:

- whether the spatial plan should supplement or replace existing regional strategic planning instruments (such as the Regional Land Transport Strategy and Regional Policy Statement) to simplify the planning system;
- the strength of the relationship between the spatial plan and other regulatory instruments (such as district plans) to make it more effective;
- the relationship between the spatial plan and national-level planning and strategic documents (such as the National Infrastructure Plan (NIP),
Transport Government Policy Statement (GPS), and national policy statements under the RMA) to provide clearer direction;

- the role that central government will play in developing and implementing the spatial plan in Auckland to improve co-ordination between central and local government; and

- appeal rights on the spatial plan to reduce costly litigation and drawn out processes

- the applicability of spatial planning to other areas of New Zealand (Ministry for the Environment, 2010b, p.22).

On November 1, 2010, the government decided through amendments to the Local Government (Auckland Council) Amendment Act 2010 including, Part 6 section 79 ‘Spatial plan for Auckland’ and, section 80 ‘Development, adoption, and implementation of spatial plan’. Part 6 section 79 (s) stated that a spatial plan would:

(a) set a strategic direction for Auckland and its communities that integrates social, economic, environmental, and cultural objectives;

(b) outline a high-level development strategy that will achieve that direction and those objectives;

(c) enable coherent and co-ordinated decision-making by the Auckland Council (as the spatial planning agency) and other parties to determine the future location and timing of critical infrastructure, services, and investment within Auckland in accordance with the strategy; and

(d) provide a basis for aligning the implementation plans, regulatory plans, and funding programmes of the Auckland Council (Local Government (Auckland Council) Act, 2009, P6 s79 (3) a – d).

The Prime Minister, at the inauguration ceremony of Auckland Council on November 1, 2010, stated:

The Auckland spatial plan will make an important contribution to our broader economic growth objectives... I pledge my support, and the Government's
support, to work with Len and his council to create Auckland’s plan for the future (Rudman, 2012, p.1).

Despite this expression of support, legislative linkages and formal sign-off by central government on the spatial plan were not included in this amendment.

Central government engagement in Auckland’s spatial plan

As outlined earlier, central government acknowledged that for a spatial plan in Auckland to be implemented it has to be “[d]eveloped and implemented via collaboration between multiple parties and provide a mechanism for agreeing joint priorities, actions and investment (Ministry for the Environment, 2010a, p.23). To facilitate central government’s engagement with the spatial plan Cabinet requested two reports.

The first report47 required the Minister of Local Government, in consultation with the other relevant ministers, to report back regarding the government’s objectives for Auckland (to feed into the development of the Auckland (spatial) Plan). The second48 required the Minister of Local Government, in consultation with the Minister for the Environment and other related Ministers, to report back to the Cabinet Committee49 before November 30, 2010, regarding options for engagement with the first Auckland spatial plan. The outcome was ‘Auckland Governance: Central Government Engagement with the First Auckland Spatial Plan’ (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b) released on November 1, 2010. It set out three proposed principles for the Auckland spatial plan:

- the spatial plan is a key vehicle for negotiating and agreeing joint strategy priorities and actions between central government and the Auckland Council;

- if implemented successfully the spatial plan can also help meet government objectives; and

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47 April 27, 2009.
48 Requested, October 12, 2010.
49 Cabinet Committee on Implementation of Auckland Governance Reform.
• developing a mutually agreed evidence base will facilitate better decision making and avoid duplication of effort (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b, p.1).

The Cabinet briefing paper clearly identified that the Auckland Council must “endeavour to secure and maintain the support” of central government in the plans implementation (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b, p.3). Furthermore, it set out core elements in which it expected the Auckland spatial plan to include which would allow for central government to support it. These elements include: setting a robust, achievable, and durable approach to managing Auckland’s growth; receiving buy-in from the Auckland public; identifying where the Auckland Council proposes that central government funds significant infrastructure, sets out an aspiration which is affordable given funding availability, is complementary with central governments objectives, interventions, funding and decision-making for Auckland and New Zealand, seeks to maximise existing infrastructure investments, and reduces regulatory costs (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b, pp. 7 – 8).

On November 3, 2010, a letter was sent by the Minister of Local Government to the new Mayor of Auckland Council (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011c). It stated, “One of the most important roles of the Auckland Council, led by you, will be to articulate the 20-30 year vision for Auckland through the Auckland spatial plan” (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a, p.1). The purpose of this letter was to communicate decisions made by Cabinet on November 1, 2010 regarding how central government would engage with the Auckland Council in the development of the spatial plan:

Cabinet agreed that central government has an interest in participating in the development of an effective Auckland spatial plan and that it will be a key vehicle for developing an integrated approach to responding to and managing urban growth (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a, p.1).

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50 It also stated that there is “no requirement for the plan to be developed within a specific timeframe” (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b, p.3), however whilst there is no date specified, “it is intended to provide a basis for aligning other plans prepared by the Auckland Council… these plans would include the Long Term Council Community Plan… some of these are required by the end of 2011” (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b, pp.4 – 5).
The letter also included government objectives in relation to ministerial input into the spatial plan. It stated that an Auckland central government-local government forum would be established for formal engagement/involvement between Ministers and Auckland Council.

This affirmed central government’s recognition that central government involvement and buy-in for implementation was vital, despite formal mechanisms for engagement not being in place. Ideally, this scenario of buy-in would enable alignment of central government objectives with that of the Auckland spatial plan. However, past experience of informal relationships of this kind in Auckland have largely been ineffective, for example, the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (1999).

### 4.4 Summary

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009) recommended governance reform and the development of a spatial plan in Auckland to better overcome the issues and challenges facing the region. Cabinet accepted the recommendation to develop a spatial plan recognising the value such a mechanism offered in relation to aligning decision-making, integrating policy and planning, and coordinating investment in Auckland between Auckland Council and central government. The underlying ideology of joined-up thinking underpinning these recommendations followed in a similar vein to previous projects such as the establishment of the Auckland Regional Growth Forum in 1999 (discussed in Chapter 3) but in a far more comprehensive manner (Dalziel & Saunders, 2005; Le Heron & McDermott, 2008).

The attempt to achieve joined-up thinking in the region went beyond solely local government in Auckland. The Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010) recommended legislative linkages and formal central government buy-in and sign-off on the plan to achieve this multi-scalar integrated planning and decision-making. Central government at the time recognised the importance of the recommendations but never adopted them in any way. Thus, the Auckland spatial plan exists without any formal central
government buy-in, sign-off and alignment, and without legislative linkages. As highlighted in the previous chapter, these informal relationships historically have not resulted in enduring partnerships and nor have they led to successful implementation of outcomes.

Despite this, Auckland Council still had the mandate to develop a spatial plan. On March 18, 2011, the Auckland Council released a discussion document on the Auckland (spatial) Plan entitled ‘Auckland Unleashed – The Auckland Plan Discussion Document’. By September 20, 2011, the Auckland Council had consulted the public of Auckland on this discussion document. It received 8,500 submissions, drafted the first Auckland spatial plan, and released the draft Auckland Plan (Auckland Council, 2012a) for further consultation (Thompson, 2011). The draft received 1,966 submissions and was adopted by the Governing Committee of the Auckland Council on March 29, 2012 (Auckland Council, 2012b).

This research is designed to examine the emergence of spatial planning in New Zealand and highlight what central government sought from the concept, as contextualised by the previous three chapters. The next chapter details the methodology chosen for gathering and interpreting the research data.

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51 Referred hereafter to as just the ‘Auckland Plan’.
Chapter 5

Methodology & Method

5.0 Introduction

The aims of this chapter are to set out the relevant methodological considerations and discuss the method used in this research inquiry. This chapter briefly explains how this research has taken a constructivist epistemological stance, an interpretivist theoretical perspective and a naturalistic methodology using grounded theory method to investigate and answer the research question. This approach to research (Chenail, 2009; Hay, 2002) is discussed following Creswell (2003) who asked “what knowledge claims are being made by the researcher?... What strategies of inquiry will inform the procedure?... [and] what methods of data collection will be used?” (p.5). It is argued here that this approach is the most suitable for answering the research question: How has spatial planning in Auckland been conceived? It is also the most suitable for achieving the two objectives of the study. First, to understand what is sought from spatial planning, and second to critique spatial planning in the context of Auckland under the reconfigured governance arrangements. In this chapter it is held that the nature of reality cannot be defined by super-imposing a theoretical lens upon it (Firestone, 1987; House, 1994). Instead, to answer the research question and fulfil the objectives, we must draw on real life experiences of actors so as to provide rich and practically grounded insight for which a naturalistic methodological approach drawing on qualitative data is best suited (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

5.1 Methodology

The methodology is the research lens which is applied by the researcher, casting a particular philosophical standpoint over the research undertaken (Scott & Marshall,
This then determines the way in which the data are collected, analysed and evaluated. Mertens (2005) refers to the art of research entailing a process of systematic inquiry based on collection, analysis and interpretation, which enables us to describe, understand, predict, control, or even empower individuals. Crotty (2003) advises to look first at what methodologies and methods will be employed to undertake the research. Then secondly, justify the chosen methodological approach in terms of why it is the best for the overarching research question. Flyvbjerg (2006) supports this pragmatic approach:

Good social science is problem driven and not methodology driven in the sense that it employs those methods that for a given problematic, best help answer the research questions at hand (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.242).

The naturalistic approach, given the strong relationship this has with interpretivism and analytic inductivism, provides for flexible research design which inquiries into a relatively new and un-researched sphere of social life (Gillies, 1993; Patton, 2002; Tushnet, 1983). This requires the use of exploratory methods (Blumer, 1969) so as to obtain a rich description (Geertz, 1973) and a clear picture into what is going on in the particular research area (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Neuman, 1997). This approach, as noted by House (1994) (cited in: Sale et al., 2002), does not require the researcher to focus unduly on methods and methodological approaches which were borne out of the perceived shortcomings and inadequacies of certain methods, because they are “everyday work tools” (House, 1994, p.20) to be used by the researcher to get to the “issues of content (and value)” (House, 1994, p.20) (refer also: Sale et al., 2002, p.44).

My research therefore adopts a qualitative approach. This approach follows a line of enquiry and a process of understanding which is “based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem” (Creswell, 1994, p.15). Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil (2002) describe the qualitative approach as being concerned with “the changing nature of reality created through people’s experiences – an evolving reality in which the researcher and researched are mutually interactive and inseparable”
The aim of my research is to understand how a spatial plan in the case of Auckland, under new governance structures, might be able to better address the challenges facing Auckland. Hence, only through interaction with the actors in and beyond Auckland can the intrinsic and intertwined fabric of society and its issues and problems be understood (Peattie, 1983).

As noted by Miles & Huberman, (1999) qualitative data gathering exercises are “a source of well grounded, rich description and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts” (p.3). They are “particularly useful for understanding issues in which processes and connections are important” (Peattie, 1983, p.232). The qualitative approach toward researching urban planning dilemmas has gained increased momentum (Miles & Huberman, 1999) partly as a result of it enabling the researcher to “go beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks” (p.3).

Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a holistic, systematic, and integrated overview of the context being inquired into (Berg, 2004; Gray, 2004; Gummesson, 1991; Miles & Huberman, 1999). As Gartner & Birley (2002, p. 394) pointed out, “…there is typically an immersion into the muddled circumstances of a...phenomenon that is cluttered and confusing. Part of the difficulty of generating and reporting the findings of a qualitative research effort seems to stem from the experience of being in such an untidy reality.” This is discussed in the following section which outlines the value of grounded theory as a methodology and method well suited to researching these untidy realities.

Regarding qualitative research, Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Blumer (1969) support the need to seek out participants who have lived experiences of the particular phenomena which are being researched as they will offer a degree of clarity beyond that of the “unobservant participants” (p.41). Flyvbjerg (2006) agreed noting, the value that experts hold in that “they operate on the basis of intimate knowledge... Context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of expert activity.” (p.222) Therefore,

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52 Refer: Ghauri & Gronhaug, (2005, p.86) for the elements which make up a qualitative method of enquiry based on constructivist epistemological assumptions and an ontological view of the world which is of relativism and subjective.
engaging with this knowledge and drawing it together is invaluable within the social science arena in terms of achieving a high level of legitimacy of research finding(s).

5.2 Method

To provide clearly delineated findings this research uses the grounded theory method as a means to collect, interpret, and analyse this qualitative data. Research methods means a,

systematic, focused and orderly collection of data for the purpose of obtaining information from them, to solve/answer our research problems or questions...

By methods we mean data collection... while by techniques we mean a step-by-step procedure that we follow to gather data and analyze them for finding the answers to our research questions (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005, p.85).

Grounded theory, founded by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), is a methodology and method with a set of procedures for generating middle-range theories about social phenomena. Starks & Trinidad (2007) provide a brief overview of the grounded theory methodology and methods. Grounded theory is an analytic inductive theory-discovery methodology which aims to develop a theoretical account, simultaneously grounding it in empirical data (Jones & Alony, 2011). Grounded theory is considered to be open-ended and involves the “collective iterative cycling” of fundamental tenets that provides the basis for theory-building (O’Reilly, Paper, Marx, 2012, p. 248). Sousa & Hendriks (2006) suggest that grounded theory method is suitable when (a) there is insufficient theoretical guidance to support the research inquiry; and (b) the meanings and relationships of concepts are fragile (cited in: O’Reilly et al., 2012, p. 259).

The value of using grounded theory in this research is because it offers clear guidelines from which to build explanatory frameworks. Issues of importance to the participants emerge from the interview data. Grounded theory is a method that allows the researcher to focus on the context, processes and interpretations of key players (Charmaz, 2000; O’Reilly et al., 2012). Accepting the philosophical and methodological
foundations outlined above, grounded theory method will be applied to in-depth interview data whereby providing a way in which to reveal, “respondents depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions” (Gray, 2004, p.21). This is considered the most appropriate way of achieving the aim of this research, to understand how a spatial plan in the case of Auckland, under new governance structures, might be able to confront the issues and challenges facing Auckland, based on the purpose of grounded theory method (O’Reilly et al., 2012; Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Sousa & Hendriks, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

**Constructivist Grounded Theory**

This research thus adopts a constructivist grounded theory method. This section outlines the basis for this. Over time, various permutations of grounded theory have emerged, with many researchers identifying a constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011; Bryant, 2003; Fendt & Sachs, 2008; Goulding, 2002; Locke, 2001; Mills, Bonner, Francis, 2006; Schwandt, 1994). The leading contemporary proponent of constructivist grounded theory Charmaz (2000) essentially rejects the notions of emergence (an external reality) and objectivity (research is value-free). Therefore, a constructivist grounded theory methodology is congruent with the present ontology of interpretivism and epistemology of social constructivism. The constructivist approach to grounded theory is that “[d]ata do not provide a window on reality. Rather the ‘discovered’ reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural and structural contexts” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524) so like the post-structuralist reality it is multiple and created in the process of agency.

Constructivist grounded theory celebrates first-hand knowledge of empirical worlds, takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism and offers accessible methods for taking qualitative research into the 21st century. Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims towards interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510).
Grounded theory methodologies (O’Reilly et al., 2012, p. 248) include: constant comparative method (which the research uses), theoretical coding, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and theoretical sensitivity (treatment of the literature). Briefly, the constant comparative method involves the simultaneous coding and analysis of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) such that in an iterative process, the collection, coding and analysis of data lead to theory building. Data from prior collection can inform subsequent data collection; insights from this process may even lead to the initial conceptual idea being modified.

Theoretical coding is a systematic process with three levels beginning with open coding (when all data is accepted), selective coding where core categories appear and data is now coded according to these categories until the core category is mature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and then theoretical coding itself which examines these saturated core categories and combines the earlier fragmented pieces to conceptualize relationships (Glaser, 2004; Jones & Alony, 2011). The core category, and the instances in the data that relate to it, are key elements in the quality of the ‘grounded’ theory (Locke, 2001; Urquhart, Lehmann, Myers, 2010). Gray (2004) noted too, “[a]nalysis does not necessarily occur sequentially after data collection, but simultaneously with it and involves the teasing out of patterns, themes and groupings in the data” (Gray, 2004, p.321).

Theoretical sampling allows the researcher to be guided to the new targets for data collection by the earlier data and analysis, as well as the theory as it emerges (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goulding, 2002); data collection will begin at a concentration site but additional data collection will ‘migrate’ to different venues, for instance, different organisations, and different levels in an organisation (Locke, 2001). The robustness of the grounded theory depends on theoretical saturation, or a state of completeness within and across contexts; “[s]aturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the [researcher] can develop properties of the category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 61). Theoretical sampling will therefore be used to develop the properties of a core category, not to meet some representative criterion in the population under inquiry. Verification of grounded theory occurs during the research process through category saturation and not through follow-up quantitative data collection.
Grounded theory takes “a cautious stance toward extant theory’s influence on research investigations” hence “researchers have to find a comfortable and achievable balance between preunderstanding (structure) and unbiased openness toward the phenomenon under study” (Leitch, Hill, Harrison, 2010, p. 12).

In-depth interviews

A total of 66 in-depth interviews were undertaken and 56 of these were recorded, transcribed and coded, (referred to as the formal interviews). The remaining ten were not recorded for confidentiality reasons and as such they are not identified below. The interviews ranged from 0.75 hours to 2.5 hours in length. The participants and/or secretaries/assistants were contacted via email or phone and invited to partake in the research given their background in the field. Ethics approval was sought from the University of Auckland Ethics Committee prior to conducting the interviews. Accordingly, consent forms were provided and signed by all the 56 interviewees.

An interview guide provided an initial structure for the first 5 – 10 interviews but as the concepts developed and/or the participants sought to pursue a particular issue in greater detail I deviated from the interview guide (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Each formal, in-depth interview was transcribed and coded by the researcher. My data analysis used grounded theory coding techniques to identify and report patterns or themes from within the data via NVivo 10 software (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; O’Reilly et al., 2012; Glaser, 2004).

The interviewees

The interviews were conducted with key actors, stakeholders and commentators involved with Auckland’s development. The participants were carefully selected and formed a comprehensive group of prominent New Zealanders who either are or have been leading figures in governance and planning over the last 40 years.

The participants were chosen for one of two reasons.

1. their known involvement in Auckland-related matters (planning, governance, development)
2. Previous participants had either recommended that they be invited to take part in the research due to their current or previous roles concerned with Auckland or they were referred to either directly or indirectly by the interviewee.

I was pleasantly surprised by the positive responses when I requested interviews, almost 100 per cent of those asked accepted and were interviewed. Other influential actors who I did not initially approach later came and requested I interview them and I accepted. The generosity of all of the interviewees regarding the time they gave up and the thought and insight they offered is noteworthy.

The 56 formal in-depth interviewees signed statements accepting that anonymity would not be offered i.e. they are named participants. I made this choice given the validity it adds to the data and the findings. As identified in Appendix 1 (Interview detail slips including short biographies of their relevant professional involvement), many of these interviewees are prominent actors who have played critical roles in the development of Auckland from a planning and governance perspective.

To avoid readers affording greater weight to some participants’ views rather than others due to their potential knowledge of them, the participants were grouped according to their primary role and when cited in the text they are done so by group name not their actual name. The groups include: planning practitioners; planning commissioners; local authority CEO’s; Auckland Council Officers; central government officials; central government politicians; stakeholders; commentators; the chair of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance; and the Mayor of Auckland Council.

**Interview Guide**

So as to facilitate the semi-structured interview discussions and obtain a consistency of direction throughout them, an interview guide was used. The interview guide consisted of four points drawn from the understanding of spatial planning as set-out in the

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53 Many participants had wide ranging experiences and expertise due to the longevity of their involvement in Auckland related matters which meant some could have fallen under several groupings, a judgment call was made regarding which group they best fitted within.
previous three chapters. The core findings of these chapters informed the interview guide:

1. Activity what has been your involvement in spatial planning in Auckland?
2. Origins where do you see the need for a ‘spatial plan’ in Auckland originating from?
3. Process how has spatial planning developed in the Auckland context?
4. Progress how successful do you see the current exercise in spatial planning in Auckland being?

These questions provided the starting point for discussions. I allowed the interviewees to drive the discussions which often stemmed from their involvements. I facilitated the discussion ensuring we remained on topic. I enquired further when I felt I needed more clarity on something that they may have said, or when they mentioned something that I thought was of particular interest. I also built on topics from previous interviews by getting the interviewee to share their insights on the same particular matter or event.

**Theoretical sampling**

Theoretical sampling/data triangulation allowed for the identification of individuals with specific involvement that was of interest to the processes and phenomena being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These participants had a range of commonalities regarding Auckland; “[d]ata collection starts most often in a concentration site, this is a unit where the area of interest goes on in concentration” (Glaser, 2001, p. 179). New targets for data collection were found, directed by the iterative grounded theory process of data collection, coding and analysis as outlined above. When category saturation occurs then differences between contexts and participants will be maximised to ensure data completeness and the research will move away from the concentration site.

Initially participants were selected based on their involvement in Auckland’s governance, planning and development. This purposeful sampling allowed ‘information-rich cases’ from which much rich data was gathered about the area of inquiry (Patton, 2002). From this core group snowball/chain sampling was undertaken where
interviewees either recommended other people who held specialist knowledge and insight or, by osmosis i.e. what previous participants may have said led me to other important actors, stakeholders and commentators (Patton, 2002).

**Analysis**

The analysis used constructivist grounded theory’s constant comparative method of simultaneous coding, comparison and analysing data in an iterative cycle. Open coding was initially used for each ‘event’ in the data, being “open to whatever... [was] happening in fragments of data” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2011, p. 303) (refer also: Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1998). These reflected different levels of abstraction. These codes were then tested as more data was gathered, transcribed and coded – using NVivo 10. Notes were written explaining these codes and their relationship to other codes (grounded theory uses this comparative analysis to establish the robustness and usefulness of the codes). Axial coding followed, linking the ideas (codes) into core categories based on the conditions, actions/interactions and consequences of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Scott’s (2004) Conditional Relationship Guide and reflective coding matrix allowed the core categories relevant to answering the research question to be drawn from NVivo 10. This resulted in either leaving out codes which bore less relevance to the research question, or bringing in of other codes which were initially deemed to be outside of the core categories but after iterative cycling their value to answering the research question increased (Scott & Howell, 2008).

**Validity considerations**

Charmaz and Bryant (2011) note that “the credibility of grounded theory starts from the ground up” (p. 298) and indeed quality is inseparable from the ontological and epistemological foundations of that research (Amis & Silk, 2008; Leitch et al., 2010). ‘Validity’ in qualitative research has been defined by Creswell (2009) as being “…findings [that] are accurate from the standpoint of the research, the participant, or the readers of an account” (p. 191).

The validity of findings from a philosophical standpoint is difficult to ensure. Much of the debate regarding validity is essentially over questions of the nature of evidence and
what constitutes knowledge (Lincoln, 2000). Validity in qualitative research is dependent upon the qualities of the researcher and the research process – i.e. trustworthiness. Validity of the research findings in this case was achieved through:

1. Data collection method that fits the research questions: grounded theory method (as discussed and substantiated above)
2. Quality of data: only those deemed to be prominent experts regarding governance, planning and development in Auckland or who have studied Auckland were drawn upon
3. Sufficient data
   a. The sample size – 56 formal in-depth interviews between 0.75 hours to 2.5 hours
   b. 9 informal interviews ranging from 0.75 – 2.0 hours (ethics for recording not obtained – various reasons)
4. Mode of interpretation: All transcription and coding was undertaken by the researcher and inputted into NVivo 10 software
5. Process of interpretation: The use of an iterative, constant comparative method process allowed for the identification of the core categories applicable to answering the research question (as discussed prior).

This research is anchored in the naturalistic paradigm and the assumption of the social constraint as the relevant ontology. This work will adopt an interpretivist position using grounded theory method.
5.3 Summary

This research enquires into spatial planning in the case of Auckland looking specifically at the contradictions, tensions and hurdles which lie ahead for it and the new Auckland Council as part of this neoliberal spatial governance experiment being undertaken in the region. Given this focus, the research required a methodology and method that would enable insight to be gleaned from stakeholders, without prior assumptions and conclusions being made by the researcher. The naturalistic paradigm taking an interpretivist position has therefore been followed whereby applying a qualitative approach in the form of grounded theory method. These philosophical assumptions align closely with the objectives for this research as well as the type of data and method for analysis chosen.

The following six chapters discuss the key findings of this research. These chapters present the data that were collected, analysed, and interpreted through open axial coding using NVivo (constant comparative method). Chapter 6, the first of the findings chapters, introduces the participants’ perspectives on spatial planning in Auckland, as a ‘backdrop’ to their sense-making and organisation of the issues which follow in chapters 7 – 11. Chapters 7 – 11 unveil the key themes found through the research which signify five overarching hurdles towards effective spatial planning in the Auckland region and more broadly the performance of the new institutional structures to respond to the region’s growth and development related issues and challenges as highlighted in Chapter 1.
Part II

Spatial planning and its enabling factors
Part II of this research presents the core body of data drawn from the participant interviews. The chapters included address two key themes. First, participants’ interpretations and understandings of spatial planning in the New Zealand context are presented. Second, a range of enabling factors associated with spatial planning and the broader neoliberal experiment in Auckland are raised. These include governance, organisational culture, legislation, and funding.
Chapter 6

Spatial planning in Auckland

6.0 Introduction

In the lead up to this chapter spatial planning has been discussed in relation to its existence internationally and its sudden emergence in New Zealand and what it may signal. To best understand how spatial planning has been framed in the lexicon of planners and other urban professionals in New Zealand, the following questions were posed to the participants; why has Auckland developed a spatial plan; does spatial planning differ from previous strategic planning attempts in Auckland, if so how; and do you think spatial planning is a new, relevant planning framework in Auckland? However, first a brief overview of what the Auckland Plan includes is provided.

6.1 The plan

The body of the Auckland Plan is a 380 page document with 15 chapters. It includes a foreword by the Mayor but yet no sign-off by government Ministers or the Prime Minister. It sets out its purpose in regards to setting a 30 year strategic direction and vision for Auckland and its communities. It includes a range of high-level objectives in the four broad areas: social, economic, environmental, and cultural. Of the 15 chapters 13 focus on key elements of Auckland which include aspects such as its people, physical and social infrastructure, urban areas, rural areas, economy, transport, housing, arts and culture, heritage, sports and recreation and a specific chapter on Maori (New Zealand’s indigenous people). Each of these chapters contains a strategic direction and several high-level targets and priorities. One of the final chapters sets out the ‘implementation framework’ but is only 13 pages long and very high-level. The final chapter is focused on
measuring progress. This simply tabulates the strategic directions and corresponding targets from each chapter and adds simple measures.

6.2 Uncertainty

Participants were asked to provide their understanding of spatial planning and almost universally participants expressed uncertainty about the meaning and nature of spatial planning. Several planning commissioners asked, “what actually is spatial planning? And what is a spatial plan?” and one commented that, “they coined this term spatial planning which I have never really quite understood”. Another commentator stated, “I don’t actually know what Auckland thinks it means by a spatial plan. It seems to be a very nebulous concept”. Planning practitioners suggested that the Auckland Council officers developing the Auckland (spatial) Plan (Auckland Council, 2012a) might have been uncertain about the meaning of spatial planning. Their observations included: “some of the staff who were appointed had no idea what they were doing”, “I don’t know whether they [Auckland Council] actually did have a clear view”, “who knows what the spatial plan is, what it involves etc.?”. These views were echoed by both the Mayor of the Auckland Council and the Chair of the Royal Commission who stated: “no one gave us a manual for this thing. I’ll tell you that” and “we only had the most general idea about what the spatial plan should contain”.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the how spatial planning might be conceptualised Auckland Council officers responded by adopting the European Regional/spatial Planning Charter: Torremolinos Charter\(^{54}\) (1983) to assist the development of the first Auckland spatial plan (discussed further in section 6.3). The Auckland Council officers chose to follow the Torremolinos Charter as a guide in the development of the Auckland spatial plan\(^{55}\) instead of adhering strictly to the provisions set out within the Local Government (Auckland Council) Amendment Act (2010) which gave the mandate to the new Auckland Council to develop a spatial plan and outlined what it had to contain. This decision demonstrates three elements regarding the conceptualisation of spatial planning.

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\(^{54}\) Referred here on to as the: Torremolinos Charter (Council of Europe, 1983)

\(^{55}\) Auckland Council Officers
planning in Auckland. First, different views on the part of the Auckland Council officers of what embodied the concept of spatial planning. Second, a lack of sufficient clarity from central government on what they intended by requiring Auckland Council to produce a spatial plan. This likely reflects the fact that government officials and politicians were no clearer about what was involved with spatial planning than those in Auckland. Lastly, this may indicate reluctance on the part of Auckland Council officers to follow the legislation as set by central government (this point is developed further in Chapter 11).

I think the spatial plan has been... met with a varying level of support I suppose.
I think there are still people who really question what it is there for and what it does.\(^{56}\)

Planners and Auckland Council officers alike remained uncertain as to what spatial planning was.

### 6.3 A new planning framework?

Participants were unsure as to whether or not spatial planning represents a new planning framework in the context of Auckland. There was widespread unanimity amongst the participants that spatial planning is nothing new in the context of Auckland. Although, two participants, a central government official and an Auckland Council officer, suggested that spatial planning might signal a change in planning framework. The central government official suggested that “there is perhaps a way to go for people to really understand what spatial planning is as opposed to planning, or even things like Regional Growth Strategy or the One Plan before?” before she revised her views to state: “I think it’s just good planning”, “it’s definitely not a new concept”. The Auckland Council officer also later moderated her view, suggesting that all it is, “is just good planning but let’s call it spatial planning now if that helps everything” and conceded that it is “about having a strategic direction”.

\(^{56}\) Planning Practitioner
Planning practitioners, planning commissioners, stakeholders, and other central government officials alike argued that spatial planning was neither a new planning approach nor concept. Instead, they labelled it as, “old wine in new bottles…. I’m not sure that I perceive a fundamental change.” Others suggested that “spatial planning’s just growth management in drag…. just dressed up in a different light” and “town planning as we know it dressed up in a new garment”. There is “nothing new here” except “different words… trying to achieve much of the same thing”, therefore it is “not a new solution…. it’s a new name for something that I think has always been done”.

Planning practitioners, planning commissioners, and stakeholders compared spatial planning with previous regional strategies in Auckland; “spatial planning in Auckland… has been occurring over many decades”. These participants cited the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) and Auckland: Alternatives for Future Regional Growth (Auckland Regional Authority, 1975) suggesting that spatial planning represents nothing more than an evolution of those plans. A planning commissioner stated:

…it is the sort of regional planning that has always been done or had always been done… but in a way that was more coordinated throughout the region… trying to get the region coordinated with services and the direction of growth.

A planning practitioner who was involved with developing strategy under the Auckland Regional Authority in the 1970s and 1980s stated “if we weren’t doing spatial planning then I’m not sure what the hell we were doing!” A stakeholder and Auckland Council officer agreed: “isn’t that what we always used to do?” or perhaps at most it is an “adaptation of what we already had in Auckland.” The Auckland Council officer surmised that it is “pretty much the same thing but with a few things tacked onto the end,” referring to the need to consider social and economic outcomes.

The main difference identified between the previous regional strategies and spatial planning as articulated now was that the previous attempts at regional planning did not have regulatory backing or the appropriate governance frameworks to enable their implementation. Under the new Auckland Council that opportunity now exists. A planning commissioner stated “It’s regional planning but it’s better than what we used
to do because it is done under one council” unlike that Auckland Regional Growth Strategy which “was pretty much a spatial plan.... it just didn’t have the power to do anything about it” and therefore this time, “they might have the power to do something about it”. Planning practitioners agreed with these sentiments noting that now “all the parties are in the... one tent”.

The views demonstrate a consensus view that spatial planning is not seen as a ‘new’ planning framework. Spatial planning is simply a new label for the type of regional planning and regional strategy making that has been undertaken in Auckland during the last half-century. Spatial planning in the region could be claimed to have always been attempted as a means to try and coordinate service provision, investment, growth, and development. However, because of the change in governance, spatial planning for the first time might be more successfully undertaken and implemented, “they might have the power to do something about it” whereas in the past they “just didn’t have the power to do anything about it”. Nonetheless, what is significant for many close observers is that, spatial planning embodies a promising attempt to try and develop a plan that for the first time in Auckland’s history has a chance of being implemented.

6.4 Necessity

The participants were asked ‘why has Auckland developed a spatial plan?’ From this question five elements of spatial planning in the case of Auckland were identified: the setting of a thirty-year regional strategy/agenda; how it takes a collective, holistic, and integrated approach to planning and; with collaboration amongst stakeholders central in order for it to achieve alignment and consensus. What central government politicians and officials were trying to achieve through the requirements of a spatial plan was explained by one commentator:

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57 Commentator
58 Commentator
59 Commentator
60 Commentator
...that this is such a big entity, this thing called Auckland, that you’ve got to get it working together and you cannot have people off making decisions about vital elements like infrastructure without considering the whole... that’s what it was trying to do, so let’s start planning for Auckland as a whole entity, not as a series of issues or problems or things to be done, but what do we need to do given we want this outcome for Auckland.

As outlined in Chapter 4, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009) recommended a spatial plan be developed for Auckland. This process was led by central government, and put into effect by the Auckland Transition Agency.\textsuperscript{61} It was only realised part way through the reform process that Auckland required an overarching policy document to set the broad strategic direction for the region. A central government official explained there was,

...a lot of focus on the... governance structure but not the same focus on how they, the Auckland Council, were going to set policy and make decisions, and it soon became clear that there was a need to have a stronger focus on policy.

Stakeholders too recognised the importance of a high level policy/planning framework for the Auckland Council to set the direction for growth and development in the region.

The spatial plan seems to me to be a really important part of that whole kind of model... I didn’t think that it was really regarded as very important.\textsuperscript{62}

In 2009 central government responded. The Ministry for the Environment (2010a; 2010b) produced the Building Competitive Cities report as well as various Cabinet papers on spatial planning. The Minister for the Environment also established the Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010) (refer Chapter 4) which produced an additional range of reports on this matter. The narrow attention afforded to the role of a high level policy mechanism in Auckland until this time suggests a resistance by central government politicians and policy makers to provide planning direction. This is despite a history indicating that the complexity of issues facing Auckland requires more than local government reform alone. Furthermore, central government politicians were slow to

\textsuperscript{61} March 2009 – November 2010
\textsuperscript{62} Stakeholder
publicly acknowledge the need for a high level strategy for the region. Central government officials eventually conceded when questioned that “if you just started at reform but you didn’t have a mechanism for deciding what those goals would be... then you wouldn’t have got very far”. Spatial planning was “more of a freeing concept”. These officials came to recognise spatial planning as a “potentially powerful tool for addressing some of the big issues... urban growth in particular,” as well as a means to set the “direction for regulation rather than [relying on] regulation by itself,” and a way of “trying to give an agenda for... the financial decisions”. Planning practitioners and stakeholders saw spatial planning as a means to “get the sort of regionally focused integration happening, decision-making etc.”

There was a high level of support for a regionally integrated policy agenda for Auckland which is broad and has the ability to confront a number of issues. The following sections expand on the five key elements of spatial planning in the case of Auckland.

**A 30 year regional strategic vision**

The Auckland Plan became a broad reaching document covering the four wellbeings. This scope meant that the spatial plan was able to consider all factors affecting the region’s development from educational achievement through to infrastructure provision over the next 30 years. There was unanimity between planning practitioners, planning commissioners, stakeholders, and central government officials that spatial planning in Auckland (the Auckland Plan) was a “big picture strategic document” which would take “a regional approach... to set out the strategic vision for Auckland,” as well as a tool to, “define a goal as to a future state and a range of objectives... to achieve that kind of outcome”. Others noted the importance of the spatial plan exercise in relation to managing growth, coordinating infrastructure, and providing a picture of where and how the region is to develop. A central government politician explained how it enabled,

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63 Social, cultural, environmental and economic as set out in the New Zealand Local Government Act (2002).
64 Planning practitioner
65 Planning commissioner
66 Stakeholder
...a regional view across the city and whether it was from a vision perspective in terms of infrastructure or policies or... high level rules around how the city is going to work... the spatial plan would provide that vision.

This view was supported by a central government official, “we certainly needed an aspirational... objective-led document.” Planning practitioners observed also that it provides a “skeleton” for the “broader planning framework” over the “next 30 years.” Mayor Len Brown agreed citing the need for the strategic management of growth and development in the coming decades. A spatial plan:

...gave Auckland Council direction that there would be a new planning tool that they could use to set the strategy, set the strategic direction and understand the different players, who... were involved with that regional strategy.67

The views regarding the development of a 30 year strategic regional plan for Auckland were all positive. Some planning practitioners commented that it is a “very helpful step”, “a really good idea”, “quite clever” and quite “important... as a visioning document” and, “a good attempt” because it sets a “high level framework” and a “bit of a baseline”.

A collective approach

The second element which participants identified was the comprehensive nature of spatial planning. Commentators, central government officials, planning commissioners and planning practitioners all commented on the importance post-reform of having a mechanism to agree on a “common plan”,68 a “unified approach”69 whereby ensuring a “consistent”70 strategy across the “whole region”.71 Spatial planning, it was further argued by a central government official, would encourage:

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67 Central government official
68 Stakeholder
69 Commentator
70 Planning practitioner
71 Planning commissioner
Central government, [and] local to start to agree on what are the priorities for infrastructure, for roads, for rail, for water and how the funding decisions could be made between the, the various parties.

These views highlight the support for and importance of a tool like spatial planning as a mechanism by which to achieve consistency and alignment between various institutions operating in the same locality. In Auckland it is particularly essential that policy, planning, investment, and delivery are coordinated between stakeholders. One Auckland Council officer explained how if done right it could avoid duplication of resources: “we’re trying to work where we don’t duplicate”.

A planning commissioner noted the positive outcomes which the Auckland Plan has already provided in terms of creating a unified and comprehensive approach to planning in the region stating that: “[it] is good because it pulls together... looks at things from both a regional and an implementation district level... going forward in a coordinated way”. This was reiterated by a central government politician in terms of how it has provided a “coherent and valid and well substantiated point of view” about the future development of the region. One central government official acknowledged the benefits already gleaned from spatial planning in Auckland, explaining how the coordination of central government priorities in Auckland, particularly around how it spends its money is “the unsung story of spatial planning in Auckland today”. One commentator stated:

For a growing city I think it’s just hugely important... Auckland has to sort of work out where it’s going to grow... giving indications of... we think these are the growth parts... it just seems to be pretty obvious that it... needs to be done.

The coordination which the Auckland Plan has engendered between stakeholders might prove to be a catalyst for the region to “lift its game as a city and manage growth and deal with some of the crippling challenges that it’s had around transport infrastructure, and around market failure in housing affordability”.72

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72 Central Government Politician
A holistic approach

Participants acknowledged that spatial planning in Auckland needed to take a holistic approach. There were, however, mixed views regarding the ability to develop and implement a plan of this nature. Planning agendas other than those focusing solely on the physical built form outcomes were welcomed: “a wider scope is a good idea”\(^73\) “you’ve got to take those factors into consideration, the wider factors”.\(^74\)

The justification for taking a holistic approach was that the issues being faced and the component parts of the urban system “don’t all sit in silos... they are interrelated things”.\(^75\) It was highlighted particularly that “the social elements, absolutely critical that you link it to physical outcomes”,\(^76\) and “essential otherwise these social and economic things are not going to work”.\(^77\) On this basis spatial planning was heralded as:

...a good idea, call it spatial planning, call it one plan, call it what you like... we absolutely need plans that are more holistic in their thinking.\(^78\)

Planning, “overall planning... planning with a small p”\(^79\) was seen as an opportunity to avoid “a formulaic approach”\(^80\) and would provide the ability to consider “the consequences of the market and otherwise of what we are proposing”.\(^81\)

I don’t know how the hell you can deal with spatial planning unless you look at the social and economic implications of it.\(^82\)

The narrow and sometimes deterministic nature of planning in New Zealand which the participants are criticising here stems in part from the statutory frameworks governing

\(^73\) Planning Commissioner
\(^74\) Planning Practitioner
\(^75\) Commentators
\(^76\) Local Authority CEO
\(^77\) Planning Commissioner
\(^78\) Stakeholder
\(^79\) Planning Commissioner
\(^80\) Planning Practitioner
\(^81\) Planning Practitioner
\(^82\) Planning Practitioner
its practice; this point is discussed in Chapter 9. Some planning practitioners argued that planning should not be limited in its scope and should be,

...trying to do something with the underclass in south Auckland, those are planning outcomes, they’re just as important as site coverage and building height as is the economy.

The views on holistic approaches to planning also demonstrated a strong recognition of urban areas being interconnected. For example, locational decisions regarding transport infrastructure have broad effects across social, cultural, environmental and economic sectors. A holistic approach could improve the management of urban systems and enable better outcomes.

An Auckland Council officer explained how at the outset of the Auckland Council there was no clear view on what spatial planning was. In response Council officers adopted the Torremolinos Charter (Council of Europe, 1983) as the model by which to follow when developing the Auckland Plan (2012a):

We used the Torremolinos Charter... European Regional Spatial Planning Charter but it’s been around since the 1980s and it has four key objectives of spatial planning... and those four key objectives are basically to get balanced socio-economic development or wellbeing if you like, to improve the quality of life, to responsibly manage the environment including the built environment and heritage and to produce a land use plan in the public interest.83

The elements of the Torremolinos Charter (Council of Europe, 1983) are similar to the purpose of the Local Government Act (2002) which is, “to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future”. The requirement for Auckland Council to develop a spatial plan falls under this legislation.84 Both the, Torremolinos Charter (Council of Europe, 1983) and the Local Government Act (2002) have contributed to, and enabled Auckland Council to develop a spatial plan which takes a holistic approach. A central government official agreed that the opportunity for spatial planning in Auckland to take such an approach is because it is

83 Auckland Council Officer
not restrained by the planning functions set out under the Resource Management Act (1991), but instead lies within the Local Government Act (2002). Another Auckland Council Officer welcomed the broad scope the legislation provided to them: “it’s very good because it gave us... the mandate to take a very broad view around the role of spatial planning”.

Whilst the broader driver for more holistic planning might have stemmed from a “political realisation that you’ve got to take all of those factors into consideration”\(^85\), one central government politician argued that the holistic nature of the Auckland Plan (2012a) i.e. covering the four wellbeings as the Local Government Act (2002) requires was unintended by central government. Cabinet intended for Auckland Council to strictly abide by the provisions relating to spatial planning as set out in the legislation. This begins to highlight the ill-defined, emergent, and contingent nature of the relationship between central government and the Auckland Council on strategy setting and service provision which is exemplified throughout the neoliberal spatial governance experiment (refer Chapter 2) in the region.

For Auckland, the challenge is to develop and implement an “all-encompassing”\(^86\) “big grand plan with everything”.\(^87\) Participants noted that “it made some sense to have a broad ranging Auckland Plan”\(^88\) and that it is “an exciting but challenging aspect”\(^89\) but also “risky because it now becomes so broad in its objectives that it’s difficult to manage and maintain”\(^90\). This will require “connecting up some of the government and local government policy direction”.\(^91\) Despite these recognised challenges the approach held support from the participants based on the benefits it can offer. As noted earlier, “it’s actually been quite good going wider”\(^92\) because of the broader planning outcomes it can seek to achieve.

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\(^{85}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{86}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{87}\) Stakeholder
\(^{88}\) Auckland Council Officer
\(^{89}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{90}\) Stakeholder
\(^{91}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{92}\) Auckland Council Officer
Hopefully [it will address]... those social and economic issues.... making planning really something that’s going to deliver things for the people who live in the city.93

An accomplishment of spatial planning in Auckland taking a holistic approach, as explained by an Auckland Council officer was that it:

Helped change the way both Auckland Council and central government work together. Central government admitted in the end that it helped them as well because they themselves were working to some degree in silos and as we move forward not only are they changing the way they work as we have changed the way we have worked.

Not all participants were positive about spatial planning and its holistic approach in Auckland. There was concern that this holistic approach would lead the Auckland Council to be involved with activities beyond its capability and possibly its mandate (discussed in Chapter 11). One stakeholder was sceptical of Auckland Council having further involvement in the areas of economic development and infrastructure provision. He noted that he would be “very wary of the capability of something like the Auckland Council to operate effectively in the area of economic development or of building infrastructure.” A planning practitioner too commented in relation to social services stating that it’s “not something it [Auckland Council] has a direct role over” therefore Auckland Council involvement in this area is likely to cause controversy and difficulty in relation to delivery. Other participants felt that whilst Auckland Council could assume in part the role as a facilitator of broader initiatives, via the Auckland Plan, ultimately it had to be left up to the private sector.

Imagine how much easier the relationship would have been between central and local government if the Auckland Council had actually said this is our knitting, we’re going to stick to our knitting…. then there could have been two parts to the Auckland Plan, the bits where we know we can make something

93 Planning Commissioner
happen or the, we accept that our influence is of this kind and of this extent so we can influence this and this, by this far.94

Taking a holistic approach to spatial planning in an ideal environment may seem plausible but in practice where power struggles and tensions exist, decision-making may be fraught with difficulty. In the case of Auckland, participants suggested that a holistic approach is important for achieving outcomes. Although for the approach to be effective there must be a common understanding of capabilities of each of the stakeholders regarding the capacity of the organisation to develop and administer the plan. Because, in this case the Auckland Council is reliant on the input and contribution of other organisations, public and private, for the development and implementation of the plan. This must be made explicit, the plan is reliant on a multitude of organisations and actors if its goals are to be realised.

Integrated Planning

Given the Auckland Plan’s and Auckland Council’s reliance on other government and non-government bodies integration becomes an essential element of spatial planning. This was argued to stem from the:

- need to ensure that to make Auckland and therefore New Zealand successful we have to integrate across delivery mechanisms such as infrastructure etc. and working at a bigger scale there will be an opportunity to be more efficient around that.... we can’t duplicate95

Various participants from a range of stakeholder groups were supportive of spatial planning exhibiting an attempt at integrated planning; “the bit that I like about the spatial planning is that it is focused on the big picture and it is integrated”;96 “whether you call it integrated planning or spatial planning... yes it is an attempt”;97 “we have got a level of integration that we haven’t seen before”.98 In order to achieve this integration

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94 Planning Practitioner  
95 Auckland Council Officer  
96 Central Government Politician  
97 Planning Practitioner  
98 Stakeholder
“an understanding that central government needed to be better joined-up to the planning process to make progress occur and for it to be optimised”\textsuperscript{99} was required.

