

Ōpōtiki

District Council

2023-24 Resident
Survey

| SIL Research

April 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to consultatively engage with Ōpōtiki District's residents to determine levels of satisfaction and perceptions of Council's services, communications and management to identify opportunities for improvement.

Research was conducted quarterly in 2023 and 2024. Multiple data collection methods were utilised to ensure residents were well-represented. A total of n=300 responses were used in the final annual analysis.

The main findings were as follows:

- The 2024 survey of Ōpōtiki District Council's services revealed mixed satisfaction levels across various service areas, with notable fluctuations in satisfaction levels among different demographic groups and service categories.
- Overall, Ōpōtiki residents were moderately satisfied with Council services and facilities they experience in their community. Satisfaction with overall services provided by the Ōpōtiki District Council decreased slightly in 2024 (54%, although within the margin of error) compared to 2023 (59%), but remained above 2022 (45%) and similar to the national average (58%).
- Of 22 services and attributes measured, three (14%) were identified as 'good performers' (70%+ satisfaction), nine (41%) as 'positive performers' (50%-69% satisfaction), and ten (45%) as areas for improvement (below 50% satisfaction). Three KPI targets were achieved, while six KPIs were below target in 2024 (one remained within the margin of error).
- Younger respondents (particularly those aged 18-39) were consistently less satisfied across various services, especially in relation to Council listening and acting on their needs (8%), value for money (15%), dog control (15%), roads (25%), and public toilets (28%).
- Despite a slight decline, the district library remained the top performing area in 2024, with almost 9-in-10 respondents satisfied with this service (86%).
- In 2024, there was a good improvement in relation to Council reputation – particularly in communication with residents (54%, up from 46% in 2023) and leadership (61%, up from 55% in 2023). This improvement was mainly attributed to more positive sentiments about the leadership of Mayor (68%, up from 60% in 2023) and keeping people informed (59%, up from 52% in 2023). Leadership of Mayor was notably higher than the national average (55%).
- In contrast, four Council services and facilities showed a significant decline in 2024. The largest declines were observed in relation to

cemetery (-12%-point drop) and dog control (-10%-point drop), followed by resource recovery centre (-8%-point drop) and library (-6%-point drop).

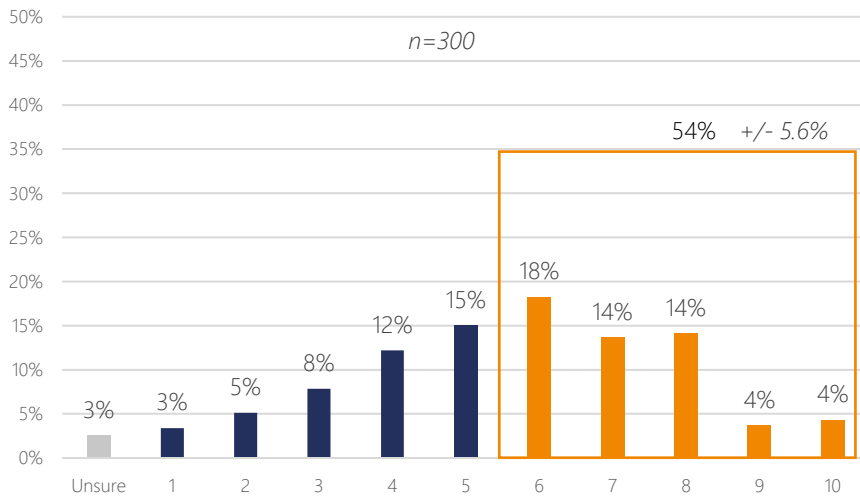
- In addition, fewer respondents were satisfied with Council's efficiency and effectiveness in 2024 (46%, down from 54% in 2023).
- Service Area Highlights: Recreation facilities received high satisfaction scores (82%) and increased usage, but concerns were raised by Coast respondents regarding the lack of facilities in their area. Public toilets (44%) faced cleanliness and maintenance issues. Dog control (25%) received the lowest satisfaction score, primarily due to concerns about roaming dogs. Cemeteries (70%) saw a decline, with maintenance issues highlighted.
- Infrastructure and Services Highlights: Building consent (35%), although consistent, showed lower satisfaction levels, with respondents dissatisfied about building consent process delays and high costs. Road safety (47%) and footpaths (60%) highlighted maintenance concerns, with satisfaction levels on par with 2023. The city centre received low satisfaction scores (42%), with calls for revitalisation due to declining conditions.
- Over half of respondents (55%) stated they had contacted the Council in 2024, with 60% being satisfied with this contact (similar to 65% in 2023).

