



Local Government Policy

Vision

The Green Party envisions an Aotearoa New Zealand in which:

- Local government recognises their responsibility to future generations, their role in responding to climate change, and the importance of environmental stewardship.
- Local government understands and responds to the diverse needs of our communities, recognising that different regions have different priorities and concerns.
- Tangata whenua are able to develop their own regional and local structures to negotiate governance issues with local government in respect of their rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Tangata whenua are widely represented in local government.
- Central government acknowledges the essential role of local government in Aotearoa New Zealand's democracy, and recognises its significance in our constitutional arrangements. Local government and central government work together to create an effective and efficient public sector.
- Local government activities are carried out transparently, promote ecological sustainability, and meet costs in a socially responsible manner.
- Elected representatives in local government are accountable to voters and decision-making is participatory and empowers communities to be involved in matters that affect them.

1. Key Principles

1. The activities of local government should enhance the social, environmental, cultural and economic wellbeing of the communities it serves.
2. Local government must honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and work in partnership with tangata whenua on economic, environmental, social and cultural issues within their rohe.
3. Decision-making processes should highlight the voice of the community most affected; while functions that cannot be effectively delivered at the local level should be provided by central government
4. Local and central government must recognise that they are distinctive but interrelated and inter-dependent spheres of government, and should manage different perspectives from a basis of mutual respect, while promoting the best outcomes for communities and the environment.
5. Local democratic processes should be protected from interference by central government, with voters determining who governs local authorities.
6. Local government powers to raise revenue should be dependent on local accountability and representation.
7. Commercial activities undertaken by local government should prioritise the needs of their communities.
8. Principles and essential elements of democracy, such as freedom of information and openness of government and its procedures, must be applied at all levels of government.

Specific Policy Points

1. Purpose and Powers of Local Government

Policy Positions

- 1.1 Support local government's legislative duty to promote the social, environmental, cultural and economic wellbeing of communities (the four wellbeings).
- 1.2 Retain the power of general competence conferred to local government in the 2002 Local Government Act.

A. Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change

The Green Party is committed to ensuring local government can and does uphold its responsibilities to environmental wellbeing. See our [Environmental Protection](#) policy

for details such as strengthening local government reporting on the state of the environment, promoting the use of sustainable development indicators by local government, implementing sustainable procurement policies throughout local government, and ensuring local government must for account for the future impacts of climate change, and the greenhouse gas emissions of development, in their planning and consenting processes under resource management legislation.

2. Relationship of Local Government to Central Government

Policy Positions

- 2.1 Develop national policy statements and national environmental standards under the Resource Management Act to provide better policy guidance to local government, promote national consistency and help reduce plan preparation costs.
- 2.2 Review the legislative framework within which local government operates to ensure responsibilities for policy-making, funding and implementation are integrated and consistently applied within and between each level of government.
- 2.3 Oppose the appointment of commissioners to replace elected councillors.
- 2.4 Identify ways to guarantee greater protection and independence for local government within New Zealand's legal and constitutional framework.
- 2.5 Remove the Ministerial powers in the Local Government Act to appoint a Crown Manager, and retain the power to appoint a Crown observer and Crown review team.

3. Local Government Funding and Borrowing

Policy Positions

- 3.1 Ensure that appropriate resources are provided when central government increases costs, responsibilities, or functions for local government.
- 3.2 Encourage the provision of shared services between councils to reduce administration costs and improve service delivery.
- 3.3 Ensure that local government has a variety of funding and borrowing options to provide local activities and services, and is able to maintain and develop local infrastructure to a high standard.
- 3.4 Require the remuneration of local authority CEOs to be approved by the Remuneration Authority.

- 3.5 Investigate the merits of the Earthquake Commission (EQC) and Fire Service levies being collected through local government rates.

4. Elections, Representation and Participation

Policy Positions

- 4.1 Require every local body not using a ranked list system to hold a poll on introducing such a system. Such polls are to be binding for three electoral cycles.
- 4.2 Ensure democratic balance of functions within local government, including a principled split of powers between Mayors and councillors, and devolved functions to local community boards where these are better placed to serve the needs of their communities.
- 4.3 Assist local authorities to explore and trial wider use of community based collaborative decision making processes, including in planning council expenditure and annual budgets.
- 4.4 Ensure that any further amalgamation of councils must be decided by a referendum, and require the majority support of voters in each affected local authority area before an amalgamation may proceed.
- 4.5 Provide a range of options within the Local Electoral Act to guarantee fair and effective representation of Māori constituents, and to ensure the views of tangata whenua are given particular consideration.
- 4.6 Support giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in local government structures, including through negotiated governance agreements. This includes support for capacity-building and training of both local government and iwi and hapū organisations, to enable effective Tiriti partnerships.
- 4.7 Require local authorities to recognise the kaitiaki role of iwi and hapū when developing regional coastal plans and aquaculture management areas, and when considering sewerage, waste disposal, and pollution issues that affect customary food gathering areas and wāhi tapu (see our [Kaupapa Māori](#) policy).
- 4.8 Require local authorities to provide robust, on-going and locally appropriate Te Tiriti education to elected representatives and officers.
- 4.9 Amend the Local Government Act to require councils to establish properly resourced youth councils, and ensure youth perspectives are taken into account – recognising the importance of local government decisions for youth wellbeing (see our [Youth Affairs](#) policy)

- 4.10 Ensure young people have a voice on local body committees, and ensure community boards promote participation of young people (see our [Youth Affairs](#) policy)

5. [Governance of Council-Controlled Organisations](#)

Policy Positions

- 5.1 Review the organisational structure of Council Controlled Organisations, to ensure appropriate governance of these public entities and promote local accountability.
- 5.2 Ensure Council Controlled Organisations prioritise local public interests, and are not required to return a profit to councils where this would undermine the ability to provide high-quality public services.
- 5.3 Ensure Council Controlled Organisations are publicly accountable.
- 5.4 Ensure Council Controlled Organisations are only used where this has benefits over direct service provision by local authorities.

6. [Transparency and Accountability](#)

Policy Positions

- 6.1 Strengthen the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (as set out in our Democracy and Constitutional Transformation policy).
- 6.2 Require Local Government to publish in a timely manner the following information on the internet:
- a) All resource consent applications and decisions, and details of consent monitoring, compliance and enforcement action and outcomes.
 - b) A pecuniary interests register for councillors similar to that used in Parliament, including disclosure of all contracts in which councillors have a pecuniary interest.
 - c) All Council minutes and Order papers, including a statement on the nature of, and reasons for, any business considered with the public excluded.
 - d) A list of all people, consultants and organisations engaged to provide services to Council and the service provided.
 - e) The source of all campaign donations over \$500.
- 6.3 Require Local Government to publish video of all council and committee meetings, except for publicly excluded sessions.