The type of integration identified included policy, stakeholders (service providers and funders) and land use and transport. A number of benefits were attributed to an integrated planning approach. First, an integrated approach could allow for better coordinated development over where it might take place. Second, integrated approaches can offer the opportunity for consensus between stakeholders over timing, sequencing and the scale of the development. Third, it might lead to efficiencies in terms of funding and resources: an “integrated approach... then supports industry and investment”.\textsuperscript{100} Fourth, having a joined-up and integrated approach could assist in resolving some of the complexity of issues which urban areas face, for example affordable housing. The “integrated nature of it is really the only way to manage complexity”.\textsuperscript{101} These views were held by the entire range of participants. It was widely accepted that the unified governance structure Auckland now possesses provides “the opportunity... to do this [integrated planning]”\textsuperscript{102} because,

\begin{quote}
...all [the] various... planning elements are working together. That has yet to be proved, but that’s the difference in that they are all working together instead of in opposition to each other.\textsuperscript{103}
\end{quote}

Participants presented varying views on the ability of Auckland Council to undertake this type of integrated planning within the current governance structures, legislative frameworks, political environment, and fiscal climate which is faced in New Zealand. Some “pretty significant challenges”\textsuperscript{104} exist for achieving integrated planning in Auckland.

\textsuperscript{99} Central Government Official
\textsuperscript{100} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{101} Central government politician
\textsuperscript{102} Planning Commissioner
\textsuperscript{103} Planning Commissioner
\textsuperscript{104} Stakeholder
In terms of an integrated approach to growth and development of Auckland... there couldn’t be any dispute that would be a good idea the questions is how it can be done and whether the spatial plan is a move... in the right direction.  

One central government politician explained that spatial planning,

...it’s not just a narrow land use tool.... it’s a way of actually unifying... and trying to make order of the complexity of local government... it would be folly to have a, a plan that’s fundamentally about land use management without trying to integrate that with the sort of strategic plan of the institution and its various parts and the stakeholders.

This statement was supported by a planning commissioner:

The role of the spatial plan now is actually to pull all those elements... bring the transport elements in, the land use elements in, infrastructure in, and kind of integrate all [into]... a combined plan in simple terms.

Participants emphasised the powerful role spatial planning can have for achieving integration between land use, infrastructure, and funding. Spatial planning has “enabled the Auckland Council to set a strategy to guide its spending”. The importance of having control over all three aspects was deemed vital for delivering good urban planning outcomes:

following the money, so to speak, where investment is put is actually a really strong influencer.... [therefore] we needed to broaden the tools of the planning tool box to really start to think about the investment side of things.

This would place far greater certainty around the implementation of a plan. Others agreed “you need a planning system that integrates land use planning and not separates them... in terms of funding streams” and “it’s a no brainer that for your major city you

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105 Planning Commissioner
106 Central Government Official
107 Central Government Official
108 Planning practitioner
need all parts to be having common goals, agreed investment and going for it”.¹⁰⁹ Central government officers argued that the collaborative element of spatial planning was about “trying to align investment... [and] understand how that investment takes place... working with the market as a tool together with regulation”.¹¹⁰ “Having a far more integrated approach to planning in Auckland”¹¹¹ was “seen as a potential way of having better alignment between land use and transport investment... and of course bringing the whole social, cultural, and environment realms together with the economic”.¹¹² This is because

all infrastructure is so powerful including education and health and all the central government bits... if he [Auckland Council Chief Planning Officer] is going to be really successful, he needs to be able to determine where schools go and where motorway off ramps go and public transport.¹¹³

Integrated spatial planning which includes detail around funding availability and allocation could provide greater certainty and clarity in relation to implementation and the quality of outcomes delivered. This would bring business rigor to the decision-making process and might lead decision-makers and officials to, alter their aspirations in line with funding realities, seek new funding sources or mechanisms, and undertake more rigorous cost benefit analyses and forecasting practices. This would provide spatial planning with greater legitimacy and could lead to increased stakeholder buy-in.

Several calls for integrated planning were made in the lead up to the 2010 governance reforms in Auckland given the issues facing the region. First it was recommended by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009). The “Royal Commission’s report they gave quite a bit of weight to do what you really call integrated and you can phrase it and coin it as spatial planning.”¹¹⁴ Following this, the Urban Technical Advisory Group (UTAG) (2010) recommended integrated planning mechanisms be put in place.

¹⁰⁹ Central Government Official
¹¹⁰ Central Government Official
¹¹¹ Central Government Official
¹¹² Central Government Official
¹¹³ Central Government Official
¹¹⁴ Auckland Council Officer
from infrastructure, urban and resource management perspective. A member of the Urban Technical Advisory Group explained:

[Central government] were very taken by the transport model and saying "oh well why couldn’t we have this for social infrastructure? Why couldn’t you have this for the other horizontal infrastructure, you know? But particularly electricity... [or] other lifeline services..." They quite liked it.

Despite these two independent recommendations for integrated planning it was considered that the ability for it to be undertaken in practice was still fraught with difficulty. A planning practitioner observed that the government has not yet applied these integrated planning mechanisms and instead they are, “just unravelling all of our integrated planning models”. A stakeholder suggested that this might be due to a lack of appreciation in central government regarding the benefits of integrated planning. He drew on the case of the National Infrastructure Unit setup within the New Zealand Treasury noting how it did not include a ‘cities’ aspect which had been advocated for:

There was a group of groups... at the time the Infrastructure Unit was formed that advocated strongly... that there should be an Infrastructure and Cities Unit and it just got no kind of... traction. It was more the blank stare when you kind of advocated the position.

At the time of this research, central government was undertaking a range of reforms to the Local Government Act (2002), the Resource Management Act (1991), and the Land Transport Management Act (2003) under the rationale of improved economic efficiency. One respondent argued that, “they’re gutting the integrated planning out those bastards.... the Nat’s have got the numbers and they are busy dismantling all of the key provisions that I’ve relied on in the Local Government Act for integrated planning”.

Whilst there is some evidence of this, it is unclear if removing the legislative power to carry out integrated planning actually inhibits the ability to undertake it (discussed in Chapter 9). Instead, it might lead to non-regulatory plan/strategy development being pursued in, otherwise known as, ‘soft spaces’ (Haughton et al., 2013). This type of non-statutory high-level planning has already been evidenced elsewhere in New Zealand. For

115 Planning Practitioner
example Smart Growth (2013) in the Bay of Plenty region, Future Proof (2009) in the Waikato region, and the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (2007) in the Canterbury region. The Auckland Plan (2012a) is, however, different. Despite the absence of legislative linkages which would inform other plans, service provision, and growth patterns it is unique in the New Zealand context. Its development is required by statute and it exists in the context of a unified local authority.  

Integrated planning as an element of spatial planning is seen as critical by participants. It provides the opportunity for improved coordination, efficiencies, buy-in and the ability to address complex issues within urban systems. The above views suggest that, including funding aspects in integrated planning models are likely to provide greater legitimacy and improve the prospects of implementation. The Auckland Plan is an attempt at this type of planning.

Collaboration

To achieve policy integration and foster partnership agreements for co-investment schemes collaboration is a vital element in spatial planning processes. The participants explained how spatial planning in Auckland provides a forum for stakeholders to “collaborate”, “negotiate”, “cooperate”, “engage”, and “align”: “It is about some sharing” because the Auckland region is, “only going to succeed by working together”. The process of developing the Auckland Plan contributed to shared decision-making outcomes including the alignment of specific goals and aspirations between various stakeholder groups (Auckland Council, 2012a). Participants suggested that the multi-stakeholder approach taken meant better outcomes were able to be reached. Some argued that this was because whilst there is a statutory requirement to develop the Auckland Plan the plan itself, is non-binding. This avoids the expensive, time consuming and often adversarial process involved in plan development under the Resource Management Act (1991).

\[116\] The legislative aspects of spatial planning in the context of Auckland are discussed in further detail in the legislation section.  
\[117\] Planning Practitioner  
\[118\] Auckland Council Officer  
\[119\] Central Government Official
Central government officials stressed the value of the “multi-party” nature of the spatial planning process because of the importance of having “everyone agreeing on where you’re going”. The collaborative nature of the spatial planning exercise encouraged stakeholders is to “sing in a choir as opposed... command and conquer”. The development of the Auckland Plan acted as an “engagement” exercise in itself leading to “on-going working relationship[s]” being formed as opposed to “issues based one[s]”. A central government politician described how the development of the spatial plan provided a “latching on point... to try to get some negotiation and... achieve some alignment with central government” whereby offering the,

...ability to engage, to integrate the aspirations and the efforts of central government and local government and ideally stakeholders and community private sector and so on.

Building on these views central government officials saw the collaborative aspect of spatial planning as a “multi-level” process “greater than one district, or greater than one region”.

[The] Auckland Plan is not Council’s plan, it’s Auckland’s Plan... so it’s a matter of government and Auckland Council working together about how to best align resources.

These sentiments by central government politicians and officials run contrary to the notion that central government is either removing or have removed the legislative provisions for integrated planning. There is a discord between the rhetoric given by actors and the actions taken.

The exercise of developing and formally adopting the spatial plan in Auckland provided a forum around which collaboration could occur (Auckland Unleashed – refer Chapter 4).

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120 There were varying views on this in the case of Auckland which are discussed further in Chapter 9 and Chapter 11.
121 Central government official
122 Planning practitioner
123 Central Government Official
124 Central Government Official
125 Central Government Official
126 Auckland Council Officer
It provided the opportunity for dialogue between stakeholders so as to engage, cooperate and align their aspirations. This is an important element, given that plans only provide a framework within which action occurs, they deliver nothing on their own (they only facilitate action) relying heavily on external parties and market conditions to implement them. Without collaboration and buy-in from external parties, over what evolves into a common plan, the ability for implementation is significantly reduced. This is a concern given the reliance on parties external to the Auckland Council to implement the plan. The Chair of the Royal Commission, who recommended spatial planning, viewed it as a platform for “on-going cooperation and dialogue between Auckland and central government” which is “absolutely essential”.

The spatial plan formed a mechanism by which it could actually agree on the direction and growth and future issues that are going to be facing Auckland... and therefore... be a centre or discussion centre before actually... getting into some of the issues.127

It was noted how the development of the plan provided a “talking point”128 for “getting people on board”129 and the “opportunity to have dialogue around a more cohesive Auckland.”130 It was described as a “tremendous vehicle”131 and “a living document”132 based on the collaboration that it has engendered between central government and Auckland Council. There was “a fair amount of interaction going on there”.133 It is “important for central and local government agencies to work together”134 so as to deliver outcomes for the Auckland region. The collaboration between central government and local government is now “on-going in terms of how we work with the Council on implementation of the Auckland Plan”, 135 ensuring “the government, private

127 Central Government Official
128 Central government Politician
129 Central Government Official
130 Auckland Council Officer
131 Auckland Council Officer
132 Auckland Council Officer
133 Former Local Authority CEO
134 Central government Politician
135 Central Government Official
sector, and NGO [non-government organisation] sector are actually in there delivering”.136

Participants argued that with the Auckland Plan in place, the lines of communication between central government and the Auckland Council remain open: “you’ve got on-going constructive engagement”.137 The emphasis is now shifting from planning to implementation where the local authorities in Auckland have performed varyingly in the past (discussed in Chapter 4).

The Auckland Plan’s been pretty essential conversation... for two reasons... helping government get clear on its goals and aspirations for Auckland and how it wants to operate... but also... working in partnership with a major entity that has the ability to deliver and to implement.138

One central government official argued that the main driver behind central government’s on-going engagement with the Auckland Plan, post its ratification, would depend on the statutory requirements provided by central government.

Having a legislated spatial plan was a very great driver for getting cross government agencies to the table in a way that I think if it hadn’t been legislated it would have been a lot more difficult to do.... Looking back, as much as anything the legislation was what gave central government the impetus to join itself up to the Council and sit at the table, and I think that’s still the case.

Not all participants viewed the collaboration between Auckland Council and central government as likely to be successful in developing and implementing the new Auckland Plan.139

[When] the Council moved in with objectives into the social policy area... that was a good example where there was a bit of a clash until the relationship got sorted out. Now it’s fine but the spatial plan was where it happened.140

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136 Mayor, Len Brown
137 Stakeholder
138 Central Government Official
139 Refer: Chapter 11.
Divergent perspectives on the necessary levels of collaboration were held between participants. A planning practitioner observed that, “it’s supposed to be a collaborative document between central government... and the Council... The document would have been better if it had been”. Another called for, “stronger coordination... between setting your strategic planning objectives or your strategy for a place like Auckland”. An Auckland Council officer explained how the Auckland Council had been “trying to engage [central] government agencies in the spatial planning approach” given the dependency local government has on central government for the provision of services in New Zealand, but as another Auckland Council officer explained:

Perhaps we didn’t do that quite as well as we could, or perhaps... central government would have never allowed us to do that, not sure of the answer to that.

Either way, “we [Auckland Council] were a bit disappointed when the central government’s response to it [the Auckland Plan] came out. It was pretty lukewarm really”. Whilst collaboration occurred and resources were invested on the part of Auckland Council to ensure collaboration, the same level of commitment and resource was not reciprocated by central government departments,

...we did as much, as if not more than, we needed to be to be collaborative with central government as we developed it... there was a lot of frustration at the amount of extra work we were doing to ensure that collaboration continued. I didn’t see a good response from central government nor did I see an equal amount of input and collaboration coming out. So it... made me wonder well, are they really in the tent here? And I guess it’s subsequently transpired that they weren’t.

This raises significant concerns for the future development of the region given that Auckland Council is required to set the strategic direction but central government controls the majority of government spending. Current growth forecasts predict:

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140 Central Government Official
141 Auckland Council Officer
142 Auckland Council Officer
143 Refer: Chapter 10.
“[an] extra million people [which] is a whole lot more schools” raising the question of “how are we working together with Ministry of Education for planning where the future schools will be aligned to where we are seeing extra growth will occur? Auckland Council have always maintained that,

...it’s not an Auckland Council plan, it’s a plan for Auckland which means a lot of players need to be implementing it not just Auckland Council but... we’ve over reached our ability to implement it in a number of areas.

The participants outlined the importance of collaboration as an element of spatial planning particularly for achieving integration. Without collaboration taking place both in the plan development stages (buy-in to the vision), and during the implementation (delivery) phases implementation of the plan is at risk. Yet, collaboration over the Auckland Plan does not in itself ensure good outcomes. The document is non-binding so it remains at threat from ad hoc investment decisions.

6.5 Fit for purpose?

In the Auckland Plan you still see the underpinning fantasy of pretending that Auckland can break away from its suburban preference roots and will emerge after a decade into some new form, some sort of transformation... it reminds me a lot of the famous novel by Kafka called The Transformation Die Verwandlung where he wakes up thinking he is a beetle, he has turned into a bug, but he is still a man inside... the Auckland Plan has this awful feel about it that it wants to be something [but] that it is actually not sure what it wants to be.

(Planning Practitioner)

The previous sections drew on the participants’ viewpoints regarding the core elements of spatial planning in Auckland. This section presents the viewpoints of participants in relation to their general views regarding the appropriateness of the spatial plan in

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144 Auckland Council Officer
145 Auckland Council Officer
Auckland in the first three years after the inauguration of the Auckland Council, the Auckland Plan. First, the views of participants who consider it to have been successful are presented followed by those who still hold concerns regarding its suitability and future success. An Auckland Council Officer explained how:

[In] spatial planning we found a very powerful tool, we are working with central government... using the power of this tool and integrating it with the Auckland Plan to make sure we are sort of working together with central and local government for the planning of Auckland for the next 30 years

Other participants were positive about the spatial plan for Auckland, the direction which it has set out (the vision), and the form which it has taken (its content). A stakeholder commented how it was an “heroic effort” culminating in a “very good product” demonstrating “what planning with a small p can do.”146 A commentator stated, “yes to planning, that’s highly strategic!” Others noted how, “this was real planning... and at a high level”;147 providing a “guiding light”148 and a “guiding document for the new council on expenditure of money.”149 Another stakeholder commented, “I am supportive of the intent of the plan.... [it] was worthwhile in purpose... [and] very promising in concept”. The Chair of the Royal Commission explained that, “to a very significant degree the Auckland spatial plan really in my view achieves what we imagined it would achieve.”

It is the first time we have an entire plan for a region down in one place with a governance capability to at least drive forward the key issues... there’s still the funding issue.150

Equally, concerns were raised with it. A planning practitioner commented:

From a framework perspective, and looking at it from above, it seems like a great approach, but whether that approach has been fully realised and the benefits really totally understood and gleaned from it, I don’t know.

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146 Stakeholder
147 Stakeholder
148 Planning Practitioner
149 Planning Commissioner
150 Stakeholder
Other criticisms included the fact that the Auckland Plan, “is effectively... a wish list of what the Council would like to see.... there’s no hard decision about the trade-offs that are being made.”\(^\text{151}\) A planning practitioner suggested that because of this “there’s a real lack of integration,” and as such, it doesn’t fulfil “that integration and coordination role” that it set out to achieve, therefore becoming merely a “baseline checklist tool.”\(^\text{152}\)

A stakeholder even suggested that we did not need governance reform per se nor a spatial plan. He argued instead an, “effective regional body could have done what it is that we now aspire to achieve.” Others suggested more generally that there isn’t “any real evidence that it’s delivering at this stage,”\(^\text{153}\) and “we are going to have another piece of try this and it won’t work anyway.”\(^\text{154}\) It was argued by one planning practitioner that:

> What we’ve actually produced by way of a, spatial plans sets us back in my view at least twenty years and we will take another twenty-five years to get back to where we were and there’s... the ability of one or two people with narrow minds about what this job is.\(^\text{155}\)

More sympathetic views were offered by some stakeholders, “It’s a first generation effort done in a year” suggesting that to expect anything more from it might be unfair or overly critical of the capability of the organisation, the people involved, and the hurdles which they faced. One Auckland Council officer described it as a “record... doing a marathon as a sprint.”\(^\text{156}\) A central government official argued that:

> The Auckland Plan has got a way to go... it’s a step closer than anything we’ve had before but it’s probably yet to realise its full potential.

This view is reflective of those held by many of the participants. The plan has been a “heroic” effort and a “good first cut” but the realisation regarding the potential of what a 30 year strategy for the Auckland region can achieve within a unified governance

\(^{151}\) Planning Commissioner  
\(^{152}\) Planning Practitioner  
\(^{153}\) Planning Practitioner  
\(^{154}\) Planning Commissioner  
\(^{155}\) Planning Practitioner  
\(^{156}\) Auckland Council Officer
structure has not yet occurred. These concerns were predominantly associated with the institutional workings that enable the plan to function effectively and be implemented. This point is discussed in later chapters.

6.6 Implementation

There’s a lot tied up in our love of the idea of planning and our substitution of it for implementation... I am really still stuck on this. Why do we have more plans when we need more implementation?

(Planning practitioner)

Local governments in Auckland have shown themselves to be effective at developing statutory and non-statutory plans in the past. The issue is that these plans have frequently failed to meet the challenges confronting the region largely on the basis of inadequate implementation. This section presents the participants’ views on the issues of implementation.

An Auckland Council officer noted that “we’re pretty good at identifying the problems and identifying our strategic approach to address those problems” but as one planning practitioner highlighted “the big question in Auckland always has been the ability to... have the tools to actually deliver on the planning.” What seems to have plagued planners in Auckland is the inability to realise that “planning documents... themselves deliver nothing; they simply set up a framework.”157 “We’ve tried [in the past] to rely on a plan and on a system and a process and it just doesn’t deliver.”158 Where strategic plans in Auckland have failed is ensuring that once

...you’ve got a strategic direction you’ve got... your funding mechanisms in place, you’ve got planners on the ground that are giving effect to this sort of strategic direction... you’ve got... your Unitary Plan that sort of resource

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157 Planning Commissioner
158 Auckland Council Officer
management document... there’s a whole lot of things that you’ve got to make sure are lined up.159

The issues of alignment are not new. They were exemplified under the Auckland Regional Council when planning strategy was disconnected from funding and service delivery (refer Chapter 3). An Auckland Council officer argued that “it’s no secret”, “implementation is always the problem.” Many participants recognised the importance and challenge of implementation, “the big challenge is implementation;”160 “execution is as critical to outcome as strategic intent,”161 hence “we just need to get on with doing”.162 The issue with planning in Auckland has not been “the part a’s, the strategy” but instead the “part b... what does the implementation plan look like? How does it get implemented?”163 These views were reflected by stakeholders, planning practitioners and central government officials alike stating; so long as “execution continues to be poor, this system will be no better”;164 “if we don’t get the implementation then nothing’s really changed”; “implementation is actually the problem”165 because it is “how it is implemented”166 that will determine its success. The views of participants here highlight the issues associated with the implementation of spatial planning and planning strategy in the region, not the content of the plan.

As noted above, implementation is the most critical aspect of public policy. However, the participants questioned whether or not the frameworks in place post-2010 could actually achieve a higher quality of implementation than those prior. They queried: “are the current tools in the right kind of shape?”167 If “you’re creating no implementation mechanisms... you’re to some extent ensuring that it isn’t going to work”.168 Participants suggested that the frameworks should have been “worked through a little bit more at
the detail level about how it was going to work”. An Auckland Council Officer argued that the new frameworks lack the implementation mechanisms required to deliver the plan, “has anything really changed? Are the public ready for it? Is the infrastructure in place to support the strategy we’ve got? If it is, it’s happened bloody quick.” Similar issues arose with the Auckland Regional Council in 1992 when regulatory functions were split from service provision and funding: “Often the big issue with planning is that, an organisation can be given planning powers but unless it’s given delivery functions as well it struggles”. The problem is as explained by one stakeholder is:

this kind of totally disconnected way of thinking and doing… we have policy that spins around in circles it goes policy strategy, policy strategy, policy strategy that’s totally disconnected from implementation and the private sector and... then wonder why nothing happens... you can see big gaps in the system all over the place between the words of intent that are used and... the words of kind of the actions of implementation that are totally missing.

Other threats to implementation for the Auckland Plan and any plan within a democratic society which pose “significant challenges” include the “political and economic market constraints”; the level of association the Mayor has with high profile and high risk projects. These all contribute to “concern and doubt” over the “willingness or capability to execute the plan”.

The spatial plan has got all of these flow-on activities that are happening, it’s not just that document there’s a whole bunch of busy bee work going on around the outside of the hive... that keeps it alive and develops it and looks at operationalising it.

A central government official referred to “the cruelty in terms of its implementation,” because without the necessary mechanisms to ensure implementation is possible “your
spatial plan... sits there as some glorious orphan child”. This issue is not new. It has plagued planning endeavours in New Zealand since the advent of the Town Planning Act (1926). In Auckland this has affected the ability of the region to address the issues and challenges which it has faced. One planning practitioner displayed frustration at the situation stating “we’ve got... planning experience now... at least going back to the 1930s so... the techniques should be there: it’s just how we can articulate them”. One stakeholder argued that failure to implement comes down to:

A lack of a bipartisan view... Sure they can play politics to 10 or 30 per cent if they want but actually unless there is a consistent policy platform and a consistent kind of implementation strategy, process, platform call it what you like... about how we’re going to make this happen and what the role of the public sector is in this and how that needs to interface with the private sector and vice versa then we will continue to struggle.

As such, one cannot “see the Auckland Plan in isolation, it’s got to be part of that wider process.”

**The importance of successful implementation**

[Failure] it’s not a consideration, we will deliver... I don’t... go into this with any fear of failure... we captured the spirit... of a united humanity... there’s nothing to hold you back

(Mayor Len Brown)

Several participants summarised the current situation regarding implementation and the Auckland Plan. “We’ve got a first generation spatial plan in Auckland largely led by the Auckland Council... with a difficult, but evolving, relationship with central government”. Mayor Len Brown argued that, “we’re in a good space to deliver”. An Auckland Council Officer took the view that “people had been sick of planning, plans, plans, plans; when are you going to deliver?” “It’s too important for it not to happen”. A stakeholder supported this view:

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176 Commentator  
177 Auckland Council Officer  
178 Stakeholder
if we don’t get this to work then we really are all in the shit, make no bones about it despite what they think in Southland... if Auckland’s stuffed then New Zealand is absolutely stuffed... is this our next best shot? It probably is, so we had better make it work. Are we institutionally, collegially, leadershiply recognising of that fact and organised to respond to that challenge? I think probably it’s an open question.

Views such as this reinforce the importance of the Auckland Plan under the new Auckland Council in relation to improving the economic performance of the region. “This isn’t about Auckland only; this is actually about New Zealand Inc. because we are competing in the world”.179 These comments were echoed by commentators and Auckland Council officers; “if Auckland doesn’t work, the country by and large won’t work”; “New Zealand’s economic growth is dependent on the economic growth of Auckland”; “the success of New Zealand is very dependent on the success of the Auckland Plan in many ways.” These statements reinforce a widely held view that the predominant aim of governance reform and spatial planning in Auckland was to improve the region’s economic performance. This supports the claim being made in this research that the 2010 governance reforms and the rise of spatial planning represent an attempt to re-configure state-market relations and the role of planning to improve how the region is managed and governed.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has illustrated the high level of uncertainty associated with the conceptualisation and operation of spatial planning. Participants perceived that spatial planning signals a rebranding of strategic planning on a regional scale under a new governance structure. Five key intertwining elements of why spatial planning has been attempted in Auckland were established. These included the significant opportunity spatial planning offers for setting a 30-year regional strategy, and providing consistency, holism, integration, and collaboration. Accordingly, participants generally acknowledged the suitability of the planning framework as a successful first attempt in

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179 Auckland Council Officer
light of the challenges it faced in its development. Participants also held some firm reservations and perceived that further evolution is necessary for spatial planning to maximise its opportunities under a unified governance arrangement. Finally, spatial planning was seen by participants to be irrelevant if implementation was not carried through. Generally, the participants observed the same problems that have faced planners and plans in Auckland for many years. Foresight and careful planning has usually ran afoul of Auckland’s lack of integrated governance, and the will power (or lack of it) of elected representatives in the end to implement the plans (Bassett, 2013).

A central government politician pointed out that it was convenient that “the creation of the new amalgamated Auckland coincided with… [the] popularity of spatial planning and [it]… reaching our shores as a new tool”. Whilst conceptually spatial planning might engender a new form of planning, the way in which it has been conceived suggests that in the case of Auckland it is nothing new. Despite this, under a unified governance structure spatial planning might be better set up to address and resolve the issues and challenges facing the region than previous attempts have been. In particular, the new structures may better support implementation.

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180 Refer: Chapter 2
Chapter 7

Unification of local government

7.0 Introduction

Governance reform in Auckland on November 1, 2010, provided one local government body for the region: the Auckland Council. This chapter builds on the participants’ perspectives presented in the previous chapter. It addresses the first of four key elements required for spatial planning to occur in the case of Auckland. Discussed below are the participants’ understanding of why the unification of governance occurred, i.e. the issues facing the region and how the new governance model might better be able to address these; the scale of the new model and what this could mean for Auckland Council’s ability to implement the new plan; the benefits of reform; and whether or not governance restructuring alone can resolve the issues facing Auckland.

7.1 Long-run governance failure

Over a very long period of time I have studied what’s happened in Auckland ...watching it semi-destroying itself, shuffling on... full of exacerbation, eating up the landscape, governments under investing in it... [the] Bolger-Shipley period, sucking all the transport funding out, not putting anything back. Just a long period of governance failure over probably about 40 years.

(Planning Practitioner)

Two issues were highlighted by participants as the catalysts for governance reform. First, the previous institutional arrangements were unable to adequately invest to address the high population growth rates Auckland experienced, thus leading to a range of issues and challenges which were not addressed. Second, the ailing governance
arrangements also led to *ad hoc* and poorly executed plans and planning decisions regarding where and how increased growth in the region would be accommodated. It was observed by one commentator that if Auckland had been a US city through the early to mid-2000s we would have been about the fifth or sixth fastest growing US city. The issue arises because,

...we don’t plan like that, we don’t invest like that, we don’t think like that, and so we’ve done some good things in Auckland and we’ve done a lot of poor, very poor things from an urban point of view, a built environment point of view, but also from an urban economy point of view.\(^{181}\)

Another commentator supported this stating that:

> From the Second World War onwards it’s very much a case of increasingly uneven growth in this country which has accelerated the growth of Auckland... I don’t think that central government ever particularly wanted to acknowledge that or to setup appropriate structures and to deal with that growth.

It was widely accepted that many of the failings are derived from a longstanding inability by the local government bodies to respond to Auckland’s issues. As far back as the 1960s, under the Ministry of Works and Development, there were attempts made to integrate service providers and increase funding in Auckland to deliver key projects, but they failed:

> In the late 60s, when the Ministry of Works still existed, [it lasted till 1987] there was... an organisation called APEC... the Auckland Public Expenditure Committee which was setup under the auspices of the Ministry of Works as an independent senior body with representatives from all the local authorities on it and the whole objective of that was to coordinate a collective effort on some of the bigger projects; again it didn’t work... the Ministry of Works didn’t have the power, they just had the responsibility to try to pull it together.\(^{182}\)

\(^{181}\) Commentator

\(^{182}\) Planning Practitioner
There was clear frustration by participants in relation to how Auckland has ‘performed’. Some argued the broader reasons for the on-going failure to adequately manage and resolve growth-related issues was a result of the particular neo-liberal paradigm of the 1980s. This new paradigm became manifest in the Resource Management Act (1991) marking the introduction of effects-based planning under the auspices of sustainable management throughout the 1990s. On this basis the Act was argued to be incapable of dealing with long run issues such as growth: “the, neo-liberal right wing agenda nobbled planning so we had this notional effects-based framework of the RMA.” At the time it was deemed ‘cutting-edge’ internationally in terms of environmental legislation. However, one downside was that it created “hundreds of plans that existed across Auckland that never got looked at.” Because of the governance arrangements what soon occurred was a “political disconnect” between regional strategy and local implementation, on-going disputes between various units of local government, and a lack of investment in infrastructure that meant the region failed to keep pace with the level of growth it was experiencing (Bush, 2008).

Participants described the Resource Management Act (1991) as “fragmented” and a “dysfunctional disaster,” “over a long period of time”. Many participants, particularly planning practitioners, referred to the poor strategic decision-making which occurred in Auckland as a result of arguments and appeals between local government authorities against the strategic plans which they developed: “there were eight different local authorities... they were never on the same page and that was enormously time consuming and resource hungry”. This created “dysfunctionality... arguments and appeals”, “fighting”, “fractious” relationships, and “parochial arguments”.

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183 Auckland’s ‘performance’ is rhetoric which was used by participants regarding the region’s economic development. The term was also used in both government and non-government reports relating to Auckland.
184 Commentator
185 Central Government Politician
186 Central Government Politician
187 Central Government Official
188 Stakeholder
189 Central Government Politician
190 Planning Practitioner
191 Commentator
which led to “abysmal strategic decision-making.”\textsuperscript{194} It was explained that “you could get a lot of agreement on the principle of working together and often have a common plan” but then it would often fall “apart when it came to allocating the funds”, culminating in, “implementation... [being] just impossible.”\textsuperscript{195}

The fighting and tensions which existed meant the individual authorities “weren’t necessarily looking for or achieving any reasoned or reasonable outcomes and they were still thinking of just their part of Auckland”.\textsuperscript{196} Regional strategies were therefore never “delivered well”.\textsuperscript{197} By the early 2000s “Auckland was... in a shambles, you had a number of units of local government and there was... not a lot of unity”.\textsuperscript{198} A central government politician talked of how the “old local territorial authorities in Auckland... had become redundant” by this stage. The governance structures also caused issues for central government when it tried to engage with the region: “from central government’s point of view, to go across seven or eight local authorities where do you hook in when really we are all part of Auckland?”\textsuperscript{199} This issue was exemplified by the proposed waterfront stadium in Auckland,

[The] Government had had an argument with Auckland over the stadium down at the waterfront and a divided Auckland once again couldn’t give an answer to government that it was seeking so it was utterly frustrated at Auckland.\textsuperscript{200} (Refer also: Bassett, 2013)

These problems were not new in Auckland. Before 1989 there were 29 territorial local authorities within the Auckland region creating the same challenges but in a more fragmented way. Since the founding of Auckland in the mid-1800s cooperation on planning has bedevilled the region (Bassett, 2013).
The motive for reform was clear. Dysfunctionality in governance led to impaired decision-making, which in-turn culminated in poor planning outcomes and *ad hoc* and under investment. This led to an inefficient use of scarce resources. More importantly, it also meant that the critical issues and challenges facing the region were being inadequately addressed, or in some cases overlooked. Participants argued for “one Mayor who can talk to Ministers”\(^{201}\) decision-making which led to implementation, and a management structure that could “encourage beneficial urban development patterns”\(^{202}\).

The realisation of a problem and the appointment of a Royal Commission

The unification of local government appeared as the obvious solution for Auckland’s governance woes. A central government politician’s view of Auckland was that, “it just wasn’t working as well as it should do... that the view that was formed in... the mid-2000s that there had to be change”.\(^{203}\) The conclusion was soon reached that New Zealand economy required its only city-region of scale to be performing as well as it could because:

> There is a political imperative that if Auckland is not performing well it’s a drag on the rest of the country... So if we want New Zealand to succeed then... our primary international city... has to perform really well for the good of the rest of the country

Under the Labour-led government (1999-2008) a more engaged role in Auckland began during the 2000s (Dalziel & Sauner, 2005; Schollmann & Nischallke, 2005) which meant central government was more acutely aware of the issues facing the region and the drag this was having on the region’s development (Bassett, 2013).

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\(^{201}\) Central government politician  
\(^{202}\) Central government politician  
\(^{203}\) Central government politician
At the end of the day Auckland is a massive driver of economic growth... the government understood that, and they wanted to create a governance model so that the Auckland economic juggernaut could be unleashed.\textsuperscript{204}

After several attempts to bring about change (as discussed in Chapter 3) Prime Minister Helen Clark appointed the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance in 2007 (refer Chapter 4). As well as the Royal Commission, the Prime Minister also put the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in behind the scenes to look at the mechanisms for improving urban planning in Auckland. The private sector too began to voice their belief that change in Auckland was needed, and in 2007 a stakeholder noted how the New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development

[started] talking up the need for governance reform pretty significantly... there were a number of other agencies from The Committee for Auckland, to the Employers and Manufacturers Association, the one Auckland Trust who were all out with a similar sort of bent... we need governance reform, we need to get aligned infrastructure investment, planning and decision-making... [and went] to the Prime Minister saying we need an independent review of governance in Auckland.\textsuperscript{205}

This marked a tipping point in relation to how central government responded to Auckland. It was not that the issues predominantly related to unmanaged growth facing Auckland had drastically changed over this period or that the governance arrangements had worsened. What had changed was there was now widespread acceptance of the issues and the need for a political will to overcome them with a solution; governance reform.\textsuperscript{206} These factors led central government politicians to act: “government came in... and said we’re sick of all of this bickering and arguing going on in Auckland and [they] set up one council and one part of it was... to establish a spatial plan”.\textsuperscript{207} The change, as opposed to that recommended by the Royal Commission (2009) was more “revolutionary than evolutionary”\textsuperscript{208} culminating in an entirely new local government
structure in Auckland that bore no resemblance to what had existed prior in New Zealand. By reforming local government in the region, and mandating the new Auckland Council to develop a spatial plan, the Royal Commission and Cabinet thought that the issues of governance in the region would be resolved. This was on the premise that a unified governance structure would enable “integrated planning and accountability” and a spatial plan would provide a “common vision” resulting in “integrated infrastructure investment”.209 The view widely held at the time was that the changes would create new institutional frameworks upon which the Auckland region could finally become a globally competitive city and a “driver of economic growth”210 in New Zealand. These latter factors i.e. being economically competitive and the region being a driver of economic growth in the country provided significant motivation for the reform process but also got carried over in to the Auckland Plan and its vision that Auckland would be the ‘world’s most liveable city’ (Beattie, 2011).

**Aligning governance**

The realisation that improved alignment between central government and local government in Auckland was required was identified by a working group set up to look at the planning issues in Auckland in the mid-2000s. The then Prime Minister Helen Clark said to the authorities in Auckland “I’ll give you a billion dollars but you will integrate land use and transport”.211 This demonstrated that within central government there was recognition of the importance of horizontal and vertical alignment between government agencies operating in Auckland for the delivery of outcomes, in this specific instance it was regarding land use and transport. In October 2007 the Government appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance. In March 2009 the Royal Commission delivered its findings to Cabinet highlighting:

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209 Planning Practitioner
210 Planning Practitioner
211 Following this the government enacted the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004 to force alignment between the authorities and land use and transport decisions. This resulted in the establishment of the Auckland Regional Transport Authority, changes to the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (Auckland Regional Council, 1999a) and a review of the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy (Auckland Regional Council, 1999b).
The need for central government, [and] local [government] to start to agree on what are the priorities for infrastructure, for roads, for rail, for water and how the funding decisions could be made between the, the various parties.\(^{212}\)

The Royal Commission’s (2009) recommendations included the need for spatial planning as the mechanism by which to establish cross-government agreement, alignment, and integration on the issues, priorities and solutions for the region. The Chair of the Royal Commission explained that:

> Having done the research and visited various other cities and looked at the problems... that were besetting Auckland... we became aware... of the move to spatial planning in various parts of the world, and it seemed to us... to be a very good idea. So we made the recommendation that the first stage of devising a set of new plans for Auckland should be the spatial plan because we saw that... as the basis upon which all other Auckland plans, be they for transport matters, or economic matters or social matters or whatever, as well as the resource management plans, could be based.

The unified local government structure in Auckland was closely tied to the need for an overarching plan to set a high-level strategic direction for the region across a range of service areas spanning central and local government and the private sector. It was envisaged that this would provide a means of aligning the direction of Auckland with key stakeholders and central government to resolve the issues of dysfunctionality and poorly integrated decision-making that previously existed.

> [Auckland] Council doesn’t have the resources to tackle a lot of the big challenges that Auckland faces, why wouldn’t you try to align local and, and central government together? So, it makes complete sense to me.\(^{213}\)

Others supported these notions of alignment too: “it’s incredibly important... the two parts of government are aligned”;\(^{214}\) “the theory was that we would have alignment” or,

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212 Central Government Official
213 Central Government Politician
214 Central Government Official
“a better chance of getting alignment with central government policy”\textsuperscript{215} Hopefully, the “whole governance reorganisation” results in “the ability for Auckland [to] effectively engage with Wellington.”\textsuperscript{216} Others voiced similar views: “It’s essential that you get alignment”\textsuperscript{217} and “it’s how we align together, it’s not one or the other, it’s how we align together”.\textsuperscript{218}

Some participants reflected on the degree of alignment with central government during the first term of the new Auckland Council (2010 – 2013); they suggested that a suitable degree of alignment had not been achieved under the new governance arrangements or spatial planning; “they’re not very well aligned at all.”\textsuperscript{219} Others thought that there was “reasonable alignment” despite conceding that they’re “not in alignment... around some of the transport issues”.\textsuperscript{220} Some participants sympathised with the difficulty of achieving alignment: “you’ve got a regional set of political priorities, matching that with... the national level is a difficult job.”\textsuperscript{221} One planning practitioner argued for “a process... that works when you’re not aligned” ideologically, for example when there is a centre-right central government and centre-left Auckland Council in power. As this participant explained, currently “it’s only set up if you’ve got central government and local government aligned, if they’re unaligned than you’ve just got this.” Both a central government politician and stakeholder supported a process which forces alignment between central government and the Auckland Council: “anything that sensibly forces alignment or encourages discussion and alignment between central government and Auckland Council is a good thing”.\textsuperscript{222} The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009) proposed “quite a radical model”\textsuperscript{223} in relation to alignment of strategy between central government and Auckland Council. The Royal Commission recommended a high level of ministerial input in the process (discussed further in

\textsuperscript{215} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{216} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{217} Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
\textsuperscript{218} Auckland Council Officer
\textsuperscript{219} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{220} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{221} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{222} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{223} Central Government Politician
Chapter 11). Within two weeks of Cabinet receiving these recommendations Cabinet declined them deeming them politically unpalatable:

[This was] quite a radical model where you’d have the Minsters sitting down with the Mayor and the council... central and local government aligning budgets and priorities in order to meet strategic outcomes and the National Government didn’t want to go there basically. That was politically not palatable for them to do that.224

The Royal Commission also argued for strong alignment on social issues, a recommendation that was not adopted by central government:

The two main things that the government didn’t do which the Royal Commission argued very strongly for... Auckland Council having a big role in delivering social services and having a real engagement on social issues with central government... on funding, how that money was spent and everything else, and of the course the government ran a mile from that.225

This suggests that spatial planning as a mechanism for achieving ‘joined-up’ governance is unlikely to be as successful as first envisaged. The participants suggested that the main determinants of this was the government administration and the current governance and legislative frameworks which are in place.

The 2010 governance reforms and the mandate for a spatial plan is only the second ever neoliberal governance experiment in Auckland’s history which has fundamentally changed the architecture of local government in the region. This follows the inauguration of local government in New Zealand in 1876 and the Bassett reforms of 1989 (refer Chapter 3). The 2010 reforms signify an overwhelming desire to re-configure the governance arrangements to improve the region’s management. Running contrary to this latest attempt is central government’s political unwillingness to follow through on this new model of governance in the region which requires a high-degree of alignment between the two tiers if it is to work effectively.

224 Central Government Politician
225 Commentator
**Integrated decision-making**

A number of participants commented on the role of governance structures in integrated decision-making processes noting how often organisations create functional silos which lead to an inability to foster integrated decision-making networks.

> When you think about the organisational structure the really big challenge is that everybody falls back into their silos and that at a governance level or a government or council level everything ends up back in a technical discipline[s] and yet the real places of urban development are actually... a very crosscutting activity, and we don’t have a system that’s designed to deal with or deliver on a crosscutting activity.226

This view relates to one of the underpinning assertions of spatial planning as an activity to enable alignment and integration across organisations and institutional silos. Participants noted how the creation of the new Auckland Council provided an opportunity for this integrated decision-making to occur because of the unified structure put in place. Since the reform the governance structures are “a lot better to make those big picture decisions”, “we’re a lot better setup to implement the strategy... they’re a lot more focused on delivering certain outcomes”.227 The Environmental Defence Society saw the new Auckland Council as having the ability to “take a more strategic view” and “a more integrated approach”.228

> It’s not until now that... we’ve actually got... a local government decision-making structure that actually has the wherewithal to address the scale of the infrastructure and planning issues that the region has been facing ever since the 20s.229

Participants explained how: “you can’t deal with the questions of housing affordability and the questions of RMA planning reform and the issues of local government reform in

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226 Stakeholder  
227 Auckland Council Officer  
228 Stakeholder  
229 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
isolation. They are all integrated parts of the same story”; 230 “The [new] governance structure in Auckland is much better at making... regional decisions”; 231 “government working with one Council makes quite a difference in terms of how you... move forward”; 232 in terms of funding options “we would never have had that ability to have that high level debate the same under the previous governance structure the same as we do under this”. 233 One planning practitioner argued that spatial planning was “much more than good planning” in that it has the ability to “influence and guide and facilitate good thoughtful decision-making and investment and aspiration.”

If good planning is about joined-up thinking then yes it’s about a joined-up thinking, it’s about better decision-making capability and more timely decision-making capability. 234

The unification of local government in the Auckland region, the creation of the new Auckland Council, with a spatial plan provides the opportunity for improved alignment between the Auckland Council and central government which did not exist prior: “we want to encourage alignment between central and local government and the spatial plan is the obvious thing where all the roads meet isn’t it?” 235 The opportunity for integrated decision-making, joined-up thinking and high level debate is now afforded through this new system.

Seven council-controlled organisations – delivery arms

The Auckland Council includes seven council-controlled organisations 236 which sit below the governing body as key delivery arms. These heighten the challenges for integrated decision-making. The Cabinet Implementation of Auckland Governance Reforms Committee (Spatial Planning Options for the Auckland Council) (Office for the Minister
for the Environment, 2009a) asserted that these subsidiary organisations are key agents in relation to delivering the Auckland Plan. This was reinforced by the views of participants. Each organisation has its own board of directors. These organisations operate at arm’s length from the Auckland Council itself (formerly referred to as the Auckland Council Governing Body)237 although the council-controlled organisations receive their overall direction from the Auckland Plan (2012a), the Auckland Council Long-term Plan (Auckland Council, 2012c) and the Council Controlled Organisation Accountability Policy (Auckland Council, 2013c). Some participants argued that the new structure has not in fact reduced the number of functional silos within local government in Auckland. They believe that the reform has removed seven (the seven local authorities) but created seven new ones (the seven council-controlled organisations). The creation of “seven functional silos”238 is likely, they say, to result in a separation of function similar to that which existed prior to 2010. A stakeholder argued that the accountability of these organisations as opposed to what existed before, is no different, and nor is the simplicity of the broader structure. Each of the seven council-controlled organisations also have their own planning functions which was argued by one commentator to undermine the planning role of the governing body; “the separate bodies... seem to actually, often take on significant planning roles”, and the concern is that they appear “not coordinated with each other or with the council”239 because they have been effectively “siphoned off into SOE’s”240 and “are tending to operate as independent fiefdoms instead of as a coordinated part of the provision of services in Auckland.” The concern is that it “could lead to all sorts of unexpected outcomes which will again undermine any idea that you’ve got a unitary approach to planning”.241

The council-controlled organisations do play a key role in implementing Auckland Plan; “they’ve got to deliver something they are part of Council”,242 but some argue that

237 The Auckland Council Governing Body comprises the Mayor and 21 councillors.
238 Planning Practitioner
239 Commentator
240 Planning Practitioner
241 Commentator
242 Planning Practitioner
“there’s quite a division between what Council wants and where the CCO’s are going.”