- To address the diverse needs and concerns highlighted by the survey findings, the Ōpōtiki District Council should focus on targeted improvements, enhanced communication (increasing direct engagement with the community, and actively listening to residents' concerns and suggestions), infrastructure maintenance (including maintenance of public amenities), revitalisation efforts of the city centre (to address maintenance issues, attract businesses, and create a more vibrant and inviting environment), and efficiency improvements (reducing amount of roaming dogs, streamlining processes for building consents to reduce delays and costs, and focus on value-for-money initiatives to optimise resource allocation and improve overall efficiency in service delivery).
- Three Council services received low (below 50%) satisfaction scores and were also considerably below the national averages: dog control, building consents, and public toilets. Dog control was also the area with significantly more negative than positive perceptions within the community (negative Net Emotional Score).
- The city centre, a newly introduced measure, exhibited a strong influence on overall satisfaction with Council services, at the same time also receiving a lower satisfaction score.

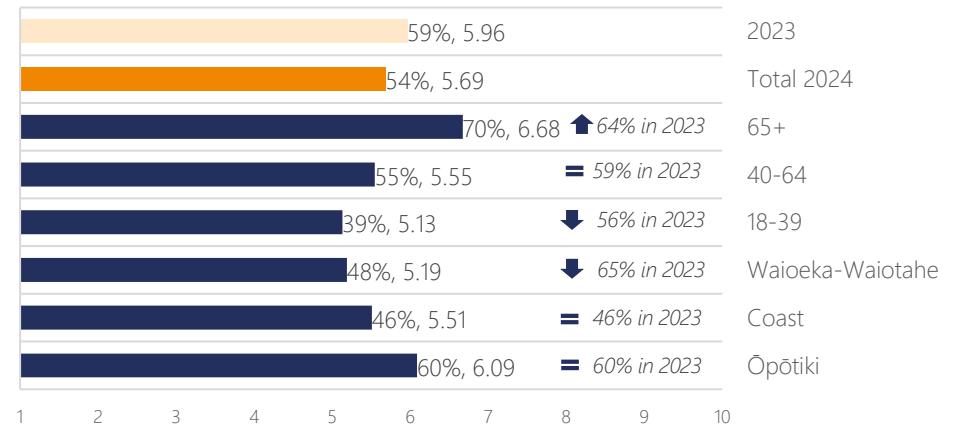


OVERALL SATISFACTION

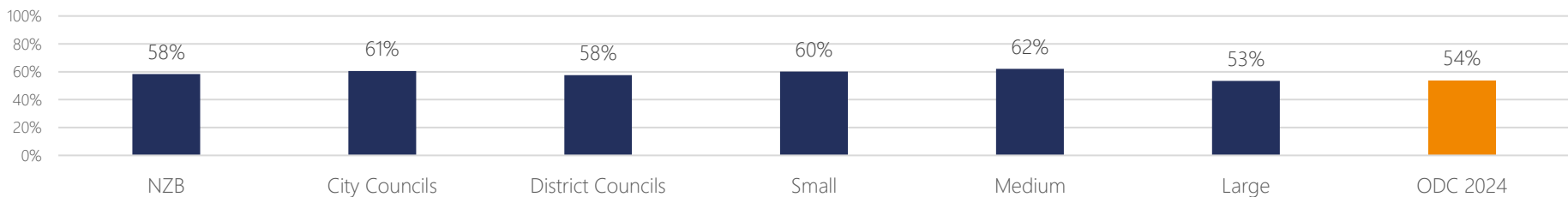
- In 2024, 54% of respondents were satisfied with overall services received from the Ōpōtiki District Council (on average rating 5.69 out of 10). Although this result was slightly down compared to 2023, it remained within the margin of error.
- Overall satisfaction was lower during Q1 (49%) and Q2 (39%) of the 2024 survey cycle, but increased in Q3 (59%) and Q4 (63%).
- The annual decrease was mainly observed amongst respondents aged 18-39, and from Waioeka-Waiotaha wards.
- Satisfaction differed significantly by ward in 2023, with Coast and Waioeka-Waiotaha respondents being less satisfied compared to Ōpōtiki ward respondents.
- Respondents aged under 65 (particularly aged 18-39) were less satisfied with the Council services, compared to older respondents.
- The current result was similar to the NZ benchmark average, but slightly below the national results for Councils with small (under 30,000) populations.





























