

Role and Key Attributes of a Mayor / Councillor / Community Board member

Fact Sheet

Elections 2022 |



In deciding whether to stand in the local body elections, or when considering who you want to vote for, it is important to understand the role of the elected member, and the core attributes that help them be successful in their role.

The following sheet outlines the general requirements and attributes of an elected member along with some information about time commitments and pay.

Structure of Council



The Far North District Council comprises the Governing Body (Council) - the mayor (elected at large) and 10 councillors elected from 4 wards – Te Hiku; Kaikohe-Hokianga; Bay of Islands-Whangaroa and Ngā Tai o Tokerau. There are 3 community boards, each consisting of six to seven members elected from the local ward area.

Mayor

The role of the mayor is to articulate and promote a vision for the Far North District and to provide leadership towards that vision, including leading the development of the council's plans (including the long-term plan), policies, and budgets. The mayor also performs civic duties (citizenship ceremonies); presides over Council meetings; speaks on behalf of Council and has Civil Defence responsibilities.

Councillor

With the mayor, councillors focus on district-wide strategic decisions including policies, plans, regulations and activities. Council also appoints the chief executive and maintains oversight of the council organisation – Far North Holdings Limited.

Broadly speaking, the role of the councillor is to:

- Provide strategic leadership and direction
- Make decisions on district matters
- Work collaboratively and build relationships
- Engage with communities
- Monitor performance
- Identify and manage risk

Community Board

Community boards set local direction through their strategic board plans, represent and advocate on behalf of their local communities. Community boards also provide input to Council decisions on community matters and strategies, policies, plans and bylaws.

Broadly speaking, the role of a community board member is to:

- Set local direction and deliver priorities through each boards strategic plan
- Make decisions on community board matters (where delegated by Council)
- Advocate for their local communities (be their voice)
- Input into decision, policies, strategies, plans and bylaws
- Promote strong, resilient and engaged communities
- Represent members of the local community

Knowledge and skills for all elected members

There are some key attributes that are important in being a successful elected member. Bringing these attributes, along with own life experiences, ensures robust decision-making at council or community board level.

Each attribute can mean different things to different people – an example has been provided for illustrative purposes only:

Quality decision-making: Make good decisions based on a combination of staff advice, community views, wisdom, experience and informed judgement.

Political acumen: Manoeuvre through complex political situations effectively and respectfully.

Leadership: Provide leadership and direction and makes things happen to achieve the vision and outcomes.

Cultural awareness: Respect and embrace differences and diversity in a non-judgemental way.

Knowledge and understanding of Council and local government: Understand council's processes (such as decision-making and policy development) and know how to influence appropriately.

Communication and engagement: Relate well and build rapport and trust with people from all parts of the community and within the council.

Relationship building and collaboration: Able to agree to disagree and accept and own decisions and outcomes.

Resilience: Cope with the pressures of being in the public eye.

Ethics and values: Understand and model the council values and behaviours and discourage unethical behaviour.

Integrity and trust: Be widely trusted, keep confidences and respect the confidentiality of information provided.

Computer literacy: Utilise computers and related technology as required, to carry out the role effectively.

Additional attributes required of chairs (committee or community Board)

In addition to the core skills required of all elected members, the role of chairperson carries additional responsibilities, and as such, additional skill requirements:

Leadership and delegation: Looked to for direction in challenging situations and faces adversity head on.

Managing vision and purpose: Invites input from each person and shares ownership and visibility.

Community Board chairs also need to build and lead an effective board, including providing feedback and information gained through attendance at council meetings, committee meetings and workshops.

Community Board chairs should look to develop and mentor other board members.

Time commitments of members

The mayor is considered a full-time role.

Councillors will spend about 60% of their time on council business, whether that be meeting constituents, reading agendas or participating in workshops and meetings of Council. Some members are also appointed to external bodies to represent Council and will be expected to attend meetings and read information related to that body. Some councillors will spend more time, others less and is dependent on the individual member and their additional responsibilities.

Community Boards, being largely advocates, will spend between 30% of their time (chair) and 10-15% of their time (members) on community board business. A large proportion of this will be "out and about" rather than necessarily in formal meetings.

Remuneration

The Remuneration Authority sets the base remuneration and a pool of money for all elected members of local authorities, including community boards (called the Determination). The pool must be used in full to increase the base remuneration if the Council so decides and also remunerate for positions of extra responsibility, including the deputy mayor and chairs of committees. The salary for the mayor is set as if it were a full-time position.

The 2022/23 Determination has set the remuneration as follows:

Mayor	\$157,170
Deputy Mayor	\$120,397
Committee Chairperson	\$ 97,464
Councillor	\$ 75,162
BOI-Whangaroa CB Chair	\$ 32,186
BOI-Whangaroa Member	\$ 16,093
Kaikohe-Hokianga CB Chair	\$ 27,589
Kaikohe-Hokianga CB Member	\$ 13,795
Te Hiku CB Chair	\$ 28,164
Te Hiku CB Member	\$ 14,082

There is a lot of useful information regarding the 2022 elections on our website – including a video explaining the new Māori ward, a cheeky look at how STV works and lots more.

We update it regularly, so check us out at www.fndc.govt.nz/Your-council/Local-Elections-2022