Another participant accepted the merits of having individual units tasked with the provision of particular services, however;

it needs to be done in way that they don’t become authorities in their own right which can be an inhibitor to coordinated development and provision of services... based on some major developments which I have been involved with... there has not been enough oversight of the SOE’s by the central body politic.

The seven council-controlled organisations have to be carefully managed by the Auckland Council Governing Body so as to ensure that they remain subordinate to the Governing Body and aligned with the Auckland Plan. For example, several of the council-controlled organisations including Watercare Services Limited, Auckland Waterfront, and Auckland Transport have their own planners and devise their own strategies and plans for the direction of their organisations. Given the size of these individual organisations and the works they carry out it would seem an immense challenge to keep them integrated merely through a high-level and often vague Auckland Plan.

Initial issues with the council-controlled organisation model might lie with the politicians still coming to terms with how the new structure works. Accountability of the council-controlled organisations to the Auckland Council Governing Body due to funding was an issue raised by participants. In the case of Auckland Transport, they receive funding from both central government and Auckland Council. Hence, questions arose as to which tier of government they are then accountable? This is illustrative of a contradiction created by this new governance structure and the council-controlled organisation model. One participant explained as follows:

Auckland Transport gets an increasing proportion of its funding from central government but also gets told by central government on what it’s to spend its money on. However, it is politically answerable to the Auckland Council which

243 Planning Practitioner
244 Planning Practitioner
245 Commentator
has its own ideas about what the priorities are, and this is the classic spat between public transport and more roads... so the structures that are in place are unworkable because they are answering to two masters.

This raises the potential for the council-controlled organisations to act contrary to or make decisions which hinder the implementation of the Auckland Plan. Transport decisions have significant effects on land use patterns. The likelihood of this occurring is heightened if Auckland Transport is acting on the direction provided by central government and the direction of central government is not aligned to that of the Auckland Plan. One central government official recalled how “we advised the government not to split Auckland Transport out from Auckland Council and [Minister of Transport] Steven Joyce... was humming and harring.” This participant recounted how “we thought we had him convinced, we and the Ministry of Transport [were] on record saying to him ‘don’t split Auckland, don’t create a CCO for transport because transport is too political’ was our view [the New Zealand Transport Agency]... We said ‘transport is at the heart of urban management and government’”. Ultimately this advice to the government was not followed. A former Auckland Local Authority CEO explained how when the “government is the owner, shareholder, and funder, their natural inclination is to want to do the business of the Board for them” which leads to tension and an inability of the board of the council-controlled organisation to do their job effectively. He went on to explain that, in the case of Auckland, this relationship between the boards of the council-controlled organisations and the Auckland Council Governing Body,

...requires constant effort to keep the Council out of doing the Board’s business but it requires equal vigilance that the Board does not disenfranchise the Council from making what are legitimate political choices and decision-making... and that the Board understands that its role is to act as the agent of the Council to implement their policy. That’s the hard part... within the framework of... where the entity has its own revenue it’s far harder to get that agent relationship working whereas where they’re completely dependent on Council funding it’s far easier.

246 Planning Practitioner
Watercare Services Limited is financially independent given its ability to charge a separate water rate. With the other five council-controlled organisations, the “agent relationship” as the participant above describes it, is far closer aligned and stronger because the only revenue they receive is on investments of which council-controlled organisation are the managers/caretakers for the Auckland Council Governing Body. One central government official suggested that “if they were smart” in order to strengthen the alignment of desired outcomes between the council-controlled organisations and the Auckland Council Governing Body, beyond what the Auckland Plan, the Auckland Council Long-term Plan (Auckland Council, 2012c) and the Council Controlled Organisation Accountability policy (Auckland Council, 2013c) set out, then:

the Council may through their letters of intent to those CCO’s could actually say you cannot do anything which is inconsistent with, or doesn’t give effect to the Auckland Plan... they could really tie them down, and they could say all spending must be in accordance with the Auckland Plan.

Other participants suggested similar concepts; “maybe there should have been a whole lot of sub-agreements on how it was going to work in terms of funding relationship with major infrastructure providers... both regionally... and nationally.”

Despite these criticisms, other participants acknowledged the benefits of the council-controlled organisation model. “Management models are important because no single organisation can cope with it all so I can see the sense in setting up some of these SOE’s to cope with specialist areas” and it stands as a “grand opportunity”. In the instances of Watercare Services Limited and Auckland Transport it was suggested that “they are starting to find their feet now”, “they are starting to get on and deliver some key projects”. For the likes of Watercare Services Limited and Auckland Transport they now have scale in relation to funding and projects to deliver a much more efficient programme of works:

Auckland Transport is now of a scale where if they have delays in one project well they can actually bring forward something else, so there is far greater

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247 Planning Practitioner
248 Planning Practitioner
249 Planning Practitioner
ability for them to deliver a coherent programme simply because of the scale of what they can do.  

For example Watercare Services Limited is preparing for a “big capital spend in the next few years” reflecting the scale of the new council-controlled organisations which enable them to do this. The council-controlled organisation model enables the sole providers of particular service, for example transport, water and wastewater, events, property investment, to take a holistic view across the entire region.

The new model holds a significant degree of potential to facilitate the implementation of the Auckland Plan. That said, it is reliant on close alignment between the Auckland Council Governing Body and the council-controlled organisations which to an extent may be missing currently.

7.2 Benefits of reform

This section discusses the benefits of the reform process and the re-configured governance arrangements. On July 11, 2011, the Prime Minister expressed his sentiments regarding the progress of the new Auckland Council.

The new structure has been a success so far and that’s a credit to all those here today from the Auckland region. The Super City has reduced bureaucracy. Previously there were nine local transport entities, eight councils and five water and wastewater companies. Now there is just one of each. And the new structure has kept rates down… The new structure has also enabled clear decision-making on important pieces of infrastructure (Key, 2011, p.1).

The participants too noted similar benefits provided through the local government reform in Auckland: a functioning structure; a comprehensive regional perspective; a unified approach; the ability to think more strategically about the region; the removal of

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250 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
251 Planning Practitioner
252 Commentator
“destructive and internecine warfare”²⁵³ between the previous local authorities; a single voice; and a consistent approach across the region. These outcomes of governance reform are considered critical components for providing a single strategic direction for the region and having the ability to implement it:

It’s all very well developing a plan but it’s making sure that the implementation arrangements are in place. A key element of that in my view is making sure that there are the appropriate governance arrangements to anchor that.²⁵⁴

The reform has resulted in a, “functioning structure [being put]... in place”²⁵⁵, providing, “simplification and consistency”²⁵⁶, the ability to for “one city... and one set of politicians, to be able to push things through”²⁵⁷ with the “administrative structure, legal structure... there to allow it to happen”.²⁵⁸ One of the most significant changes regarding planning is the ability to look “at things comprehensively on a... region-wide basis”²⁵⁹ with unity and without conflict at the local government level.²⁶⁰ Participants expressed a high degree of confidence in having “one umbrella entity”²⁶¹ particularly when tasked with “engaging central government and dealing with regional spatial planning”.²⁶² There was unanimity around the “unitary governance of Auckland” enabling “a better job of its overall strategic planning” and the capacity to “carry out more competent urban strategic planning”. An Auckland Council Officer supported these comments by stating; “we could never have done this [the Auckland Plan] with the eight existing councils”.

One stakeholder reinforced comments made earlier that, “we have [now] a single voice... leading the process and that means if nothing else we have a level of consistency... that we haven’t had previously”.

²⁵³ Commentator
²⁵⁴ Planning Practitioner
²⁵⁵ Planning Practitioner
²⁵⁶ Planning Commissioner
²⁵⁷ Planning Commissioner
²⁵⁸ Planning Commissioner
²⁵⁹ Planning Commissioner
²⁶⁰ Planning Practitioner
²⁶¹ Stakeholder
²⁶² Auckland Council Officer
Auckland has not had a centre until the reforms and I think this has held back real development of the city into the driver of economic growth and, and cultural innovation... and now it can.\(^{263}\)

The creation of a single centre and single voice for Auckland was also argued by one stakeholder to have led local government in Auckland to be more outwardly focused regarding its engagement with other stakeholders:

...[the] quality of dialogue particularly between the public and private sector has improved markedly through the process of the of the consolidation of government... in Auckland.

This might suggest organisational cultural change has occurred as a result of the reform process or that this person is dealing with a more adept officer.\(^{264}\) Whilst the governance reforms in Auckland have provided a range of tangible benefits, central government officials also argued that benefits have been seen at that level too. The reforms have “mobilised central government to start to talk with one voice.” The importance of the whole-of-government approach that this provides in Auckland is discussed further in Chapter 11.

The above views reinforce the importance of unification so as to enable a broad regional perspective and approach to be taken towards Auckland’s development. A former Auckland local authority CEO when questioned regarding the implications the structure has on outcome asserted, “It’s fundamental, it’s absolutely essential” although he viewed the governance transformation as a change in scale not a change in function. “Well in essence that’s no different... the transformation is about the scale of what you can do”. This view reinforces the neoliberal spatial governance argument of creating economies of scale within the architectures of local government in order to address the issues being faced in the region. “The governance structure was the elephant in the room, that’s now been dealt with.”\(^{265}\)

\(^{263}\) Commentator
\(^{264}\) Refer Chapter 8
\(^{265}\) Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
Unified governance in Auckland has provided one solution to resolve the institutional shortcomings that previously existed in the local governance structure of the region. The question remains, is simply amalgamating governance in Auckland enough to resolve the issues which the region faces? There are a range of views on this, some welcoming change, others pointing to potential conflicts. The following section begins to address this question.

7.3 Institutional scale

The size of the Auckland Council has changed the relationship between central government and local government in Auckland. This section presents participants’ views on this and what it may mean for spatial planning, spatial governance, and the implementation of the Auckland Plan (2012a) in the region.

The new Auckland Council was widely noted by participants to be “a very, very, big beast”. Some participants observed that Auckland Council is “not really local government anymore... It’s almost like regional government”266 and therefore it has created “more like a peer to peer conversation than the typical local government to central government”267 relationship. To an extent this is what was intended. One commentator suggested that it is almost like “one sovereign state talking to another”; an Auckland Council officer stated “we are effectively a state government”.

The change in size leads to changing power dynamics between central government and local government in the Auckland region, “it’s changed... a lot of the power dynamics”268 between central government and local government in Auckland, “it’s not like a council talking to central government... it’s some other creature”.269 As a result it has created “quite a powerful... political element in that sense.”270 Because of the size and highly urbanised make-up of the population base of the new Auckland Council relative to other

266 Central Government Politician
267 Central Government Politician
268 Central Government Politician
269 Central Government Politician
270 Planning Practitioner
local authorities in New Zealand “Auckland is now what you might call a metropolitan centre and it doesn’t share a huge amount with the rest of the country”. This results in “all sorts of interesting dynamics” which is compounded by the contributions that Auckland makes to GDP and the percentage of New Zealand’s total population growth that Auckland is projected to accommodate over the next 30-40 years. The size was acknowledged by many as providing the region with “the opportunity to give effect to some really good outcomes”; “Auckland does have some muscle, it is in a better position [than before] to demand things” from central government in relation to the region’s development. Although there was some concern regarding the size of the new Auckland Council in that it is now a “huge bureaucracy”, “very complex” when in fact the “intention was to make it less complicated”. This led one participant to question:

Did central government really truly understand what they were imposing on regional and local government here in Auckland? I suspect there are commentators and people within the Ministry who probably say ‘yup we were well across that’ but I do actually wonder in practice if that was the case.

A planning commissioner questioned;

Why the government wanted to have such a large and powerful organisation except that they do say that they want Auckland to be large and powerful and successful because if Auckland’s powerful and successful then the rest of New Zealand will be too, and I guess that’s the case.

This might reduce central government’s control over Auckland meaning they can no longer “divide and rule anymore”. Optimistically a planning commissioner argued that the increased size, power, and critical mass of local government in the region will improve the ability for Auckland Council to speak with ‘one voice’ to central

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271 Commentator
272 Central Government Politician
273 Auckland Council Officer
274 Planning Practitioner
275 Stakeholder
276 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
277 Planning Practitioner
278 Mayor Len Brown
government. Accordingly, “one would hope that this sort of collective power of Auckland now means that its voice means something”.\(^{279}\) The unification allows the Auckland Council to have clarity of direction and be able to integrate better with the other major stakeholders concerned with the region’s development, including central government. Now, “there is no end to what Auckland could get because… Auckland is a very large political lobby or political block”.\(^{280}\) But another participant observed that although “Auckland is united… [and] speaking with one voice… whether that makes any difference to the listener [central government] is another question.” One Auckland Council officer argued that “we are big and therefore central government does have to engage”. Furthermore, in one participants view, the increased size of local government in Auckland has contributed negatively to the relationship between the two tiers of government.

Auckland’s a third of the country, central government feels a little bit threatened by that, doesn’t want to give them any extra powers certainly, but also is probably too scared to take away their powers so it’s probably just the status quo.\(^{281}\)

One commentator agreed explaining that, “there will always be an ambivalence because of Auckland’s relative size within the country, there will always be an ambivalence of central government with its dealing with Auckland”. This causes concern for spatial planning and achieving integration and alignment between the two if the relationship is clouded in conflict and political tensions (this is expanded on in Chapters 10 and 11).

Another issue concerning the size of the Auckland Council was raised regarding the capability of actors within a larger governance structure to be able to perform their roles. One stakeholder explained that the risk is that “you end up with people who are not capable of operating on the bigger scale”. A planning commissioner echoed these concerns regarding planners working on this bigger scale because “regional planning is far more complex than city and district planning” and therefore it “can be quite hard for district and city planners to get their heads around”.

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\(^{279}\) Auckland Council Officer  
\(^{280}\) Planning Commissioner  
\(^{281}\) Planning Practitioner
It is clear that the reforms to local government in Auckland have provided the new Auckland Council with an institutional scale unseen before in the history of local government in New Zealand. The new scale created by the unification process of the previous eight legacy local authorities has provided the Auckland Council with a unified voice when engaging with key stakeholders, particularly central government. However, the size of Auckland Council might now cause power dynamics between itself and central government to the detriment of good public policy outcomes and plan implementation.\textsuperscript{282} The scale also poses challenges from an organisational staffing point of view.\textsuperscript{283}

**The mayoral office**

Strong praise came from many participants regarding the political leadership that has been shown from the Mayor to make the new Auckland Council function. One central government politician stated,

> [Auckland Council has] been vindicated... we’ve seen a kind of clarity and a kind of purpose and a direction from the political leadership of Auckland Council... that the city’s lacked in living memory.

These views were reflected by other central government politicians, central government officials, the Chair of the Royal Commission, commentators and stakeholders. The part the Mayor has played in facilitating coordination and collaboration between central government, other stakeholders and the Auckland Council was deemed as “bloody impressive” by one planning practitioner. Without unnecessarily causing conflict he has “bedded in the structure”\textsuperscript{284}, facilitated discussions, and brought the potential factions of the region together. He has “managed by and large to keep a politically diverse council pointing in the same direction”\textsuperscript{285} despite being subject to, “horrendous behind the scenes pressure over the Auckland Plan”.\textsuperscript{286} The Mayor has been;

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{282} Refer Chapter 11 \\
\textsuperscript{283} Refer Chapter 8 \\
\textsuperscript{284} Central Government Politician \\
\textsuperscript{285} Chair, Royal Commission \\
\textsuperscript{286} Planning Practitioner
\end{flushright}
prepared to bend over and not take exception when Ministers... treat Auckland with a high degree of contempt as they regularly do... but he’s not stopping in his desire to... have a joined-up approach to dealing with these kind of issues.

This has provided a strong platform for inter-government negotiations and coordination to occur which is crucial for the success of spatial planning and the success of the new institutions working in the region. The above comments reflect on the importance of leadership towards successful planning and governance arrangements in Auckland. This has led to central government “recognising that there is some energy in Auckland and it’s... worth working with it instead of against it”. One stakeholder added to this stating, “we’re always going to have fights and tears before bedtime, but essentially we’ve got a Mayor with some vision... we’re moving along.” Leaders, despite their competencies, are still constrained by governance, legislative and funding structures they work within and it is sometimes, too easy to just say “oh if you had a good leader you would achieve something”... there’s reasons why leaders don’t achieve things it’s because they’ve got constraints which means you can’t achieve them.

The Mayor of the new Auckland Council stood out in the view of some participants as providing necessary and long overdue leadership to the region. They believed his performance has diluted historic tensions within the region and enabled some coordination and agreement to occur between central government and the new Auckland Council, largely because Auckland is now united.

That said, local government in Auckland has for the first time a mayor with executive powers afforded under the Local Government (Auckland Council) Amendment Act (2010) (s9). These powers are unheralded anywhere else in New Zealand. The legislation entitles the mayoral office to 0.2 per cent of total budgeted operating expenditure for that year. In 2013 it was reportedly 3.9 million dollars which was expected to rise to 4.9 in 2014 (Vaughan, 2014). The mayoral office provides the mayor with services such as policy, development, research advice and communications advice.

287 Commentator
288 Commentator
The team of staff behind the mayor provides them with support rivalling that of the Prime Minister (Vaughan, 2014). The executive powers also enable the mayor to make policy decisions without consulting his 21 councillors (New Zealand Herald, 2011). On this basis the Mayor is much better equipped to operate strategically than any previous mayors of large city councils in Auckland.

7.4 ‘Single shot’ solutions

Reforming the governance structure in Auckland alone does not, however, guarantee improved outcomes for the region. A former Auckland local authority CEO explained,

...all that’s happened in Auckland is a change in the governance structure but actually the responsibilities of the new Auckland Council are exactly the same as the sum of the responsibilities that the eight councils had previously.

Therefore, “what has been done doesn’t automatically or inherently create better outcomes”. Furthermore, simply reforming the architecture of local government in the region does not necessarily guarantee “a beneficial effect on governance.” All that has been done is a rationalisation and reduction of the local government areas. One commentator argued that instead of “creating the best governance structure” that the same “energy would be better directed, and the good will, directed at making things happen” because “there’s no such thing as a perfect structure”.

The question becomes, “does it [the new Auckland Council] really have all of the powers it needs to actually deliver on... what the documents like the Auckland Plan talk about?” Commentators and stakeholders alike raised these questions about whether the new governance structures have the ability to respond to the issues and challenges facing Auckland. One suggested that the governance reform had to be supported by further legislative reform; “significant governance reform supported by that legislative reform” because it was not only the governance structures which were performing inadequately in response to the issues and challenges facing the region:

289 Stakeholder
290 Planning Practitioner
The reform in Auckland was centred on governance as it should have been, however nobody then did the next step and said well right with this governance model what does that mean for trying to still work within the structures of the RMA.  

Although a barrier to achieving this was having central government “aligned around that [same] thinking”. It was suggested by some that further changes, other than governance structure, did not occur because central government was trying to get the simplest and lowest cost solution. The end result was “a bright shiny new local government structure” which then “had this old piece of legislation behind it that was even less relevant in a metropolitan situation”. A stakeholder’s view was that there is a lack of “understanding [about] what we are dealing with here and being able to make the hard decisions”. In actual fact,  

...in the ideal world you would have started with a realisation that our current planning frameworks in New Zealand’s aren’t working and particularly they are not working in the biggest city... you would have supported the governance change with a fairly substantive review of the current statutory planning process.

A planning practitioner explained that “you can’t invent a structure that guarantees it [the planning frameworks] will work” because “a better plan isn’t dependent on a structural solution”. Instead what has occurred in Auckland in his view is that by “doing away with the local authorities has created its own set of problems without solving the original problem”. These views underscore that the problems confronting Auckland are not solved by merely governance reform alone. Nor can governance reform alone be relied on to simultaneously provide better plans or improved implementation. The suitability of the new governance structure was also queried.

I don’t think that they [central government] have got the right governance model to achieve it [the aspirations of the Auckland Plan] and I don’t think they

291 Commentator  
292 Stakeholder  
293 Commentator  
294 Stakeholder
have thought through the implications for how they are going to roll that out and implement it.\textsuperscript{295}

Another participant observed that they “are probably not the most optimal... and they are also probably not the most efficient”.\textsuperscript{296} This was echoed by another stating; “when you look at structural design I mean come on... it’s not necessarily the best". These views were supported by those suggesting that Auckland didn’t need one council, the one council might in fact be too big, and that we could have avoided the complexity of the restructuring by looking at other means to resolve the issues other than governance reform. “We didn’t really need this very complex restructuring we’ve had in Auckland”.\textsuperscript{297} One participant explained how one large entity creates multiple tiers of management which creates significant diseconomies of scale and strong functional divisions within the council culminating in: a less responsive council; increased costs; and a diminished labour market, because there is no longer competition between councils. One participant explained:

...you can’t do the counter factual, you can’t know what would have happened if you had done nothing... I would not have done nothing but I would have done something about money, I think people just look in the wrong places... we seem to be very slow... to innovate, we, we think we are on number eight wire, innovators and all the rest of it, but we are not.\textsuperscript{298}

This section has outlined that governance reform alone, in the view of many experts, does not resolve the issues of decision-making, investment, and plan implementation, neither does it guarantee positive outcomes. Governance reform in Auckland was chosen in isolation and over other means of resolving the institutional challenges in the region. One commentator summarised: “Is the new structure in Auckland good enough for where we’re at? Yup. Is it completely fit for purpose? Not entirely, but we can improve it.” What Auckland required was a workable local government structure and this has now been provided. What is still missing, as highlighted by the participants

\textsuperscript{295} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{296} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{297} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{298} Planning Practitioner
views above, are reforms to other statutory processes which will enable the new governance structures to function effectively.

### 7.5 Summary

The purpose of the governance reform in Auckland was to provide a structural solution to better address the issues and challenges with which the region faced. This chapter concludes by reflecting on the views of the participants about the capacity of the governance reform to solve these issues. There is a wide range of views. Some participants were content with what has been achieved but the majority saw the inadequacies, potential overlaps, and a need for further legislative clarification.

Reasons for Auckland likely not succeeding under the new governance arrangements included factors such as: a long history of failure; a lack of the adequate tools to deliver; actors in the system unable to take up the opportunity that the reform has presented; the shortcomings of the structure; and the lack of support from central government. Some participants questioned “whether... Auckland takes up the challenge”\(^\text{299}\), whether the Auckland Council has “tools to do it”;\(^\text{300}\) whether or not the “council has the brains, drive, and maturity”.\(^\text{301}\) A central government politician defended the new governance structures put in place:

> We designed the best structure that we could for Auckland. We did not go and rip something off another city we actually really thought about it... we’re seeing the benefits of that.

Despite this statement, participants held doubts regarding Auckland Council’s ability to succeed based on Cabinet’s ‘put the structure in place and then step back’ attitude. Some suggested that, “central government agencies will continue to do their own thing”. This is reflective of the Crown not inserting anything into the legislation

\(^\text{299}\) Planning Commissioner  
\(^\text{300}\) Planning Practitioner  
\(^\text{301}\) Commentator
requiring them to engage with Auckland Council. A commentator offered a different view on why it might not succeed explaining:

Auckland has suffered from poor governance for such a long time that it will take it an equal amount, if it takes a city that long to develop a problem, it’s probably going to take an equal length of time to find solutions to them.

Some looked upon the governance reforms in Auckland more favourably commenting on the great opportunity the new local government arrangements have created for the region to realise its potential; how much better off as a result Auckland is as a region; and the ability for local government in Auckland to be strategic as opposed to reactive. A planning commissioner speculated that, “the new governance structure and the… new name and perhaps some new political will we might get ahead a bit further than we did before”. Others described the reform as a “success”\textsuperscript{302}, “pretty wonderful”\textsuperscript{303}, “we are so much better off”\textsuperscript{304} “whilst recognising that “there are still aspects that need tweaking”.\textsuperscript{305} Furthermore the opportunity that now exists was labelled as “amazing”\textsuperscript{306} and “terrific”\textsuperscript{307} in that, “its left Auckland in a much, much, better space than it has been before”.\textsuperscript{308} A former Auckland local authority CEO argued that it is, “the right, governance structure” because as one central government politician observed “Auckland Council now has the scale and resources, the size, the specialist staff, it’s got serious intellectual grunt behind it and resources”.

Following central government’s experiment in the Auckland region with neoliberal spatial governance and the creation of a ‘super-city’ it was suggested by two central government officials that this type of exercise involving spatial planning would not be undertaken again: “things have their moment in time”.\textsuperscript{309}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[302] Central Government Politician
\item[303] Stakeholder
\item[304] Stakeholder
\item[305] Central Government Politician
\item[306] Planning Practitioner
\item[307] Commentator
\item[308] Commentator
\item[309] Central Government Official
\end{footnotes}
What’s happening in the Better Local Government space has the potential to destabilise that... and therefore its ability to do spatial planning... things have moved on... I’m not sure that the legislation that’s there would be put in place now.

An Auckland Council officer also recognised this, noting that the planning frameworks are,

...changing all the time... they are not static and they are not the same as they were when we started.... effectively, is the planning framework right now? No and that’s why we are advocating some change ourselves and it’s changing anyway.

This is illustrative of how spatial planning and the re-territorialisation of governance in the Auckland region signified a neoliberal experiment borne out of particular set of factors, range of experiences and ideologies present at a point in time. This demonstrates, as discussed in Chapter 2, how neoliberalism is a fluid process defined by the government’s constantly changing view of state-market relations and what is the most effective means for achieving prosperity.

This chapter has shown that participants believe governance reform by itself is not the panacea to resolving Auckland’s issues or overcoming its challenges but yet is a necessary component. Consequently, the governance reform in Auckland has made a significant contribution to alleviating the problems of the previous governance arrangement in the region. The reform process has provided new opportunities for the region to address its issues and challenges. Despite some participants’ scepticism over whether or not the opportunities of governance reform will be realised, and the suitability of the structure in place, the shift to a unified local government model in the Auckland region does provide the ability to align decision-making and strategy both across the region and nationally, something that previous neoliberal projects in the region had failed to do. The question becomes whether or not those opportunities will be capitalised on? If so, the governance arrangements are likely to provide a key step forward in enabling the region to develop and implement a unified and coordinated strategy to overcome the issues and challenges. If not, the new governance
arrangements might only perpetuate tension between local government in Auckland and central government, resulting in the status quo.

Spatial planning relies upon a range of factors introduced in this Chapter: organisational culture, legislation, funding, and central government. The next chapter in Part 2 addresses organisational culture.
Chapter 8

Organisational culture and leadership

Structures aren’t really that important... what really matters are the behaviours of the individuals who are actually operating those structures, and having the right sort of people in place can make bad structures work really well.

(Stakeholder)

8.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the role of actors in spatial planning and the central role they play in fostering organisational culture and leadership. Organisational culture and leadership are critical factors in enabling the success of this latest neoliberal spatial governance project in Auckland. The chapter focuses on how actors can either assist or prevent the performance of the new governance structures based on their organisational culture and leadership. Many participants acknowledged that to make the new structures work “people are key”\(^\text{310}\) and that “ultimately it comes down to the individuals”.\(^\text{311}\) Or, conversely actors can be “a major problem for achieving good outcomes”.\(^\text{312}\) Some rightly raised concern that “the quality of our leadership and the quality of our culture in the organisations that lead these things”\(^\text{313}\) is much more important than the technical planning or institutional structural factors.

\(^{310}\) Stakeholder
\(^{311}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{312}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{313}\) Stakeholder
8.1 Organisational Culture

[we need to organise] ourselves for success in terms of our institutional capability, our regulatory regimes, our kind of leadership responsibility and... our community... there’s a... good hard a look in the mirror required by a lot of people in this space around this system and... we’d better start doing that soon

(Stakeholder)

The importance of organisational culture in carrying out effective spatial planning and implementing the Auckland Plan (2012a) was seen by one participant as either not recognised, or recognised but not dealt with. In their view, therefore “we could end up with the world’s best spatial plan and the world’s best Unitary Plan... but if you don’t have the right culture it doesn’t matter how good your plan is, your implementation will not be good.” Conversely, “a poor to average plan with a great culture focus on implementation... can deliver great outcomes”.314 Others agreed that “most structures can be made to work if you’ve got the right leadership, the right strategic thinking, the right people in place, the right culture.”315 Participants widely agreed that it has always been the organisational culture and the quality of the people which determine whether or not the new structure or plan works well and is implemented effectively.

One planning practitioner suggested that there is “a certain lack of experienced personnel” at the Auckland Council. Others agreed. “It’s manned by people who do not understand the process that they are overseeing”, said one,316 and “they’re not challenging the planning thinking.”317 The reasons for this were thought to be a “cultural hangover” from the old style of governance in the region.318 One planning practitioner agreed that it essentially stems from a lack of “joined-up thinking” and an outcome focus around implementation symptomatic of the staff and old legacy councils in the region. One planning commissioner argued that “getting rid of the hide-bound views of the Regional Council would have been a good idea but in fact it hasn’t

314 Stakeholder
315 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
316 Stakeholder
317 Central Government Official
318 Auckland Council Officer
happened”; instead it has become a “poisoned chalice which has gone onto the new Council”.

Some participants were not surprised by this outcome given that the governance reform process has reduced the size of the labour force and in doing so, “probably shook out a lot of good people... [and] thinned down our labour force”. Furthermore, the governance reform process has done little by way of improving the quality of the elected representatives because all that has been done is a “rationalising of boundaries, amalgamating and so on” which has reduced complexity, but which might just end up in “a bigger cock up”. To perpetuate problems, after the reform, “there was no capacity building”. The result, as another stakeholder observed, is that,...we’ve got a small pool of people to pull from... we’ve shuffled the deck chairs on the Titanic slightly but I don’t think we’ve fundamentally changed the thinking.

Many agreed that for organisational cultural change to occur it needs to stem from “individuals trying to change institutional thinking and culture rather than the other way around, its bloody hard; again it gets back to lack of leadership.” These views suggest that for any significant change to occur, as envisaged by the Royal Commission and central government, there has to be an organisational cultural change. Many participants noted that this has not yet occurred, and that there are “some quite serious challenges” as many of the staff came from the old legacy councils. One observer noted that these people both brought with them different ways of working, and embedded organisational tensions which had existed between the legacy councils. It was suggested that the pace of work in relation to the development of the spatial plan and the new Unitary Plan quelled some of this tension. This led to some changes. One planning practitioner noted how the development of the Auckland Plan took the “legacy mind-set” and “shook it up”. One stakeholder thought it related to the pace of work because:

319 Planning Practitioner
320 Planning Practitioner
321 Stakeholder
322 Planning Practitioner
323 Stakeholder
324 Auckland Council Officer
325 Auckland Council Officer
They’re trying to do too much too quickly... as a consequence they may achieve less than they would have done if a more measured approach had been taken... a little more patience might well have been appropriate.

These concerns were echoed by other participants. Auckland Council is now “a really big boat and it’s really hard and slow to turn”\textsuperscript{326} true organisational cultural change will take time.

Some suggested that they had not seen any “real evidence of post structural change”\textsuperscript{327} and “no evidence of that opportunity being likely to be... accepted, or taken up”\textsuperscript{328} As well as this there was uncertainty as to whether or not people are “motivated”\textsuperscript{329} to change. The Mayor accepted that the “big risk, with these types of things is a lack of will”. He added that some of his staff “seemed desperately keen to find excuses not to do things”.

Notwithstanding the criticisms by participants of the quality of the staff and political actors which went into the new Auckland Council, it has remained fully functional throughout its first term. The job of “bringing eight councils together is just an enormous job”\textsuperscript{330} and this feat should not be overlooked. Its functioning throughout the first term is down to the “extremely good people there,” which have made it work.\textsuperscript{331} Undoubtedly, strong leadership and the ‘right’ organisational culture in parts of the new administration have enabled this. Some participants commended the leadership of certain staff within the Auckland Council for the role they played, particularly the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Planning Officer and the Manager of Regional Strategy (discussed further in the following section). The whole “team have done an amazing job... to ensure that everything stays working as well as to put out a strategic plan within the timeframe that they’ve achieved”.\textsuperscript{332} One participant explained how she was, “just grateful that current management has meant that it [the Auckland Council] hasn’t fallen

\textsuperscript{326}Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{327}Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{328}Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{329}Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{330}Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
\textsuperscript{331}Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{332}Central Government Official
over” because of “the huge job just to keep things on the road has been and will continue to be a real challenge”.

During the first three year term several participants argued that there had been change regarding organisational culture in terms of implementation: “they’ve stepped up”, as one put it, despite some concern about them in the beginning. Others thought there had been a change in ‘mentality’. “It might not be as far as we want, but it’s going in the right direction”, and “we’ve seen some early signs of intent... that’s all encouraging”. This, it was argued, resulted in the Auckland Council as a whole being “lot more strategic... thinking a lot harder and more intelligently and more thoughtfully about what we need to do”.

These views support the role organisational culture plays towards improving the performance of the governance arrangements in Auckland. An Auckland Council Officer reiterated these views explaining that implementation and an outcomes focus has now “become infused within our organisation right from the Chief Executive down”. A commentator concluded that the “biggest thing that is working is the culture, not for everybody, but enough of them are changing”.

The strong leadership by council officers is vital because the capability of the elected representatives is not assured. One stakeholder explained that when “your governance structure is elected there’s more emphasis on a high quality senior management... the chief executive then has a critical role”. This was supported by the Mayor when arguing that to achieve the new direction set out in the Auckland Plan it has to be ingrained in the organisation’s culture; “don’t back off, no matter who the Mayor is, or whoever the Council is... you’re ingraining it as the spirit of Auckland”. Others agreed: “you’ve got to keep on the case, it just doesn’t happen naturally”, you’ve got to have “government

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333 Planning Commissioner  
334 Planning Practitioner  
335 Commentator  
336 Stakeholder  
337 Commentator  
338 Planning Practitioner
commitment for implementation”, including “people in the right place and people who are committed to it”.

Regardless of these views, it should not be dismissed that “amalgamation of this scale is huge and takes years to bed down”. Many participants agreed, arguing that it would not be until the third term of the Auckland Council that the new structure begins to “manifest itself”, before “new councillors get to grips with the new governance structure of the governing body, the local boards, the relationship that they have with the CCO’s [council-controlled organisations]”. On this basis it could be suggested that organisational culture and leadership capable of maximising the opportunities the new governance arrangements offer would not emerge until this time either. It will take time until “you start to see people of real ability”, before “you will really start to get an Auckland wide, regional thinking and a perception of what a combined Auckland can do”, and “somebody will come in who has... a real vision for Auckland”. Another commentator agreed, maintaining that Auckland needs “an extraordinary person” as mayor but conceded that the “likelihood of that extraordinary person turning up is fairly small”.

The success of the new Auckland Council, spatial planning, and this new form of governance will be reliant on, “having the right people, facilitating the right things, at the right time... As it always has been”. It was overly optimistic to expect at the outset there would be organisational culture and leadership capable of maximising the potential of the new governance structures, undertaking spatial planning, and responding immediately to the issues and challenges facing the region. The quandary still has to be faced over this time that “too often” we don’t have “the right people in the room... on either the political or administrative sides which threatens new ways of

339 Planning Practitioner
340 Auckland Council Officer
341 Auckland Council Officer
342 Commentator
343 Stakeholder
344 Stakeholder
345 Stakeholder
346 Planning Practitioner
347 Central Government Official
working, such as undertaking spatial planning. Ultimately, this is “a real... organisational structural failing and maybe a cultural failing”. 348

8.2 Leadership

You’ve got to start at the top, it doesn’t matter whether it’s private or public sector, local or central government, if there’s leadership, if there’s effective quality leadership at the top, then the outcomes tend to be much better regardless of how difficult the issues are.

(Stakeholder)

Leadership was identified by many participants as a key attribute for the success of the new governance arrangements in Auckland and the ability to undertake spatial planning. One participant argued that the “most powerful way to get better outcomes is to have better leadership”. 349 This view was supported by stakeholders, Auckland Council officers, planning commissioners and former Auckland local authority CEO’s. Leadership was viewed as a key enabling force behind following through on strategic intent, pitching policy at the right level to get community buy-in, and having honest debate. One planning practitioner explained that, “to get really good planning outcomes, you’ve got to have technical excellence, and very good governance leadership and alignment to deliver”. In the case of Auckland an Auckland Council Officer reiterated how important leadership is “to stay bold and to keep moving... to get examples on the ground to give the community a level of confidence that we can deliver well”.

There were signs, noted by participants, of strong leadership already being present in the Auckland Council. One stakeholder observed that “significant leadership” has already been demonstrated by some from within the Auckland Council. It has helped to “shift the thinking” of both council officers and councillors themselves. Some participants proclaimed that the future of Auckland will crucially depend on only “a few

348 Stakeholder
349 Stakeholder
people i.e. who’s Mayor and who is Prime Minister”; “just a dozen people will decide this, a few in Auckland and the rest in Wellington”.350

The quality of leaders in the Auckland Council and central government is critical both at a political level and at an organisational level.351 Some participants again questioned whether “the change in the Auckland model had got better people at the top.”352 At the political level “it’s not clear that it has because they are determined by an electoral process... it’s a lottery really, that’s the big risk”.353 The size of the new organisation, the Auckland Council, might result in “better people in key leadership roles, but that’s not automatically the result”.354

Participants noted how the issue of poor leadership is a systemic issue within organisations, both public and private in New Zealand, predominantly due to a lack of accountability and performance measures. One stakeholder suggested that these issues arose in the 1980s when public sector managers were given, “a high level of authority and discretion but they weren’t held to account” and as a result “you’ve had poorly performing senior and chief executives in the public sector, many of whom have been absolutely incompetent”. This commentator believed it did not bode well for Auckland Council and had resulted in poor leadership capability at both central government and Auckland Council level. “There’s a void in leadership at the provincial level just as there is at central government level.... the track record of that has not been good”.355 Another stakeholder described how as a result “Auckland and New Zealand are, as he put it, walking into the future looking backwards... our leaders are... stuck in yesterday”.356 One participant thought there was a lack of bureaucratic leadership leading to “uncharted political opportunism”. Consequently, the levels of optimism about the future of the new council were widely varied.

350 Commentator
351 Auckland Council Officer
352 Stakeholder
353 Stakeholder
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356 Stakeholder
In relation to plan implementation, leadership by senior staff is critical. When good plan implementation has occurred in the past in New Zealand this has been, as one planning practitioner described it, “good joker syndrome” where “somewhere, sometimes, you strike a bloke... and somehow or other for a while they get on with implementation, and things happen”. Leadership, whilst not being a guarantee of better outcomes, can be a key agent of change and a driver of plan implementation. The difference the new structure has made in achieving this was noted by one Auckland Council officer as “just phenomenal” and the progress “to get a plan out in two years, to get a Unitary Plan out soon thereafter, to get budgets re-aligned, requires political nous and political strength, and that’s what’s happening.”

**Political actors**

Nonetheless, concern remains regarding a lack of leadership in local government and central government in New Zealand generally and the effect this may have on working within the legislative, governance and organisational frameworks to implement the Auckland Plan. One participant summarised: “I’m cautiously optimistic but... we should not make light of the effort and leadership that it’s going to take to get us there”.

Political actors are a key enabling factor for the implementation of the Auckland Plan. One participant said “you can have all the staff commitments in the world, but you’ve still got have that political driver in terms of implementation.” The capability of the elected representatives is just as important as those non-elected members in making decisions, providing leadership and contributing to the organisational culture. Bold decision-making within political environments often requires bravery “which is an anathema to any politician” because it costs votes. If this was not the case, “we could do extraordinary things”. The difficulty is also that you cannot avoid the clashes of personality and individual agendas that affect political decision-making choices; central government politicians particularly have tendencies to,

357 Planning Practitioner  
358 Stakeholder  
359 Stakeholder
...posture and bully... rather than analyse and understand the nature of the system or the potential of the system, or indeed the truth of the data that is collected around things.  

This compounds the ability of politicians to make strategic decisions in the best interests of the whole as opposed to serving their own ends, “you have Ministers who generally run on how do we reduce risk... rather than where do we take the country”.  

Some participants argued that those same issues with politicians at the national level occurred locally with councillors on the Auckland Council. In many participants’ views politicians exist to advance their own ends, avoiding bold decisions, reducing risks, and avoiding a loss in voter confidence towards them. One participant noted how the “minds that have come to the council table... have a degree of parochialism”. A planning practitioner explained his frustration that “at the end of the day, if you’re taking quality advice to political fools, then you’re not going to get anywhere”. Others agreed, “I don’t know who does the thinking in our system... I don’t think politicians do much”. Participants also observed the fractious nature of the make-up of the Auckland Council Governing Body, noting how “hellishly difficult” it becomes to make decisions since you are forced to find the “option that the smallest number of people would object to. That’s bland planning, that will not get a proportion of people you want living in medium density housing”.

Participants criticised the calibre of elected representatives on the Auckland Council. One stakeholder explained that “you’ve still got some of the old players who are the causes of the problem and not part of the solution”. One described them as “all old has beens” and another as the “baggage from what we had before”. A commentator argued that better outcomes won’t be delivered until “you’ve got new faces who understand the new large regional city and its obligations”. The overarching issue confronting any democratic system is that “teams are... generally elected, not
selected and furthermore they are often elected without any vigorous accountability mechanisms in place, and therefore there are “no guarantees that they will perform well or to a high standard.” An example cited by a planning practitioner was the state of traffic on Auckland’s state highways which central government rarely are held accountable for. A solution offered is that “there should be a range of areas in which they are explicitly accountable and it is clear whether they are being successful or failing.” Limited solutions exist for further improving the quality of elected representatives in Auckland and the skill sets they hold to effectively manage the new Auckland Council.

8.3 Summary

Organisational culture, leadership, and actors all have key roles in the new institutional structures in Auckland and enabling effective spatial planning. The theme of this chapter, ‘organisational culture and leadership’, has highlighted two core issues that present hurdles to effective spatial planning in Auckland and the implementation of the Auckland Plan (2012a).

First, poor organisational culture is perceived to exist in the Auckland Council. Participants noted early signs of change and improved organisational culture are expected to evolve over time given the short life span of the Auckland Council and that much of the labour force has transitioned from the legacy councils. This has not yet been supported by capacity-building within the Auckland Council. This has meant in some cases slow organisational-cultural change despite strong leadership and top-down requirements to deliver outcomes, for example the Auckland Plan.

Second, quality of leadership, at both central government and local government levels, was highlighted as critical. Participants perceived that there is a general void in leadership within both central government and local government which is compounded by a lack of accountability mechanisms. Despite this, participants acknowledged that
there was some evidence of strong leadership by some senior Auckland Council officers. Leadership issues appear to have no simple solution aside from stringent accountability mechanisms for elected representatives and staff.
Chapter 9

Legislative arrangements for spatial planning

9.0 Introduction

Local government in New Zealand is empowered through legislation namely, the Local Government Act (2002). Central government can amend or repeal this legislation at any given time by a majority vote in Parliament. As explained by the former Minister of Local Government:

Whatever the Act says is what they [Auckland Council] are going to have to do.
Power does not lie here with local councillors. Auckland Council is a creature of Wellington, like it or lump it, and so they will have to fall into line.

The legislative arrangements provide a mandate for the planning functions which local authorities across New Zealand are required to carry out. This chapter discusses the suitability of the legislative arrangements currently in place in Auckland in light of the mandate to undertake spatial planning (discussed in Chapter 4). Issues addressed within this chapter include whether or not the various statutes which require planning to be undertaken need consolidating, the aptitude of the Resource Management Act (1991) for urban planning, and the pros and cons of a unitary (city, district, and regional) land use regulatory plan (code). Finally, ‘legislative linkages’ and the spatial plan are discussed in relation to whether or not the plan needs to have legislative influence across other planning and decision-making processes.

9.1 Consolidation of planning statutes?

A plethora of plans and strategies, all with varying levels of legislative effect, still existed in the Auckland region between 1989 and 2010 despite the wholesale governance
reforms of 1989 which reduced the number of territorial local authorities from 29 to just eight. Amendments to the Resource Management Act (1991) and the Local Government Act, 1974, and 2002 after 1989 sought to incrementally resolve the problem of an overly complex system of governance and planning in Auckland and nationally. The outcomes from these reforms were characterised by the Minister for the Environment as follows:

These Acts [The RMA and LGA] set up a system that is overly complex, tricky to understand and just downright difficult to implement. This system was not designed as a simple or effective means to plan nor provide for towns, cities and infrastructure. The result? A confused system - with multiple plans, and multiple planning and consultation processes, and poor integration across sectors. My goal is to create a system of planning that is simple and effective; one that enables people to work together to deliver quality towns and cities and one that is focused on enabling quality urban development and investment. It is clear to this Government that New Zealand does not have the right urban and infrastructure planning system currently in place to serve the... urban population. The Government recognises our cities and towns as drivers of our economic prosperity. Building well-functioning and attractive cities is vital for our international competitiveness... On the establishment of the Auckland Council, local government will work closely with central Government and other stakeholders to get the plan in place... These are complex issues requiring careful consideration and expert input (N. Smith, 2010a, p.1).

However, these issues were well recognised two decades prior and yet the same problems continue to be faced (New Zealand Business Round Table, 1987). The three primary pieces of legislation which mandate planning functions to local authorities include: the Resource Management Act (1991); the Local Government Act (2002); and the Land Transport Management Act (2003). All three statutes have planning functions, some of which are interrelated, but are not formally integrated in any way with one-another:

[They are] the principal planning pieces of legislation in New Zealand... [and] they all have different objectives, they all have different processes and they are quite misaligned and dis-integrated... you get a miss match of planning and
funding capability... so it’s no wonder you end up with a disaggregated and suboptimal outcome.367

Other participants identified similar issues of: “irregular, inconsistent decisions being made”368; “too many pieces of legislation intruding in the same space that are not well coordinated”;369 “hugely expensive and bureaucratic for both the council and government and public sector and the private sector having these multiple processes going on around what are essentially the same issues”;370 and that they are, “not necessarily well connected or integrated”.371 The outcome of this is that the “whole local government/urban development space is weighed down with planning requirements... it’s planned within an inch of its life.”372 This fact was widely acknowledged as a “weakness in the system” and that better, “linkages between those three Acts”373 don’t exist but are essential. The outcome is that:

We don’t have a... best for all project approach in a way that legislation is used and applied... we don’t have well aligned objectives and drivers and legislative frameworks in that space.374

During the 2010 reform process integration between these three statutes governing planning in Auckland were both recognised and investigated. However no change occurred.