Overall satisfaction by ward and age (% satisfied and average score)



Overall satisfaction New Zealand benchmark



Overall satisfaction with services received from the Ōpōtiki District Council. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.

 Public library (p.22)	 Recreation facilities (p.14)	 Cemeteries (p.20)	 Resource Recovery Centre (p.26)	 Leadership of Mayor (p.40)	
ODC 2024: 86% / 8.1	ODC 2024: 82% / 7.3	ODC 2024: 70% / 6.8	ODC 2024: 69% / 6.8	ODC 2024: 68% / 6.7	
ODC 2023: 92% / 8.1	ODC 2023: 81% / 7.2	ODC 2023: 82% / 7.4	ODC 2023: 77% / 7.2	ODC 2023: 60% / 5.9	
NZB 2023: 87% / 7.8	NZB 2023: 82% / 7.4	NZB 2023: 79% / 7.4	NZB 2023: 66% / 6.5	NZB 2023: 55% / 5.6	
 Footpaths (p.30)	 Keeps people informed (p.38)	 Managers and staff (p.41)	 Opportunities for people to have their say (p.38)	 Leadership of Councillors (p.40)	
ODC 2024: 60% / 5.8	ODC 2024: 59% / 5.9	ODC 2024: 59% / 5.8	ODC 2024: 55% / 5.6	ODC 2024: 53% / 5.8	
ODC 2023: 61% / 6.1	ODC 2023: 52% / 5.6	ODC 2023: 56% / 5.9	ODC 2023: 47% / 5.3	ODC 2023: 53% / 5.7	
NZB 2023: 60% / 6.0	NZB 2023: 57% / 5.7	NZB 2023: 54% / 5.6	NZB 2023: 51% / 5.5	NZB 2023: 50% / 5.4	
 Strategies for developing prosperity (p.41)	 Easy for people to interact (p.38)	 District's roads safety (p.28)	 Efficiency and effectiveness (p.41)	 Skills and expertise (p.41)	
ODC 2024: 52% / 5.5	ODC 2024: 50% / 5.5	ODC 2024: 47% / 5.3	ODC 2024: 46% / 5.3	ODC 2024: 45% / 5.3	
ODC 2023: 50% / 5.6	ODC 2023: 51% / 5.6	ODC 2023: 45% / 5.1	ODC 2023: 54% / 5.6	ODC 2023: 50% / 5.6	
NZB 2023: 49% / 5.3	NZB 2023: 51% / 5.5	NZB 2023: 43% / 4.9	NZB 2023: 47% / 5.1	NZB 2023: 51% / 5.5	
 Public toilets (p.16)	 City Centre (p.32)	 Good spending decisions (p.41)	 Listens and acts on the needs of the people (p.38)	 Building consents team (p.24)	
ODC 2024: 44% / 4.9	ODC 2024: 42% / 5.0	ODC 2024: 39% / 4.8	ODC 2024: 36% / 4.8	ODC 2024: 35% / 4.7	
ODC 2023: 44% / 5.0	ODC 2023: n/a	ODC 2023: 41% / 5.2	ODC 2023: 42% / 5.1	ODC 2023: 38% / 4.6	
NZB 2023: 87% / 7.8	NZB 2023: n/a	NZB 2023: 43% / 4.7	NZB 2023: 42% / 4.7	NZB 2023: 46% / 5.2	
 Value for money (p.41)	 Dog control (p.18)	 Overall communication (p.38)	 Overall leadership (p.40)	 Overall management (p.41)	 Overall performance (p.6)
ODC 2024: 34% / 4.5	ODC 2024: 25% / 4.0	ODC 2024: 54% / 5.5	ODC 2024: 61% / 6.0	ODC 2024: 50% / 5.4	ODC 2024: 54% / 5.7
ODC 2023: 36% / 4.7	ODC 2023: 34% / 4.5	ODC 2023: 46% / 5.4	ODC 2023: 55% / 5.7	ODC 2023: 53% / 5.8	ODC 2023: 59% / 6.0
NZB 2023: 39% / 4.8	NZB 2023: 63% / 6.2	NZB 2023: 51% / 5.3	NZB 2023: 53% / 5.4	NZB 2023: 49% / 5.2	NZB 2023: 58% / 5.9