When central government were developing the Auckland legislation they were looking at how you integrate across the Local Government Act, the Resource Management Act and the Land Transport Management Act because... you need an integrated approach across all three areas.375

367 Stakeholder
368 Planning Practitioner
369 Stakeholder
370 Central Government Politician
371 Planning Practitioner
372 Central Government Politician
373 Central Government Politician
374 Stakeholder
375 Auckland Council Officer
Specifically, having three disparate pieces of planning legislation and processes for Auckland means that the Council are required to develop:

1. a long term plan (Local Government Act – funding 10 years) (Auckland Council, 2012b);

2. an annual plan (Local Government Act, 2002 – annual funding program);

3. a spatial plan (Local Government Act) (the Auckland Plan – Auckland Council, 2012a);

4. a land transport management strategy (Land Transport Management Act) (the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010-2040, Auckland Regional Council, 2010); and

5. a Unitary Plan (Resource Management Act).

Previously, to satisfy the legislative requirements the Auckland Regional Council were required to produce:

1. a regional policy statement (s59) (The Auckland Regional Policy Statement, 1999);

2. a regional plan (s63) (Auckland Regional Plan: Air Land and Water, 2010); and

3. a regional coastal plan (s64) (Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal, 2004).

In this area limited change has occurred following the reform. Drawing on the example of the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010-2040 (Auckland Regional Council, 2010b) an Auckland Council officer highlighted how “we don’t need transport strategy, we’ve got a transport strategy, it’s in the Auckland Plan, why do we duplicate?” Yet, by the end of the first term of the new Auckland Council no evidence or attempt by central government to integrate the three planning statutes had occurred. Participants were strong on the point that, “to support the… governance and planning reform in
Auckland you also need statutory reform”. Instead, “what the government is consistently doing and the Auckland Council is doing is finding work arounds” without confronting the broader issue that all three need reviewing and some level of reform.

The mandate to develop a spatial plan had the potential to provide an enabling mechanism to work across all three statutes but because legislative linkages (discussed in Chapter 4) were not included no change occurred: “somebody should have gone and looked at a model for how that is done [integrated planning], and I don’t think it’s done where you’re doing all of that under disparate bits of legislation”. Participants argued for further reform which would see either a consolidation of these planning statues and/or better integration between them: “if there’s a way of consolidating... bringing it together that’s got to be good”; “simplification of the planning framework is... good... Why have more plans than you need”; and “the statutory environment probably needs some tightening up... central government... says we want greater certainly in our planning decisions, well you need the legislation to enable that to happen”. The call from the participants was clear: to enable effective urban planning in Auckland; “another level of reform needs to be done”. A central government politician too acknowledged this:

> We have got copious volumes of Auckland planning documents... it’s not that we need more planning it’s that we need better quality of planning.... I don’t object to the spatial plan and the work that has gone into it. But if it is an add-on and not a replacement I think we’re in a big pickle. So the real challenge now is going to be to consolidate the different planning instruments that exist under the local government, resource management and land transport plans to be able to get a single story.

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376 Stakeholder
377 Stakeholder
378 Commentator
379 Central Government Politician
380 Auckland Council Officer
381 Auckland Council Officer
382 Stakeholder
Other participants noted how there “should be some better connection horizontally across them” and that planning functions need to be tied into budgets, “that would be spatial planning”.

The same central government politician agreed explaining how integrating,

...planning type issues [into the one Act] would result in a more effective process for getting proper integrated decisions and on that part I’m actually quite sympathetic.

These criticisms of the current legislative planning frameworks stem from the increased costs which the requirements for multiple planning processes create for local authorities. This often leads to duplication of planning process, disjuncture between plans, and overlaps of jurisdiction. These legislative frameworks pose a significant barrier to achieving integrated, planning, and decision-making. Although, not all participants agreed:

One can always criticise the statutes, one can always suggest potential improvement but those Acts taken together do not prevent the kind of full and proper strategic planning process taking place.

A former Auckland local authority CEO disagreed with the notion of integrating or combining the planning legislation since each has a unique role:

They have different dimensions... you can’t go changing the property rights willy nilly you need, in order for that regulation to be effective, it’s got to provide a level of medium to long term certainty in terms of what it is they are dealing with... they can’t be exposed to the sort of annual reallocation decision-making that happens around where the Council chooses to spend money.

Despite these contrasting views it was widely recognised that the legislative frameworks are “broke and we need to fix [them]”. A solution posited by the participants was for legislative reform and the development of a specifically designed planning statute for

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383 Planning Practitioner
384 Planning Practitioner
385 Planning Practitioner
386 Stakeholder
Auckland. The Chair of the Royal Commission too acknowledged; “it’s a real question as to whether it would be desirable to have another Act specifically designed for Auckland”. Others agreed. One stakeholder argued that “it’s time for a fundamental re-write of our planning legislation in New Zealand”. A commentator suggested that there should have been, and there still needs to be, planning legislation put in place which complements the new governance structures that have been formed, “Auckland should have its own planning legislation…. That sets a structure for planning that imitates the… governance structure”. This would avoid constantly tweaking the three statues because what central government are “doing at the moment is a disaster”.387 The tweaking of the legislation was tagged by one participant as, “legislative deconstruction” which is “pretty sad for what I call successful spatial planning.”388 The solution advocated by one commentator was:

Auckland planning legislation… it would have clipped into your governance structure… part of the whole piece of legislation called the Auckland Metropolitan Act… [creating] the governance structures and… the complementary planning system.

A central government politician agreed:

The spatial planning mechanism… cannot be an add-on to the existing planning instruments… We have to sort out how we can consolidate those planning processes… under the new spatial planning process

Participants also criticised the context of legal formalism which planning takes place within. The legislative processes for plan development and implementation in Auckland and in New Zealand is, “counterproductive” and that, “if you want to move quickly and you want to move on big issues quickly then you can’t be bogged down in… legalistic and… micro democratic processes”.389 Others reflected on how it is overly “cumbersome”,390 not “sufficiently agile”391 resulting in councils being “leg roped by the

387 Commentator
388 Planning Practitioner
389 Auckland Council Officer
390 Commentator
391 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
statutory frameworks” restricting what the Auckland Council can do. One participant voiced his frustration that,

...local government needs less statutory direction from central government not more... it just annoys me that every time they want to fart... they’re regulated by some new law in government... I just don’t think it’s necessary.

It was widely held by participants that, aside from funding issues (discussed in Chapter 10), regulation is the second most critical factor for enabling spatial planning in Auckland. The three separate statutes which provide planning functions for local government in New Zealand in effect create a cumbersome, complicated, disjointed and costly framework for the Auckland Council to operate within. This is detrimental to spatial planning and the achievement of outcomes. Reform of these planning frameworks is critical to allowing integration and coordination of planning function.

9.2 Urban planning under the Resource Management Act (1991)

The Resource Management Act (1991) was widely seen as being unfit as a planning piece of legislation for the setting of urban strategy in Auckland. One stakeholder stated that the legislation “has real issues”, “it’s clearly been bastardised” and it’s “been a huge constraint on the ability to do anything”. A commentator further added to these sentiments; “I don’t think it’s ever worked in urban areas, and it certainly doesn’t work in a metropolitan area”; it’s “had its day... it has passed its used by date”. These views were widely supported by other participants; “I don’t think the RMA really is set up well for urban planning”; “it’s so useless, strategically”; it is “not particularly fit for purpose for the kind of issues that Auckland faces”, and it’s “an environmental

392 Planning Practitioner
393 Planning Practitioner
394 Auckland Council Officer
395 Planning Practitioner
396 Planning Practitioner
management statute, it’s not a planning statute…. we were fools to go there”. In relation to its operation participants called it “clunky”, “desperately cumbersome” and only capable of delivering a “dose of regulation”. An Auckland Council officer explained how the “Council are doing their best to implement the Auckland Plan through the Unitary Plan” but “it’s going to be whether the RMA process delivers that result in the end”. A core failing of the Resource Management Act (1991) as argued by one planning practitioner who was involved with writing the Act was that good planning “connects up the head, the heart, and the pocket” but unfortunately it fails to do that. The Resource Management Act (1991) therefore poses as a “horrendous” hurdle toward moving beyond anything more than effects based planning (discussed in Chapter 1).

Some participants were opposed to this view. For example, the Chair of the Royal Commission stated that in relation to “urban design and city form” they “can be… addressed quite successfully under the Resource Management Act”. A former Auckland local authority CEO supported this. The Chair of the Royal Commission maintained that it is, “possible to do what is necessary for cities within the framework… even though it’s not ideal for the purpose” whilst acknowledging that “there could be some useful realignment, that would make urban planning rather easier to undertake”.

Those participants who believed the Resource Management Act (1991) to be ineffective as an enabling piece of legislation for urban planning, called for it to be reformed: “it’s passed its ‘use-by’ date” and it “might as well be swept away tomorrow, frankly put through the shredder”. This same commentator argued that it is a “patchwork quilt” created by a “very poor source… the colours don’t match”. Another participant went so far as to state:

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397 Planning Practitioner  
398 Central Government Official  
399 Planning Practitioner  
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401 Planning Practitioner  
402 Commentator
I’ve been depressed about it in practice. I don’t talk to many people about it. It’s been an absolute low point in my career... watching this bloody thing roll out over the years to the point where I just weep over what’s gone on.403

Accordingly, those participants disillusioned about the ability of the Act to provide the necessary urban planning frameworks for the Auckland Council called for “a really significant review... much more than has been done to date driven very much from a kind of outcomes based approach”.404 In this participant’s view the “system is broken and it needs to be fixed and it’s not just a tinker, it’s a radical kind of total rebuild.... Just polishing the cam covers isn’t going to fix it”. Even a central government official argued:

Go and change the bloody system, give us a decent planning system and we will do what you have in mind. But don’t give us this wonderfully complicated and ambitious effects based system and then ask us to daily guide and to interact and manage cities so they are highly successful places.

These views demonstrate a high level of frustration experienced by skilled professionals with the Resource Management Act (1991) and its ability to provide suitable urban planning frameworks. On this basis participants called for significant reform to it, to better facilitate integrated planning (a holistic approach) and the implementation of the Auckland Plan, beyond solely the notional effects based planning framework which it currently provides. The inadequacy of the Resource Management Act (1991) in the case of Auckland exemplifies yet another contradiction made in the governance restructuring of the region. The reform has been “like the cart before the horse”405 highlighting piecemeal and not fully considered responses to what are complex issues to do with urban management in Auckland, of which governance reform is not the sole panacea.

403 Planning Practitioner
404 Stakeholder
405 Planning Practitioner
9.3 A unitary approach to land use regulation

It’s about trying to then make that happen [the Auckland Plan] which... obviously is a very strange mix of part prescription, part quite directive, and yet not being onerous in that and yet also encouraging people to give expression to those ideas.

(Commentator)

The Resource Management Act (1991) is the primary piece of planning legislation in New Zealand. It requires the provision of district and regional plans for territorial local authorities (discussed in Chapter 1). As noted earlier, between 1989 and 2010 each of the eight local authorities in Auckland were required to have an operative district plan. As local authorities notified their proposed district plans to the public and the process towards the plans becoming operative commenced the prior operative plans were still in existence. During this period in the process both plans would have a varying degree of legal weighting. This resulted in not only eight different district and regional plans being in existence in Auckland at one time but up to double this number. To add to the complexity and cluttered state of planning in the region there was no template ever provided for how Resource Management Act (1991) plans should be constructed. The result was seven local authorities all having a minimum of seven district plans in effect at one time, all unique, and none with any homogeneity between objectives, policies, methods, rules, and zones. The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009) recognised this and recommended that “there will be one district plan for Auckland, thus simplifying planning and consenting processes” (p.13). The Chair of the Royal Commission noted:

The second major recommendation in the planning area that we made was that there should be... one resource management plan for Auckland... I am not sure that envisaged that both regional plans and district plans would be combined.... we thought it was very important... as soon as practicable there should be one plan for Auckland
Creating a unitary authority in the Auckland region made it possible. Legislative provisions under the Resource Management Act (1991) (s80) too enabled the regional policy statement, regional plan, and district plan to be incorporated into one document, referred to by the Auckland Council as the Unitary Plan: “that’s where the detail is, that’s where the rubber meets the road”.\textsuperscript{406} It was described by another participant as “a big box, and really within that you’ve got the Regional Policy Statement, you’re regional plans and you’re district plans”. The Unitary Plan once fully operative will be the key regulatory planning document controlling activities across the entire Auckland region (refer draft: Auckland Council, 2013c). This will be one mechanism for facilitating the outcomes in the Auckland Plan (2012a) from a land use planning perspective. Mayor Len Brown commented that the Unitary Plan “delivers... a full environmental and development and construction document that basically delivers the, preeminent principles and targets of the Auckland Plan.”

The Auckland Draft Unitary Plan was released in March 2013 for feedback prior to a formal submission phase set down for the second half of 2013. Some participants suggested that it may not be fully operative until as late as 2019: “The reality is we’re going to be I expect stuck with the legacy statutory planning documents through till at least 2017, if not 2019”.\textsuperscript{407} A planning commissioner also agreed; “don’t expect the transition to be over in 5 years”. The outcome of this delay will likely be that it is “going to hold us up in terms of implementation, once again”.\textsuperscript{408}

\textbf{A unitary planning approach: consistency, simplification and homogenisation}

We’ve got a real shonky, bloody half-baked god damn process for that, that we inherited. So all of that stuff is really sitting there and waiting for the single comprehensive Unitary Plan, which sets the rule framework.

(Mayor Len Brown)

In the view of participants a land use regulatory plan which includes previous district and regional plan content within it, referred to by one central government official as a

\textsuperscript{406}Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{407}Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{408}Planning Practitioner
“combined plan”, will offer benefits for Auckland. It allows for the consistency and simplification of land-use planning regulation across the Auckland region. Participants explained how it will “tie together and make sense of all the different bits of planning instruments all around the region” allowing “consistency throughout the Unitary Plan”, provide a “more uniform approach and understanding” and “across the board coordination”. Simply, this provides the opportunity for Auckland Council to homogenise and reduce the amount and zones across the region. This will likely produce a simplified regulatory framework and ease for its users. However, participants were concerned about the simplification of controls, “I’m a little bit nervous about it being dumbed down to the point where it’s... producing a sort of standard approach rather than a best outcome approach” due to very “very simplistic zoning notions”. There was also concern over the simplification of rules and zones as this might potentially lead to greater discretion on the part of the planning officer causing delays and uncertainty of outcome for the applicant,

...simplification of controls is likely to make execution in a systems sense poorer and slower... the fewer rules you have the slower and more difficult tend to be the processes and outcomes.

Some participants regarded the development of the plan as affording the opportunity for Auckland Council to re-evaluate previous planning provisions in light of whether or not they help in meeting the broader intent of the Auckland Plan (2012a): “the Unitary Plan now gives us the opportunity to reconsider all of that in a holistic way”. Despite this opportunity the task of integrating between various parts of the plan will be no mean feat, it “is really hard in, the Unitary Plan... to integrate across all the different things is a massive job... that’s the one area... the Council’s struggling”. Furthermore,

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409 Planning Commissioner
410 Planning Commissioner
411 Auckland Council Officer
412 Planning Practitioner
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414 Stakeholder
415 Auckland Council Officer
416 Planning Practitioner
“integration across different parts of the plan is going to be critical”.417 There was widespread support for this unitary approach which pulls together the land use planning policy frameworks concerning regional and district matters into the one place as, “once the Unitary Plan is in place... [it] will provide that clear statutory guidance”.418

Given the legislative weight that the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) will have once it is operative, in some participants’ views it will become “key”419 for Auckland delivering on the Auckland Plan (2012a). It was widely held that the Unitary Plan is the “legislative tool which will implement the Auckland Plan”420 and as held by some, will “enable the Auckland Plan dreams and goals”,421 giving the “detail, the colour, the life in behind the Auckland Plan”.422 A central government official supported these views arguing it is a “mechanism” to deliver the “outcomes for Auckland from a land use planning perspective”, or as the Chair of the Royal Commission explained, the Unitary Plan is the “framework within which that [the Auckland Plan] can happen”.

These sentiments are all borne from the fact that the Auckland Plan is not provided statutory weighting (discussed in Chapter 4). Auckland Council “have the opportunity through the Unitary Plan to give it [the Auckland Plan] statutory clout”.423 This places a significant degree of weighting and reliance on the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c), once notified, to provide the Auckland Plan with the statutory effect it needs so that it can be implemented. A central government politician referred to the Unitary Plan as “the implementation arm”. Statutory weight once afforded to the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) will require resource consent and Environment Court decisions to give effect to it.

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417 Planning Commissioner
418 Planning Practitioner
419 Central Government Politician
420 Auckland Council Officer
421 Planning Practitioner
422 Mayor Len Brown
423 Stakeholder
It’s the Unitary Plan that’s going to be listened to in court not any of this other waffly stuff. Write what you like in the spatial plan what’s in your Unitary Plan is going to count.424

One stakeholder argued that, “we will end up with a Unitary Plan, and the spatial plan will be put on the shelf and never referred to again”. This immediately places greater emphasis on the ability of Auckland Council officers to ensure the strategic direction of the Auckland Plan is reflected in Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) and the specific controls within this allow for the implementation of the strategy. These views favour regulatory approaches to land use planning as the core enabling forces behind implementing a broader strategic direction, in this case, the Auckland Plan.

Some participants expressed criticism of the unitary planning approach in Auckland: “the idea of having a Unitary Plan for the whole region has just got me stunned.”425 Disapproval from one planning practitioner came on the grounds that the process was being rushed and that it had begun before a clear set of regional objectives and policies had been decided. In his view the process of policy development should have been a cascading one:

Unitary planning might work in Gisbourne and Marlborough, I don’t think it’s a smart way to go in Auckland... it would have been much more sensible to... to translate the Auckland Plan into a statutory regional plan first and got that settled and then dealt with the nuts and bolts from there... there seemed to be greater interest in trying to have to have fewer zones and fewer names... but... did the desire to have a simpler district plan and getting that out... outweighed a more sensible approach of actually bedding down the regional level first.

This view was supported by other participants who noted that, “maybe we should have done a re-write of the Regional Policy Statement, at the end we’re going to end up back there.”

Based on the above discussion, the consolidation and simplification of the regulatory land use planning frameworks in Auckland into one unitary plan, if done effectively, it

424 Planning Practitioner
425 Planning Practitioner
might provide a consistency of approach across the region. If not done carefully it might be to the detriment of area specific qualities. Homogenised zoning favouring a one size fits all approach in areas currently covered by uniquely developed bespoke planning controls might see these area specific qualities eroded.

**Converting the strategy into regulation**

Translating the high-level strategy contained within the Auckland Plan into the lower-level Auckland Draft Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) is likely to be problematic. One of the main hurdles in doing this is the inflexibility of the Resource Management Act, “the Auckland Plan is incredibly flexible and RMA processes are not”. An Auckland Council officer argued that, “central government hasn’t set up the legislative mechanisms to enable” the link to occur easily. One stakeholder voiced his disappointment with state of the legislative planning frameworks on a count of them providing limited tools available to encourage development. A central government official cited his experience with Auckland Council planning officers with whom he raised his concern with in terms of how the Auckland Plan would get converted into regulation:

> All these vague notions are now going to get turned into rules, and what’s the discretionary and non-discretionary…. “you can’t write a plan on those, how do we handle the fact that Ree was just floating spatial concepts?”, “the market may go the other way”.

Other participants made similar observations on the challenges of bringing the legacy district and regional plans into one combined unitary plan. These included: the complexity of the bureaucratic processes, “its hugely complicated bureaucratic process and they are trying to represent the spatial plan in it”; the ability for Auckland Council officers to reflect high level principles in regulation, the need to ensure linkages between the Auckland Plan and Auckland Draft Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c); the extent to which the Auckland Council officers are going to be able to “enshrine those principles in the Unitary Plan”; and the ability for those officers to achieve a cascading

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426 Planning Practitioner  
427 Planning Practitioner  
428 Stakeholder
approach from the objectives, policies methods and rules within the Auckland Draft Unitary Plan (2013) which cover both regional and district level matters. Simply, it is a “huge challenge” and “you cannot underestimate the significance of bringing... eight plans into one effectively”.429

Given the lack of legislative linkages afforded the Auckland Plan the level to which the Auckland Plan can be represented through the Unitary Plan becomes vital: “[y]ou could protect yourself by writing the Auckland Plan into the Unitary Plan”.430 “The extent that we require, or should have, or want a regional strategy it’s going to have to be inherent in the Unitary Plan” if it is to have statutory effect because otherwise it will have no relevance”.431 This requires the Unitary Plan to make “appropriate reference” so as to create “the interconnectedness that you need”.432 An Auckland Council officer explained how “we’re driving it hard to make sure the Unitary Plan is aligned to and will implement the Auckland Plan”. The issue with this is that,

...the Auckland Plan is full of the most wonderful vision under the four wellbeings of the Local Government Act which is much broader than the RMA, and the Unitary Plan.433

Some participants observed a change in how statutory planning is now being used as a result of the governance reform and the introduction of the Auckland Plan. The inaugurating of the new Auckland Council marked a watershed moment for planning in the region. Following up to and after the reform Aucklanders became far more engaged in what the future of the region might look like. The Auckland Plan soon followed setting out a vision and a range of associated targets. The reform process marked the beginning of a new governing authority for the region, a newly revised strategic direction, and the requirement on Auckland Council to produce a new combined district and regional plan. This meant for the first time a close nexus and the sequential development of planning strategy and planning controls by one authority. The development of these two new plans has provided the opportunity for the aims of

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429 Planning Practitioner
430 Planning Practitioner
431 Stakeholder
432 Planning Practitioner
433 Planning Practitioner
strategy, the Auckland Plan, to be directly reflected in the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c).

It’s been looked at [the planning controls] on this broader basis now in terms of how many houses we’re going to build... there’s never been that sort of... aspiration or expected outcome through district planning... that’s the unique feature of... the Unitary Plan to put into effect the spatial plan.434

There is more specific attention on the role land use planning controls as a mechanism for achieving broader aspirations. Previously district and regional planning controls were more aimed at regulating the market and maintaining the status quo as opposed to being used explicitly to give rise to broader strategic objectives. Questions remain as to how effective the Auckland Draft Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) might be in achieving this. “Will it actually give you a different outcome? Or is it just a you know, is it just a big district plan?”435 Regardless of the answer, for the first time there is a clear intent to use the planning controls to achieve a set of broader aspirations.

The role of regulation?

This section discusses participants’ views around the extent to which the Unitary Plan will be capable of delivering the outcomes which the Auckland Plan seeks.

A planning commissioner stated, “the plan delivers nothing... it’s a plan” and furthermore, “some of the aspirations in the spatial plan... are going to be pretty hard to implement through district planning... it requires a broader brush approach from the council as a whole.”436 One Auckland Council officer agreed, querying “maybe we need different mechanisms and different techniques... having the statutory frameworks is important, to underpin it all but whether they’re the actual drivers of the action is another matter”. A central government official questioned the level of influence a planning control could have, “[a] little district plan rule... about a non-complying activity compared to where you put a regional hospital”.

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434 Planning Commissioner
435 Planning Practitioner
436 Planning Commissioner
The Unitary Plan... all it can do really is stop things happening and enable things, it can’t make things happen the market makes things happen. So the Unitary Plan can put constraints or not... in the way of the market.437

A former Auckland local authority CEO questioned this also stating how “a lot was made in the... amalgamation debate about harmonising plans” but “if you change the rules around what the front yard is between Waitakere and Auckland, is it actually going to make a difference?” He went on to say that “it’s not going to make a blind bit of difference in terms of the overall performance of the region”. Whilst many participants agreed that, “you need the regulatory basis” it is no longer sufficient to just rely on land use regulation alone:

Because the Auckland Plan’s got lots of other things in there about you know educational achievement, and social, and economic things which are not going to be delivered through a policy statement.438

Others criticised the regulatory planning frameworks. The reasons for this criticism stemmed from: “regulation doesn’t... deliver visionary outcomes”,439 and planning regulation itself does not “make things happen”;440 regulation has failed to stop bad development and failed to enable good development, “we have a fundamental flaw in the system. It’s clearly failed to stop bad stuff being done and its absolutely failed to enable good and better and innovative stuff to be done easily so... it’s failed totally”.441

What has also occurred as a result is that the risk associated with dealing with the regulatory system has increased the costs of development, deterred would-be developers and led to mediocre outcomes, “the development sector... would say the single biggest risk you carry... is regulatory risk... it’s a significant problem and it’s a huge cost”;442 and regulation has meant that the ability to make timely decisions has been impaired, “the ability of that regulatory system to respond is very leaden footed so”.443

\[\text{\textsuperscript{437} Auckland Council Officer}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{438} Planning Commissioner}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{439} Planning Practitioner}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{440} Planning Practitioner}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{441} Stakeholder}\]
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\[\text{\textsuperscript{443} Stakeholder}\]
which has further heightened the risk which the development sector is exposed to. The same participant explained because, in a country like New Zealand where “you’ve got scarce resources you have to be far more nimble”. Furthermore, “the council is like an orchestra in a way, it’s like the conductor of the actors... you can’t force someone to do something they don’t want to do.”444 This suggests that other methods for achieving the outcome desired need to be looked at.

Participants supported this view. They felt strongly that any regulation needs to be supported by other mechanisms such as pricing to influence outcomes, “discussion is always around the regulatory control and not enough is around pricing... it’s actually the interaction of pricing tools and regulatory tools that actually result in the real world outcomes”.445 Stakeholders were frustrated at the expenditure of rate payer funding on writing plans as opposed to delivering outcomes, and described it as “craziness”.

The example of Auckland Transport, a council-controlled organisation, given its focus on funding tools as opposed to regulation alone was argued by one Auckland Council officer to illustrate a more effective way of working: “it’s about driving where you spend your money rather than directly altering land use and private property rights”. Other participants agreed, suggesting that Auckland Council officers should focus more on funding, such as under the Auckland Council Long-term Plan 2012-2022 as that is what will “reflect change” (Auckland Council, 2012c) as opposed to the Unitary Plan.446 Another stakeholder explained how planners often argue that, “oh we’ve got to have all of this [regulation] to prevent bad outcomes” without realising that “what it actually does is it gives you a de facto mediocre outcome”.

Both a planning commissioner and planning practitioner argued that the legacy district and regional plans do not prevent good outcomes from taking place. They offered examples in relation to housing intensification and improved housing supply, an aim of the Auckland Plan. Whilst they accepted that the legacy district and regional plans are neither coordinated throughout the region nor up to date in terms of reflecting the strategy set out in the Auckland Plan, they are in fact still capable of allowing the

444 Central Government Official
445 Central Government Politician
446 Stakeholder
outcomes to occur which the plan seeks. On this basis it could be argued that “there isn’t that absolute need for the Unitary Plan.”

There is a lot of stuff going on which is actually about... intensification... it’s happening despite... the current planning framework,... a lot of the old planning framework is outdated but... it’s not so terrible that it’s, it’s, stopped development .... it’s all happening anyway.

A planning practitioner discussed how:

The Hobsonville [housing development]... shows that you can actually work within what you’ve got now... [and] those things would generally fit into what is the aspirational vision under the spatial plan... the major infrastructure elements, the rail link and that, nothing wrong with that, that could all fit in under the current structure.

As one planning commissioner argued, “legislation is quite often not the problem”. These views reinforce the argument that land use controls are not the sole determinant, nor the only mechanism to deliver outcomes. Despite the existence of some poorly conceived land use controls and the detrimental impacts which they have had (Haarhoff, Beattie, Dixon, Dupuis, Lysnar, Murphy, 2012), the existing district and regional plans are not preventing the outcomes in the Auckland Plan from being achieved. An Auckland Council officer summarised the situation acknowledging that whilst the new policy frameworks under the Unitary Plan will provide an easier framework for development to occur within as opposed to, “under old policy, implementing intensification is going to be harder” or would be harder.

In summary, regulatory land use planning frameworks are not the sole prerequisite for delivering strategy and nor do they ensure good outcomes. A new regulatory planning framework in Auckland, i.e. the Auckland Draft Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c), specifically designed to facilitate the implementation of the strategy (the Auckland Plan) will likely improve the ability to meet the aims of the strategy but won’t be the sole determinant of it. All planning controls do is set the parameters within which the

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447 Auckland Council Officer
448 Planning Commissioner
market operates. Land use planning controls are an important component towards facilitating the implementation of a strategy but alone will not deliver it. Any regulation must be complemented by other mechanisms to encourage, facilitate, and if necessary, control development.

The risks and challenges ahead

There is a range of risks in developing a new unitary plan for Auckland: “the Unitary Plan is going to be the challenge” \(^{449}\) and there is “a heck of a lot to get done... to get good outcomes”. \(^{450}\) One participant went so far as to argue that, “the biggest challenge of the governance restructuring is probably... the Unitary Plan challenge.”

The challenges identified by participants include: the scale of the task in developing a new piece of planning regulation covering an entire region; the ability to be integrated across all its various parts and functions to avoid contradiction; the limited central government assistance in developing and implementing it; and short timeframes to develop it. Participants argued that these factors have the “capacity to bring down the RMA, and bring down this Council as well”. \(^{451}\) Others commented how the Auckland Council may be “biting off more than it can chew” \(^{452}\) due to “trying to do too much too quickly” \(^{453}\) and as a result it may be flawed. One participant thought that the creation of one plan for Auckland attempting to encompass both regional policy, including environmental, as well as district and local, is “deeply flawed”. \(^{454}\) They speculated that it is likely to result in “a big disconnect” between planning agendas which will “keep investment down, it will keep costs up.” \(^{455}\) Other challenges were argued to; be “no government assistance”; \(^{456}\) and the “one dimensional advice” \(^{457}\) that was being provided by central government officials.

\(^{449}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{450}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{451}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{452}\) Planning Commissioner
\(^{453}\) Hon. Peter Salmon
\(^{454}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{455}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{456}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{457}\) Planning Practitioner
9.4 Legislative linkages for the spatial plan

This section explains the importance of legislative linkages for implementation of the Auckland Plan. Legislative linkages refer to the statutory provision given to a document prepared under one piece of legislation and its relationship with another document prepared under either the same or different legislation. For example, under the Resource Management Act (1991) a district plan has to ‘give effect to’ a regional policy statement both of which are required by the same piece of legislation. In the case of the Auckland Plan it is mandated under the Local Government (Auckland Council) Amendment Act (2010) but plans either within the same statute, such as a long-term plan, those under the Resource Management Act (1991) or the Land Transport Management Act (2003), have no ‘give effect to’ provisions. This case leaves other planning documents, such as district plans under the Resource Management Act (1991), without having statutory requirement to ‘give effect to’ the content of the Auckland Plan. “The difficulty with the spatial plan at the moment is... it’s required under the Local Government Act, [but] it has no real formal links into the RMA” 458, and as a result, “it has no statutory clout so it’s entirely voluntary”. 459

The argument for linkages

Legislative linkages are required to connect the Auckland Plan (2012a) to other relevant plans. If the provisions of the Auckland Plan “aren’t brought into the Unitary Plan” limited weight will be provided to it and “like many documents in the past the courts have said it ‘doesn’t have any statutory basis” and “the courts don’t have to take into account”. 460 “Unless you’ve got those defined legal links then it’s [the Auckland Plan] got no weight”. 461 One stakeholder referred to this as being a “failure”, “bizarre”, and “ridiculous that we have a strategic document that cannot be taken into account”. An Auckland Council officer explained how, “We see... [the Auckland Plan] as the paramount driver on direction. So there probably could be better statutory frameworks

458 Planning Commissioner
459 Stakeholder
460 Planning Commissioner
461 Planning Practitioner
for that to be enabled”. Planning commissioners, planning practitioners, Auckland Council officers, stakeholders and a central government politician all supported this view: “the linkage between the Auckland Plan and the RMA isn’t as clear cut as it should be and that should have been made clear right from the start”,462 “the spatial plan should have had... statutory, support somewhere”.463 Under the current legislative environment the Auckland Plan lacks the ability to statutorily inform other plans and have weight in decision-making processes.

Some participants did argue against the need for legislative linkages for spatial planning when operating within a unitary governance structure. One commentator stated; “my biggest fear is that we will get some statutory requirement for spatial planning”. One planning practitioner, argued that there is no need for a ‘give effect to’ provision under a unitary council such as in Auckland on the basis that “it just doesn’t make any sense” if Auckland Council officers don’t give effect to their own strategic document. The risk of non-implementation is less because the one authority is both developing and administering its own plans. Whilst the officials may treat the plan as if it had statutory weight without legislative linkages it still leaves the plan at risk to the whims of those sitting politicians:

You have the group of politicians around who wrote the spatial plan and it reflects their ideas and their concerns and their beliefs but when you get the next lot in who have partly come in by opposing that spatial plan I wish you luck.464

There are several examples throughout New Zealand where strategic regional plans have been voluntarily developed between several local authorities outside of legislative frameworks; this too has been experienced in Auckland (discussed in Chapter 4). Without legislative linkages existing and for the strategies to have regulatory influence they have to be translated through into lower order district plans. In an involuntary environment this process becomes challenging.

462 Auckland Council Officer
463 Planning Commissioner
464 Commentator
As noted earlier the lack of legislative linkages in Auckland has meant that even though the plan has been prepared and adopted by the Auckland Council it is unable to have influence over: any decisions made under the Resource Management Act (1991) for both resource consent and Environment Court decisions; and for plans developed under the Resource Management Act (1991) and the Land Transport Management Act (2003). The only way in which it is able to be given regulatory effect within a statutory context is because the Auckland Council is able to write the strategy into their Unitary Plan (discussed earlier). The urgency surrounding the development of the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) and its release may in part be attributed to the fact the Auckland Plan remains non-statutory, without legislative linkages.

The provision of legislative linkages for the Auckland Plan should be reconsidered in light of the importance placed on land use regulation as a mechanism for implementing a strategy. The Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) is not the sole implementation mechanism for the Auckland Plan but given the highly litigious planning environment in New Zealand it is thought that the likelihood of implementation of the Auckland Plan without legislative linkages is threatened.

**Why no legislative linkages yet?**

As noted earlier, local government in New Zealand is created and empowered through legislation (Local Government Act, 2002) enacted by central government. The legislative linkages/statutory weight provided to the Auckland Plan is a political decision. This section briefly provides insight as to why central government may or may not have provided legislative linkages for the Auckland Plan illustrating a broader issue surrounding central government and Auckland Council relations (discussed in Chapter 10).

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009) intended that the spatial plan would have legislative linkages and “that’s what the Internal Affairs Department thought was appropriate”. A central government official supported this claim stating “the model intended that the Auckland Plan would be sufficiently

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465 Hon Peter Salmon
developed in an RMA sense to have legal links to the Auckland Unitary Plan”. The Chair of the Royal Commission explained:

It was always intended... to follow up the... special Auckland Act with further legislation that would give the Auckland Plan... the status that it ought to have.... I don’t think the government really had any difficulty about that in principle, I think it’s more a matter of... the political concerns that have arisen [and] that have... resulted in the government not being prepared to take that further step.

This highlights how central government’s reluctance to provide legislative linkages was politically motivated. Another central government official supported this explaining how at the time central government intentionally paused before providing the spatial plan with legislative linkages in to the Resource Management Act (1991). Cabinet was saying:

Let’s see what the Auckland spatial plan turns out to be before we give it a statutory mandate in the RMA. We’re not hearing good things about how it is transversing.466

Ministers reacted at the time, when presented with the Auckland Plan by Auckland Council officers, because it included social and cultural outcomes instead of a plan that dealt with the infrastructure requirements to manage Auckland’s growth:

Auckland Council was on about social outcomes and outcomes... that the Ministers didn’t really think was the responsibility of local government... they [Auckland Council senior officers] had, a meaty dialogue with Ministers and they spent the first twenty minutes talking about deprivation in south Auckland as opposed to the need for highways or sewerage or roading upgrades and that kind of put Ministers off the role of the spatial plan as a mechanism to be given greater weight than it is in the RMA framework.467

Based on that meeting central government officials and politicians have provided Auckland Council constantly with advice that,

466 Central Government Official
467 Central Government Official
...in its [the Auckland Plan] current form we couldn’t give it legal links to an RMA document... like to the Unitary Plan.... it had to do a lot more of the business that’s being left to the Unitary Plan in order to get it that far.\footnote{Central Government Official}

These insights from central government officials, many of whom were present at these meetings between central government politicians and officials, and Auckland Council politicians and officers, illustrate how the provision of legislative linkages for the Auckland Plan was used by central government as a ‘carrot and stick approach’. Clearly, the content of the Auckland Plan and the direction being taken by Auckland Council was not to Cabinet’s satisfaction. Auckland Council officers viewed central government politicians as not providing the Auckland Plan with legislative linkages,

...as a... stick brandished over our head as we did the Auckland Plan... if they [central government] didn’t like the outcome than there would be no ‘give effect to’ or it would be as loose as it could possibly be or as weak as it could possibly be... that fundamentally undermined a lot of people’s work on the Auckland Plan because they really weren’t sure of the total sort of legislative background to it... that’s a frustration and still is a frustration.\footnote{Auckland Council Officer}

A planning practitioner explained the sequence of events at the end of 2011 in terms of Cabinet providing linkages between the Auckland Plan, the Unitary Plan and the land transport plan when the Hon Dr. Nick Smith was the Minister for the Environment,

...it was a road to Damascus type thing, when he was going down this track with these provisions and he had presumed that he was going to sign-off on the spatial plan and suddenly it became clear that no... it was in the Local Government Act and he wasn’t the Minister of Local Government and he wasn’t going to be signing-off on it. Nick went very cold at that point and he rang up the MFE office in Auckland, and basically said, ‘I’ve got a window [December, 2011]... of opportunity for new legislation before Christmas if there is anything you want to bring this into line what do you need? I can put it through before Christmas. And they hummed and harred around making a
connection between the Auckland Plan, the Unitary, Plan and the Land Transport Plan.

Ultimately, nothing eventuated. Cabinet and central government officials appeared “negligent to push something through [new legislation to provide linkages] without sufficient robust policy”. Many participants alluded to this apprehensive view taken by central government with Auckland Council. It was characterised as reluctance by central government politicians to commit to policy agendas which they were not clear on, ones which were contrary to their own political agendas, and those which may require them to invest heavily in Auckland. Because the Auckland Plan did not satisfy what central government politicians were seeking from it:

The [central] government hasn’t yet got around to passing legislation which would require the Council to follow the... spatial plan and which would in effect give the spatial plan the... legal basis that it really needs.

Legislative change has not occurred despite Auckland Council officers and the Mayor requesting that central government make amendments to provide the legislative linkages. Requests made only resulted in limited change. “It’s a gap that government setup, it’s not a gap that Council would have wanted.” This is despite, as recommended by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009), the spatial plan model in Auckland be provided legislative linkages.

Although legislative linkages have not been created, some participants maintained that there can still be connections made to funding allocation and council-controlled organisations, two important levers in implementing the Auckland Plan.

Hierarchy of Plans

Legislative linkages tie plans together ensuring a cascading effect of strategy and aims down to lower order plans creating a hierarchy. Auckland requires a hierarchy of plans like this. Participants agreed, “there should be a hierarchy... there should be the spatial

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470 Central Government Official
471 Hon. Peter Salmon
472 Auckland Council Officer
plan and that has the dominance over all other plans provided central governments bought into it”.473 This would reflect the model between 2005 and 2010 when the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050 (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999) had to be ‘given regard’ to by all other statutory plans in Auckland. Ideally central government when undertaking the reforms in 2010 would have created “a hierarchy... where you would have the spatial plan guiding other plans underneath it, and those plans underneath it are the implementation plans”.474 Participants who were members of some working parties involved in giving advice to the Minister prior to reform favoured a hierarchy of plans, starting at a national level which would then inform the plans developed at the Auckland Council level.475

Under the model that currently exists, the Auckland Plan is at the top of the hierarchy. Some observed that this may be why central government has been reluctant to provide legislative linkages. Doing so would place the Auckland Plan at the top of the hierarchy where in fact many outcomes in Auckland rely heavily on central government; “you can’t just have that there and then everything else has to be subsidiary to it... it just looks barmy from a central government perspective because they have to pay for most of it.”476 If formal guidance by central government for the future development of Auckland had been provided this would have set parameters within which the development of the Auckland Plan could have taken place. This might have ensured better alignment between the two tiers of government on the future development of Auckland. One central government official explained that, “A national spatial plan for New Zealand could be a page... it doesn’t have to be much but at least then they have something to respond to”.

A strengthened hierarchy at the regional level could be created through providing legislative linkages to the Auckland Plan. It was noted by some that currently it is not clear where the Auckland Plan sits causing confusion as to what plans are actually guiding the future development of the region. Central government guidance on this

473 Commentator
474 Commentator
476 Commentator
would be of benefit, including a plan at the national level setting out the future direction of Auckland which would then inform the Auckland Plan and the plans below it.

Linking the Auckland Plan to the Unitary Plan

There needs to be a change so as to provide legislative linkages for the Auckland Plan into the Resource Management Act (1991) plans, the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c). One stakeholder argued that the, “spatial planning legislation... hadn’t got far enough” and therefore there needs to be a “change to the Auckland Amendment Act to ensure that the Auckland Plan instructs the Unitary Plan”.\footnote{Planning Practitioner} It was widely noted that the situation currently is unsatisfactory for achieving implementation of the strategic direction and there needs to be statutory provisions put in place.\footnote{Stakeholder; Central Government Official; Auckland Council Officer} One planning commissioner explained the situation currently when in resource consent hearings:

We get put to us all the time, you’ve got to give effect to the Auckland Plan, and we keep saying ‘well what’s the statutory basis for that?’ And they say ‘there isn’t one but that’s what the Council directive is’.

This outlines the importance of legislative linkages in the decision making processes. Without legislative linkages the overarching strategic vision, the Auckland Plan, is unable to influence resource consent decisions made under district and regional plans. Auckland Council officers have continued to argue that there is a legislative linkage existing, “we do see there is a legislative linkage through the Unitary Plan”.

Auckland Council’s view

On November 24, 2011, the Auckland Council Governing Body committee\footnote{Refers to the Mayor and the 21 elected councillors} raised concerns regarding the lack of legislative weight that was going to be afforded to the new Auckland Plan. They submitted a briefing paper to central government (Auckland Council, 2011a & 2011b) outlining their concerns which included: the proposed legislative link between the Auckland (Spatial) Plan and other Plans under the RMA and
LTMA; adopting a "place-based" approach to planning and delivery; transport planning and funding; population growth, housing and funding; and the implementation of the Auckland Plan through the Unitary Plan provisions (Auckland Council, 2011a, p.77). Two of these points have already been covered here; the other three are addressed within Chapters 10 and 11. First on the list was the threat facing the Auckland Plan in relation to timely implementation. There is a,

...legislative vacuum in the Resource Management and Local Government Acts; neither of which acknowledge and provide for the legal requirement for a spatial plan in the Auckland Council legislation (Auckland Council, 2011a, p.79).

As raised earlier, this is likely to leave the Auckland Plan redundant in regulatory decision-making arenas. The Auckland Council Governing Body committee recognised that this “creates major risks and uncertainties for Auckland Council, the Government, key infrastructure providers, and other stakeholders in the spatial planning process” (Auckland Council, 2011a, p.79). They further noted “there are non-legislative ways in which the policies and objectives of the Auckland Plan could be met” but concede that, “these are far less effective than the certainty provided by clear and unambiguous legislation” (Auckland Council, 2011a, p.79). As a result regulatory effect has to be provided through the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c).480 Until the Auckland Draft Unitary Plan (2013c) becomes fully operative, which is currently unknown but suggested to be 2016 or 2017,481 resource consents will continue to be considered (in part) under the legacy plans. The provisions within these legacy plans may not facilitate the outcomes sought by the Auckland Plan. An Auckland Plan which had influence on regulatory decisions from the date of its adoption would have resolved this issue. The Auckland Council Governing Body committee called for “immediate amendments” in order to “ensure there is a clear relationship between the spatial plan and other plans under [the] RMA and [the] LTMA until 1 July 2014” (Auckland Council,

480 Only once a plan has become fully operative i.e. all appeals against it have been resolved (either through the public hearing process or the Environment Court) can only then full weighting be attributed to it in regards to the consideration of such things as resource consent applications.

481 Previously under the Resource Management Act (1991) it takes five to seven years from the date that a plan is notified until it becomes operative this is due to the extensive and lengthy public submission and hearing processes and appeal rights to the Environment Court (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009, p.516).
This would have resulted in existing documents (the Regional Policy Statement and the Regional Land Transport Strategy) being excluded from consideration in regulatory processes if they are inconsistent with the Auckland Plan (Auckland Council, 2011a, p.80).

Lawyers too have called for central government to provide a firmer position on the legal status of the Auckland Plan (Auckland Council, 2012a; Chapman Tripp, 2011, p.1). This was supported by another lawyer explaining that the lack of any legislative connection regarding the councils strategic direction and Council’s and council-controlled organisations plans and decisions, “will seriously limit the Auckland Council’s ability to implement an agreed strategic direction” (Carruthers, 2011, p.20). This commentator argued that without all stakeholders understanding its importance “Auckland will be no better off than it was in 1998” (Carruthers, 2011, p.20).

In 2011 the preferred options by the government for confronting this issue were:

(a) replace existing strategic plans under the Resource Management Act (RMA) and Land Transport Management Act 2003, or
(b) [Provide the spatial plan] ...statutory weight under the Auckland legislation with strengthened legislative linkages (effectively allowing the Plan to ‘influence’ other existing planning regimes). (Chapman Tripp, 2011, p.1)

Spatial planning in Auckland therefore requires legislative linkages due to the litigious nature of the planning system in New Zealand.

9.5 Summary

You can do all you like, but, in terms of statutes, but how do you get from statutes to effective practice is a serious challenge that I am still grappling with.

(Planning Practitioner)

This chapter has presented six key issues in relation to the legislative planning frameworks under the new institutional arrangements in Auckland. These present hurdles to spatial planning and the spatial governance of the region as they are likely to
impede the implementation of the Auckland Plan. It was clear from participants’ views that the quickest resolution “is at a national level and through legislation, finishing the job.”

First, three pieces of legislation which mandate Auckland Council to carry out planning functions are unintegrated and have led to unnecessary duplication of plans resulting in the planning frameworks causing highly inefficient and costly bureaucratic processes for those who administer them (i.e. several plans and statutes governing and setting direction for the same or similar interrelated issues). Better linkages between one another are required and a rationalisation of their functions. Second, the Resource Management Act (1991) was seen to have failed to have set an adequate framework for undertaking urban planning functions in Auckland therefore a planning statute more ‘fit for purpose’ akin to addressing the issues facing Auckland was called for. Third, the Auckland Plan exists without legislative linkages requiring the Auckland Council to translate the spatial plan into a regulatory land use plan, the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c). This is fraught with difficulty due in part to the narrow scope of the Resource Management Act (1991). Concern was also raised regarding the appropriateness of a unitary approach to regulatory planning in region. This may lead to a homogenisation of planning rules resulting in a loss of bespoke controls which ensure local identity. Operational challenges also exist. For example the process of consolidating the previous ten regulatory planning documents into one. This in itself was a contested point amongst participants. Views were split as to whether or not planning regulation was the sole determinant for delivering outcomes in the region or conversely perhaps its role is only to help facilitate certain outcomes and restrict others.

Fifth, legislative linkages are critical for tying together the planning frameworks and creating a hierarchy of plans. Their absence is a significant shortcoming of the new governance frameworks, the fault of which rests with central government. The absence of legislative linkages means a hierarchy of plans do not exist in Auckland. The outcome is that the Auckland Plan will be overlooked in favour of the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan

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482 Planning Practitioner
(Auckland Council, 2013c) which will hold statutory effect, hence subverting the role of spatial planning in the development of Auckland. Finally, central government had the option to use national policy statements to provide ‘national’ direction on issues of national importance facing Auckland such as the region’s growth and development however Cabinet were averse to doing so. The utilisation of such a tool would have set direction and provided parameters for planning endeavours undertaken at a regional level, namely spatial plans and regulatory plans.

The legislative components of the new governance frameworks in Auckland and the story relating to their development represent contradictions and tensions. According to participants when local authorities are mandated to carry out a function the legislative frameworks are often not optimal due to disconnect in understanding between the central government legislators and what local authorities need. This same disconnect in theory and practice between central government and local government is exemplified at varying scales in different ways throughout the 2010 neoliberal project. The following chapter discusses funding aspect of the new spatial governance relations.
Chapter 10

Funding

You can have all of the wonderful planning visions you like and they can be elegant, and communities can spend hundreds of hours crafting them and they can believe in them... but if you can’t back them with money, sufficient funding to implement them, they’re going to fall short.

(Planning Practitioner)

10.0 Introduction

Funding dilemmas have plagued the Auckland region throughout its history. In part this has stemmed from the nature of the two tier and relatively centralised central government-local government arrangements in New Zealand, as alluded to below. These hurdles in regards to funding and investment in the region’s growth and development have been brought to a head post the creation of the new Auckland Council by the advent of the Auckland Plan. This new local government institution now seeks to invest more heavily in the region than any previous local authority did in history (for reasons outlined in Chapter 3). The Auckland Plan is the touchstone of this new council and its investment aspirations. The plan outlines where and how this investment will occur but with scant regard and limited certainty as to where and how the money for this investment will be sourced. This chapter draws on the participants’ perspectives to discuss this issue.
10.1 Background

The funding expenditure split in New Zealand between central government and local government (in this case Auckland Council) is approximately nine to one. One commentator highlighted that “in fact we are the worst in the OECD, in terms... how, central government dominates [funding]... we are an outrageous outlier [amongst other developed nations] and the government is tightening up on this”. In 2008 nation-wide central government expenditure was 88.1 per cent and local government expenditure was 11.9 per cent. Similarly, central government’s revenue was 90.4 per cent compared to local government’s of 9.6 per cent of (OECD, 2011). This ratio represents a highly centralised expenditure/revenue divide between local government and central government in New Zealand compared to other OECD countries; “in New Zealand [central] government holds the purse strings”.484 The ratio demonstrates that local government in New Zealand receives limited direct funding assistance from central government (eight per cent of total revenue of all councils) (New Zealand Government, 2013d). This means that when government spending occurs in Auckland, nine times out of ten, it will be by and at the discretion of central government, not Auckland Council.

The sources of funding for central government’s expenditure are derived from sources such as income tax,485 sales taxes, borrowing, and dividend returns on Crown owned enterprises and investments. Auckland Council, on the other hand, has far more limited sources of funding to draw on.

Auckland Council’s core revenue comes from land tax (rates based on the value of the property) (60 per cent) (Local Government New Zealand, 2013b). Secondary sources include development contributions, rents from council owned property, and user charges on council services including car parking. The revenue Auckland Council accrues is spent predominantly on public services including upgrading and servicing infrastructure to support the city’s growth and development. In the 2009/2010 financial

484 Auckland Council Officer
485 Auckland contributes 37 per cent of the tax revenue the government accrues and accounts for approximately the same in GDP (Auckland Council, 2012d).
year 25 per cent of total operating expenditure was spent on roading and transportation (New Zealand Government, 2013d).

Central government spending however covers a wide range of sectors including transport, health, education, housing and social welfare which make-up their 88.1 per cent of Auckland expenditure. Inevitably overlap occurs. Central government capital expenditure in Auckland in the 2008/2009 fiscal year was approximately $2 billion out of a total of $5.4 billion for New Zealand (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a, p.1). The Crown asset holdings in Auckland are valued at $30.5 billion. The Crown’s infrastructure investments per sector in Auckland are estimated to be: “transport (NZ$705 million), housing (NZ$474 million), education (NZ$283 million), health (NZ$125 million) and law and order (NZ$98 million)” (Ministry for the Environment, 2010a, p.14).

Approximately 40 per cent of total central government expenditure on transport, housing, and education in New Zealand is spent in Auckland (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a). These figures outline the powerful role central government plays in determining the outcomes which Auckland Council seeks through the Auckland Plan (2012a). According to the then Minister of Local Government, “The imperative to spend this money effectively is one driver for taking a coordinated, cross-portfolio approach to providing input into the development of the spatial plan” (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a, p.1). As established in Chapter 4 the coordination and alignment between Auckland Council and central government is critical in avoiding duplication and inefficiency of expenditure in the region. The Office of the Minister of Local Government recognised that the spatial plan was a primary opportunity “to better align the location and sequencing of different infrastructure and services with each other, and with land use and demand” (2011a, p.1). The Chair of the Royal Commission had also argued this. The government further recognised that,

...if developed and implemented appropriately, the Auckland spatial plan can make an important contribution to the achievement of the Government’s economic growth, infrastructure, environmental, social and cultural objectives.

The development of the spatial plan provides an opportunity for the Auckland Council and Government to identify and prioritise those initiatives that will
make the most significant contributions to achieving national and regional outcomes (Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011a, p.3).

Alignment of funding between central government and the new Auckland Council is critical to the success of the new institutional arrangements and of spatial planning. Some participants observed that, “funding is probably more important than legislation at this stage”. From this the participants noted that central government has two key roles in Auckland. It is not just a “stakeholder but a core funder of all of this”. The simplest solution to funding in the Auckland region is if central government continues to provide financial assistance to Auckland Council on the projects which central government deem necessary. The conflict arises when central government’s funding priorities in the region differ from those of Auckland Council as set out in the Auckland Plan because “central government holds all the financial strings”. Central government, after all, takes responsibility for raising its money, most of it by taxation, and under the principle of “he who pays the piper calls the tune” one would expect that the finances being provided to the region as “hand-outs” would involve considerable vetoing by ministers. However, The Chair of the Royal Commission argued that “if the government really wants Auckland to succeed... then it must be prepared at the very least... to engage with Auckland”. Some suggested that central government is “obliged to fund the outcomes” of the Auckland Plan because “people expect central government to do things”. But in that approach there lies the constant risk of central government exercising veto over what the Auckland Council seeks to do in the region.

Participants generally all acknowledged that the funding arrangements are critical to ensuring improved outcomes for the region. However, under this new governance model funding issues exist.

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486 Auckland Council Officer
487 Stakeholder
488 Commentator
489 Commentator
490 Planning Practitioner
491 Commentator
10.2 Limited revenue sources

The 2010 governance reform in Auckland occurred without altering the financial capabilities of local government in the region; “the financial tools that it has are identical. So you know we’ve changed the governance structure without changing it’s financing responsibilities”\(^492\). The unified governance model has provided increased financial scale but not with any additional funding powers; “the only difference... is that ... new Council’s got bigger scale when it comes to its finances.... [and] how substantially bigger and better is that? That’s... far from clear”\(^493\). For integrated spatial planning to be successful, as one planning practitioner explained:

> We’ve got to have the vision connected to all of the key levers... and then all those levers connected to money... we’ve got the head and the heart and the pocket remains with Uncle Scrooge in Wellington. And it’s not just a money Scrooge, it’s an intellectual Scrooge and a failure to understand the importance of finance as a spatial planning implementation tool.

The issue this created in one participant’s view is that the “people charged with delivering [Auckland Council], are not provided with the funding”\(^494\). The contradiction, developed further in this chapter is that those who are mandated to develop the spatial plan (Auckland Council) are also charged with delivering it without adequate funding at their disposal. This raises a more fundamental issue regarding the role local government and central government play in the region, an aspect to the arrangements which continues to be ill-defined.

These comments highlight a shortcoming in the new governance frameworks conceived by central government. If spatial planning was in fact sought through the development of the Auckland Plan it might be reasonably expected that more clearly defined funding arrangements be put in place. Auckland Council and central government are the only two key stakeholders which have “sufficient financial clout behind them”\(^495\). One

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\(^{492}\) Former Auckland Local Authority CEO

\(^{493}\) Planning Practitioner

\(^{494}\) Stakeholder

\(^{495}\) Planning Commissioner
planning practitioner noted that in a small country where sources of funding are limited there has “got to be a partnership between the central government and local government”. The issue of poor coordination between central and local government has been perpetuated by the Auckland Plan because it seeks to deliver beyond its financial capability. Consequently, “[the] big elephant in the room is the funding one... the Auckland Plan comprises a funding gap they [Auckland Council] say $10 – 15 billion to implement the major [transport] projects”. 496

The funding gap created by an ambitious plan illustrates a potentially flawed assumption on the part of Auckland Council through the Auckland Plan, that they are either able to fund what they have set out to achieve or that they are able to find the funds. One commentator was adamant that it is an impossible task. An Auckland Council Officer acknowledged this conceding, “we have perhaps bitten off more than we can chew in the Auckland Plan... part of that’s around the resource that’s available to make some of those things happen.” But, these views carry an assumption that central government’s money would be best spent at the behest of local government (and planners) notwithstanding the contestable nature and robustness of the ideas put forward in plans such as the Auckland Plan. 497

Regardless, this leaves Auckland Council with “major issues” over how the Auckland Plan can be funded.498 The issue stems in part from a lack of direction provided by central government when Auckland Council was developing the Auckland Plan (discussed in Chapter 6), “it’s enabled Auckland to develop a plan that has no fundability”. 499 An alternative view to this is that the plan merely sets out what the region requires in relation to investment and future demand over the next 20 years whilst realising that the Auckland Council “don’t have the level of investment that’s required to deliver it”. 500

496 Stakeholder
497 Commentator, Planning Practitioner, Central Government Politician
498 Stakeholder
499 Stakeholder
500 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
10.3 Aspiration versus capability

Without a willing central government prepared to invest in the region, even at the potential cost of running a government deficit, combined with a local government which has limited revenue sources, the ability to implement the Auckland Plan could be in jeopardy. This is subject to two factors. First, is the government of the day willing to invest in Auckland, second, are their constituents comfortable with running government deficits to pay for the investment in Auckland. As one participant explained, “the Select Committee reporting back on the Local Government Reform Bill has said local government’s in a desperate state in terms of its funding sources.” Other participants reinforced these views, noting how they generally do not see the “resource on the ground at the moment”. This inevitably led some participants to question, “who’s going to pay for these things?”, “are we wealthy enough to afford our aspirations?”, and where is the “money going to come from”? Several planning practitioners and stakeholders were resigned to the fact that simple projects would not be undertaken because “we don’t have the luxury of… vast pools of capital sitting around”.

The solution to this, it was argued by some, was to be “much more nimble in our decision-making and… we’re not” and that the priorities for what needed to be done should be better enunciated. Generally, this would mean a revision of plans in line with funding realities. If the Auckland Plan in its current state is to be realised then central government needs to take a greater role in funding Auckland initiatives; and/or look at alternative funding mechanisms for local government. A stakeholder agreed that “unless we have some alternative funding mechanisms… we haven’t got a hope in hell of implementing the Plan”. Again, as explained by the Chair of the Royal Commission, a

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501 Planning Practitioner
502 Auckland Council Officer; Stakeholder
503 Central Government Politician
504 Auckland Council Officer
505 Planning Practitioner
506 Stakeholder
507 Stakeholder
508 Auckland Council Officer
range of ways that funding could be raised were recommended by the Commission but were not adopted by government.

Others argued in favour of Auckland Council having the ability to “raise its own money”\textsuperscript{509} therefore requiring central government “to broaden the funding base of local government [but] in a way that we [so far] have shown no willingness as a country to do to date.”\textsuperscript{510} Without increased funding to the Auckland Council, and whilst the Mayor and Auckland councillors remain opposed to rates increases, the region remains dependent on central government providing the funds by way of “hand-outs”.\textsuperscript{511}

One planning practitioner offered an alternative view suggesting that neither, devolution of funding nor a centralisation of responsibility, had to occur to resolve this. Instead, he called for a more integrated approach drawing on “multiple sources of funding”. This would require much better coordination between central government and Auckland Council and other key stakeholders involved in the delivery of services illustrating what was intended by spatial planning. The relationship currently can be described like Auckland Council “clinging to mummy and daddy for the finance, that is the government”.\textsuperscript{512} Participants maintained that, whilst the central government-Auckland Council relationship is not sufficiently coordinated and integrated planning, investment, decision-making and the provision of services will continue to occur in an \textit{ad hoc} manner. This situation is likely to remain so long as the Auckland Council lacks the funding to be able to support the implementation of the Auckland Plan on its own, fails to adequately engage with the private sector to help achieve its aspirations, and whilst central government refuse to be bound by the plan and continue investing in the region in an \textit{ad hoc} manner as they see fit.

\textsuperscript{509} Commentator
\textsuperscript{510} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{511} Commentator
\textsuperscript{512} Planning Practitioner
10.4 Central government funding

Local government just doesn’t have the resources to do all that is needed... any significant investment... requires a significant central government backing and investment.

(Central government politician)

As things stand, central government’s investment decisions in Auckland significantly influence developments within the region and have a profound effect on whether or not local planning agendas are achieved. Without central government investment the region’s growth and development will be hampered. Regardless of the funding arrangement “central government... has a major role to play” because one way or another it “has to get involved in investment”.513 Some interviewees seemed to accept current financial relationships between central and local government and suggested that “inevitably much [funding] will have to come from central government”.514

Part of the perplexity surrounding funding of the Auckland Plan stems from the long standing roles and mandates of local government and the roles and responsibilities of central government (Cheyne, 2008; Craig, 2004; Guerin, 2002; Lewis & Moran, 1998). This leads to different central government administrations having varying and sometimes divergent views as to whether a particular service should be funded by local government, in this case Auckland Council, or central government; “some of those things you could argue are... things that should be... primarily Auckland funded, or they are things that... are critical infrastructure elements that... need to be supported for the national economy.”515 In an extreme example, one central government politician who was interviewed argued against government providing Auckland Council with either a portion of central government revenue, or the ability to use extra funding mechanisms to raise revenue on the basis that:

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513 Planning commissioner
514 Planning Practitioner
515 Planning practitioner
Local government are struggling to constrain their costs and as a consequence are wanting the easy opt out: give us a share of the GST, let us put charges on to road users, all of those sorts of questions... they're flawed.

Any change to the funding dynamic in his view would have negative impacts on how the New Zealand electoral system functioned in regard to the perceived roles and responsibilities by voters of central government versus local government; “If you start to blur those... you bring real problems around the fundamental architecture of the connection between the democracy and the flows of money.” Currently, “the public has a very clear idea in their minds that taxes go to their parliamentarians and rates go to their council".516 Another commentator agreed: “If they could get central government funding for it then there would be a cut between that accountability to the people who are actually paying for it and... what they are choosing to do with it.” Others were “pretty anxious about devolving too much authority down to the Auckland Council"517 based on their perceptions of performance so far.

Whether funding is devolved or not, both central government and Auckland Council are empowered to address the issues and challenges faced in the region. Currently, Auckland Council has a spatial plan, required by statute, which goes beyond what Cabinet had initially intended when they had the legislation drafted. Because of the breadth of the spatial plan it requires financial investment beyond Auckland Council’s current willingness to pay (rates could always be increased beyond the 2-3 per cent margin currently adhered to), and in sectors which overlap with central government responsibility. This immediately causes tensions and potentially inefficient resource use. To avoid conflict it might be timely for central government to articulate in legislation the role of local government (Auckland Council) more clearly. This would better direct and inform the content of any planning undertaken by Auckland Council. Once both parties have a more clearly defined role in Auckland a more integrated and coordinated approach to the region’s development may be possible.

516 Central Government Politician
517 Stakeholder
Auckland’s fair share

Some interviewees argued that Auckland Council could overcome funding shortfalls in the Auckland Plan if they received the region’s share of government sales tax, income tax, and road user chargers back to invest at their discretion. One planning practitioner argued that this has been a longstanding issue: “for the whole decade of the 90s and into the 2000s Auckland received... every year 20 per cent less of its share than it needed to stand still”. Others agreed stating that, “Auckland’s contributed more than it has received”\(^{518}\) in relation to tax and GST. Some participants disagreed. One pointed out that the region has been receiving “more than 30 per cent of the National Land Transport Fund”\(^{519}\) since the mid-2000s. Regardless, he argued against measuring the level of funding which Auckland received from central government with Aucklanders’ contributions, “[its] the wrong frame of reference” because the “view we’re paying this much, therefore we expect this much back this year reflects a pay as you go approach to funding”. He argued for a more “New Zealand Inc.” perspective in that it is central government’s role to redistribute wealth around the country as they see fit. Others found this hard to accept. One maintained that Auckland Council should be able to make “decisions which we think are critical to Auckland’s future”\(^{520}\) with the money it had contributed. Therefore, “if this city says that we want to have a... rail loop, for example, then we should have access to our fair share of the resources to make that call.”\(^{521}\) Some viewed this as a solution because if Auckland Council are going to be “effective they need a lot more self-determination and a lot less dependence on... the whims of the government of the day.”\(^{522}\) This line was again opposed by a central government politician who stated “Well actually I am sorry that’s not how the real world works”.

Based on the participants’ views, it can be argued that, whether or not the Auckland region is receiving its ‘fair share’ (whatever that may be), investment in the region needs to be better coordinated between the policy agendas of central government in

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\(^{518}\) Planning Practitioner

\(^{519}\) Former Auckland Local Authority CEO

\(^{520}\) Auckland Council Officer

\(^{521}\) Auckland Council Officer

\(^{522}\) Planning Practitioner
Auckland, of Auckland Council, and the funding realities based on the “nation’s wealth and our ability to afford all the nice to haves”. Spatial planning, if used as a multi-scalar integrative planning tool, might offer a platform upon which to do this.

Central government as the check and balance

If central government provides Auckland Council with additional funding or new mechanisms to earn revenue, central government would still need to provide a ‘check and balance’ on how that money was spent and Auckland Council would have to develop a robust business case.

One of these checks and balances, in one participant’s view, is that when Auckland Council staff and elected representatives request funding assistance from central government, central government specifies it for a certain project. One interviewee claimed that “the politicians in Auckland are only just waking up to that and realising that yes they might get the money, but it will come with a certain tag on it”, a questionable claim since central government has always had to keep a careful eye on the expenditure of money parliamentarians raise. Participants argued that it is only logical if central government is providing the funding that they will want the power over Auckland Council as to how that money is spent. But such restraint can be restricting: “the government just says no you can’t do that, you’re only going to have the money we give you and therefore you can only do what we say you can do”. Another commentator refused to accept that central government had a right to control how their money was spent locally. He argued; “that’s hopeless... I’ve got a real beef about that” because the Auckland Plan sets out a vision for Aucklanders which they have ‘bought into’. Similarly, if central government raise the funding, then central government should control it, or at least maintain careful oversight. This was, as seen from the above participant’s comment, met with ill-feeling from some who opposed central government’s parsimony and their constitutional authority:

523 Stakeholder  
524 Commentator  
525 Commentator
Central government basically spends 18 billion there and local government spends 3.5 and that basically says that whenever the central government wants to do something... if it sees Auckland getting in the way of its national objectives it has the leverage and the financial weight in Auckland to get its way.\(^{526}\)

A solution to this is if spatial planning was used as a meta-governance tool, an activity jointly undertaken between central government and Auckland Council, as first envisaged. But even this scenario with,

....central government cooperating with Auckland sort of begs the question of who’s prepared to pay? Because... when the ant lies down with the elephant...
budget wise the government’s calling the shots on all the important things that are needed to make Auckland function.\(^{527}\)

As already noted, many participants noted the powerful position central government is in due to the disproportionate funding split between central government and Auckland Council. It enables central government to use the funding ‘hand-outs’ as a way of saying “yes, but we want you to now go away and develop a properly integrated transport land use spatial plan and when you’ve done that... here’s the pot at the end of the rainbow.”\(^{528}\) A central government politician supported this view, explaining that it is within central government rights to require Auckland Council to “take due consideration” and if they don’t “we reserve the right to cut back”, “where central government money is involved, central government should have a veto... he who pays does need to be able to call the tune”. Other participants including stakeholders, central government officials and planning practitioners agreed: “where the money goes so the influence should go” said one,\(^{529}\) mainly for the simple reason that,

...if I was central government why would I put a billion on the line and then let somebody else tell me where to spend it and how to spend it? I wouldn’t... It would be irresponsible because of where they get their money from, they are

\(^{526}\) Commentator
\(^{527}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{528}\) Stakeholder
\(^{529}\) Stakeholder
either getting it from us or they are borrowing it from overseas and saddling future generations.530

This argument was also based on the belief that “you get some of the worst public policy outcomes when you disconnect the payer from the decision-maker”.531 These views all support the need for planning, decision-making, and funding to occur at the same level.

Under the current circumstances, as argued by some participants, if central government funding is provided to the Auckland Council to implement the Auckland Plan the Auckland Council must provide a business case to support that investment. Central government “need to go through a robust process... to spend the tax payers money... in a careful, considered way on the whole... we need to see these business cases.”532 There were also arguments supporting the view that central government want to see “Auckland with real skin in the game” as opposed to “just coming to us for money”.533 To date it was suggested that the business cases provided had not always fulfilled the requirements of central government. “Auckland has not demonstrated the discipline and the process of doing really vigorous assessment of their investments”534 and the “evidence base that supports the spending of that money has not been well done by the Auckland Council”.535 Some participants were pleased to see the current government “holding the Council’s feet to the fire over money because it brings a rigor and a reality to the implementation... [which has] been missing in the past.”536

The effect of this argument is that through this practice central government is restricting the region’s development, contrary to its professed aim of reform, by not funding the Auckland Plan. One planning practitioner stated that whilst central government “accepts that it’s [Auckland] an important economic power house, it wants it to grow, it is acting as a handbrake... [not] allowing and providing for the funding mechanisms”. Others agreed observing that “Auckland’s being asked to do this with its arm up its  

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530 Planning Practitioner
531 Central Government Politician
532 Central Government Official
533 Stakeholder
534 Stakeholder
535 Stakeholder
536 Planning Practitioner
Some suggested that central government’s reticence is because, “Treasury doesn’t ever want regional government to have independent sources of money”. One commentator explained that “even if we fix the finance problem... [and] Auckland had more ability to raise our own money” the region still requires “central government buy-in”. He went on to argue that devolution therefore is not the solution:

> It’s impossible to imagine a New Zealand where all of that was devolved so even if we got more freedom financially we would still need central government buy-in on the rest.

Central government’s opposition to devolving funding to the Auckland Council is clear. Whilst the Auckland Plan remains a plan which is developed at the Auckland Council level the usefulness of spatial planning in the region and the governance reform is likely to under-deliver relative to what it could have achieved. Until a truly integrative, multi-scalar approach is reached whereby central government co-writes, signs-up, and/or provides funding, then the plan and the region will continued to be thwarted by this reluctant partnership.

**A national roading agenda versus local priorities: Roads of National Significance**

An example of conflicting investment priorities for Auckland is represented through central government’s roading policy, ‘Roads of National Significance’. It illustrates how, given the quantum of funding central government invests in the region as opposed to Auckland Council, the policy direction of the two tiers of government can easily run contrary to one another and the direction sought by Auckland Council can be easily undermined.

> If central government is putting money in it is going to want some form of influence and control... you can see that already in the fixation on creating new roads.

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537 Planning Commissioner
538 Planning Practitioner
539 Commentator
In March 2009, central government highlighted seven Roads of National Significance to be constructed by 2020 (New Zealand Government, 2009). The Roads of National Significance were a policy platform for the National Party during their election campaign in 2008 which it won. The policy was driven on the basis that capital expenditure in these roads would increase economic productivity, provide employment, and reduce travel costs for business. They were deemed “essential” and “linked to New Zealand’s economic prosperity” (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2012). These roads however, did not fit within a broader land use transport plan within their given localities. In some people’s views this culminated in high capital expenditure on roads with little regard to whether or not this was the most optimal spend or the best fit with regional growth and infrastructure priorities. One central government official explained:

The government picks these roads and then local government... argues that they should have been different... it’s all about funding but it’s a consequence of not having any way of engaging in long term planning between each other.

In the instance of no available mechanism to reach agreement on investment between the two tiers of government then it is reasonable to expect central government to exercise its constitutional right. Three of these Roads of National Significance are contained within the Auckland region: Puhoi to Wellsford, estimated cost of $1.76 billion (Dearnaley, 2012a); the Western Ring Route, estimated cost of $2 billion (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2012); and Victoria Park Tunnel, approximately $340 million (New Zealand Press Association, 2011). This resulted in dissatisfaction surrounding how central government had made these investment decisions particularly when some argued that there were other higher priority demands for investment in Auckland. One participant explained:

To see the amount of funding put into that and see funding taken out of things that we are critically in need of... strikes a discordant note with people in Auckland... people are aware that this government doesn’t seem to be supporting Auckland.540

This quantum of investment has flow on effects for other sectors:

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540 Auckland Council Officer
The government by introducing at whim without any discussion or policy analysis Roads of National Significance empties out the barrel... [leaving] more and more of the things which were previously funded by central government to local government.  

People’s perceptions of central government prerogatives are clear. They are only “willing to support Auckland’s economic future... through those roading projects” said one interviewee. These roads “didn’t really achieve any of the issues that Auckland’s grappling with”, was the opinion of another. These large-scale roading infrastructure investments will have a long-term effect on the development patterns of Auckland and furthermore they start “shaping your plan”. Another stakeholder suggested the challenge was changing the perceptions of central government to the issues in particular localities; “our real challenge is how to get them focused on what the actual needs are of the locality”. With this, he also argued that there was a need to alter the performance measures of the agencies to become more in tune with the influences that policy and funding decisions have on local communities.

Participants highlighted that continued investment patterns by central government geared heavily towards roading will threaten the implementation of the Auckland Plan, which is more focused on providing alternate modes of transport. These central government investment decisions will also reduce the amount of funding available for other projects because “funding from central government is limited”. This can be a problem if there is not more prior agreement between local government officers and central government officials. If the Auckland region is going to realise the vision which the architects of the Auckland Plan aspire better decision-making at all levels is required “to direct those funds... into the infrastructure projects that are really going to help”. If central government planning, investment, and decision-making agendas are contrary to those of the Auckland Council and the patterns of investment are ad hoc, then inefficient resource use and sub-optimal outcomes, as experienced prior to 2010, are
likely to continue. These will exacerbate the issues facing the institutions managing the region. The example of roads of national significance reinforces the value and importance of spatial planning as a tool to integrate and coordinate activities within a region, between various agencies and tiers of government.

A working party to solve funding: the Consensus Building Group

The Auckland Council released a funding deficit discussion document in February, 2012. The document outlined the investment needs facing Auckland, the issues surrounding sufficient funding to meet these investment needs, and the funding options that could be utilised to fulfil them. The responses to this report “indicated that Aucklanders wanted to see improvements in transport infrastructure that are able to cope with growth and that a mix of new and existing funding might be desirable” (Auckland Council, 2012f).

The funding gap in transport between what the Auckland Plan seeks and what is currently available is approximately $15 billion. The entire transport programme as set out in the plan will cost approximately $72 billion to implement over the next 30 years (Auckland Council, 2013d). One stakeholder noted:

> there’s a funding gap at the moment between what’s available out of the combination of Auckland Council budgets and central government budgets of somewhere between 10 and 15 billion dollars over that period.

Central government opposed this approach. One central government politician commented, “I can understand why he’s [Mayor Len Brown] putting up those funding mechanisms because he wants to have a bit more control over some of the funding”. Another central government politician stated: “councils are always trying to invent ways of getting their hands into the pot of Parliament’s money. And they should be careful what they ask for”. This reinforces reticence on the part of central government politicians towards providing Auckland Council with funding or new funding mechanisms for projects to implement the Auckland Plan.

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547 Getting Auckland Moving
548 Stakeholder
Following the release of the discussion document (Auckland Council, 2012e) there was a group of key stakeholders asked by Auckland Council in July 2012 to examine a raft of funding mechanisms, (a) regional fuel taxes, (b) congestion charging/network charging, (c) additional car parking charges, (d) airport departure and visitor accommodation charges, and (e) tax increment funding. The group comprised eighteen members from varying organisations within Auckland. A participant who was also a member of the group commented “our job is to look at how you can plug that gap”. On October 23, 2012, it was reported that central government was not going to participate in the group (Dearnaley, 2012b). According to this report neither the Ministry of Transport nor was the New Zealand Transport Agency going to participate:

Council set up a working party with central government except that central government doesn’t want to be in the room... to fund these projects... it seems to me that... the Ministers have told the bureaucrats you’re not allowed to go in the room because “we don’t want you to drag us in there. We want to sit outside of it”... When you observe that from the outside... it’s not going very far.550

These views were supported by statements such as:

...you’d have thought that central would want to be involved in that exercise but they haven’t. The Minister of Transport basically got his tits in a tangle and said “no I don’t want any officials involved in that process”... there’s pressure now on the PM... to reconsider551

As a result of this,

...there’s a lot of tension and a lot of hostility... about the way that the Government’s transport officials have been instructed not to take part in Auckland Council’s consensus building exercise around transport funding options.552

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549 Consensus Building Group  
550 Planning Practitioner  
551 Stakeholder  
552 Central Government Politician
The discussion document, Getting Auckland Moving (Auckland Council, 2012e), followed by the establishment of the Consensus Building Group, indicates Auckland Council is taking a proactive approach towards sourcing alternate funding options. “Council has set up a building consensus group that’s talking about alternative funding... my intuition tells me that that is going to force a solution of some description”.553 Whilst central government refuses to both agree with the direction of the Auckland Plan and provide funding for it, the ability to achieve integrated planning and decision-making outcomes to achieve its goals appear unlikely:

If you had central government as a willing and able partner that's willing to invest alongside Auckland Council you’d achieve a lot of that... that’s not happening. You’d also achieve a lot if Auckland Council had the resource to invest where it thought was appropriate and it hasn’t got that either.554

 Whilst the Auckland Plan remains with a funding shortfall the outcomes it seeks to achieve will be limited. Implementation of the Auckland Plan will therefore be significantly constricted, “unless we can get some wider sources of funding”.555 One participant in part blamed Auckland Council for this issue stating,

...what the Auckland Council didn’t do was say “oh well hang on if we want to deliver, if we want to have an agreement on that which is dependent on central government funding we’ve actually got to reach an agreement”.556

Mechanisms for local government to earn revenue: Rates

The main source of revenue for Auckland Council comes from rates. However, whilst increased rates and increased levels of borrowing on local or international markets could fill a funding shortfall very few participants acknowledged this as a potential option. This could possibly be due to the reluctance of Aucklanders to individually carry the cost of these projects directly or indirectly through rates increases. If this is the case, and politicians persist with this the political ramifications would be dire.

553 Stakeholder
554 Auckland Council Official
555 Planning Practitioner
556 Planning Practitioner
One participant argued that rates can always be increased, “there’s no limit on their rates rises”. Then if “the local community thinks that it’s too expensive well then that’s the accountability mechanisms”. Other participants supported this: said one “rates are incredibly blunt but actually there’s substantial scope in rates” because they are secured against property and therefore “better than many forms of central government revenue”. Along with rates, some participants also argued for the introduction of a betterment tax, “you could levy something up to 50 per cent of the value of the land” based on the premise that infrastructure projects are directly linked to the value uplift on affected land. Some also suggested better debt funding and borrowing so as to spread the cost over the life of the project as well as better use of excise taxes.

The views on increasing rates as a means to secure increased revenue were mixed. Those who argued against it claimed that it was “an outdated method of income” for the Council. Furthermore, “rates are at an absolute premium,” “no way we are ever going to pay for you know our share of the 2.86 billion out of rates it’s just not going to happen”. These views reject the possibility of doubling rates for a period of time or increasing surcharges on certain services for specific purposes as used in the past. One central government politician observed that “councils are struggling with the fiscal pressure of living within their rates and they know that the public will nail them if the rates increases are excessive.” Others claimed that central government are “shitting all over local government in terms of trying to cap rates.” Generally, those opposed to rates increases claimed that the “Council is going to have to be able to... get money some other way”.

Despite opposition, rates offer a strong tool for Auckland Council to secure a revenue stream to fund and implement the Auckland Plan whilst providing a robust

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557 Commentator
558 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
559 Commentator
560 Planning Commissioner
561 Auckland Council Officer
562 Auckland Council Officer
563 Planning Commissioner
accountability mechanism between the ratepayers and the political representatives. A loan poll provides for a region wide consultative mechanism with ratepayers.

Mechanisms for local government to earn revenue: Road pricing

Road pricing, congestion charges, or fuel taxes offer options for funding, especially for major infrastructure developments involving roads but is not a new idea to Auckland (Binning, 2005; Dearnaley, 2006). There was split in opinion between participants on who should receive the revenue from them if collected, and whether the Auckland Council or central government should enforce it. Nevertheless, there was a high level of unanimity expressed towards applying some form of road pricing or congestion charging. Comments in favour of such an approach included, “the most powerful way of funding this sort of thing is through road pricing”,564 “Auckland Council... should have... road user charges unlocked to their benefit”565 “we are getting to the point where it is economic to congestion charge”566 and it “could be brought down to the local level much more.”567 Road pricing, after all, is an issue that had been discussed between the Auckland City Council, the Auckland Regional Council and Ministry of Transport officials off and on during the first decade of the 20th century although no final agreement was ever reached (Bassett, 2013).

One stakeholder commented that “clearly they [Auckland Council] would prefer to levy their own fuel taxes and stuff” however “the ratepayers of Auckland would have a major difficulty” with that. Another participant argued strongly for “devolution”, “government should... allow petrol tax and road user tax to go to the province”.568 Another participant rebuffed these views; “there’s no way that central government would devolve the funding of that to Auckland”. Legislation was passed for a Regional Fuel Tax in 2008 by the then Labour-led Government with the money intended to be used for urban transport. The incoming National-led government refused to pass the necessary Order in Council to allow this to occur. One central government politician agreed:

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564 Auckland Council Officer
565 Planning Practitioner
566 Central Government Politician
567 Commentator
568 Planning Practitioner
“there is a good case for... a greater degree of sophistication around how we might fund roads” but “those need to be imposed by central government not extending the mandate of local government.” The funds should be distributed according to who is responsible for construction and servicing.

Some participants felt very strongly that, until other funding mechanisms such as road pricing were put in place, the Auckland Council and the region as a whole “don’t have a hope in hell” of achieving the plan. So long as Auckland Council continues without these additional funding tools the goals set out in the Auckland Plan will need to be lowered, incremental change will at most be all that can be hoped for, and “Auckland will continue to chug along as a sort of mediocre at best city”.569

10.5 The outlook

Funding is a key determinant for implementing the Auckland Plan. So long as “funding is unresolved... that’s a real issue”570 said one interviewee while another expressed the opinion that the “funding issue is the key to unlocking the dilemma”.571 The issues surrounding the institutional frameworks in Auckland prior to 2010, on this basis, might have been resolved better by looking at funding of local government in detail within the region in light of how services and investment are made. On this premise the issue and solution may not have revolved solely around governance structure. A planning practitioner stated: “It was always an option two years ago not to smash Auckland.... I would not have done nothing, but I would have done something about money... people just look in the wrong places, you just don’t have the money.” Other issues exist with Auckland Council and to an extent central government’s approach to funding. One participant observed that Auckland Council is “totally ignoring the capacity of the community to pay for what they are putting in place” whilst seemingly ignoring the fact that if “you try and fund it out of the income sources this Council has, we’ll go bust”.

569 Stakeholder
570 Planning Practitioner
571 Stakeholder
Central government’s reluctance

Implementation of the Auckland Plan relies heavily on central government for both funding and service delivery. The region has relied on some central government funding throughout history and it has always been a stumbling block (Bassett, 2013). “There’s always going to be tussles... there’s been tussles about transport funding for 100 years.” It is perpetuated when central government “is not at the party” with the agendas of the local authorities in the region. Some interviewees also observed that the situation is worsened when central government is “financially stretched” or, as another participant described it, “broke.”

Other participants thought the issue was simpler, and that it reflects a power struggle with central government not wanting to relinquish control to Auckland Council. “Wellington will continue to be very cautious about providing funding because it doesn’t want to have a competing centre of power”. This has further deteriorated as Auckland Council developed a plan with which central government was not aligned. “Central government, would probably be loath to commit budget wise to a plan that was developed by Auckland... that’s the big gap” said one council officer. This exemplifies a contradiction in neoliberalism; central government provided Auckland Council with the mandate to undertake spatial planning, it provided Auckland with an enlarged institution to better manage the region but now central government is refusing to allow the new framework to work. “The government’s very carefully kept one part of it out of the pot because it wants to be able to control it according to its aspirations and where that money should go.” This is culminating in a “stoush” and “tension”. One participant suggested that it is no more than petty politics, “if you’re a central government politician... you want to be the person who’s cutting the ribbon.”

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572 Central Government Official
573 Stakeholder
574 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
575 Planning Practitioner
576 Planning Practitioner
577 Planning Practitioner
578 Commentator
579 Central Government Politician
There was also criticism by some participants about central government taking a “minimalist position”\textsuperscript{580} on funding and being unprepared to approach the issues in Auckland in any new ways. A stakeholder explained that, “it hasn’t done anything constructive about how one might bridge that funding gap.”

**The need for better alignment**

Spatial planning requires integration, alignment and coordination between multiple tiers of government. In Auckland this has not occurred. One stakeholder observed that the spatial planning experiment in the region so far has done little to resolve these challenges which get “played out on a daily basis”.\textsuperscript{581}

In the ideal world... the world of smart spatial planning, there would be alignment between central government and Auckland about what those investments are because they have been through a joint process\textsuperscript{582}

Change would require Auckland Council and central government to be “more joined-up in their approaches”\textsuperscript{583} and in an ideal world the Auckland-Wellington divide would be done away with and an agreed document would emerge.\textsuperscript{584} Almost certainly this would provide increased security over funding and service provision. One central government politician seemed confused as to what could be done to ensure allocation of funding in a strategic manner. Yet alignment between the two tiers of government is critical to the success of the plan. The same participant observed that “there is a reasonable level of alignment on this stuff” but came back to the critical point that there is no agreement about how to pay for the plan. Alignment without funding, as discussed earlier, is pointless since it is the funding which ultimately delivers the outcomes. A central government official explained that discussions have not yet got “down to the nuts and bolts” regarding funding. Other participants noted the disagreements going on which he argued represented a restatement of priorities instead of a misalignment. One commentator took a more pragmatic view suggesting that alignment around priorities

\textsuperscript{580} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{581} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{582} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{583} Central Government Official
\textsuperscript{584} Planning Practitioner
and funding probably rely on a “change in government... These things go in political cycles”, and consequently “it’ll probably just be the status quo for a while.”585 This represents a sanguine argument; no central government is going to fund local government plans without a strong business case and negotiation. Another participant pessimistically thought that there might be few solutions available to solve the issues of alignment.

I don’t know that in a democracy that there is any solution... we can say ideally there would be better coordination between strategic objectives here and funding streams and priorities from Wellington, but in a political democracy that may be but a dream.586

Auckland Council officers and central government officials all agreed, citing the number of things which need to align to enable big things to happen. One planning practitioner explained that the issues we face in relation to integration and decision-making “boil down to politics and money in a democracy” and whilst these problems are present only mediocre outcomes will be achieved because compromises always have to be made between competing agendas. Achieving alignment is critical in terms of coordinating resources, priorities and timing of investment to implement the Auckland Plan but also for achieving a more collaborative, efficient and integrated approach to, service delivery and infrastructure provision in the region. These issues again highlight a neoliberal project of spatial governance in the Auckland region half finished. Without coordination being possible, the new institutional frameworks only offer a marginally improved system compared with what could have been achieved if there were better alignment.

10.6 Summary

When the new Auckland Council was established in 2010, aside from its borrowing capacity and a region-wide rating base, funding capabilities remained the same. Many of the shortcomings raised in this chapter by participants support the findings by the

585 Commentator
586 Planning Practitioner
Local Government Rates Inquiry (2007), released prior to both the design and inauguration of the new Auckland Council had taken place. The Auckland Council proceeded to develop a spatial plan for the region, mandated by central government but without their sign-off. This culminated in the release of the Auckland Plan which aims to carry out services and activities which sometimes overlap with central government’s agencies and for which there is a significant funding deficit. Whilst the major aims of the plan remain unfunded and the other priorities which it sets out remain the duty of central government who are not ‘signed up’ to deliver them, the plan is unlikely to fulfil its own aspirations. The funding difficulties faced in the region given the control over funding which central government holds highlights a misguided attempt at spatial planning, an activity which is typified by integration, alignment, and coordination in a multi-scalar, meta-governance manner. The new institutional frameworks in Auckland, coupled with their spatial plan, were envisaged to improve the management and performance of the region.

There is strong support by participants for the devolution of funding from central government (potentially the region’s share of GST or something similar), or the provision of new funding mechanisms to fund the aspirations of the Auckland Council. However these remain flawed solutions. Given the size of the region (over a third of the country’s population), the tax take from it, GST, and Auckland’s contribution to GDP in a country of only four million spread across a land area of 271,000 square kilometres, devolution of funding must be avoided. As one participant described it, a “New Zealand Inc.” approach must be encouraged wherever possible, despite central government decentralisation tendencies occurring elsewhere in the world.

Spatial planning in the Auckland region, whilst an effective tool to set strategy, policy agendas, and coordination of multiple stakeholder investment will not succeed without the key funding partners being involved. Currently, it is likely to suffer the same fate as previous regional planning endeavours in the region. Few solutions exist. Spatial planning could be escalated to an intermediary level between central government and Auckland Council where it is co-written and agreed to. Alternatively, the role of the Auckland Council in the region could be more clearly defined by central government so as to avoid contradictions, un-planned overlaps, and tensions.
Part III

Broader considerations and conclusions
Part III of this research first addresses the broader nuances affecting the newly established local government structures in Auckland. Namely, the role central government plays in the region. Second, some concluding views from participants are presented regarding where the neoliberal project in Auckland has got to. The core findings are then synthesised. Following this, how the research has informed and contributed to prior literature in this field and the implications for the findings are discussed. Lastly, the research is concluded by returning to the objectives of the study and how they have been met, the contributions to knowledge which have been made, and the corresponding areas worthy of further research.
Chapter 11

Central government and the Auckland region

You’ve got Auckland city as the Obama, the Democrat camp, and really you’ve got the [New Zealand central] government as… the Republican Tea Party. And so you have a complete disconnect of ideology, vision, and outcome between the two groups, and yet it was the government that set Auckland up.

(Central Government Official)

11.0 Introduction

Integrated planning and multi-scalar approaches to governance require by their inherent nature multi-stakeholder buy-in. The neoliberal spatial governance project undertaken in Auckland in 2010 has since demonstrated fundamental flaws in terms of achieving these concepts which embody ‘spatial planning’. This chapter focuses on the political dynamics being played out in the Auckland region between central government and Auckland Council. These stand to threaten the region’s development, the success of the governance restructuring process, and spatial planning. This scenario can be typified by the regions need for a whole-of-government approach and leadership whilst being hamstrung by Cabinet’s refusal to commit to spatial planning.

11.1 Shifting ground

Some participants observed a will on the part of central government to take a more active role in controlling what happens in Auckland. Some saw this at odds with developing a spatial plan at the local government level. It has not always been central
government’s prerogative to have centralised decision-making, previously subsidiarity was favoured (Guerin, 2002).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s central government’s approach was to devolve decision-making responsibility to the local communities, it was “all about decentralization” with the view that “Wellington has just been cocking it up... we need to send it back to local communities, let them make decisions about it”.\textsuperscript{587} Intertwined in this approach, as one participant described it was a “laissez faire approach to resource management. Let the market decide... let the communities decide”.\textsuperscript{588} This marked a “less government is better movement”\textsuperscript{589} economic reform period which was described as exemplary (Evans, Grimes, Wilkinson, Teece, 1996) and one of the most notable episodes of liberalisation in history (Henderson, 1995; Larner, 2005). Some viewed it as a ‘knee-jerk reaction’ following too much government involvement and unsustainable levels of government debt, either way, New Zealand had been in a crisis (Easton, 1989; Evans et al., 1996; Lewis & Moran, 1998). The reforms after 1984 involved phases of market liberalisation; corporatisation and privatisation; core-state restructuring; and a period of entrenchment (Lewis & Moran, 1998). These changes had an overwhelming impact on Auckland’s governance and institutional configurations in the region, which even post the 1989 local government amalgamation continued in a state of flux. One participant believed that “central government has tended at times to throw the baby out with the bath water”\textsuperscript{590} in relation to reforms. A view perhaps reflective of reform processes which seldom achieve their desired outcomes on account of competing interests and different political ideologies.