-  - Good performance (70% and above)
-  - Services with positive performance (less than 70% but equal or more than 50%)
-  - Services for improvement
-  - Overall performance indicators



METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH GOAL

As a part of the consultation process, Ōpōtiki District Council (ODC) has commissioned a Resident Satisfaction Survey every year. The purpose of this research was to consultatively engage with Ōpōtiki District residents to determine levels of satisfaction and perceptions of Council's services, communications and management, and to identify opportunities for improvement.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND PROJECT SPECIFICS

From 2022, the Resident Satisfaction Survey has been conducted by SIL Research.

SIL Research, together with the Ōpōtiki District Council, developed a Resident Survey questionnaire in 2022. The initial drafting was based on research previously carried out for ODC.

This questionnaire was reviewed and tested prior to full-scale data collection to ensure the survey was fit for purpose.

A number of methodology changes (e.g. rating scales, data collection methods, demographic questions) were adopted in 2022 and repeated in consecutive years. From 2022, data collection was administered four times a year to allow for seasonal variations to be tracked using a 1-10 Likert scale, which provides more robust options for residents to express their views.

For the 2023-24 survey year, the data was collected from July 2023 (retrospectively covering the Apr-Jun quarter) to March 2024 (covering the Jan-Mar quarter) to align with ODC's annual reporting period.

Fieldwork was conducted quarterly in July - August 2023 (Q1), September - October 2023 (Q2), December 2023 – February 2024 (Q3), and March – April 2024 (Q4). A total n=75 responses were collected each quarter, providing a total annual sample of n=300 for the final analysis. For ease, this report refers to the 2023-24 survey year as '2024'.

With the change to quarterly fieldwork cycles, the recall window for respondents has also been adjusted since 2023. Previously, respondents had been asked to indicate which services/facilities they had used or visited in '*the last 12 months*'. From 2023, respondents are instead asked about the services/facilities they used/visited in '*the last 3 months*'. While representing a shift from the previous method, moving forward the use of a narrower recall window should result in more accurate responses (easier to recall behaviour over the previous 3 months than a longer 12-month period), while providing more sensitive measures of seasonal variations across quarterly cycles.

In 2023, a new question was introduced (mid Q2 and Q3 fieldwork):

- Satisfaction with "*Developing and maintaining a vibrant town centre (as an enjoyable meeting place for all people)*".

Every quarter, SIL used a multi-layered sampling technique to ensure a proportional spread of respondents from each of Ōpōtiki's three

electoral wards, by age and gender distribution. Post-stratification (weighting) was then applied to the full annual dataset (Q1-Q4) to reflect the age and gender group proportions as determined by the Statistics New Zealand 2018 Census.

DATA COLLECTION

In each quarter, multiple data collection methods were utilised to ensure residents were well-represented. The mixed-methods approach included:

- (1) Telephone survey. Respondents were randomly selected from the publicly available telephone directories within specified territorial units (e.g. wards);
- (2) Social media (available via SIL Research social media platforms, such as Facebook). The invitation advertisement was randomly promoted to District residents within specified territorial units;
- (3) Postal survey. Survey forms were sent to randomly selected Ōpōtiki District households.
- (4) Online survey. The survey was promoted and available via ODC channels to increase community awareness.

A total of n=300 surveys were used in the final analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Responses were also statistically weighted (post-stratification) to reflect Ōpōtiki District gender, age and ethnic group proportions as determined by the Statistics New Zealand 2018 Census.

SIL Research ensured quality control during the fieldwork period. In addition, a quality control check was performed using follow-up calls

across randomly selected respondents (10% of those who agreed to the follow up) to verify the key responses.

Further checks included, but were not limited to, removal of incomplete responses and responses coming from outside of Ōpōtiki District.