During the 2000s there has been a change towards the conception of state-market relations, where decision-making should lie, and the level of government involvement for a well-functioning market-led society (Challies & Murray, 2008; Dixon, 2005; Larner, 2005; Le Heron & McDermott, 2008; Wetzein, 2008). Participants observed that “during 2005, 2006, 2007, onwards there’s been, a, stint to bring back the role of the centre”, \textsuperscript{591}

\textsuperscript{587} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{588} Planning Practitioner
\textsuperscript{589} Planning Commissioner
\textsuperscript{590} Planning Commissioner
\textsuperscript{591} Central Government Official
“what we would call a growing centralisation in New Zealand”\textsuperscript{592}. One commentator called it a “strongly centralist urge” and a “very conservative urge”.

Concern was expressed by some for what this means in the Auckland region. “I’m terrified about what the government’s about to do to Auckland”\textsuperscript{593} because these shifts mean central government are “playing... a bigger role in local government” as discussed by Cheyne (2008).\textsuperscript{594} For example, the creation of the new Auckland Council and their relationship with central government has been described now as, “little brother talking to big brother” where the voice of the Auckland Council is marginalised. This was also illustrated by central government’s limited consultation with Aucklanders on the new governance arrangements, “central government knew best”.\textsuperscript{595} Participants found this centrist approach hard to manage. Central government on the one hand, “have created the supercity, the largest non-national government entity in the country”\textsuperscript{596} but then if it makes any decisions central government do not agree with, it will “tell Auckland what to do”.\textsuperscript{597} An Auckland Council officer described the reform process and central government’s actions following the start of the new council as somewhat of a “give with one hand and take with the other” approach. One stakeholder likened the situation surrounding the new Auckland Council and spatial plan to the government loosing “its nerve... we can’t trust them.” A commentator agreed, “central government really has a mistrust of local government and is prepared to bias the location of decisions more at the central level”. Others agreed with this ‘mistrust’ argument.

Many participants were clear on their views as to what was happening in Auckland. Central government are “wanting to control Auckland rather than work in partnership with Auckland”,\textsuperscript{598} they are wanting to make the “big strategic decisions”,\textsuperscript{599} and not believing Auckland has the ability to make the correct decisions; central government
“knows better”. At the time the media also observed this emergent theme concerning central government and Auckland (Clifton, 2013). Some participants questioned, “who says that they are going to make better decisions out of Wellington?” However, this last comment runs contrary to the adage that ‘he who pays the piper has a right to call the tune’ (refer Chapter 10).

One planning practitioner noted that “the sad thing about Auckland is that [central] government has constantly attempted to undermine it”. Some argued that the centralisation occurring now is only because Auckland Council are seeking a direction for Auckland, as set out in the Auckland Plan, contrary to that of central government which they don’t like. One participant observed that government’s attitude towards Auckland Council is that: “It’s not as if we’re the poor cousin, we’re the poor and dangerous, and stupid cousin.” In relation to the 2010 reforms some thought that central government “are more of the problem than Auckland [Council] is.” Another example of central government “clawing back control” is evidenced in the funding of Auckland Transport (a council-controlled organisation). It now receives an increasingly higher proportion (at least 35 per cent) of its funding from central government (Parliamentary Library Research Paper, 2011) (refer also: Auckland Transport, 2013):

The Crown has just acted completely contrary to what it says it was trying to do by way of integration... it is running a strategy, this is opinion rather than fact, to basically unseat transport planning as a regional function and centralise it all.

The new organisational structures were meant to provide improved integrated planning in Auckland compared to what existed before. However, this change in funding dynamic, some argued, will instead lead to a failure to “integrate transport planning
with... land use planning”.\(^{608}\) It will in fact disconnect transport decision-making from land use decision-making. This, it was argued, would represent a direct loss of local democracy, “unless you are tinkering around the edges”.\(^{609}\) One participant speculated that the form of the governance structures created were “predicated on a compliant Auckland Council” to ensure alignment.

[Central government] are setup to implement Auckland’s direction so long as it’s wholly consistent with this government’s position on Auckland\(^{610}\)

One commentator argued that the return to the centre approach for decision-making regarding Auckland “will constrain the degree to which Auckland can develop into a real world class city”. Others supported this claim: “centralised regimes don’t tend to work well in the long run.... it doesn’t seem to be the general way the world is going”.\(^{611}\) These comments were not widely held amongst the participants.

Many viewed favourably the role of central government as the provider of the big picture strategic direction to guide Auckland Council’s decisions. “The role of central government... [is] giving guidance to Auckland [to] constrain the position of local government to save it from itself.”\(^{612}\) Another stakeholder maintained that there has “always got to be a degree of checks and balances” and that currently it is “quite well pitched”. An Auckland Council officer suggested that given the Council has been arguing that central government is a key stakeholder than perhaps it is not surprising that centralisation is occurring; “with big stakeholders come big demands, that’s what’s happening”.

The easiest solution to this problem is to have decision-making, funding and planning all at the same level. So either, “take all the power down to Wellington and make the decisions down there or... devolve it back up here plus a requirement to fund and allow them to make their own decisions”.\(^{613}\) The difficulty arises when integrating planning

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\(^{608}\) Planning Practitioner
\(^{609}\) Auckland Council Officer
\(^{610}\) Auckland Council Officer
\(^{611}\) Stakeholder
\(^{612}\) Stakeholder
\(^{613}\) Planning Practitioner
and decision-making between tiers of government. Despite the solution adopted, central government and Auckland Council will still remain key stakeholders in the region’s development and therefore there will always be a need for multi-scalar integration between the two levels of government. Although the extent and form of Auckland Council’s role will, “very much depend on the role the government thinks local government should have.”614 One participant argued for a,

...re-balancing in terms of how... local and central interact... some greater acknowledgement that local government actually has... key roles in delivering on central government’s aspirations. It’s not necessarily just a command and obey approach. 615

New Zealand has always been a, “very highly centralised... governmental system, it’s the most centralised outside the autocratic states by far”.616 Therefore, “we don’t practise subsidiarity here”617 and consequently “the scope of councils to do very much has always been quite limited”618 even though the “instinct of the current government is to take it even further down that track”.619 The creep of decision-making authority back to the centre under the re-configured structures might enable improved spatial governance in the region. In many of the participants’ views this will have significant impact on the ability for Auckland Council to implement the Auckland Plan as it currently exists.

A sign of centralisation – local government reforms 2012/2013

A hopeful sign that central government might be considering more clearly defining the role of local government in New Zealand and the role of the new Auckland Council is evidenced by a partial attempt through the 2012 Local Government Act Reform Bill. On March 19, 2012, the Minister of Local Government 620 announced there will be further local government reforms. The aim is to reduce the spending of local authorities in

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614 Hon. Peter Salmon
615 Planning Practitioner
616 Commentator
617 Planning Practitioner
618 Commentator
619 Commentator
620 Hon Dr. Nick Smith
areas where central government already accepts responsibility, such as economic and social development (N. Smith, 2012b). These changes came into effect on December 4, 2012 narrowing the role of local authorities by removing the four community wellbeings; social, economic, cultural and environmental, and bringing the focus back to local infrastructure, public services and regulatory functions “at the least possible cost to households and business” (New Zealand Government, 2012, p.6). As the Minister outlined the changes would stop duplication and meddling by local government (Auckland Council) in areas where central government already has responsibility policy-wise.

The reform sought to enforce new fiscal restrictions on local authorities including rate increases caps of seven per cent (N. Smith, 2012b). The changes included: (1) refocusing the purpose of local government; (2) introduction of fiscal responsibility requirements; (3) strengthening council governance provisions; and (4) streamlining council reorganisation procedures. The government stressed that the key messages in the new purpose statement was ‘local’ “to differentiate from services better provided by central government”, to avoid local authorities trying to replace services provided by the private sector, and placing an emphasis on the least cost to provide efficiency (New Zealand Government, 2012, p.6). Participants maintained that the narrowing of the role of local government will constrict the ability of spatial planning when undertaken by Auckland Council.

Auckland’s Mayor expressed concern over these changes. He argued that it is vital certain services remain in the realm of local government on the basis that, if local government no longer provides them, would central government be appropriately equipped to do so? (Brown, 2012) Auckland Council formally expressed concern regarding the potential impact the amendments might have on the implementation of the Auckland Plan (Auckland Council, 2012a; Auckland Council, 2012g). The Council highlighted the broad mandate under section 79 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 in which the Auckland Plan was developed and the risk posed if this scope was narrowed; “[Auckland Council] oppose any narrowing of local government’s purpose that will have implications on its ability to implement the Auckland Plan” (Auckland Council, 2012g, p.63). Their submission argued that the Auckland Plan
included targets such as climate change and education because to achieve the ‘world’s most liveable city’ these matters must be addressed at a local level.

The legislative change illustrates to some participants a further centralisation of power away from local government. In the end the new legislation constrains the role of local government as opposed to clarifying it. Consequently, the changes reduce local government’s authority and responsibility (autonomy) and their powers of self-determination thus threatening the ability to implement the Auckland Plan.

Political power play

I’m not particularly optimistic just at the moment... we have to move into a world of politics rather than one of policy... the ability to get political leaders here to leverage resources and policy out of the team in Wellington who aren’t going to be entirely sympathetic... history is on Auckland Council’s side because Wellington can’t do everything

(Stakeholder)

The size of the new Auckland Council has completely changed the political dynamics which exist between the two tiers of government in the region. One participant explained how “the fundamental problem, I don’t think they’ve understood, is you don’t create a huge local government power house without expecting it to have power”.621 An Auckland Council officer argued that central government must have known what it was doing when creating the new Auckland Council. This has led to a “party political flavour to the relationship”622 accentuated by a Labour aligned mayor being elected as opposed to “the National Party candidate”.623 The professed view was that if a National Party candidate had been elected as Mayor then the relationship between the two tiers of government would have been stronger and yielded better outcomes for the region than currently is the case. The Mayor of Auckland Council has also been provided with strong executive powers unlike anywhere else in local government in New Zealand. As a result “there was a lot made in the media around... Len Brown having the second most

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621 Planning Practitioner
622 Central Government Politician
623 Central Government Politician
powerful job as Mayor… second only to the Prime Minister"; central government passed legislation which gave “the Mayor of Auckland a miles larger mandate than any single… Member of Parliament.” One central government politician refuted this argument by observing:

Local government in total controls four per cent of New Zealand’s GDP. Government controls 40 per cent … Len Brown as the head of the Auckland Council is in charge of one per cent of New Zealand’s GDP, John Key affectively as the Prime Minister of the government resources has got 40 per cent… it’s not an even game.

Because “Auckland is so large now” participants perceived an urge by central government “to exercise some control so as not to see Auckland as a rival to central government”. This has seen central government become “strongly determined to… hold all the cards”. One commentator cautioned: “never underestimate the ad hoc capacity of governments and local governments; decisions have rarely been made according to any set of principles”. This has already been exemplified through the Draft Auckland Unitary Plan (Auckland Council, 2013c) and central government not allowing Auckland councillors sign-off on the this plan, “[central government say] ‘we can’t have the locally elected members sign-off on the plan, we don’t trust local democracy.’”

Others also feared that the legislation which “requires Auckland Council to consult with central government” because it potentially puts “the strategy in the hands of [central government] politicians.” This shows that Auckland-related matters are now more than ever “clouded by political differences” both at the Auckland Council level and at the national level. The outcome, as one stakeholder observed is “pork barrel politicking”, “Auckland accuses government of only looking at Roads of National Significance, government accuses Auckland of only having rail-tinted glasses”.

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624 Planning Practitioner
625 Commentator
626 Planning Practitioner
627 Commentator
628 Stakeholder
629 Central Government Official
630 Planning Practitioner
These tensions run contrary to the aims of the reform process which sought alignment and integration under the banner of spatial planning. Several participants voiced their frustration towards this, citing what they saw as a lack of “political maturity”.631 The politics need to play out in a constructive way, [because] it’s no good just waiting for a change of government for alignment to occur, it has to be consistent over time because Auckland’s economic welfare is New Zealand’s economic welfare.632

For improved outcomes to be realised from the neoliberal project in Auckland, “it’s going to require political will”.633

11.2 Political perspectives on Auckland

Various participants argued that there is “a lack of understanding” by central government “of the cities”.634 This is reflected, as shown in Part 2, by the flaws in the new governance structures provided and the flow-on effect this has had on the ability to undertake spatial planning. The policy decisions by central government in Auckland demonstrate the negative impacts of policy decisions made in isolation without considering their broader implications.636 However, this is not a new challenge for the region (Bassett, 2013; New Zealand Herald, 1991; Scobie & Jardine, 1987). Some suggested that central government’s lack of understanding might be as a result of there being no one in Cabinet who “lives and breathe cities. And sort of understands what a city is”.637 Others went further describing it as a “caste of mind in Wellington that does not understand this town, its frightened of it... and is scared of... giving it the tools,”638 partially on the basis, as argued by one planning commissioner, that central government do not fully accept the importance of the region as an economic unit. These views were

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631 Planning Practitioner  
632 Stakeholder  
633 Central Government Politician  
634 Planning Commissioner  
635 Stakeholder  
636 Auckland Council Official  
637 Commentator  
638 Planning Practitioner
supported by participants who explained: “Treasury’s understanding of Auckland... and the development of Auckland is so one dimensional.... they are blinded to the real things that were affecting productivity.”

...there’s always been this real difficulty with central government sort of figuring out what Auckland is. The public servants in Wellington don’t understand it, it’s quite large in New Zealand terms, they’re frightened of it.

Attempts were made by central government during the 2000s to better engage with Auckland, understand the issues being faced, and respond appropriately. A Minister for Auckland Issues (Judith Tizard) and an Urban Affairs Minister (Marian Hobbs) were appointed during this time along with the establishment of the Government Urban and Economic Development Office (GUEDO) (refer section 11.6). But, prior to then “you didn’t have any kind of focus on urban affairs and so you went for 20 years and you didn’t have anyone in the bureaucracy saying ‘hey we have to think about cities’”, displaying a very hands off approach to the development of cities in New Zealand, primarily Auckland. One stakeholder commented:

New Zealand has been highly urbanised for a long time and... that coupled with a sort of institutional vacuum... in Wellington has really... led to very poor policy development... very short term view of things and absolute lack of understanding.

Several participants noted some of the poor decisions made and the lack of understanding which central government has displayed around transport related issues in the region. The decision by the Ministry of Transport to go against the New Zealand Transport Agency on the City Rail Loop was “just plain dumb”. Another participant criticised central governments “very old fashioned sort of build more motorways solution” to transport planning arguing a “more balanced approach is needed”. Rarely did participants offer opposing views. A commentator argued that Cabinet might

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639 Planning Practitioner
640 Planning Practitioner
641 Stakeholder
642 Mayor of Auckland Council
643 Stakeholder
have been being rightly cautious to hesitate on funding a large portion of a scheme which might have endless annual operating shortfalls and in the long-run cost Auckland ratepayers.

Further criticism of central government’s policy choices were made in relation to land supply. An Auckland Council officer and a stakeholder both argued that central government had misunderstood the role of land supply and the provision of infrastructure relative to demand; “there was a bit of pushing and shoving with central government particularly around some incorrect understandings that central government had about the role of land supply.”  

To make matters worse in their view, during the reform process, central government sought only limited levels of input from local government officers. One participant described how central government officials, “were absolutely not allowed to discuss it with anybody and so nobody in Auckland had any input into these processes” resulting in, as one planning practitioner described it, “absolutely no solid policy advice coming to government”. Participants became confused because, as they saw it, the purpose of the reform exercise was to improve governance in the region but yet expert experience was being overlooked. Questions were posed as to whether central government “really investigated and really understood the implications of it [spatial planning] and what it meant for Auckland?”

This raises fundamental issues for spatial planning and more broadly the planning system in New Zealand if those senior officials and decision-makers tasked with creating the new systems lack a sound understanding of them to begin with. On this basis some participants were highly critical of central government and the development of public policy in New Zealand. One stakeholder argued that “If our national governance was working, New Zealand’s economic performance would be very much better than what it has actually been”. Another stakeholder argued that plans and policy choices are made without any consideration of flow on consequences, and instead there is “a lot of kind of wishful thinking or naïve or uninformed thinking”. He called for more joined-up

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644 Stakeholder
645 Planning Practitioner
646 Planning Practitioner
thinking. On a count of central government’s perceived ‘incompetence’ one planning practitioner thought the region was on “its own”.

Despite these criticisms by many of central government, it was observed by some that its “understanding of Auckland issues has grown to the point where I think they get it”\textsuperscript{647} because central government’s focus on Auckland is now much “stronger”\textsuperscript{648} than it previously was. This enables better policy responses and decisions to be made in regards to the development of Auckland. A central government official agreed. A former Auckland local authority CEO maintained that;

\begin{quote}
...this incarnation of the National Government... in terms of their understanding in terms of the need to build and deal with infrastructure... it’s a far safer and more constructive place to have debates about what you need to build the city that’s worth having than it ever has been.
\end{quote}

Based on these views, and drawing on the history of governance and planning outlined in Chapter 3, Auckland’s development has been at times hindered by poor policy responses by central government. Such instances suggest an inadequate understanding by central government officials and politicians of the issues facing the region. Some argued that this lack of understanding existed at the time of reform culminating in a less than ideal model of governance being put in place in 2010. Despite this, there have been signs during the 2000s, and now since 2010 and the new Auckland Council, that central government is taking a more engaged role in the region’s development.

\textsuperscript{647} Auckland Council Officer
\textsuperscript{648} Stakeholder
11.3 A loose commitment?

Unless the government buys into the Auckland vision then the Auckland vision won’t be realised, it’s as simple as that.

(Chair, Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance)

This section reviews the extent to which central government are committed to assisting in delivering the new Auckland Plan. Furthermore it considers the likelihood for an ongoing partnership arrangement between the two tiers of government to emerge.

Central government buy-in

From an early stage in the creation of the new Auckland Council, and the requirement to develop a spatial plan, central government acknowledged that they had a key role to play in the development of the Auckland (spatial) Plan (discussed in Chapter 4).

The Government recognised that a spatial plan is a tool that will help the Auckland Council deliver on its regional aspirations, and also help central government deliver on national objectives. More importantly, it is a tool that can help ensure that central and local government objectives are well aligned (Ministry for the Environment, 2010a, p.22).

To begin with, participants observed that “conceptually the government was there,” and believed there was a “desire for central government to get involved” in Auckland far more than previously had been the case. Central government too saw the “spatial plan as being a really good means of influencing outcomes at a financial and… regional level”. This involvement required central government to buy-in into the spatial plan, which Auckland Council would eventually develop and in doing so would necessitate central government relinquishing some of its “own sovereignty by getting enmeshed in

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649 Stakeholder
650 Central Government Official
651 Chair, Royal Commission
local issues.”652 The likelihood of this occurring in the manner sought by many participants, i.e. devolving funding, soon became remote.

Central government’s refusal to buy-in in any way became a controversial point because the spatial plan is “reliant on central government.”653 A planning commissioner questioned, as things progressed: “I’m not sure how much central government have bought into it... which has been the issue”. Other participants came to share this view. Central government’s choice not to buy-in was deemed a “missed opportunity”,654 “highly frustrating”,655 and “really... problematic”656 due to the extent to which the region relies on central government investment and the spatial plan acts as the tool for coordinating this investment.657

Part of the issue is that “there isn’t a lot of formal... structure around that relationship”658 to ensure buy-in and collaboration to occur despite several recommendations (as discussed in Chapter 4) for there to be. Central government remaining uncommitted to the policy directions and investment priorities the Auckland Plan mean that they “could only be aspirational”.659 Some argued that “there should be an incentive for the Auckland Council to make sure that it had central government buy-in before it finalised the plan”.660 The desire amongst participants was for the government to have ‘signed-up’ whilst the plan was being developed providing assurance to the Auckland Council regarding the policy direction and funding needs of the plan from central government. Others agreed, maintaining that the Crown had to be bought into the process.661 The lack of buy-in was described as “an Achilles heel”662 because “the vision can’t be achieved without government assistance”.663 “Auckland’s

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652 Stakeholder
653 Planning Practitioner
654 Central Government Official
655 Auckland Council Officer
656 Commentator
657 Stakeholder
658 Central Government Politician
659 Planning Practitioner
660 Commentator
661 Stakeholder
662 Auckland Council Officer
663 Hon. Peter Salmon
challenges are such that any success in tackling them will rely on central and local government working together”. 664

It was argued by one commentator that the “right level of buy-in wasn’t there and never was” because central government in the end simply “set the framework, devolved the doing to Auckland Council and took its hands-off.” It was also observed that central government “were waiting for it [the Auckland (spatial) Plan] to sort of come to them.” 665

Some disputed that the argument that central government wasn’t buying into the process. This raises important questions over rhetoric versus the realities presented by participants. One central government politician maintained that there is “quite a high level of buy-in” and a stakeholder thought that “there’s a huge amount of meeting of minds in terms of direction... they are pretty much united on stuff.” One central government official also thought that “we’re in a pretty good place.” However, such views were not plentiful. The main areas of contention between central government and Auckland Council surround transport, urban form, funding, and the priorities for various projects. These areas of disagreement are the critical factors which have the capacity to determine the future shape and form of the region which dictate many lower level decisions.

The development of a spatial plan could have brought unity to these issues. If a happy medium can be found, the “spatial planning partnership approach” could have “significant potential”. 666 In the case of the Auckland region the integration, buy-in, and alignment issue is even more acute given the disparities in service provision and funding between the two; one participant thought Auckland “is in world terms a tiny town and so the obstacles to it becoming a genuinely international city are huge and... if it is achievable it’s only achievable in-sync with the central government”. 667 A single, coordinated, and agreed direction for the future of the region is required but further work is required to achieve this.

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664 Central Government Politician
665 Commentator
666 Planning Practitioner
667 Commentator
Different conceptions exist between central government and the Auckland Council relating to how these two tiers of government engage and contribute to spatial planning in the region. The difference of opinion has created a political divide which has so far led to an ill-fated attempt at spatial planning on a count of unsatisfactory governance arrangements. Participants widely observed the divergent ideologies between the two tiers of government leading to a “big separation between the two governments”668 and “a degree of arm’s length”669 nature about how central government engages with the Auckland Council. Participants cited “a fundamental divide”670 existing, a “difference in political outlook”,671 a “complete disconnect of ideology, vision and outcome”672 and that “they’re just coming from philosophically completely different positions.”673 One significant issue is that this leads to disparate policy agendas between the two tiers of government within the same region, described by one participant as “contrapuntal”674 in their vision and policy direction. For example, “while a project might seem good from a rational perspective, because of political components in there, it never gets signed off.”675 One participant went so far as to argue the “political masters... [are being] blinded by the principles”.676

The Chair of the Royal Commission noted, “I don’t think that there is any doubt that the government... does recognise the importance of Auckland succeeding... the difference lies... [in] what is necessary to ensure that that happens.” This was exemplified by the opposing standpoints between central government and Auckland Council in the development of the Auckland Plan. An Auckland Council officer explained how central government are “making principle-based decisions” which disregard the evidence-based policy decisions which Auckland Council officers have developed leading to often divergent or sometimes at odds directions. The issue of divergent views is also

668 Central Government Official
669 Central Government Official
670 Commentator
671 Central Government Official
672 Planning Practitioner
673 Planning Practitioner
674 Planning Practitioner
675 Central Government Official
676 Auckland Council Officer
illustrated by the Social Forum. The Social Forum was intended as a collaborative exercise between central government (the Ministry of Social Development) and the Auckland Council to focus on and address the social issues facing Auckland with other relevant stakeholders. It was a recommendation of the Royal Commission and the initiative was launched by the Auckland Council. However, it suffered due to varied conceptions of what was required and a result “it has been a victim of interagency jealousy at the government level”.677 The Ministry of Social Development opposed other government departments and agencies being involved. The Minister seemed at best uninterested in, or at worst unable to acknowledge that “you actually need to join social development with housing, and with justice and all the other related government agencies who work in this space”.678 If a joined-up spatial planning-like approach was taken towards social issues a more coordinated response to the problems faced could be reached.

These factors have hindered the ability for a coordinated and unified approach to be taken towards the development of the Auckland Plan. The outcome has been a spatial plan which says one thing and a central government that can ‘overrule it at any point’ and go the opposite way.679 Simply, this signifies “a different agenda… a national agenda rather than a local”680 which creates a clear “difference between civic and national administrations”681 merely, “different ways of looking at the world”682.

These divergent ideologies highlight the tensions and contradictions which surround neoliberal experiments. The issue for the Auckland region is that spatial planning and new Auckland Council is unlikely to be as effective whilst these political tensions and contradictions exist.

677 Stakeholder
678 Stakeholder
679 Planning Commissioner
680 Auckland Council Officer
681 Stakeholder
682 Central Government Politician
Growing tensions

The divergent conceptions have led to tension between the two tiers of government. “There’s obviously tension between them”, 683 “tensions... there’s a lot”, 684 “there is bound to be those tensions”. 685 The result of this tension has been “strong disagreement” 686 and a “standoff approach” between the two parties. One participant also argued that “the visible tension... [reflects] differing views on the philosophy of planning”. 687 These factors have resulted in central government being “quite antagonistic” 688 towards Auckland Council. It was argued that this would remain “as long as Auckland’s a special case”, 689 “there’s obviously always going to be tension”. 690

The main source of the tension arose with the development of the Auckland Plan. Central government are “not happy with it” the Auckland Plan because it reflects a vision “that’s very broadly based” 691 and a policy direction “that they are not comfortable with,” 692 one which is contrary to their own. Auckland Council’s officers and local politicians introduced the plan to Central government officials. The central government officials response was “hang on; you have got directives and outcomes in the Auckland Plan which sit squarely with central government. What the hell do you think you are doing?” 693 One central government official explained that where there were objectives and targets around social areas, therefore “where it was central government business there was a real issue.” Another Auckland Council officer recognised this: “maybe that was the reason why we lost the support from central government... we were seen to be doing some of their job.”

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683 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
684 Central Government Official
685 Central Government Official
686 Commentator
687 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
688 Central Government Official
689 Commentator
690 Stakeholder
691 Planning Practitioner
692 Central Government Politician
693 Auckland Council Officer
It was clear from this response that if the Auckland Council, through the Auckland Plan, had “stuck to their knitting”694 and had not taken the holistic approach central government would have likely remained supportive. As discussed in Chapter 6, the concern held by Auckland Council officers was clear, if spatial planning took a narrower focus like that prescribed under the legislation, in their view, it would be contradictory to the purpose of undertaking ‘spatial planning’ in the first place. The exclusion of certain content from the plan would have meant that higher level issues were not being “grappled with”695 either at the Auckland Council or central government level, certainly not in a holistic and integrated manner. Auckland Council staff,

...worked very hard with central government to get that relationship and to convince them that we weren’t there to do their work but we were actually there to get a better outcome for both the government and the country and ourselves.696

There was also significant tension between central and local figures. One central government politician acknowledged that he and the Mayor “sparred significantly over the framework for the plan” but conceded “we shifted the ground very substantially... and came up with a pretty reasonable compromise.” Some participants observed that the “frustration” that does exist at both levels “is probably good and appropriate and fine and a natural tension... [but] the whole thing is actually quite well pitched”697. Mayor Len Brown agreed, “we’re a lot more collaborative.... [but that] frustrates them at times”. He did accept that, “you’re not going to bury the old tensions over night... they’re still there at times, but to a far lesser extent”.

The tension and hostility by central government was viewed by some as an attempt to try and steer Auckland Council’s policy direction closer to that of central governments.698 One highly politicized commentator observed that central government is “busily now trampling in on top of Auckland”699 in relation to housing. Another example is the 2012

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694 Planning Practitioner
695 Auckland Council Officer
696 Auckland Council Officer
697 Stakeholder
698 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO; Central Government Politician
699 Commentator
Local Government Act reform discussed earlier. The reform to the purpose of the Act is illustrative of central government’s perception of local governments’ inability to spend within their means and to avoid duplication of services therefore requiring greater control.

Central government follow through with the Auckland ‘experiment’

Divergent views and tensions raise concern for the success of the new governance structures in the region. As it stands currently, “Auckland Council has produced a plan and central government which hold the keys are saying well we are not even interested”. Spatial planning in these circumstances will fail “unless all the participants can come to some consensus”. Central government’s actions suggest first a change in attitude to the neoliberal experiment initially undertaken in the region and second a lack of understanding as to what is required to make it work effectively. One commentator suggested that events to date have shown that the government “supports amalgamations but... has no intention of helping to achieve them”. A planning practitioner cited a conversation he had with Ministry of Transport officials which exemplifies this:

I said to some of the senior officials in the Ministry of Transport, “is Wellington actually monitoring what’s going on here?” “Oh no we’ve put the statute in place.” And it’s a classic case of government passing a motion and feeling good, put a statute in place. No monitoring and no follow-up.

In the minds of some, this is reflective of central government’s longstanding approach to the Auckland region, somewhat detached and ‘hands-off’. The governance restructuring in Auckland was “a government intervention” and therefore required government “to be in there helping to make that work” to enable integrated planning and decision-making. Others agreed with this; “the government says it supports amalgamations but says it has no intention helping to achieve them”. It is clear that central government, after taking a highly interventionist role in reforming local government in the Auckland

700 Planning Commissioner
701 Planning Commissioner
702 Louise Marra
703 Commentator
region, has now largely retreated again leaving the new Auckland Council to resolve the issues and challenges facing the region themselves. Central government have effectively said, “well we’ve fixed Auckland’s structure so now Auckland ought to be able to get it right” without recognising that “Auckland can never get it right unless central government is singing from the same song sheet”.704 This same attitude by central government was taken with the development of the spatial plan, “Council were expected to pick it up, frame that up and run with it, and produce the document”.705 Consequently some, “didn’t take too much notice of [the Auckland Plan] because... how would it be implemented without strong government?”706 These concerns were validated by a central government politician stating “we [central government] have been clear that we are not going to drive this stuff”. It seems “now Auckland is able to tell government what it wants and the government’s having problems with that.”707

The Auckland Plan provides a mechanism to engender discussion, reach compromise, and form alignment surrounding policy and investment priorities. Central government’s unwillingness to engage fully with Auckland Council places spatial planning in jeopardy along with the development of the region and the success of the reform process.

11.4 A refusal to commit

Despite recommendations (Urban Technical Advisory Group, 2010; Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009) central government never legislated for their own sign-off on the spatial plan for the Auckland region (refer Chapter 4). If this had been done, the issues of buy-in discussed in the previous section might not have been so problematic and a more collaborative relationship focused on the development of the region could have been fostered. It is clear that if buy-in “was going to be the case they [central government] would have then had to agree to it formally... they would have had to sign it off.”708 This would have ensured integrated planning and decision-making and

704 Planning Commissioner  
705 Planning Practitioner  
706 Planning Practitioner  
707 Chair, Royal Commission  
708 Auckland Council Officer
would have required central government to commit their own agencies to it.\footnote{Central Government Official} Crown endorsement/sign-off on the Auckland Plan was recommended by the Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010).

We recommended that the spatial plan only be given precedence... planning hierarchies, if it had been approved by the central government because it seemed to us that a nexus between regional government and central government was absolutely crucial... we tried to force that... as a requirement and the Minister didn’t buy it. It was one step too far.\footnote{Commentator}

One central government official and member of the Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010) explained that, “the officials told us at the time we could forget about it... central government doesn’t want to approve it”. Some thought this was because New Zealand “governments generally... don’t much like the idea of being committed to a partnership arrangement with local government”\footnote{Chair, Royal Commission} because this would mean that they would be “held accountable”.\footnote{Commentator} Other views in a similar vein were also offered in that central government “didn’t want to own the plan”,\footnote{Commentator} and that they “weren’t willing to sign up to something... which would require them to act or finance things contrary to... their principles”.\footnote{Auckland Council Officer} As noted earlier, the content of the plan was also a key factor in central government not signing-off on the plan (refer Chapter 4).

If the Auckland Plan needed government sign-off then it would have been quite different looking thing and the process would have been quite different and it would have been a partnership and it wasn’t.\footnote{Central Government Official}

Some viewed central government sign-off on the plan as “a pretty radical proposal” in that it would undermine “the limited autonomy that Auckland has got through the system of local government.”\footnote{Central Government Politician} Despite there being no formal sign-off in the end a

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{709}{Central Government Official}
\footnotetext{710}{Commentator}
\footnotetext{711}{Chair, Royal Commission}
\footnotetext{712}{Commentator}
\footnotetext{713}{Commentator}
\footnotetext{714}{Auckland Council Officer}
\footnotetext{715}{Central Government Official}
\footnotetext{716}{Central Government Politician}
\end{footnotes}
central government official maintained that there was “real negotiation” between central government and Auckland Council. It was also argued that if central government had “bought into it first, then it would smooth everything down the path”717 because, it would have “locked in” the two parties and reduced any risk caused by the three year cycle.718

A central government official explained the difference in opinion between the two sides. Central government “saying this is the Auckland Council’s plan... and Auckland Council saying this is not our plan, this is everybody’s plan... including central government.” This led central government to say “if it was our plan we would be in there signing it off and we’re not, so it’s not our plan, it’s your plan”. Consequently “there is a long way to go... in terms of just resolving some of those conflicting points of view.”719 There were conflicting views on central government’s role in the drafting of the spatial plan as well. An Auckland Council Officer suggested that although central government were not writing the Auckland Plan “they were overseeing significant parts of it” and “that’s partnership to me”.

It came as a surprise to Auckland Council officials when central government did not sign-off on the plan. One central government official explained that the reason for central government not signing-off was simple. It would have been “scary to see the sort of effect the spatial plan would actually have... on the outcomes of funding decisions”.

An expectation of sign-off

Many participants viewed the fact that there wasn’t sign-off as a “missed opportunity”,720 and a “mistake.”721 “It’s a third of New Zealand, they have to co-own” the plan.722 A central government official even stated that “you would expect the Prime Minister and the Mayor to have signed the front... [including] all the Ministries”. Stakeholders too argued that “central government particularly in the case of... Auckland,

717 Commentator
718 Planning Practitioner
719 Central Government Official
720 Central Government Official
721 Commentator
722 Commentator
should sign-off on the total plan” because “you shouldn’t take that risk in areas where there’s a direct and significant national policy impact or where there are really big budget items”. A concern arising out of an informal relationship is who then is “accountable for making sure there is the hierarchy of governance, senior management and technical support in terms of that implementation package?”

Sign-off of the Auckland Plan (2012a) provides an accountability mechanism to help ensure its implementation and a unified approach to policy, investment, and service provision in the region. With the absence of formal sign-off there is no certainty as to how, when, where, or if, central government will assist in the plans implementation because, “unless you actually have a document... where the government signs on the dotted line and says this is what we will deliver as well... [it becomes] actually more aspirational”. A central government official suggested that “if you got the chief executives of all... [the] central government ministries if they all had in their KPI's a requirement to actively engage in Auckland... then you probably would get a bit more coordination” as well as “taking into account the Auckland Plan when you’re making investment decisions”.

Some thought that Auckland Council might have gone about the process of gaining central government sign-off the “wrong way around” because consensus should have been reached prior to the plan’s release.

The implementation list... a big number of them are actually central government projects... it [Auckland Council] can’t do it on its own... and they’re all... interdependent... the Auckland Plan and the Auckland Council don’t control those projects, they’re at the whim of... central government as to when they are done and the speed at which they are done.

It is therefore, “critical to have an Auckland Plan... endorsed by central government given that central government is the major funder” and by putting a sign-off mechanism in there it provides that “compulsion... that this is going to be a joint plan
and we are all going to agree to it, otherwise it is meaningless.”728 Several participants agreed with these statements in that the plan has to be a combined plan since this would be the only way to bring the two parties together.

Central government officials argued that a binding relationship over the strategic direction of Auckland might not work. These participants took the view that “people get involved not because they’re forced to do so, but because they think that there’s a mutual interest or an incentive to do so.” These sentiments again raise significant concerns for the new governance arrangements in place in the region particularly surrounding central governments perception of their own role in the development and management of Auckland.

Given the informal relationship between Auckland Council and central government surrounding the Auckland Plan, a central government official suggested that Cabinet had already taken the view that, “that was before, this is now... we’re not bound by it, so we’ll move on... put it to one side”.729 Because of no formal sign-off, Cabinet now gives little regard to the content of the plan because it “sets an agenda that’s nice, but what does it actually mean in practice? Well we’ve got our own budget processes and our own things and our own agendas now”.730 Without sign-off on the plan from central government it becomes merely an “aspirational document”.731 What central government officials have indicated above is that neither they, nor Cabinet, accept responsibility for the implementation of the Auckland Plan or are influenced by the direction which it sets.

For integrated planning and decision-making the partnership “needs to be developed much more”732 as well as to ensure implementation occurs. “Agreements spatially, functionally, and monetarily”733 need to be made. A central government politician even accepted that “it could be that you have something more formal in the future” and that, “it might be that we change the legislation and say... whatever you put in the Auckland

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728 Planning Practitioner
729 Central Government Official
730 Central Government Official
731 Planning Practitioner
732 Planning Commissioner
733 Planning Practitioner
Plan you’ve got to make sure you’ve got the budget signed off with central government”. It is unfortunate this foresight had not been brought to bear sooner because the Auckland region relies heavily upon central government’s funding and resources. Without certainty and commitment between central government and local government towards a common plan or strategy for Auckland the challenges to overcome the issues facing the region are significantly heightened.

11.5 A need for direction from the centre?

Strategic spatial planning is the fundamental beginning for town planning and population growth management.

(Planning Practitioner)

The neoliberal reforms in New Zealand during the 1980s marked a considerable reduction of state intervention, planning, and central investment in the regions. Since the 1984 public sector reforms entities such as the Ministry of Works and Development that carried out significant state-led planning and investment functions were disestablished or merged with other agencies. From this time central government has “had this real aversion to planning”\(^\text{734}\) born out of the interventionist state economic strategies involved with ‘think big,’ the large-scale industrial schemes between 1975 and 1984 that played a part in the 20 per cent devaluation of the New Zealand Dollar in July 1984 (Castles & Pierson, 1996; Easton & Gerritsen, 1996).

A consequence of the retrenchment of state-market intervention since 1984 has meant limited central government strategy and planning for growth, economic development, and infrastructure provision has been undertaken. This has left the question of, “who sets the criteria? Who decides the big policy issues that have national implications?”\(^\text{735}\) Central government’s stance was resolute, it wasn’t going to “pick winners”, it was going to take a ‘hands-off’ approach and let the market decide. Some continued to ask

\(^{734}\) Commentator
\(^{735}\) Stakeholder
“what’s the government’s role in planning for overall growth and direction and influencing urban form by how they spend their money?”

The importance of planning

Many planners see central government planning (i.e. the setting of high level policy) as a critical component to the development of Auckland so long as it is reflective of central governments aspirations for Auckland. Participants widely bought into the economic argument that, “Auckland’s not competing with the rest of New Zealand; Auckland’s competing with major city-regions overseas”. Some argued that without central government planning there is a “lack of focus” and direction given the “competing political interests” in Auckland. The existence of central government planning in the region could help to set a framework for Auckland Council to work within, and it might assist in “prioritising central government funding” in the region. One participant argued that Auckland needs and central government has a right to, “have aspirations for its largest city, its only globally relevant city,” and therefore “it would be helpful if government would articulate its objectives for Auckland” which has so far been done at a low key level. Simply put by one planning practitioner “[as with] everything in life, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail”.

The absence of central government planning

Following the 2010 governance reforms in Auckland no central government-led strategic plan or statement of intent was released regarding Auckland. One participant claimed: “there is no government direction at all... there’s no national strategy... there is no overall national direction for growth... there should be” because planning is, “just a basic principle of life”, “everyone plans... so why shouldn’t the government plan about how it’s going to spend its money and where it’s going to go and how it gets maximum

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736 Planning Practitioner
737 Commentator
738 Planning Practitioner
739 Planning Practitioner
740 Planning Practitioner
741 Planning Practitioner
742 Planning Practitioner
effect?"743 The spatial plan which could have served this purpose but failed to do so when central government refused to jointly develop it and sign-off on it.

The difficulty, as explained by one central government official is that, “You find a ten year plan in central government and I will congratulate you... one doesn’t exist”. The Chair of the Royal Commission remarked that, “it’s a pity” there is no central government planning to help steer Auckland’s growth and development, adding however that they do not “have an obligation like that to produce a plan... for New Zealand”. Others thought it an “appalling failure in the New Zealand system that there is no central government department of planning and infrastructure... that’s just such a hands-off view.”744

This void means that there “is no institutional knowledge, capability, understanding, even theoretical understanding... let alone any kind of practical knowledge and understanding” in central government regarding planning at the local level.745 The absence of this was described as a “huge... failure in the system” and that “until we fix that it’s going to continue to be a huge drag on New Zealand’s performance and capability”.746 Some participants maintained that central government is “the next best thing to useless... they’ve got no strategic capacity... this government’s got no balls”747 and, “the government’s got no ability to think about spatial or integrated planning from a ministerial cabinet position”.748 This (so-called) lack of understanding was argued to be compounded by “a real serious lack of thinking about urban areas”749 and “a lack of urban thinking and capability”.750 Some suggested that this was typified by the inadequacies of the new governance frameworks in Auckland, for instance regarding how central government engages with the new Auckland Council and spatial planning. The “inexperience just shows through... in terms of what it takes to achieve an

743 Planning Practitioner  
744 Stakeholder  
745 Stakeholder  
746 Stakeholder  
747 Commentator  
748 Planning Practitioner  
749 Stakeholder  
750 Stakeholder
integrated and coordinated... system of planning”751 which this research further highlights.

Others maintained that, “central government is never going to be in a position to have a vision for Auckland like the elected people from Auckland will have”752 and on this basis they argued for localism. Although this point of view overlooks the need for Auckland Council to have checks and balances providing a national perspective regarding how the Auckland region should develop comparative to other regions in New Zealand. Contrary to the standpoint of some participants, there is a profound need for central government direction and input into spatial planning (in all regions of the country) because failure to do so would result in limited certainty of how, where, or when funding and investment will be made.

Some participants thought there had always been an issue” for local government getting “clarity from central government about its direction”.753 Now more so than ever, it is seen as critically important that direction is provided given the unified local government structure in Auckland and the opportunity it presents to deliver on a strategic direction for the region in partnership with central government. One central government official proclaimed that central government directs “through its capital investment but never overtly in a planning context.” In the absence of a clearly enunciated strategic plan from central government “unfortunately it all comes down through individual actors in Cabinet making public statements and saying oh... we need more greenfields land”.754 The irony of this, argued by participants, is that central government requires local government to undertake more planning than they carry out themselves:

> We require longer term plans say from the Auckland Council than a lot of departments do themselves... New Zealand’s governments aren’t necessarily that great at thinking 30 to 50 years out... so yes there’s a lot of improvement that could be made.755

751 Planning Practitioner
752 Commentator
753 Central Government Official
754 Stakeholder
755 Central Government Official
This is highlighted by the absence of a National Policy Statement for Auckland. It was widely held that central government needed to at least facilitate development in the Auckland region, if not plan. To date, the lack of planning and “poor last minute planning... actually has cost” central government stemming from poor integration and alignment of decision-making. Efficiencies are often borne through good planning and coordination of service delivery which ensure resources are not duplicated and the investments being made are optimal. For example central government,

...put a lot of money into... transport, public transport, and motorways and then they make locational decisions for their own offices which are totally contrary to where they’re putting the money and they say ‘oh well that’s the market’.757

Central government not disclosing “its long term plans for its own networks and how it will all fit together, [means] local government develops its own plans and then fights about the investment priority.”758 It appears that the effects these decisions have are not always been well thought through by central government.

How they choose to spend their money, dictates a lot of how... the country grows... and how urban form grows... where do they put their schools.... their decisions about how they spend their money have a huge influence on urban form and spatial development.759

Certain government agencies and departments were singled out by participants as being particularly weak. For example, one stakeholder explained how the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet “doesn’t do strategic thinking” instead he argued that its “dressed up police agent... ensuring agencies don’t take too many risks and don’t do any creative thinking... their focus is primary control”. The New Zealand Treasury and the Ministry for the Environment also came under attack.

A commentator drew on his experience with the National Infrastructure Unit within the New Zealand Treasury, explaining how they, “regarded planning as an evil sort of

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756 Central Government Official
757 Planning Practitioner
758 Central Government Official
759 Planning Practitioner
activity... they didn’t want to have planning experiences, they thought it was a bad thing.” This was supported by a similar experience of a planning practitioner in the mid-2000s when he was a member of a group commissioned by the New Zealand Treasury. He and others “spent the first nine months actually convincing them that growth in Auckland wasn’t a temporary phenomenon in that one day it was going to stop.”

Another stated that:

The quality of advice that Treasury is giving is so poor and so one dimensional, there’ll be no outcomes delivered. “Oh we’re going to zone more land.” “Who’s going to pay to service it?” “How are we going to get affordable housing out of just doing that?”

This planning practitioner argued that “its intellectual deceit... it’s a public policy deceit”. Others maintained that the New Zealand Treasury generally haven’t got, “clarity of view around what they want to achieve”760 compounded by an “inconsistency of the behaviour”761 both of which stem from lack of planning and strategic direction.

The Ministry for the Environment, the most well placed ministry to provide Cabinet and the Auckland region with the guidance and planning necessary for the implementation of Auckland’s plan, was also criticised. The “MfE used to be the repository”762 for this planning intellect. The Ministry for the Environment’s mission now is to provide environmental stewardship. This has changed little from when the Ministry was established in 1987 (Ministry for the Environment, 1987). There is no mention of urban areas, urban planning, or Auckland anywhere within their Statement of Intent 2012 – 2015 (Ministry for the Environment, 2012b). On this basis it may be unsurprising that their role in addressing urban planning and urban related issues in Auckland is limited; “MfE’s primary concern tends to be the natural environmental and science”.763 As a result, many observed there was limited “ininstitutional knowledge about the way cities work and the importance of them... and the value and the potential gain that you can

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760 Auckland Council Officer
761 Planning Practitioner
762 Planning Practitioner
763 Planning Practitioner
get from planning as opposed to just environmental management”764 within them. One stakeholder again questioned whether anybody within these central government departments currently held “a good sort of urban understanding?” These views led to others labelling them as “fairly useless”765 and that “they are a policy-generating outfit… planning… operationalising policy is a different matter”.766 To compound this they are “not terribly well resourced”.767 Resourcing levels are dependent on the work programmes which are influenced and signed off by the relevant minister in charge. If he or she and the government of the day believe urban issues and Auckland are not high priorities a situation similar to the one described by participants is likely.

These issues are likely to stem from that fact that “there’s no government leadership, no will to do anything”. A central government official within the Ministry for the Environment, acknowledged these points: “there’s less of an emphasis on urban policy now that the Council is up and running,” its focus is no longer on cities, planning and urban growth related policy areas, instead “MFE’s involvement has been very much around natural resource sector thinking”. She maintained, however, that “we’re still very much aware of the urban policy dimension and its… implicit but not as explicit in focus as perhaps it was say a few years ago”.

Some participants opposed these views adding that “it’s not all about lack of planning… some of it is about disagreement about what is the right thing to do.”768 An Auckland Council Officer noted more generally that “it’s not that they don’t have a strategic view… they have a principled view… the principles of this government get in the way of good outcomes” and in his view are getting “clunkily” applied. One commentator thought the government did have a clear plan which is to grow GDP, and would take action against councils if they interfered, telling them to “pull their heads in”.

This situation regarding the perceived lack of intellectual capability of some politicians and ministries by participants’ surrounding planning and urban issues is reflective of challenges now facing the new governance structures in Auckland. Central government
politicians sometimes seem not to understand the intricacies of the neoliberal experiment which they embark upon. This causes concern regarding the quality of policy responses developed by central government in support of the issues facing the Auckland region. The ability of the Auckland Council to undertake spatial planning and deliver a coherent agenda towards managing growth and development of the region is threatened by a lack of intellectual prowess, competing principles and means of achieving them.

Central guidance, a national policy statement for Auckland

This section discusses the use of a national policy statement for Auckland as it could offer a means by which to provide an overarching planning agenda and direction for the Auckland region (discussed further in Chapter 10). A national policy statement is a mechanism provided for under the Resource Management Act (1991),769 at the discretion of the Minister for the Environment. The use of a national policy statement creates a policy hierarchy setting a national context for the lower level plans which would then follow. National policy statements are required to set out objectives and policies to address matters of national significance. One commentator explained that this tool was introduced through the Resource Management Act (1991) as a “way to get consistency across the country”. To date however,

...we’ve had insufficient national guidance and leadership on planning policy in New Zealand... the National Policy Statements... are a missing layer and I think that that kind of guidance would have been really helpful... to the point where at a central government level some essential elements of strategic planning could and should be laid down.770

The Urban Technical Advisory Group (2010) recommended that central government develop a, national policy statement on urban issues, “we argued strongly in the UTAG for National Policy Statements on urban issues including urban design and those sort of issues.”771 A central government official, a member of the group, commented that “our

769 S45
770 Planning Practitioner
771 Commentator
idea was of course for the government to have a policy statement on Auckland” which Auckland Council would then have to ‘give effect to’ when preparing the spatial plan.

Central government did not accept this advice. One stakeholder commented in light of this that the “government has made a few false starts”. A planning commissioner explained how “central government was going to talk about national policy statements about growth and... about urban form... and development which has never really come anywhere” even though the Ministry for the Environment have been working on it. The reasoning behind these false starts was argued to be because “central government hasn’t wanted to be accountable”. To add to this it was also argued that there is a; “lack of desire amongst central government officials to have a planning sort of role”. Despite central government’s aversion to the concept of strategic guidance to the regions participants were very supportive of the concept. One stakeholder commented, ...

...to put in targets, to have within the national policy framework a set of parameters... which constrain and incentivise local government to achieve... that’s sensible particularly for fundamental issues that impinge on national policy or really big ticket items.

Others agreed a national policy statement provides the opportunity to constrain or guide local government towards “what it can do and how it should do it”. Several commentators also referred to how the Resource Management Act (1991) has been run in a “too fragmentary a fashion” and that the use of more It was also noted that, “National Policy Statements could really improve the operation of the RMA”. A national policy statement could too act as an effective mechanism in achieving statutory integration. Currently “there’s no ability in the functional silos of New Zealand Government Ministries, transport... planning and local government to achieve statutory integration.” There was a high level of consensus amongst participants that, whilst a spatial plan should be developed by the people of Auckland, central government does have a role in setting the parameters for Auckland Council to work within.

772 Commentator
773 Commentator
774 Commentator
775 Planning Practitioner
A national policy statement to address Auckland issues; the future direction; and how planning should be undertaken, would provide a more robust planning framework for the region. It would offer a national view on the future of Auckland within the New Zealand context. A national policy statement would immediately form a policy hierarchy of plans in the Auckland region providing a consistency of direction from a national level through to a local level; involving central government, Auckland Council, and key stakeholders, both public and private.

A glimpse of change

There are some recent signs of change in terms of strategic direction from central government in relation to Auckland. One commentator noted that “central governments getting better at planning.” Others agreed, “there’s a developing capacity, interest, and connection” as well as a “desire by the government to engage with the spatial issues of Auckland.”776 It was suggested that central government began to realise this in the early 2000s with a begrudging acceptance that,

...planning’s not... awful it’s essential and... you can’t deal with the sort of growth that Auckland’s facing without a focus on real planning... it’s about how you.... envisage and envision for the future and figure out how you can get there.777

The genesis of this return to thinking of planning came out of the Sustainable Development for New Zealand: Programme of Action (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2003). This included an analysis of New Zealand cities “and the Prime Minister said for the first time recorded ever that Auckland was the engine of New Zealand and that cities... [are] kind of important places.” A former Auckland local authority CEO agreed explaining how this change in ideology emerged out of, “the work around governance in Auckland” and “for the first time government [started] thinking about cities and urban issues” which consisted of “a language and debate within government that did not exist before then.”

776 Planning Practitioner
777 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
Others agreed, central government planning is “a process that’s underway now”\textsuperscript{778} citing the case of the National Infrastructure Unit within the New Zealand Treasury. It was set up in 2009 to provide a more strategic planning approach in terms of managing its assets (New Zealand Government, the Treasury, 2013). This evidence runs counter to some earlier criticisms of Treasury. Having a, “National Infrastructure Unit is probably a big step forward”\textsuperscript{779} but “it still doesn’t set out funding, or timelines, or expected outcomes; it was supposed to highlight priorities, it doesn’t even do that. It’s more of a stock-take then a policy.” As noted earlier, “until we get better at that sort of stuff then we are going to struggle.”\textsuperscript{780} To add to this short-coming, nowhere does the National Infrastructure Unit focus on urban development. This suggests that:

We see infrastructure as fundamentally disconnected from urban development... why are we building infrastructure?... to connect something at the end of it and generally that thing is an urban thing.\textsuperscript{781}

Some mentioned that there “are no extensible signs of shift in government policy”.\textsuperscript{782} A central government politician even acknowledged that “central government needs to step up” although he suggested that there is “an indication that the government is becoming a lot more active”. A central government official also noted that “we [central government] could get better at thinking, [and] planning better”. These changes dating from the 2003 Sustainable Development for New Zealand: Programme of Action and various other endeavours represent neoliberal projects attempting to rebalance and reform the role of the state. Currently another phase of this might be underway with,

...[central] government recognising now that it does have to take a much more hands on role in terms of setting that some of that overarching guidance but also having a more hands on role in perhaps how that’s implemented as well.\textsuperscript{783}

\textsuperscript{778} Commentator
\textsuperscript{779} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{780} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{781} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{782} Stakeholder
\textsuperscript{783} Planning Practitioner
A more active role of the state in planning and strategy development could lead to important questions being asked such as, “do we [Auckland] want all this growth, or are there alternatives?” Since the early 1980s very limited thinking in this space has occurred, on a count not of difficulty but political ideology; “you would think that in a country this size with a unicameral parliament it should be a walk in the park”.

In summary, the ramifications of what has been discussed in this section are significant in relation to spatial planning, the implementation of the Auckland Plan and the ability for the Auckland region to overcome its issues and challenges. The participants hold that if increased central government guidance, planning and understanding of urban areas were present it might provide the opportunity for more integrated and coherent spatial planning in Auckland. Whilst the region remains in this “vacuum of any kind of national strategic thinking” it is extremely difficult to create a coordinated and integrated planning approach for Auckland. The benefits of having a unified institutional governance arrangement in the Auckland region to act as a key delivery mechanism for broader national objectives will not be realised.

Participants felt that central government needs to have a better understanding of planning, the urban issues and challenges facing Auckland, the most optimal means by which to address these issues and challenges, and to devise a plan to resolve them. This plan could then steer Auckland Council in their planning, investment, and implementation to bring about change in partnership with other key stakeholders.

So long as alignment is not present between central and local government in the region competing agendas will culminate in inefficient and sub-optimal policy responses, investment decisions and land use choices. The most seemingly obvious solution is to design a system of government which enables a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to be taken in the region. Currently, in the absence of this the negative impacts are already being seen in Auckland in relation to the uncertainty around the ability to implement the Auckland Plan. This is largely because of central government not providing enough clear direction.

784 Stakeholder
785 Stakeholder
786 Stakeholder
11.6 A whole-of-government approach

You now have problems or issues that are so big that you cannot essentially cope with them on your own and you now are home to a substantial part of the national population and therefore central government has to be involved to achieve some of the outcomes you want. However, at that point the politics become very important.

(Commentator)

This section discusses a whole-of-government approach in relation to spatial planning and the new governance arrangements in the Auckland region. To enable effective spatial planning and implementation of the Auckland Plan “key parties you’ve got to join together are the central government agencies”787 in “an all of government approach”. 788 There are hurdles to achieving this; “getting a whole-of-government view is incredibly difficult”.789

You would have to seriously question... any government’s ability to reflect their intentions with respect to the spatial plan in Auckland through the activities of every department [because] government doesn’t think spatially.790

One practitioner argues that currently central government departments are “all in separate statutory silos and dysfunctional,” culminating in “no joined-up thinking in government”791 and no 'big picture' thinking. Instead, central government just manages “issue by issue without any kind of big sense and picks and chooses advice that it likes.”792 To add to this, as noted earlier, central government “are challenged by [the idea] of working in partnership.”793 As a result, as one planning practitioner explained,
central government “lack the thrust because they don’t have everybody singing off the same song sheet”. 794

It was widely noted by participants that a whole-of-government approach was critical for effective spatial planning despite the current perceived non-existence of it. According to some, during the development of the spatial plan under the new Auckland Council central government did recognise the “formal need”795 to have “a single government view... a whole-of-government”796 approach, having signed statements from each ministry about their intended directions in relation to the Auckland Plan. This acted as a driver which “mobilised central government to start to talk with one voice”. 797

This was spurred on by the establishment of the Cabinet Committee for the implementation of the Auckland governance reforms (refer Chapter 4) suggesting some of the strongly worded comments were poorly based. According to one central government official “they were very focused on having this input into Auckland and starting to coordinate their approach” and as a result “a lot of work that went into the... plan to actually coordinate government and... [to] have a single point of view”. Another central government official was sceptical, saying that the input and alignment was “reasonably high level and probably didn’t provide enough... specificity in terms of direction”.

The Auckland Policy Office

The success of the new institutional arrangements in Auckland is reliant upon a whole-of-government approach. There was some recognition of this by central government politicians and officials which culminated in the establishment of the Auckland Policy Office. It is based in Auckland and comprises representatives from fifteen central government departments who have a focus on Auckland related matters.

The creation of the Auckland Policy Office emerged out of a broad “understanding that central government needed to understand that its policies and investment took place in

794 Commentator
795 Central Government Official
796 Central Government Official
797 Central Government Official
a place which affected people”. This was a significant evolution in their thinking. As one participant observed, it was no longer, “we just spent three billion dollars in New Zealand or three billion on a roading project, it actually had impacts in... a space... and in time”. This marked a significant change in central government ideology regarding their role as the ‘state’.

Auckland Policy Office, previously known as the Government Urban and Economic Development Office (GUEDO), was a mechanism to organise central government officials from various agencies and departments. The Auckland Policy Office represented “a really strong push to try and align central government policy and thinking, and cross talking instead of central government being quite siloed”. Its establishment was “a direct result of... government’s need to... get involved in Auckland, in Auckland issues”. It was a significant step for central government to have a “policy shop outside of Wellington” and “they were quite tentative setting it up..., [and] were quite worried about it”.

Those participants who observed its establishment argued it was initially an attempt to set up “a competent urban planning authority in New Zealand... funded by government so it knew what it was talking about in these places.” Another planning practitioner explained how its creation suggested a higher level realisation that “local government or communities in the regions are not separate from the government” and therefore trying to create better interaction and integration.

The foundation of the Government Urban and Economic Development Office began in the mid-2000s instigated by the then Prime Minister Helen Clark who sought from the office “an agenda for Auckland.... it was called Economic Transformation.” A central government official observed how at the time “the government felt they needed to do something about Auckland but didn’t know what, so they shoved some people into this

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798 Central Government Official  
799 Central Government Official  
800 Central Government Official  
801 Central Government Official  
802 Central Government Official  
803 Central Government Official  
804 Planning Practitioner  
805 Central Government Official
Office and said tell us what to do.” Shortly after, the office proposed governance reform and they were then “tasked with putting an agenda together for Auckland which included governance reform”. Once the Auckland Council was established the role of the Auckland Policy Office (by this stage renamed) changed. It went from providing an agenda for reform to providing input to the Auckland Council in relation to developing a plan for dealing with the issues facing Auckland: the Auckland Plan.

The office instilled a new way of working for central government officials. One noted it was, “a different way of working, a lot of cross agency effort... an attempt at whole-of-government... approach to the Auckland Council.” Another official highlighted that the Auckland Policy Office now means that “you’d be less likely to get departments doing arbitrary things without actually trying to work in with the Council and with other departments”. She did concede that things were not yet perfect but many departments were now thinking about what their own strategies for Auckland were and how to work in with the Auckland Council and “understanding how everything’s working in a system” as opposed to silos.

Some participants thought that the Auckland Policy Office has enabled a collegial relationship between central government with Auckland Council over the development of the Auckland Plan, “we’ve had very close working relationships with the central government officials right from the start” through fortnightly meetings. Observers noted that it has “worked effectively,” and that it has led central government to be “more intimately involved in Auckland” and provided a lot more direct connection with Auckland Council. One participant thought that the development of the Auckland Plan forced central government officials and the Auckland Policy Office “to sharpen themselves up”. It was generally accepted as well that the establishment of the Auckland Policy Office has led to “an improvement in... how Auckland engages with central government”. One Auckland Council Officer explained how the interaction between Auckland Council and central government has occurred at both a ministerial

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806 Auckland Council Officer
807 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
808 Planning Practitioner
809 Planning Practitioner
810 Auckland Council Officer
and officer/officials level. This is now culminating in, “a huge impetus and desire to be able to work together to be able to deliver some things for Auckland... we’ve just sort of started to get cranking”.811 One central government official argued that this has led to a government “view on Auckland that’s pretty cohesive”.

Despite the collaboration, alignment and whole-of-government approach which the Auckland Policy Office has engendered never the less criticism still remains. One Auckland Council Officer explained how he came into it with the assumption that “[we were] working together towards an agreed outcome... we weren’t really”. He noted how the process was “very, very difficult” and more of an “inquisition” of Auckland Council “rather than a free and frank discussion of equal parties”.812 Others who observed from outside held strong opinions possibly because they themselves weren’t involved, arguing that the body “absolutely doesn’t deliver at all”.813 One planning practitioner cited an example prior to amalgamation: “we [senior local authority staff] were meeting with the APO officials who knew nothing about planning, who knew nothing about Auckland, just astounding how ignorant they were.” His most significant concern was that these same Auckland Policy Office officials were advising Cabinet on the reforms and in “the absence of evidence they just made things up.... [they] simply weren’t competent to give advice.”

Criticisms also came from central government officials involved with the Auckland Policy Office. They called for Auckland Council to improve how they interact with central government and become more organised. Despite the Auckland Policy Office managing the Auckland Council-central government relationship to date, “in the long term, that’s not going to be enough for the Council”.814

That said, the Auckland Policy Office faces hurdles regarding how it integrates and works with the central government departments in Wellington. One planning practitioner explained that, “they’ve been bloody shocking... head office branch office problems”.815 A central government official explained how she initially thought it was “going to take

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811 Central Government Politician  
812 Auckland Council Officer  
813 Planning Practitioner  
814 Central Government Official  
815 Planning Practitioner
forever to change all these myths down there” in central government. A commentator added to this, observing that maybe the Auckland Policy Office still “doesn’t have enough power, enough coordination with central government to really produce unity”. The effectiveness of the Auckland Policy Office will also vary from department to department based on organisation culture and a willingness to work in a coordinated fashion.  

Despite these criticisms, the opportunity for the Auckland Policy Office to act as a conduit between central and local government in Auckland is “quite significant”. One planning commissioner stated that, “I would like to think there’ll be further opportunity... for central government to work with Auckland”.

The establishment of the Auckland Policy Office as a mechanism to provide a whole-of-government approach in Auckland marks a significant shift in central government’s approach towards local and regional governance in New Zealand. It is in itself representative of a neoliberal spatial governance project, a precursor of similar ilk to what then occurred by way of spatial planning and a unified governance structure in pursuit of improved national-regional integration and coordination.

11.7 Summary

This chapter has illustrated the issues underlying the theme of ‘central government involvement’. These issues, all related to central government, include: centralising power and decision-making, and the perceptions of a political power play by central government with Auckland Council; understanding the urban issues facing Auckland and central government’s ability to formulate robust policy responses towards resolving them; their lack of buy-in and sign-off on the Auckland Plan stemming, in part, from differing ideologies and tensions between the two tiers of government; central government’s limited guidance and planning which would enable alignment of direction;

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816 Stakeholder
817 Planning Practitioner
and the need for more progress towards getting a whole-of-government approach on Auckland’s issues and challenges.

Unless resolved, these issues all reduce the ability of Auckland Council to undertake integrated and coordinated spatial planning in the Auckland region. As already established, the Auckland Council relies heavily upon central government to deliver outcomes in the region. Furthermore, central government themselves are threatening their own neoliberal project which was predicated on the basis of creating joined-up government in the region.

Some hopeful signs exist. First, the Auckland Plan itself is a mechanism/forum for dialogue, collaboration, and compromise between the two tiers of government that operate in the Auckland region. Second, is a recognition that there needs to be a formal sign-off on the Auckland Plan which would make all parties accountable and require them to ‘give effect’ to the plan, thereby encouraging collaboration and consensus on policies relating to the Auckland region. The Auckland Policy Office might illustrate the genesis of a mechanism which will enable these things to occur.
Chapter 12

Implications for Auckland

12.0 Introduction

What has occurred in Auckland by way of reform since 2009 is revolutionary as opposed to evolutionary. This chapter begins by presenting the final views of participants on the progress and outlook for the new Auckland Council and spatial planning in this post-reform era. The key findings from the preceding chapters are then drawn together.

12.1 Reflections on progress

Participants identified broader considerations regarding what occurred in Auckland. These provide some high-level impressions of the outlook for spatial planning within the broader neoliberal restructuring project undertaken in the region.

There was widespread support for the progress to date on what had been achieved by the new Auckland Council. The Chair of the Royal Commission commented that it would get a “very good tick for progress so far”. Other comments included: “It’s a pretty good job... 10 years ago we just dreamt of this... it’s fantastic”; it’s “a... big step forward, and that’s progress”. One central government official noted how having a well-functioning system of government in the region is “much better for Auckland and much better for the country.” The “new frameworks... [do] provide new energy and they provide a new opportunity for looking at... unsolved problems” and region-wide issues.

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818 Stakeholder
819 Central Government Politician
820 Planning Practitioner
Notwithstanding these views from some, there was unease about the reforms amongst others who believe that so far it is a “job half done”.821 Some were slightly more generous, observing “it’s done sort of 70 per cent or something”,822 or “I would give it a six out of 10 in terms of the ability to achieve... which is not a failure, but it’s nowhere near what it could, and hopefully will evolve into.”823 One commentator was even less enthusiastic: “it’s better than it was... but it’s not as good as it could have been.” He would have liked the Auckland Council “to have done better.” This view emphasises earlier criticisms that suggested the reorganisation undertaken in the region fell short of achieving integrated planning and decision-making. Even the key author behind the Auckland Plan acknowledged that the concept within the new governance structures might take time to emerge: there were early signs of progress, but it “doesn’t mean to say we haven’t got a way to go”.824 One central government official also noted that there is “a way to go... there is a journey here”. Some adopted “a wait and see” approach, wondering whether we are capable of capitalising on the part-opportunity presented.

Some participants were more critical in their views, acknowledging that some things had been achieved, but that the result to date could hinder further progress. One commentator argued that we have ended up with a “disjointed patchwork approach,” in relation to the governance structures in Auckland and how Auckland Council engages with central government, and as a result it “could actually get quite dysfunctional”.826 Others worried that the reform so far enables the joined-up approaches sought, but it is “only half done... it’s produced neither one thing nor the other... it’s not going to produce good integration”.827

As highlighted, each participant had varying agendas and expectations, thus making it difficult at various points to get any consensus about the new structure and what might

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821 Auckland Council Officer
822 Commentator
823 Stakeholder
824 Auckland Council Officer
825 Commentator
826 Commentator
827 Planning Practitioner
be reasonably expected. Others had difficulty accepting that all decisions, including accessing government funding, could not be made at the local level.

The dilemma with neoliberal experiments is that “governments change and make ad hoc decisions and then they change again…. [and] there has been a history all the time of dithering around and arguing”828 which has led to a lack of clarity and purpose in what is being sought. In this participant’s view the outcome to date is one which emphasises the Auckland Council as leading the region’s planning and development while central government holds most of the authority, funding, and service provision functions. To add to this, central government sometimes seem diametrically opposed to the direction set out by the new Auckland Council. Consequently,

...where we’ve gotten to... is that ultimately we are going to be disappointed...

Council doesn’t appear either capable or willing to... lead the on-going process sufficiently.829

One participant was very sour: “Is anything better in terms of process or outcome than it was three years ago?” The answer he gave was “no... It’s no better, it’s no quicker, it’s not producing any better quality.”830 A few wondered whether or not a new plan was needed because implementation still remains “an enormous challenge,”831 reliant on partnerships and funding between central and local government which have not changed. Despite these views the potential for spatial planning alongside unified governance was not written off by participants: “potentially it can work”832; although “in the absence of some of those key delivery tools its ability to deliver will be diminished,” said one.833

The reform project in Auckland began with clarity after the Labour-led government (1999-2008) had insinuated that wholesale reform was needed to achieve integrated planning and decision-making. The Royal Commission set out to investigate how a new

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system of local government could be configured in the region following the terms of reference set by central government. However the reform project became indeterminate at the point where central government, by this time a National-led administration, appeared unwilling to follow through on the underlying approach envisaged by the Royal Commission for achieving joined-up governance in the region: a public policy approach to regional governance which was favoured by the previous government (illustrated by the establishment of GUEDO).

The new structures deviated significantly from what was first recommended by the Royal Commission. Limited provision for on-going engagement between central government and Auckland Council was afforded, yet the need for a spatial plan remained. “Where the government’s heading in terms of its public policy framework, spatial planning will only be half as effective as it might have been.” Most held the view that the new arrangements will work more effectively than those prior to reform, but will not be as effective as they could have been. The result will be inadequate planning and decision-making, leading to inefficient spending and suboptimal outcomes.

“What you will see is the plan being able to deliver some times and in some places which will give a sense that it is delivering.... how much of a difference it will make is debatable.” One planning practitioner who seemed to feel that wisdom predominantly resided at the local level, argued that until central government’s approach changes regarding how it interacts with the Auckland Council it will be a “serious inhibitor” to the development of the region. What is required is:

A more mature model where the two work together more collaboratively and where central government is up-skilled... and we reach a New Zealand Inc. view exemplified in the Auckland Plan of how this third of the country is going to track.

There seemed, therefore to be a fairly strong view that the opportunity remains “open to the Auckland Council to say to central government... we need these additional
powers.” Some thought that Auckland Council needed to be saying “quite stridently... ‘right we did what you asked for three years ago, but you haven’t given us the tools to finish the job.” For some participants this meant central government agreeing to fund some of the major infrastructure projects in the region sought by Auckland Council, to which central government agreed on June 28, 2013 after political pressure. Others viewed this as more than funding alone and thought that the new model of governance should be provided a far greater degree of authority and responsibility than currently exists under the model of local government in New Zealand. This would inevitably mean the devolution of function from government ministries to Auckland Council. Regardless of the viewpoint taken, it was argued that once central government accepts that “it’s part of the problem and part of the solution” only then can further progress be made towards creating effective governance arrangements in the region which will enable spatial planning to occur.

12.2 A synthesis of the findings

The prelude

The history of governance and regional planning in Auckland illustrates an inability of politicians, planners, and community leaders to effectively address and manage the long-running issues confronting the region. These on-going issues have hampered the region’s growth and development (Auckland Regional Council, 2010a; Bassett, 2013; Beattie, 2010; Bush, 1971, 1988, 2008; Frame, 2008; Memon et al., 2007; Murphy et al., 1999). The 2010 neoliberal spatial governance reforms which followed and the inception of spatial planning were borne from this long history of failure.

The shortcomings of the governance and planning frameworks in the region have culminated in an historical inability to respond coherently to the issues and challenges associated with regional growth. This was caused by ad hoc local governance arrangements, under-investment, failure to implement strategies, and the absence of

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839 Central Government Official
any one unit of governance with sufficient authority, resources, and legislative planning frameworks to address and respond to the regional issues (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). The last significant attempt to improve the region’s management occurred in 1989 instigated by the then Minister of Local Government the Hon Dr. Michael Bassett. Institutional restructuring occurred which attempted to resolve these shortcomings through the creation of a stronger, overarching regional authority (the Auckland Regional Council). Despite the rationalisation of local authorities which also occurred in 1989, their reduction to just eight in Auckland, their inability to cooperate effectively, let alone implement a regional approach to Auckland’s growth and development, continued. The capability of this new entity was impaired due to misguided reductions of power in 1992 (Bassett, 2013).

During the 1990s and 2000s further ad hoc experiments were undertaken attempting to incrementally strengthen the governance arrangements in Auckland, but sometimes causing more harm than good (Bassett, 2013). After a series of these occurred involving the establishment of informal forums, development of strategies, and legislative amendments, central government became frustrated at the lack of cooperation at the local level. Under-investment in infrastructure, piecemeal and mismanaged growth, and newer social issues remained. Furthermore, the centre-left Labour-led government (1999-2008) by the mid-2000s was coming under increased pressure from lobbyists such as the Committee for Auckland, New Zealand Property Council, Employers and Manufacturers Association, and the New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development to put in place a unified governance structure in the region that would be more adept at managing Auckland as a whole. These groups knew that from an organisational point of view “we [Auckland] had a grotesque shambles”.840 In 2007 central government appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance. The Royal Commission reported its findings in 2009 recommending a number of changes to the governance structures comprising a single Auckland Council with six local boards below it, with redefined powers, one mayor elected at large, and a spatial plan to guide the growth and development of the region. This gave credence to

840 Stakeholder
the argument that “the governance structure was the elephant in the room”. A key tenet of their recommendations was the need to put in place structures which would enable integrated planning and decision-making whilst retaining democratic self-determination at a community level (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009).

The ideologies of joined-up governance inherent in the Royal Commission’s recommendations were not echoed by the new centre-right National-led government elected in 2008. Whether a re-elected Labour government in 2008 would have reacted more positively to the Royal Commission’s report can only be speculative. The new government opted for a centralised model consisting of one governing body for the region with a spatial plan, seven council-controlled organisations, and 21 local boards with limited powers: with, as it later transpired, minimal central government involvement. The 2010 local government reform in Auckland was predicated on improving the region’s economic performance. It was underpinned by this rhetoric from the National-led government, which went largely unchallenged, arguing that the Auckland region as an economic unit was ‘too big to fail’. On November, 1, 2010, the new institutional structures went into effect known as the Auckland Council.

The new Auckland Council quickly developed a spatial plan under the pretence of providing high-level planning direction to coordinate, align, and integrate the growth and development across the region. For the first time the term spatial planning was introduced to New Zealand. Central government was reported as viewing the spatial planning concept as multi-stakeholder, a way of bringing greater efficiency to investment and resource allocation decisions, a holistic approach to managing Auckland’s growth, a way to promote Auckland’s strategic development as an internationally competitive city, and a mechanism focused on implementation and delivering outcomes (Ministry for the Environment, 2010a, p.23; Office of the Minister of Local Government, 2011b, pp. 7 – 8). These views reinforced the government’s position on the purpose of spatial planning within the new unified governance structure.

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841 Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
The use of spatial planning in this way, as sought by central government, correlates strongly with the characterisation of spatial planning in the literature: an integrative, collaborative, coordinated, multi-scalar, and a meta-governance tool which is outcome and delivery orientated often tied to projects of neoliberal spatial governance (Adams & Tiesdell, 2010; Morphet, 2011b; Tasan-Kok, 2012; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010).

**Spatial planning, re-territorialisation, and neoliberal projects**

A high degree of ambiguity regarding the meaning of ‘spatial planning’ was acknowledged. Participants seemed more firmly of the view that it did not represent a new planning framework, instead a rebranding and a refocusing towards what planning should be. Despite the diverse nature of spatial planning, participants identified some core concepts underpinning it:

1. a visionary exercise, setting a 30-year regional strategy;

2. a comprehensive approach to urban-related issues;

3. a holistic approach to policy development and the actors and stakeholders who are involved with implementation (public or private sector);

4. an integrated approach to coordinate policy responses and actors towards common outcomes; and

5. a collaborative approach with actors and stakeholders to implement commonly agreed outcomes.

These views show that spatial planning in the New Zealand context is not yet seen as a new form of planning by participants. Its emergence at a time of significant governance restructuring shows that there was a willingness by the state to change and improve the role of planning to service economic agendas. Furthermore, spatial planning coupled with the associated governance reforms signified a form of re-territorialisation by the government to alter state-local relations. On this basis spatial planning can be seen as a key part of the neoliberal project in Auckland.
The predominant concern of participants regarding spatial planning, the Auckland Plan was its inability to be implemented based simply on the new governance structures. Notwithstanding this, the unification of local government in the Auckland region has provided benefits. The creation of seven council-controlled organisations to manage the delivery of services, and the introduction of spatial planning have enabled the Auckland Council to develop a far more coordinated and integrated approach to the management of future growth and development of the region; albeit largely detached from central government’s involvement in the region. The size of the new Auckland Council provides economies of scale to the governance of the region. For example, the need for fewer plans, the creation of only one water and wastewater provider, and the ability to reduce the net size of local government bureaucracy in Auckland. The reform has also provided the opportunity for the new administration to more effectively align planning, service provision, and investment, increasing the likelihood of implementation. A downside to this is that the scale of the Auckland Council constituency means that some now view it as a competing centre of power with central government. But on financial and constitutional terms this is largely illusionary. Despite some advances relating to governance in the region, many participants perceived that local government reform alone was not the panacea to resolving the issues and challenges facing the region, and nor would spatial planning be helped or enabled through the model that has been created. Some of those who argued this wanted more control over resources at the local level.

The governance reform was narrow in its reach culminating in the legislative planning frameworks remaining largely unchanged. Participants therefore saw these as inadequate for allowing spatial planning to occur. They believed that consolidated planning legislation in the region is required instead of the three separately designed statutes which the Auckland Council have to work with: creating duplication and a conflict of function. The Resource Management Act (1991), the current core piece of planning legislation which provides for regulatory land use planning, was considered to be unsuitable for addressing the urban planning issues facing the Auckland region in an integrated and coordinated fashion. In the view of most participants revised legislation
is needed. This is something that the present government maintains it is undertaking but the outcomes are yet to be seen.

A development for planning provided for in the legislation, made possible by one unitary authority, is the ability to develop only one regulatory land use plan for the entire Auckland region. Optimistically this is likely to provide a consistent approach across the wider region, and if written and enforced effectively, it will facilitate the outcomes sought by the Auckland Plan (Auckland Council, 2012a; Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009). Although, some participants acknowledged that land use regulation is not the sole determinant of achieving beneficial outcomes in the region (often wrongly assumed). Additionally, translating the high-level aspirations of the Auckland Plan into a regulatory unitary plan will be problematic. Risk in developing a unitary plan also exists in relation to first, the loss of local identity due to potentially homogenised planning controls, and second, the breadth and complexity of the task of developing such a document, potentially leading to varied quality and poor integration and conflicting policy frameworks (Haarhoff et al., 2012).

Legislative linkages between planning documents in Auckland currently do not exist. The research found that virtually everyone thought they are required. Legislative linkages would afford the Auckland Plan precedence over other plans and provide it with weight in decision-making processes. Legislative linkages would also create a hierarchy of plans which is currently lacking in Auckland, but is viewed as critical to achieving coordination and integration between plans and service providers. Lastly, relating to legislation, it was clear that not enough central government guidance was provided to spatial planning attempts in the Auckland region. The introduction of a national policy statement on Auckland under the Resource Management Act (1991) would offer assistance by providing central government with a policy mechanism through which to set parameters within which the Auckland Plan (the Auckland Council) would then have to be congruent: this would create improved alignment between central government and local government in the region similar to that in Australia (Ruming et al., 2014). Related to this was the lack of any one central government agency or department with the authority and intellectual clout to set strategy for regional development. Fixing this was viewed as vital to remedying the shortcomings in the current system.
Spatial planning without clear connections to available funding partners, sources, or mechanisms, was identified as likely to fail. The priorities for the region as set out by Auckland Council in the Auckland Plan are highly dependent on central government funding assistance. This raises questions about the level of integrity of the planning process which occurred: did the politicians and planners not have to take account of the funding realities facing them? Given that the spatial planning for Auckland occurred predominantly at the Auckland Council level with no formal buy-in or sign-off by central government, it lacked policy alignment which gave rise to further political tensions. Some participants felt that central government devolution of funding or funding mechanisms to Auckland Council would disproportionality favour the Auckland region over others and would reduce checks and balances.

From the findings it can be argued that, for the funding issue to be resolved, the development of spatial planning should be undertaken in a bipartisan manner between the two parties led by central government. The ability for Auckland Council to deliver on the current Auckland Plan given the present situation will require one of two options. First, a central government aligned to the policy direction and funding priorities Auckland Council sets out, potentially to the detriment of regions elsewhere in New Zealand because of an Auckland-centric view of the nation. Second, incremental progress on certain projects and in certain policy areas might occur from political pressure by Auckland Council on central government. This will provide limited certainty of outcome because significant levels of brokering will be required to reach an agreement. In these instances the governance arrangements will give the illusion of working. Spatial planning in theory assumes an integrative role through multi-scalar collaboration and coordination to overcome issues such as these. In the New Zealand case the structural and political divides post 2010 appear set and will require either a change in political outlook by one or both tiers of government or further structural changes will be required. A combination of the two might be necessary.

Organisational culture and leadership are critical components to successful spatial planning. In the case of Auckland, organisational cultural change is required at both Auckland Council and central government levels. A culture centred on outcomes, implementation, and collaboration both internally and externally with stakeholders is
required for effective spatial planning. It was clear in some participants’ views that this would take time to foster because most of the actors have come from process-based cultures, as seen under the legacy councils. Improved accountability mechanisms might offer a solution.

Central government and local government have critical roles to play in effective spatial planning. Following the central government-instigated reform process in Auckland there has been reluctance on the part of central government to engage constructively with the new Auckland Council to undertake spatial planning. This might have stemmed from unrealistic aspirations put forward by Auckland Council politicians and planners. Whether this is the case or not, the resulting situation now renders the reform process only partially successful given the governance reform and spatial planning was predicated on enabling joined-up governance. For this to be possible it relies on cross-sectorial policy integration and inter-governmental collaboration. This demonstrates at best a misconceived understanding by central government of what is required to make neoliberal projects of this nature work or, at worst, a shifting political outlook by central government in relation to their role in regional governance and development.

A number of factors concerning central government’s role in the region were identified. First, there is a tendency at the central government level to centralise power and decision-making. Central government is taking a more active interest in local government affairs and attempting to constrain the role and activities of local government. Second, this leads in part to contradictory understandings between central government and Auckland Council regarding the most appropriate means to resolve the issues facing the region in relation to policy agendas and investment decisions. The outcome has been a resistance on the part of central government to fully engage with this new concept of spatial planning, culminating in uncertainty, inefficient resource use, and sub-optimal outcomes. Central government’s unwillingness to fully engage with spatial planning highlights the differing political outlooks, policy agendas, and/or conflicting views on the best means of achieving them between the two tiers of government. Third, as also noted above, it suggests central government has not altogether fully embraced the underlying philosophy of their own neoliberal project. An unknown is where a Labour-led administration would have acted any differently.
Fourth, to begin with there was an understanding that central government would formally sign-off on the spatial plan which Auckland Council developed in partnership with central government. Neither occurred as recommended (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance, 2009; Urban Technical Advisory Group, 2010). If this accountability mechanism had been put in place it would have helped ensure that spatial planning for the Auckland region was a joint, collaborative, and coordinated activity between the two main government stakeholders in the region, thus providing certainty of process and outcome, and thereby ensuring the success of the new spatial governance arrangements. This was a lesson mirrored time and time again in Auckland through attempts at regional planning prior to 2010 demonstrating that informal relationships do not work.

Fifth, central government does not provide any strategic planning direction regarding their priorities for the region’s development. This leaves crucial policy and investment decisions, which heavily affect a region’s development, prone to ad hoc and occasionally, seemingly, spur of-the-moment decisions by Ministers. These decisions, such as transport investment and legislation to increase housing supply can often have significant impacts on the ability to undertake and achieve pre-existing strategies, for example the Auckland Plan. Auckland Council, stakeholders, service providers, and perhaps the ministries themselves are left with no frame-of-reference for when, where, and how decisions by central government are going to take place. When policy and investment decisions are made in isolation from a plan, or strategy, or funder, significant costs are incurred, and some of the worst public policy outcomes are attained. Finally, spatial planning requires a whole-of-government approach in order to coordinate and align planning, investment, and service delivery. The Auckland Policy Office suggested a move by central government in this direction but it is difficult to determine their level of success, perhaps because the key decision-making responsibility still remains with central government departments in Wellington.
Chapter 13

Prospects

13.0 Introduction

The research findings from the case of Auckland have provided new insights into spatial planning as a global phenomenon (OECD, 2001). Based on these insights inferences can be made and conclusions arrived at about what lies ahead for this often vague and ill-defined notion, spatial planning.

13.1 The future for spatial planning?

Global trends have led to the emergence of spatial planning which include complexity, increased flows of people and wealth, and a changing relationship between the state and the market (Albrecht, 2010; Breheny, 1991; Castells, 1996; Couclelis, 2005; Healey, 2007; Nadin, 2007; Neuman & Hull, 2009). The concept of spatial planning can be characterised by some core underlying tenets: integration, multi-scalar, and meta-governance as ways in which to respond to the complexity, fluidity, and changing state-market relations. Spatial planning has often been used as a high-level, holistic approach to planning that centres around relationships and stakeholders (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010; Morphet, 2011a & 2011b; Gallent & Wong, 2009). The literature relating to spatial planning highlighted its close affiliation to neoliberal projects concerned with state-market restructuring (Baker & Wong, 2013; Albrecht, 2011, 2010; Baker et al., 2010; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Tasan-Kok, 2012). The authors also argued that spatial planning could not be easily transposed into a foreign context and be successful without other constitutional changes. First, because spatial planning would likely require some form of institutional redesign to facilitate integration in a multi-scalar manner to fulfil spatial planning’s meta-governance role (Albrecht, 2010 & 2011; Healey,
and second, and more generally, because education around the concept was necessary for all those actors involved, due to its vagueness, fluidity, and ease of misinterpretation (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; Faludi, 2002; Healey, 2007; Morphet, 2011b; Stead & Meijers, 2009; Wong & Watkins, 2009). Albrecht (2010; 2011), Albrecht & Mandelbaum (2005), Brenner (1999), Couclelis (2005), Hames (2007), Nadin (2007) and Morphet (2011a, 2011b) all discussed the need for evolution, re-scaling, and reconfiguration of how regions are managed to enable the complexity and dynamism of the issues being faced to be dealt with. The findings from the case of Auckland offer robust evidence in support of these claims.

Furthermore, the case of Auckland has demonstrated how neoliberal projects, underpinned by nebulous ideologies which change over time, result in piecemeal outcomes (Jessop, 2002; Tasan-Kok, 2012). The piecemeal outcomes are a consequence of the transient political ideologies and agendas which drive them culminating in their dilution. The institutional re-organisation which has occurred in Auckland shows how the initial intention to achieve integrated planning, decision-making, and investment under the auspices of joined-up governance has failed because of these changing, and at times competing, political ideologies and agendas throughout the process. For many participants the process has been arduous and the outcomes have fallen short of expectations. This is because central government perhaps did not fully appreciate the multi-faceted and complex governance and planning arrangements required to make spatial planning work. Furthermore, nor did central government want to be bound by a spatial plan developed locally by Auckland Council. This research has revealed some of the aims of spatial planning and this broader reform process.

**A new way of working? What will make it work?**

Spatial planning represents an attempt by planners and politicians to reconceptualise planning practice (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010; 2009a; Newman, 2008; Peel & Lloyd, 2007); the impetus for planning to be re-characterised and for a new term “spatial planning” to emerge signifies a willingness by society to engender new ways of working. Spatial planning is an attempt to integrate and unify competing interests and tensions
around a common plan to better address the issues facing society (Healey, 2009, 2006a; Morphet, 2011b; Nadin, 2007; Stead & Meijers, 2009). The literature surrounding spatial planning argues for multi-faceted approaches. Ones which are more integrated between stakeholders involving policy integration, cost sharing, and unified direction i.e. avoiding competing interests and inefficient use of resources; ones which are holistic (spanning multiple agencies, public and private sector and various issues – a joined-up approach to addressing complex issues); ones which take a meta-governance approach (joined-up decision-making and action); and ones which are multi-stakeholder. Interestingly, aside from Healey (1998) there has been little focus on the importance of organisational culture and leadership in these endeavours. This might suggest reluctance by planning researchers to confront the more quintessential aspects affecting the planning discipline which lie beyond the traditional planning research field.

My research has found that the proponents of spatial planning in Auckland (The Royal Commission, some central government officials, and since then the Auckland Council) are seeking to achieve many of these aspects as part of a broader experiment to alter state-market relations and how regions are governed. Planners and other actors (some even within the Auckland Council) view spatial planning simply as a rebranding of planning to encapsulate some core concepts of ‘good’ planning practice which have in the past three decades been marginalised since the 1980s market-led reforms. However, given the new socio-political and economic context after the 1980s in New Zealand the role of planning has changed significantly. The emergence of spatial planning in Auckland represents the rediscovery of some of the earlier rationale for planning prior to the 1980s. But the drivers for planning have now changed. This is demonstrated by how the notion of spatial planning has become enmeshed in the processes of neoliberalism occurring in Auckland: typified by the reconfiguration of regulation and governance relating to how the market operates.

The research has highlighted that spatial planning is dependent on a range of factors. These include:

- funding (if the tier of government developing the plan is either not in control of the funding or does not have security over the funding then it is likely the plan will fail to achieve its desired outcomes);
legislation (if the legislative planning frameworks are not in place to ensure bi-lateral agreements occur amongst key stakeholders involved with implementation then the plan will fail to meet its aspirations);

governance structures (if the structures are not conducive to allowing multi-scalar relations to occur then the plan will fail);

organisational culture (if the organisational culture is not conducive to the new approaches being sought both the structures, the plan will fail); and

central government (when a central government administration is relied upon to provide a range of core services and to fund a plan that is not developed by them, significant issues are always likely to arise).

This shows that merely adopting a term which embodies the elements of integration, collaboration, and holism does not guarantee improved planning outcomes. New planning approaches need to be complemented by enabling institutional structures and frameworks. Globally, this a field of inquiry which needs greater attention in jurisdictions other than Auckland alone because of the pivotal role institutional factors have in enabling or curtailing certain development agendas.

Spatial planning – ill-defined?

The differing conceptualisations of spatial planning by those involved has led to contradictory interpretations of the concept and has not assisted its application. This supports some claims already made in the literature. The result in the case of Auckland has been significant intergovernmental tension and a lack of support by central government for Auckland Council’s plan. This has largely defeated the purpose of spatial planning as conceived by central government politicians. Blame falls with both parties: central and local government. Because of the vagueness surrounding the term, spatial planning, can be interpreted in various ways as argued by Allmendinger & Haughton (2009a); Inch (2012); Tewdwr-Jones et al. (2010); Healey (2006a); and Scott (1998). In Auckland this was exemplified by the interpretation of spatial planning by a centre-left Labour mayor and a predominantly left-wing council. This was reflected in the plan by their significant investment ambitions for the city not only in the areas of infrastructure but also social and community spending.
On November 1, 2010 the Mayor took office (actually elected several weeks before). He set out a vision to create the ‘world’s most liveable city’ and campaigned for an ‘inclusive Auckland’ becoming the founding vision of the Auckland Plan. He was an unrelenting champion of this new vision and infused it into the new organisational culture of the Auckland Council. His leadership surrounding the plan and this new vision for Auckland led to high levels of engagement by the community at large. There was extensive media coverage and a sense that a new development trajectory which the people of the Auckland region contributed to was being created. This reinforces the claims by Healey that spatial planning and governance reform often create moments of transformative practices.