The main resident groups analysed in this report were: ward, age, gender, ethnicity, home ownership and location. During the analysis stage of this report, two sets of statistical testing were employed while reviewing data findings. Chi-square tests were used when comparing group results in tables, and ANOVA tests were used when comparing statement averages across groups. The threshold for reporting any statistically significant differences was a p-value of 0.05. Where differences were outside this threshold (less than 95%), no comments were made; where differences were within this threshold, comments have been made within the context of their practical relevance to ODC.

Overall results are reported with margins of error at a 95% confidence level, as indicated below.

Table 2 Margins of error

Responses n=	Reported percentages	
	50%	80% or 20%
300	±5.5	±4.4
200	±6.8	±5.5
100	±9.7	±7.9

The maximum likely error margin occurs when a reported percentage is close to 50%. The key reported measures in the main report include margins of error calculated taking into account the survey design, finite population size correction, and service usage.

NOTES ON REPORTING

Comparative data prior to 2022 is indicative only; data collection methods before 2022 (including response scales) differed significantly from current methods.

Due to rounding, figures with percentages may not add to 100%. Reported percentages were calculated on actual results not rounded values.

Open-ended (free-text) responses were also collected and analysed. SIL Research used a content analysis approach to determine certain themes, concepts or issues within this feedback. This represents a 'bottom up' data driven approach where identified themes are derived purely from the collective respondent feedback, rather than fitting responses into pre-determined categories. Results for reported themes may exceed 100% as several themes could be mentioned by a given respondent.

Where results are reported by sub-groups of residents, estimates of results may not be statistically reliable due to the high margins of error (small sample sizes).

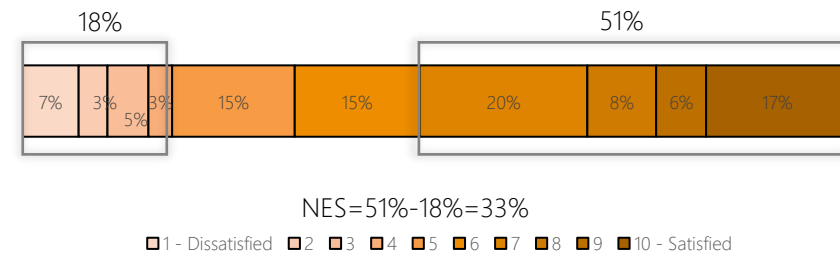
Overall 'satisfaction' percentages presented in this report are aggregated 6-10 responses on a 1-10 scale. Satisfaction percentages will differ from mean scores (average ratings). Satisfaction percentages represent positive ratings only, whereas mean scores provide an average of all ratings across the whole scale. Mean scores were calculated on responses excluding 'Don't know'.

Satisfaction with Council services and facilities is reported in two ways:

- Total satisfaction percentage for the District (all responses), and

- Satisfaction percentages for 'Users/Visitors' (e.g. residents who had visited/used specific Council services/facilities and/or knew enough to provide a rating).

In addition, Net Emotional Scores (NES) show the relative difference between positive and negative emotions associated with Council services. This is calculated by subtracting the percentage of negative ratings (1-4) from positive ratings (7-10).



The strength of trends or changes over time was also assessed. R^2 is a measure based on regression analysis of results over time. It was applied to the historical and current aggregated satisfaction ratings. In summary, the closer the R^2 value is to 100%, the more likely there is a trend towards an increase or decrease in performance ratings over time.

The regression analysis was used for key driver analysis. This statistical method investigates the relationships between potential influential drivers (e.g. Council services) and residents' overall perceptions about the Council. Identified key drivers are factors that have a greater improvement potential.

RESPONSES USED IN THE ANALYSIS

Table 1 Responses by ward

	Frequency	Percent
Ōpōtiki	150	50%
Coast	41	14%
Waioeka-Waiotaha	108	36%
Total	300	100%

Table 2 Responses by age

	Frequency	Percent
18-39	93	31%
40-64	134	45%
65+	73	24%
Total	300	100%

Table 3 Responses by gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	147	49%
Female	152	51%
Non-binary	1	0.3%
Total	300	100%

Table 4 Responses by location

	Frequency	Percent
Urban	122	41%
Semi-rural	60	20%
Rural	118	39%
Total	300	100.0%

Table 5 Responses by home ownership

	Frequency	Percent
Owned	241	80%
Rented	39	13%
Private trust	6	2%
Other	7	2%
Not stated	7	2%
Total	300	100%

Table 6 Responses by ethnicity (multi-choice)

	Frequency	Percent
New Zealand European	182	61%
European	17	6%
Māori	179	60%
Pacific people	3	1%
Asian	3	1%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	4	1%
Other	5	2%
New Zealander/Kiwi/Not stated	10	3%
Total	300	100%

Note: final dataset was statistically weighted to increase accuracy of the reported results.