However, the plan did not focus solely on infrastructure investment and economic development as intended by central government. Instead the focus in the plan was initially on the arts, culture, environment, and recreation. This was the first sign of a disconnect in ideology between what the two tiers of government thought spatial planning amounted to, leading to some discontent, and heightened tension between them. More broadly this showed how due to a ‘fuzzy’ definition of spatial planning, it can be interpreted by various parties to serve the political agendas of the day (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009b). Auckland Council politicians and officials argued that they were merely conforming to the overarching purpose of the Local Government Act (2002) by adopting a holistic approach covering off the four community wellbeings (social, cultural, environmental and economic). In fact they were deviating from what central government was seeking and had prescribed in statute.

This suggests a degree of unwillingness by local government simply to act as an agent of central government. In more recent times, local government has been unaccustomed to prescriptive planning legislation. The Resource Management Act (1991) merely sets out a framework for local government to develop regional policy statements, regional and district plans. Characterised as a devolved and cooperative mandate (Dixon, Ericksen, Crawford, Berke, 1997) the Resource Management Act
(1991) does not prescribe the structure or content of these plans let alone any sign-off by central government. The emergence of spatial planning and the constant use of the word ‘integration’ suggest that this planning framework, conceived at a time of significant market-led reforms and devolution, has been found inadequate in terms of regional economic development and infrastructure investment given any investment relies heavily on central government. Now, a much more aligned approach with government policy is required to achieve efficient investment and development patterns. What is unfolding in Auckland under the new regime might signal the gradual recognition by central government politicians and bureaucrats that local government in New Zealand can no longer act as autonomous bodies detached from central government and that they require oversight to improve the delivery of various development agendas in certain localities. The current architecture of local government and the planning framework promotes competition between regions. As some participants observed more central government leadership in this area will better serve the interests of both the nation as a whole and its component parts, the regions.

When the content of the spatial plan was introduced to the politicians and officials of the centre-right National-led government, Auckland Council ran into trouble. This culminated in central government’s refusal to provide it with legislative linkages to other statutory plans. Nor did the government sign-off on it and agree to support it. In late 2012 central government proposed amendments to the Local Government Act (2002) legislating for local government in New Zealand, including the Auckland Council, to return to core services: in part a response to Auckland Council moving beyond central government’s vision about the functions of local government into areas which would inevitably require further central government investment and/or duplication of that investment.

This highlights failings on the part of both tiers of government and has significantly detracted from the success of the neoliberal experiment. First, it was not clear whether central government fully comprehended what was required of it, or were supportive of a joined-up approach to governance in the region. It could be argued that central
government’s ideology had shifted from joined-up governance to economic efficiency, although this was never explained in so many words. Thus, the intent of the reforms might have shifted towards achieving improved economies-of-scale regarding governance and service provision in Auckland. Spatial planning for the government seemed to become a misnomer compared to what the Royal Commission has envisaged from it. Notwithstanding this, it was always central government’s role to clearly articulate what they intended by a spatial plan (which they did to some extent through the legislation), and to work with Auckland Council to ensure that it was achieved. Second, it was Auckland Council’s role to engage with central government prior to preparing its plan to determine scope and expectations particularly given its heavy reliance on central government for funding. Furthermore, central government politicians had signalled their expectations for stronger alignment in major investment decisions on infrastructure, given the extent of central government funding and service provision in Auckland. What ultimately occurred though was the development and release of a plan which did not have the support of central government or some of the key stakeholders in the region. This makes it largely unachievable, and does not fulfil the characteristics of spatial planning as discussed in Chapter 2.

Planning’s reliance on re-territorialisation?

These findings signify a broader theme relating to planning practice in general. For planning to be able to bring about change, the broader influences have to be in a form which is conducive to integrated planning and decision-making efforts. When the structural components are not in an optimal form to allow the notions of integration, holism, meta-governance, and multi-stakeholder partnerships to occur, the outcomes of these practices will not be fully realised. This will result in the benefits of spatial planning being largely unachieved. This is a relatively new line of enquiry highlighted by Albrecht (2010; 2011), Dodson (2009), Healey (2009; 2006a), Nadin (2007).

This study has confirmed what those researchers too have found: applying spatial planning without (a) considering the broader architecture of the urban system which the term is being applied to and (b) redesigning it to allow the practices embodied within the term spatial planning to occur, the outcomes are unlikely to differ from those
previously experienced. The case of Auckland showed that prior to 2010 attempts made to instigate these types of planning approaches failed due to competing interests, *ad hoc* governance structures, permissive legislation, and limited funding. Despite the creation of the new Auckland Council in 2010 (new governance structure at the local and regional level) and the inception of spatial planning (a new planning term) many of the factors that restricted integration, collaboration, and holism from occurring then still remain now.

The term spatial planning has been an attempt to reimagine planning as a discipline concerned not only with regulation and control at a micro level. This study, through highlighting the hurdles to effective spatial planning practice in Auckland, and canvassing the issues which led to the 2010 governance reform, has found that the underlying concepts behind spatial planning have always been present in planning practice regardless of how they are canvassed (spatial planning, smart growth, regional planning etc.): planning at a strategic level in the eyes of participants has always been about promoting and encouraging certain development agendas in a given region. What has either not been acknowledged, fully understood, or acted upon, is that for this type of planning to be effective it requires new and carefully conceived governance arrangements to enable it. This requires astute and decisive actors. In the case of Auckland further reform is needed.

### 13.2 Implications

The case of Auckland demonstrates the globalisation of spatial planning. This shows a widespread willingness amongst governments to adopt more holistic, integrative, and coordinated approaches to planning practice than might be afforded through land use regulation alone. This reinforces spatial planning’s association with neoliberalism and suggests a growing need for planning in the 21st century to be re-framed internationally to be able to better address the issues and challenges facing society.

The research findings have identified strong similarities between the characteristics which were identified in the literature pertaining to the original concept and those
evidenced in the Auckland episode: not just the use of the same term. This signifies a strong linkage between how the concept is theorised and how it is applied in practice. Also, this shows that some governments are following similar policy agendas to change, reinvent and modernise the role of planning. But, the findings here have shown that similar issues to those faced in the United Kingdom exist regarding how spatial planning has been conceptualised. The focus needs to shift to the workability of the new institutional structures being put in place and their ability to achieve implementation.

Whilst spatial planning has some underlying characteristics no set form in which it is best, or in which it works most effectively can be set out. This is because of spatial planning’s constant re-appropriation by governments, leading to misconceptions. The idea remains fluid. As a result its general definition and its specific application remain contextually and temporally bound. As seen in the case of Auckland the core characteristics of spatial planning have remained constant (within the literature). Although the particular outcomes sought from episodes of spatial planning and how it delivers them, who it engages with, and its geographic parameters including the governance, legislative, and socio-political environment, alter according to the context.

The findings relating specifically to Auckland point clearly to a government seeking a resolution to the history of ad hoc governance in the region and the issues this has caused. Through the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance (2009) came the recommendation for spatial planning as the tool which would enable integrated planning and decision-making to complement the new governance structures. This concept was ratified by central government’s cabinet papers and reports.

Wholesale governance reform and the inception of spatial planning held great promise as central government sought a joined-up governance arrangement for the region. The ambition about what could be achieved was high. But, new ideological bases and a misunderstanding of the intricacies and the new architecture of the system being reformed were overlooked, culminating in a sub-optimal outcome to date. Perhaps the intent of spatial planning should have been deliberated for longer. Inevitably the plan’s
“promise is much greater than its achievement so far.” If the reform was focused more on function rather than form more robust and enduring frameworks could have been created in Auckland.

In summary, instances of spatial planning represent efforts on the part of governments to re-imagine the role of the state in the delivery and provision of services, and the management of regions. It also suggests a rekindling of the practice of planning not as a regulatory tool but as a tool which can be used to further economic agendas. Spatial planning can be claimed to be often synonymous with fostering new trajectories of governance behaviour in relation to state-market relations. However, as observed here, spatial planning was inadvisably and too hastily transposed, resulting in its downfall. The political expediency involved in the reform process left limited opportunities for the maturing of understanding by officials around what was being sought from both spatial planning, or its role within the broader architecture of the new governance arrangements. The result has been a new label, ‘spatial planning’, for an activity which differs only marginally from previous strategic planning endeavours at a regional scale. This reflects poorly on the institutional culture of the government and of the Auckland Council politicians and planners to understand and bring about the changes required to enable the Auckland region to function effectively (Healey, 1998).

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Commentator
Chapter 14

Dénouement

14.0 Introduction

This thesis has investigated spatial planning in the case of Auckland. Spatial planning in the region became intertwined with the local government restructuring process that occurred in 2010 when the new Auckland Council was formed. The research offers in-part a critique of the new governance arrangements and their ability to respond to the burgeoning issues facing Auckland. Highlighted throughout the research findings is a belief that neoliberal projects centred on governance reform contain contradictions, tensions, and misunderstandings about how to improve the performance of a region whilst effectively managing and responding to the issues and challenges faced. Spatial planning in Auckland seemed to be employed arbitrarily without much regard to what was intended from it and how it might improve the functionality of the new institutional structures being created. Similarly, the 2010 local government reform was undertaken recklessly, resulting in a ‘half-baked’ system which fails to understand and address the broader intricacies of the governance frameworks necessary for the region.

14.1 Objectives of the research

The research set out to answer the question of: How has spatial planning in Auckland been conceptualised?

The objective of the study was to first understand what was being sought from the seemingly foreign concept of spatial planning. Second, the study sought to provide a critique of spatial planning within the context of the new Auckland ‘super-city’ governance arrangements. Spatial planning was revealed not as an independent concept or activity, but tightly linked to the broader processes of urban management.
and governance in Auckland. On this basis the findings do not pertain solely to spatial planning itself, although this was the main focus of study, but they also offer valuable insights into the appropriateness of the new governance arrangements in the Auckland region, and possibly elsewhere in the country.

To answer the research question and fulfil the objectives, an in-depth literature review regarding spatial planning was undertaken set within the context of neoliberalism. A review of literature relating to planning, spatial planning, and governance in Auckland was carried out. This covered two aspects. First, a history of governance and planning in Auckland, illustrating the \emph{ad hoc} governance arrangements and underwhelming attempts at regional planning (Chapter 3). This led to the second aspect (Chapter 4) which outlined the emergence of spatial planning within the setting of the new ‘super-city’, a unitary local government entity in Auckland. Chapters 6 – 11 then detailed the findings from the data collected which highlighted participants’ views on spatial planning in Auckland including a number of factors relating to the enablement of spatial planning in the region. These latter findings (Chapters 7 – 11) demonstrate the flaws with the neoliberal project that was undertaken, i.e. the creation of the new Auckland Council.

### 14.2 Contributions to knowledge

This study makes the following key contributions to knowledge:

1. This first inquiry into the new Auckland ‘super-city’ neoliberal experiment and the application of spatial planning in the New Zealand context has demonstrated that spatial planning remains a nebulous and poorly defined concept, its emergence is evidence of a will to evolve planning. However, in practice it has failed due in part to failures with the broader reform process;

2. A critique of this new episode of spatial planning and governance reform has revealed major flaws in the new institutional arrangements in Auckland which have suppressed spatial planning. These flaws stem from an ill-
conceived neoliberal project that was implemented in the absence of understanding the dynamism of the system which was being deconstructed;

3. Improving the management of regions and the effectiveness of their plans relies on more than the mere introduction of a new idiom to the repartee of those concerned with urban management. Also, more is needed than the solely the superficial reconfiguration of governance structures.

This study, by drawing on participants’ views of spatial planning in the case of the Auckland region, has made a significant contribution to knowledge surrounding the understanding and conceptualising of spatial planning as part of neoliberal projects. It has enquired into a new instance of spatial planning in a nation that until this time was unfamiliar with the concept.

As established in the review of literature, much of the research that has investigated spatial planning has been undertaken in the United Kingdom (refer Chapter 2). Outside the United Kingdom limited attention has been given to spatial planning, and even less towards understanding what it is, and what is required to ensure its effectiveness. The closest comparable example to this study was that by Dodson (2009) in Queensland and Jackson (2009) in Melbourne, Australia. Dodson (2009) acknowledged that spatial planning practice varies in place and time; therefore its application remains contextually and temporally bound. This supports a case study approach to spatial planning as opposed to a comparative analysis between episodes of it. Furthermore, recently, Mouat & Dodson (2013) have urged that the case of Auckland be examined due to the changes in the scale of government, the re-bordering (re-territorialisation) that has occurred, and how strategic coordination, namely spatial planning, might be enabled or stymied in this new system. This study has grappled with these questions among others and exposed significant shortcomings.

The study has illustrated in Chapters 7 to 11 the issues and challenges facing the implementation of spatial plans. These findings highlight that the implementation of plans when multiple parties are involved is a dynamic and complex activity. The case of Auckland has shown that high-level plans are relatively easy to conceive, but they
require institutional restructuring, re-organisation, and commitment to enable their implementation. The final point is often fraught with difficulty because of different power structures, tensions, and differing ideologies. The establishment of these findings and the insights they offer extends the body of knowledge initiated by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) regarding public policy and plan implementation by analysing a specific example. The findings from this study might assist agencies and institutions elsewhere that seek to embark on, or undergo governance reform processes, and the development of new plans.

The research provides insight and knowledge to those seeking a better understanding of the relationship between episodes of spatial planning and neoliberal spatial governance experiments. In doing so, this research emphasises the need for improved understanding of the structures of our urban systems before initiating major reform processes. The point which has been highlighted here is that reform is often centred on governance structures when in fact governance structures only comprise one part of a larger system of urban management. The study also sets a starting point in the process of knowledge development and understanding around spatial planning in Auckland and elsewhere.

The content of this study makes a contribution to knowledge by drawing on a collation of original, expert, verbatim in-depth interviews drawn from leading New Zealanders from the fields of planning, public policy, economics, law, and business. A total of 66 in-depth interviews were undertaken, 56 of which were recorded. The majority of them were undertaken over a four-month period between October 2012 and January 2013. The research findings were based upon the content of these interviews. The research offers a robust and insightful account of the first three year term of the Auckland Council from experts and key actors, nearly all of them with planning experience.

Finally, prior to this study, the inquiry into the effectiveness of planning frameworks including that of spatial plans (refer: Clifford, 2012; Walsh, 2012) have been undertaken in a post-hoc manner through applying a variety of evaluative frameworks (refer: Alexander, 2009; Alexander & Faludi, 1989; Berke, Backhurst, Laurian, Day, Crawford, Erickson, Dixon, 2006; Berke & French, 1994; Kaiser & Godschalk, 1995; Laurian et al.,
These studies have largely concentrated on the planning process as opposed to investigating the external factors such as the broader neoliberal projects and institutional structures and workings which influence the effectiveness of plans and planning practice. This study, instead of evaluating the plan’s effectiveness through using a complex set of evaluative criteria (unable to do given the timing of this research study) to determine the intent of the plan and analyse against the outcomes delivered (performance and conformance based evaluation), has inquired into the architecture of the urban systems within which the plan exists. This research approach provides a stronger argument for adoption because it enables more useful and relevant insights to be revealed relating to the broader causes of plan implementation failure. For example, the research approach taken here has provided a platform to critique, not the plan itself, but the neoliberal project and the associated enabling and restricting factors through the use of grounded theory method. The depth which this study has gone to in determining these factors, and the clarity provided is unique in New Zealand. This approach might offer a new way of looking at researching, and understanding the contributing factors which lead to effective plan implementation and planning practice in general.

14.3 Further research

This study, takes a naturalistic, qualitative approach using grounded theory method. By doing so the research has produced unique insights into spatial planning and the governance reform which has occurred in the Auckland region. It has enabled the uncovering of a range of aspects relating to Auckland’s development, governance, and planning that are broader than solely the study of spatial planning alone. These aspects provide the basis for a number of questions to be raised germane to spatial planning in a New Zealand setting. These include:

1. What is the role of local government in New Zealand? Local government’s role will dictate the extent to which local government can lead spatial planning exercises versus support their development and implementation.
2. What role should the New Zealand government have in managing urban and regional development in New Zealand?

3. What level of government should planning be undertaken at and to what extent? and

4. How can the relationship between central and local government be improved in order to enable spatial planning to be undertaken effectively?

This research has shown that in the case of Auckland not enough attention was given to the suitability of the legislative frameworks, funding sources, governance frameworks and relationships, organisational culture or leadership to achieve effective spatial planning. The result, as found here, is that a number of key hurdles now lie between effective spatial planning, the success of the new Auckland Council, and the ability of the Auckland region to overcome the issues and challenges facing it. This research has identified the problems. Further research is required to understand the intricacies of these barriers to spatial planning and to develop useful ways to overcome them. The questions above illustrate the high-level questions that must be considered if spatial planning is to remain a desire of government.

14.4 Conclusion

Spatial planning in the Auckland region, signified by the creation of the new Auckland Council and the development of the Auckland Plan, faces a variety of risks detailed in this thesis. Governance failure at both levels combined with poor plan implementation in Auckland have meant that the region has struggled to adequately manage growth-related issues and challenges over time. Some might argue is hallmark of hands-off and under resourced governments. Neoliberal projects have meant that every now and again in Auckland’s history the region and its governing institutions, “indicate that it might be going to get there” but the history of failure is long, and “it has missed its

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chance so many times on so many issues." The 2010 reforms in Auckland and the inception of spatial planning were another attempt to improve the management of the region through a re-configuring of institutional structures.

The preceding chapters have outlined the challenges brought on by a neoliberal experiment which did not go far enough to create a workable governance structure in the region. As a result, neither will it allow for effective spatial planning practice to occur. These factors have centred predominately on the institutional, governance, and legislative challenges in Auckland. Until these are overcome it appears highly likely that the issues and challenges facing the region stemming from its mismanagement will remain. This demonstrates once again that the region’s “promise is much greater than its achievement”.

During the time this research was undertaken, (after the 2010 local government reforms in Auckland), there was growing speculation within the media and by some participants regarding the potential amalgamation of a range of other city, district, and regional councils around New Zealand and their transformation into ‘super councils’ or ‘super cities’. Independently, those entrusted with the administration of water were lobbying government for structural change and a reduction in the number of water and wastewater authorities. Furthermore, in early 2014 the Former Prime Minister Sir Geoffrey Palmer, called for a royal commission of inquiry into the performance of the public sector, citing the poor levels of integration occurring amid concerns there are inefficiencies due to a lack of coordination and inadequate governance (Palmer, 2014).

The ground was also shifting in Auckland. In June 2013 several significant responses from central government occurred. Of most relevance, the Prime Minister announced that central government would fund a portion of the proposed inner-city underground rail loop (Davison, 2013) and would afford priority to a second harbour crossing. Prior to this time central government had refrained from promising to fund either. But as the raiser of the required funds, central government would follow its own spending timetable, pointing out that it was open to Auckland Council with its own funding

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powers to move more swiftly on the projects if it chose to do so. The Auckland Council Governing Body also announced at the beginning of 2014 a 16-month long review into the effectiveness of the council controlled organisation model (Radio New Zealand, 2014).

Collectively, a more informed understanding is required of the way urban systems work and the architecture behind them. Until a heightened appreciation of the dynamism, complexity, and nuances involved in these are held then neoliberal spatial governance exercises are likely to lead to sub-optimal outcomes which will fail to achieve the broader objectives of spatial planning, and will fail the broader objectives of the project itself of achieving increased well-being.

When considering undertaking governance reform and spatial planning to improve the management of regions the research findings presented here are readily transferable to central government and local authorities elsewhere in New Zealand. As discussed, the structure and makeup of government in New Zealand is unique. There is a highly prescriptive regime laid out in legislation about the functions of local government and service delivery requirements. Many local functions specified from time to time by central government are not funded by central government. Some local government authorities are required to administer large geographic regions and provide and maintain physical infrastructure in sparsely populated areas where their population and hence their economies are either stagnant, or in decline. Also, in many instances the large infrastructure networks which these authorities are required to maintain are nearing their life expectancy and require significant capital reinvestment. This creates a range of funding disparities and problems coupled with administrative issues. Only recently have these issues come to the fore for debate following the Auckland experiment and a realisation that the current architecture of local government, outside of Auckland, is inefficient, finds it hard to deliver what is required, and therefore cannot continue for much longer in its existing state. Furthermore, there is a sense (real or not) that these regions are competing between one another for business, investment, people and their ‘shares’ of funding from central government. A unified structure of local/regional government like that
in Auckland with one clearly articulated planning agenda is viewed by the Local Government Commission as the best vehicle to help in resolving these problems. Consequently, this has heightened the calls for governance and planning reform elsewhere in New Zealand for which this study has much to offer.

The general recommendations in relation to those considering reform are (a) to recognise that governance reform is not the panacea to resolving issues and challenges faced; instead consider it as one lever which could facilitate change, (b) investigate what the issue with the current institutional arrangements is, for instance in the case of Auckland, the issues might have been overcome by altering the power dynamics and funding mechanisms through the Local Government Act (2002), as opposed to reverting to wholesale governance reform, (c) clearly define the outcome being sought and work back (i.e., the solutions required might be more incremental and less drastic than first thought), (d) draw on the expert local knowledge which exists; international best-case examples and overseas ‘experts’ are unlikely to have the same insight and workable solutions as those locals who observe, work, and are enmeshed within the systems and (e) the practice of spatial planning might already be being undertaken under a different label, so harness the energy and investment which has already been expended and recognise that a new plan might not be the solution to broader more systemic problems.

14.5 Valedictory

We live in a “world of tumultuous economic, social, cultural, technological and physical change” (Graham & Healey, 1999, p.623). Those things that appear stationary are unlikely to be stationary for long, if at all. Auckland is no different; the flows of people and wealth will continue to change more rapidly than elsewhere in the country; “change is constant”. As the population changes, so too will the ideologies and relationships that create the institutional arrangements that govern and manage this space. They will have a profound effect on the region’s gradual evolution and development. At the beginning of 2014 as this study was nearing completion change in Auckland continued.

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Three key legislative changes were being enacted, local body elections had occurred October 2013, central government had signed a housing accord with Auckland Council, and the first Auckland Unitary Plan was notified for public submissions, threatened by direct central government involvement, public outcry and legal wrangling. Perhaps Vern Warren was right, when he said that spatial planning “in a political democracy... may be but a dream.”
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Appendix 1:

Participant interview details and their relevant involvement
Ree Anderson

Date and time of interview: 6th December 2012, 1:00pm

Interview Duration: 58 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Manager, Regional Strategy, Community and Cultural Policy, Chief Planning Office, Auckland council (2010 - )
- Director Environment, Manukau City Council (2006 – 2010)
- Director, Strategy & Policy, Rodney District Council

Group: Auckland Council Official

Leigh Auton

Date and time of interview: 2nd November 2012, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 51 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Acting CEO Tauranga City Council (2012 - )
- Director, Auton and Associates Limited (2010 - )
- Current board member of Auckland Council Property Limited (2010 - )
- Former Chief Executive of Manukau City Council (2005 – 2010)
- Former President of the New Zealand Planning Institute (1994 – 1996)
- Former General Manager Environmental Planning Manukau City Council (1990 – 2005)
- Fellow Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
- Distinguished Service Award to planning (NZPI – 2009), New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Former Auckland Local Authority CEO
Dr. Shaun Awatere

Date and time of interview: 11th February 2013, 12:15pm

Interview Duration: 59 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Researcher, Landcare Research
- Member, New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities
- PhD Fellowship, Governance and Policy, Landcare Research

Group: Commentator

Lesley Baddon

Date and time of interview: 3rd December 2012, 3:00pm

Interview Duration: 58 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Manager, Urban Environments, Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand Government (2010 - )
- General Manager, Policy and Planning, Auckland Regional Council (2009 – 2010)
- Group Manager, Economic Social Environmental Monitoring and Research, Auckland Regional Council (2005 – 2009)
- Team leader, Social Economic Monitoring and Research, Auckland Regional Council (2002 – 2005)
- co-lead the development of the: Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy 2002 – 2022, Auckland Regional Council
- social and economic researcher, Auckland Regional Council

Group: Central Government Official
Hon Dr. Michael Bassett (QSO)

Date and time of interview: 28th November 2012, 9:30am

Interview Duration: 54 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Member of Parliament, 1972 – 1975 (Labour – Waitemata, Auckland Central); 1978 – 1990 (Labour – Te Atatu, west Auckland), New Zealand Government
- Author of ‘City of Sails: The History of the Auckland City Council 1989-2010’ (2013)
- Professor of History at the University of Western Ontario (1992 – 1996)
- Fulbright Professor of New Zealand Studies at Georgetown University, Washington DC (2002)

Group: Commentator

Harry Bhana

Date and time of interview: 24th October 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 61 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Director at Harry Bhana & Associates Ltd
- Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
- 40 years planning experience
- Independent Hearings Commissioner, Resource Management Act
- Deputy City Planner, Manukau City Council
- Planner, JASMaD
- Planner, Auckland City Council (1963 – 1968)
- Fellow Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
- Distinguished Service Award to planning (NZPI – 1993), New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Planning Commissioner
Dr. Roger Blakeley

Date and time of interview: 11th December 2012, 9:00am

Interview Duration: 41 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Chief Planning Office, Auckland Council (2010 - )
- Former Chief Executive Office, Porirua City Council (2000 – 2010)
- Former Chief Executive, Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand Government (1995 – 2000)
- Engineer, Research and Development, Civil Design, Ministry of Works, New Zealand Government

Group: Auckland Council Official

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Alan Bradbourne

Date and time of interview: 19th November 2012, 4:00pm

Interview Duration: 29 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Independent Planning Commissioner, Resource Management Act
- Private Planning consultant (30 years)
- Former, Planner, Auckland Regional Authority (ARA)
- Fellow Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
- Distinguished Service Award to planning (NZPI – 1995), New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Planning Commissioner

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Len Brown

Date and time of interview: 2nd November 2012, 1:30pm

Interview Duration: 32 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Mayor, Auckland Council (2010 - )
- Mayor, Manukau City Council (2007 – 2010)
- Councilor, Manukau City Council (1992 – 2004)

Group: Mayor, Auckland Council

Dr. Graeme Campbell

Date and time of interview: 27th November 2012, 9:30am

Interview Duration: 154 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Director of Strategic Planning, Waitakere City Council (2004 – 2010)
- Former Executive Secretary to the Minister of Conservation, New Zealand Government
- Sustainable Development Advisor, Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand Government
- Co-author, Local Government Auckland Amendment Act 2005, Ministry for the Environment
- New Zealand delegate to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (2001-2002) and World Summit for Sustainable Development (2002)
- Co-authored the Draft Auckland Regional Planning Scheme, Auckland Regional Authority (1979)
- Principal Planner (Resource Management), Regional Planning Department, Auckland
Regional Authority (1980s)
• Northern Conservancy Director, Department of Conservation, New Zealand Government
• PhD, New Zealand rural land use and the cultural context of land use decision making

Group: Planning Practitioner

Jan Crawford
Date and time of interview: 26th November 2012, 4:00pm
Interview Duration: 90 minutes (approx.)
Relevant involvement:
• Director and Proprietor of Planning Consultants specialising in city planning, environmental and public policy issues, community consultation, facilitation and mediation of disputes.
• Research Member, Planning Under Cooperative Mandates (PUCM) research programme since 1995
• Co-author, Planning for Sustainability: NZ under the RMA (2003)
• Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
• Distinguished Service Award to planning (NZPI – 1998), New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Planning Practitioner

Evan Davies
Date and time of interview: 1st November 2012, 10:00am
Interview Duration: 48 minutes (approx.)
Relevant involvement:
• Chair, Capital Investment Committee, National Health Board
• Director, Waterfront Auckland (An Auckland Council Organisation / CCO) (2010 - )
• Managing Director of Todd Property Group Limited, a subsidiary of Todd Corporation
Limited (2008 - )
• Managing Director, SkyCity Entertainment Group Limited (1996 – 2007)
• General Manager of Brierley Properties, Brierley Investments (1991 – 1996)
• Executive Director, Rainbow Properties, Rainbow Corporation
• Formerly a planning consultant

*Group: Stakeholder*

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**Johnnie Freeland**

Date and time of interview: 5th March 2013, 12:30pm

Interview Duration: 66 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

• Manager, Māori Strategy and Relations, Auckland Council
• Former Manager, Māori Relations, Auckland Regional Council

*Group: Auckland Council Official*

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**Hamish Firth**

Date and time of interview: 5th December 2012, 8:15am

Interview Duration: 56 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

• Director, Mount Hobson Group

*Group: Planning Practitioner*
Rob Fisher

Date and time of interview: 23rd January 2013, 4:00pm

Interview Duration: 40 minutes (approx.)

Rob Fisher relevant involvement:

- General Counsel, Watercare Services Limited (2010 - )
- Former Legal Counsel, Auckland Transition Agency (2009 – 2010)
- Former Chair, Simpson Grierson (10 years)
- Office, New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM)
- Former Director, Genesis Power

Group: Stakeholder

Peter Fuller

Date and time of interview: 19th December 2012, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 69 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Barrister, Quay Chambers (2012 - )
- Partner, DLA Phillips Fox (2011 – 2012)
- Special Counsel, DLA Phillips Fox (2009 – 2011)

Group: Stakeholder
Joy Grant

Date and time of interview: 17th May 2013, 11:00am

Interview Duration: 47 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Senior tutor and Research Project Assessor, University of Auckland Planning department – includes involvement with students on Auckland Spatial Planning topics (2007 - )
- Lecturer, University of Auckland – maintained some involvement in regional issues work (1984 – 1989)
- Planning Consultant – included research for Auckland Regional Authority, Government Organisations & and several Territorial Authorities on Residential Intensification & Housing issues in Auckland (1979 – 1984)
- Member, New Zealand Planning Institute (1976 - )

Group: Planning Practitioner
Dr. Arthur Grimes

Date and time of interview: 22nd November 2012, 2:30pm

Interview Duration: 60 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Senior Fellow, MOTU Economic & Public Policy Research Trust
- Chair of the Board of the Reserve Bank,
- Chair of the Hugo Group
- Member, National Infrastructure Advisory Board, National Infrastructure Unit, Treasury, new Zealand Government
- Member of the Urban Technical Advisory Group (UTAG) to the Minister for the Environment (2010)
- Former, Chief Economist, National Bank of New Zealand Limited
- Former, Chief Executive, Southpac Investment Management Ltd (NBNZ subsidiary)
- Adjunct Professor of Economics at the University of Auckland.
- Adjunct Professor of Economics, University of Waikato

Group: Commentator

Phil Gurnsey

Date and time of interview: 13th November 2012, 2:00pm (phone)

Interview Duration: 50 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Associate, Beca Planning (private consultancy firm) (Current)
- Former, Private Secretary - Office of the Minister for the Environment (2008 – 2011)
- Former, Manager of Climate Change Policy at the Ministry for the Environment (2006 – 2008)
- Former, Environmental Policy Manager responsible for Resource Management Act (2003
Participant interview details and their relevant involvement

Greg Hill

Date and time of interview: 31st October 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 65 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Independent Hearings Commissioner, Resource Management Act (2000 - )
- Director, Greg Hill Resource Management Consulting (2008 - )
- General Manager of Policy and Planning, Auckland Regional Council (2005 – 2008)
- Planner, Auckland Regional Council
- Planner, Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand Government
- Planner, Rodney District Council
- Member, New Zealand Planning Institute

Colin James

Date and time of interview: 4th December 2012, 9:00am

Interview Duration: 35 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Senior Associate of the Institute of Policy Studies at Victoria University of Wellington
- Managing Director of The Hugo Group
- Past chair of MOTU Economic and Public Policy Research Institute, New Zealand
- Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration
- columnist in the Otago Daily Times and Management Magazine
• 40 years’ experience as a political journalist

*Group: Commentator*

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**Hugh Jarvis**

Date and time of interview: 7th November 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 62 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

• Planning Consultant
• Former, Group Manager – Policy Implementation, Auckland Regional Council
• Planner, Auckland Regional Council
• Planner, Auckland Regional Authority

*Group: Planning Practitioner*

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**Campbell Jensen**

Date and time of interview: 19th November 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 64 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

• Manager Masterplanning Strategy & Urban Planning – Auckland International Airport Limited (current)
• Former, Technical Advisor – Urban, Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand Government
• Former, Planner, Urban Economic and Development Office, New Zealand Government
• Planner, Boffa Miskell
• Member, New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Central Government Official

Bryce Julyan

Date and time of interview: 30th October 2012, 3:00pm

Interview Duration: 48 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:
• President, New Zealand Planning Institute
• Technical Director, Beca Planning and Design
• Practice Development Director, Beca Planning
• Member, New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Bryce Julyan

Nikki Kaye

Date and time of interview: 15th December 2012, 1:00pm

Interview Duration: 48 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:
• Member of the New Zealand Parliament, Auckland Central Electorate, National, Incumbent (2008 - )
• Member, Local Government and Environment Select Committee and the Auckland Governance Legislation Select Committee, New Zealand Government

Group: Central Government Politician
John Mackay

Date and time of interview: 18th December 2012, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 68 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Principle Urban Designer, Boffa Miskell
- Former Manager, Urban & Economic Strategy, Waitakere City Council

Group: Planning Practitioner

Louise Marra

Date and time of interview: 7th December 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 41 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Executive Director, Auckland Policy Office
- Former Director, Government Urban and Economic Development Office
- Former General Manager, Community and Strategy, Auckland Regional Council

Group: Central Government Official

Kerry McDonald

Date and time of interview: 31st January 2013, 9:00am

Interview Duration: 52 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- NZ Institute of Economic Research Board Member (1988 - ); Deputy Chairman (2002 - )
- Opus International Consultants Limited, Director (2007 - ); Chairman (2008 - )
- Bank of New Zealand, Director (1991 - ); Chairman (1997 – 2008)
- Comalco New Zealand, Managing Director, Executive Director and Deputy Chairman (1988 – 2003)
- National Australia Bank, Director (2005 – 2008)
- Fellow, Institute of Directors
- Fellow, NZ Institute of Management

**Group: Stakeholder**

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**Dr. Phil McDermott**

Date and time of interview: 29th November 2012, 11:00am

Interview Duration: 66 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Adjunct Professor of Regional and Urban Development, Institute of Public Policy, Auckland University of Technology (2005 - )
- Director of CityScope Consultants, (2004 - )
- General Manager and Senior Consultant, Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation, Sydney, Australia (2000 – 2004)
- Professor and Head of School, School of Resource and Environmental Planning, Massey University Planner (1994 – 1999)
- Principal and Managing Director, McDermott Miller Group / McDermott Fairgray Group (1978 – 1999) (land economic research)

**Group: Planning Practitioner**

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Damien McGahan

Date and time of interview: 5th December 2012, 1:30pm

Interview Duration: 48 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Planning Manager, Executive, Aurecon
- Associate, Beca Planning
- Developed and led the methodology for Auckland Council on the Area Spatial Planning exercise and led the development of the first two Area Spatial Plans
- Team member and lead on the Auckland Future Planning Framework exercise, Auckland City Council

Group: Planning Practitioner

Associate Professor Caroline Miller

Date and time of interview: 13th November 2012, 10:00am (phone)

Interview Duration: 66 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Associate Professor, Resource and Environmental Planning Programme (Massey University)
- Author of The Unsung Profession – the first book written outlining the history of the planning profession in New Zealand.
- Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
- Distinguished Service Award to planning (NZPI – 2007), New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Commentator
Brian Monk

Date and time of interview: 23rd January 2013, 4:00pm

Interview Duration: 40 minutes (approx.)

Brian Monk relevant involvement:

- Chief Financial Officer, Watercare Services Limited (2010 - )
- Former Finance General Manager / Chief operating Officer, Auckland Regional Council (2005 – 2009)
- Former CFO, Fletcher Energy
- Former Finance Director, Air New Zealand
- Chartered Accountant, NZICA

Group: Stakeholder

Neil Olsen

Date and time of interview: 21th November 2012, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 67 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Parks and Recreation Advisor, Auckland Council (2010 - )
- Manager, Resource Planning and Design, Regional Parks, Auckland Regional Council
- Planning Manager, Auckland Regional Development Strategy, Auckland Regional Authority (1970s)
- Principle Planner (forward planning), Auckland Regional Planning Scheme, Auckland Regional Authority (1980s)
- Manager, Auckland Strategic Planning Model, Auckland Regional Council (1990s)
- Planner, Housing New Zealand Corporation
- Planner, Devonport District Council
Group: Auckland Council Official

Rod Oram

Date and time of interview: 29\textsuperscript{th} November 2012, 4:30pm

Interview Duration: 74 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Adjunct Professor, Business School, Unitec
- International corporate, economic and political journalist
- Columnist for The Sunday Star Times
- Regular broadcaster on radio and television and a frequent public speaker
- Author, Reinventing Paradise (2007)

Group: Commentator

Brian Putt

Date and time of interview: 25\textsuperscript{th} October 2012, 2:00pm

Interview Duration: 49 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Director, Metro Planning Ltd (1987 - )
- Visiting Lecturer, Unitec
- Planner, Ministry of Works, New Zealand Government
- Planner, Auckland City Council
- Member, New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Planning Practitioner
Noel Reardon

Date and time of interview: 20th November 2012, 9:00am

Interview Duration: 36 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Manager, Heritage, Auckland Council (2010 - )
- Former Manager, Regional Policy Statement Review Team, Auckland Regional Council (2008 – 2010)
- Former Development Manager, Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 2050, Auckland Regional Council
- Former District Planner, Franklin District Council

Group: Central Government Official

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Dr. Mike Reid

Date and time of interview: 10th December 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 45 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Principal Adviser, Local Government New Zealand (2011 - )
- Former Governance Manager, Local Government New Zealand (1996 – 2011)
- Member, Institute of Public Administration New Zealand
- PhD, Public Policy

Group: Stakeholder

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Kathleen Ryan

Date and time of interview: 4th December 2012, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 65 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Independent Planning Commissioner
- Private planning consultant in Auckland
- Environmental Sustainability Representative on the Auckland Regional Transport Committee
- Auckland Regional Manager, Ministry of the Environment, New Zealand Government
- Member, New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Planning Commissioner

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Hon Peter Salmon CNZM

Date and time of interview: 28th November 2012, 11:15am

Interview Duration: 47 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Appointed Chair of Royal Commission into Auckland Governance (2007)
- Judge of High Court of New Zealand (1996 – 2005)
- sat regularly on Divisions of Court of Appeal (1998 – 2005)
- Judge of Commercial Division of High Court (1998 – 2004)
- Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM)

Group: Chair, The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Auckland Governance

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Robert Scott

Date and time of interview: 28th November 2012, 5:00pm

Interview Duration: 54 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Partner, Blakeley Scott Planning Consultants (2004 - )
- Planner, Department of Conservation
- Planner, Auckland City Council

Group: Planning Practitioner

Craig Shearer

Date and time of interview: 23rd November 2012, 4:00pm

Interview Duration: 72 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Former Director of Planning, Auckland Regional Council (1992 – 2005)

Group: Planning Practitioner
Hon Dr. Nick Smith

Date and time of interview: 26th November 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 66 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Member of the New Zealand Parliament, Nelson Electorate, National, Incumbent (1990 - )
- Member of Parliament for Nelson, New Zealand Government (1990 - )

Group: Central Government Politician

Conway Stewart

Date and time of interview: 12th October 2012, 1:00pm

Interview Duration: 36 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Independent Planning Commissioner, Resource Management Act
- Private Planning and Resource Management Consultant (25 years)
- Team Leader, Alternative Growth Studies, Auckland Regional Authority (15 years)
- Auckland City Council (2 years)
- Member, New Zealand Planning Institute

Group: Planning Commissioner
Stephen Selwood

Date and time of interview: 30th November 2012, 2:30pm

Interview Duration: 58 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Chief Executive of the New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development (NZCID) (2005 - )
- Member of the Technical Advisory Group – Infrastructure on Phase 2 Resource Management Act reforms (2010)
- Member of the Auckland Regional Land Transport Committee

Group: Stakeholder

David Taipari

Date and time of interview: 26th February 2013, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 53 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Chairman, Independent Maori Statutory Board, Auckland Council
- Chairperson, Hauraki Māori Trust Board
- CEO, Ngāti Maru ki Hauraki Inc

Group: Stakeholder

Gary Taylor QSO

Date and time of interview: 4th December 2012, 12:00pm

Interview Duration: 52 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Chairman, Environmental Defence Society, New Zealand
- Former Councilor, Auckland Regional Council
- Former Councilor, Auckland Regional Authority
- Former Chairman of the Auckland Health Board,
- Former Chairman Climate Change and Business Centre,
- Former Chairman Peoples Centre Health Trust and
- Former Director of Watercare Services Ltd,
- Former Director of Auckland Regional Transport Authority,
- Former Director of Infrastructure Auckland
- Former Director of Hobsonville Land Company.

**Group: Stakeholder**

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**Connal Townsend**

Date and time of interview: 27th November 2012, 2:30pm

Interview Duration: 78 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Chief Executive Officer, Property Council New Zealand (2005 - )
- Chair of Auckland Council’s CBD Advisory Board
- Member of the Technical Advisory Group on Resource Management Reforms (RMII -U), New Zealand Government
- Member, Committee for Auckland

**Group: Stakeholder**

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Ken Tremaine

Date and time of interview: 9th November 2012, 10:30am

Interview Duration: 76 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Implementation Advisor (current) and Project Manager (past) of the SmartGrowth growth management strategy for the Bay of Plenty region
- Project Manager for the 2006 review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy for the Bay of Plenty
- Project Manager (Technical) for the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy
- Member of the Upton Review Group which oversaw the completion of the Resource Management Act 1991
- Former Director of the Environment and Local Government Consulting units for KPMG (7 years)
- Former Head City Planner – Palmerston North City (approx. 10 years)

Group: Planning Practitioner

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Michael Tucker

Date and time of interview: 14th December 2012, 9:00am

Interview Duration: 48 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Team Leader, Spatial & Infrastructure Strategy, Auckland Council (2010 - )
- Strategic policy analyst, Auckland Regional Council
- Senior Strategic and Policy Planner, Auckland, Beca

Group: Auckland Council Officer

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**Phil Twyford**

Date and time of interview: 29th October 2012, 1:00pm

Interview Duration: 47 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Member of the New Zealand Parliament, Te Atatu Electorate, Labour, Incumbent (2008 - )
- Labour representative on the Select Committee, Auckland Law Reform Bill, New Zealand Government
- Labour Spokesperson for Auckland Issues, Transport, and Associate Spokesperson for Environment

*Group: Central Government Politician*

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**Martin Udale**

Date and time of interview: 7th December 2012, 4:00pm

Interview Duration: 54 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Director, Cranleigh Strategic Limited
- Former CEO of McConnell Property Australia (2003 – 2009)
- Member, Tamaki Transformation Board, New Zealand Government
- Former Director Corporate Advisory with CRI Sydney, Australia
- Trustee for the Auckland Community Housing Trust

*Group: Stakeholder*
Bill Wasley

Date and time of interview: 20th December 2012, 11:00am

Interview Duration: 56 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Independent Chair, SmartGrowth Implementation Committee, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand (2000 - )
- Independent Chair, Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy Implementation Committee, Christchurch, New Zealand
- Independent Chair, Future Proof Implementation Committee, Waikato, New Zealand
- Independent Hearings Commissioner, Resource Management Act
- Director / Owner, Wasley Knell Consultants (1996 - )
- Former Company Secretary, Ports of Tauranga (1995 – 1996)
- Former Acting Chief Executive, Tauranga District Council (1994 – 1995)
- Former Director of Planning & Environment, Tauranga District Council (1989 – 1994)

Group: Planning Practitioner

Vern Warren

Date and time of interview: 17th January 2013, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 46 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

- Director at Planning Network Services (1989 - )
- Former Director of Planning & Community Development, Auckland City Council (1980 – 1989)
- Former Director of Strategic Planning (State Planning Policy and Regional Planning) with the Town & Country Planning Board of the State of Victoria, Australia
- Planner, Palmerston North City Council
- Member, Australian Planning Institute
• Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
• Distinguished Service Award to planning (NZPI – 2001), New Zealand Planning Institute

*Group: Planning Practitioner*

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**Peter Winder**

Date and time of interview: 17th January 2013, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 47 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

• Director at McGredy Winder & Co (2010 - )
• Former Chief Executive of Auckland Regional Council (2005 – 2010)
• Former Chief Executive Local Government New Zealand (2001 – 2003)
• Former Director of Transport at Auckland Regional Council (2003 – 2004)

*Group: Former Local Authority CEO*

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**Adrienne Young-Cooper**

Date and time of interview: 21st February 2013, 10:00am

Interview Duration: 40 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

• Deputy Chair, Housing New Zealand Corporation, New Zealand Government
• Deputy Chair, Waterfront Auckland, Auckland Council Controlled Organisation
• Board Member, New Zealand Transport Agency
• Chair, Hobsonville Land Company Limited
• Former Deputy Chairman, Auckland Regional Transport Authority
• Former Director, Auckland City Council Property Enterprise Board
• Former Director, Manukau Building Consultants Limited
• Former Director, Hill Young-Copper
• Member of the Urban Technical Advisory Group (UTAG) to the Minister for the Environment (2010)
• Member of the Infrastructure Technical Advisory Group (ITAG) to the Minister for the Environment (2010)
• Member, New Zealand Planning Institute
• Distinguished Service Award to planning (NZPI – 1996), New Zealand Planning Institute
• Fellow and Accredited Director, Institute of Directors

Group: Planning Practitioner

Ernst Zollner

Date and time of interview: 31st January 2013, 11:30am

Interview Duration: 45 minutes (approx.)

Relevant involvement:

• Group Manager Strategy and Performance, New Zealand Transport Agency
• Former Director, Urban Development and Transport, Wellington City Council
• Former Chief Advisor, Strategic and Economic Development, Wellington City Council
• Former Lecturer, Planning, University of Auckland, New Zealand
• Former Advisor, Local Government New Zealand
• Former Planner, McDermott Fairgray, New Zealand

Group: Central Government Official