BENCHMARKING

SIL Research conducts a representative National survey of Councils* to establish a series of benchmarks across a range of Council services. This allows ODC to compare their survey results against a National average (NZB).

The National survey data is collected throughout the year so that annual results can be presented without seasonal bias. The benchmarking results in this report are based on n=400 responses collected over 2023. The data is collected using a 1-10 scale; satisfaction percentages are aggregated 6-10 ratings.

Benchmarking results are reported at 95% confidence level +/- 4-5%.

**Excludes Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.*

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

When reading this report, it is important to note that factors such as the timing of unusual or one-off events can affect the ratings that residents give, particularly if they occur close to the time when the survey data is being gathered.

Factors that may have influenced public perception of the Council's performance in 2023-24 include:

Key Q1 (May - August 2023) factors:

1. In July 2023, the Council sought feedback on its Interim Speed Management Plan to make travelling around the district safer for everyone. The Interim Plan will allow Council to make some more immediate safety changes while the wider Bay of Plenty Regional Speed Management Plan is still under development. Changes in the Interim Plan initially focus on areas used by many of the most vulnerable road users around schools, kura, several marae and high pedestrian use areas with other risk factors like parking, cyclists and mixed use.
2. In late July 2023, a blessing was held on the site of Ōpōtiki's new harbour to mark the place where water now flows between the 450m long groynes out to sea. This is the start of the process of moving the river mouth from its current location near the Waiotahi Drifts subdivision, to its new location between the constructed seawalls further east.
3. In early August 2023, the Council began work on the latest long-term planning document covering Council's activities for the next 10 years. Opportunities were being planned for

community engagement and feedback on future Council priorities and investment.

4. In mid-August 2023, Council began developing a new Masterplan for the Waihou Bay coastal area to help improve facilities, access, and community use of the waterfront area. This was in response to the increasing popularity of the area with visitors, with reports of congestion, parking shortages and environmental concerns around the boat ramp, despite the benefits of increased visitor business and spending in the area. The masterplan is designed to ensure that future development progresses in line with community preferences.

Key Q2 factors (August – October 2023):

5. In September 2023, the community celebrated the grand opening of its new harbour development, with the Ōpōtiki channel being open for recreational boats. Construction continued on the harbour walls, and Pohonui dredging between the walls and river closure.
6. Later in September, Ōpōtiki District was impacted by a severe rain event, which caused road closures, surface flooding, put pressure on the District's wastewater and stormwater networks, and led to residents on Te Kaha water supply on a boil water notice due to a positive reading of E. coli. The Ōpōtiki Resource Recovery Centre was closed on September 28th due to flooding blocking the entrance.
7. The 2023 New Zealand general election took place on October 14, 2023, with advance voting beginning at the start of October. Nationwide political campaigns were conducted throughout the country before the election. General elections can have a significant impact on people's perceptions of local council

services, shaping residents' views regarding the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by their local councils.

Key Q3 factors (November 2023 – January 2024):

8. Between November 2023 and January 2024, the Council opened a public consultation on their draft Revenue and Financing Policy, as part of the Long Term Plan process. The policy included a new activity structure to reflect the activities and services Council delivers more accurately, and to reflect the funding mechanisms of each activity/service.

Key Q4 factors (February – April 2024):

9. In February 2024, the changes to items accepted for recycling (as part of the Ministry for the Environment's Standardising Kerbside strategy) were announced. The main change for Ōpōtiki recyclers was that only plastics 1, 2 and 5 would be accepted in plastic recycling and no soft plastics or mixed plastics would be collected. In the tin crate, aerosol containers would no longer be collected.
10. In March 2024, the Council consulted with the community on the Council structure and the way councillors are elected (the Representation Review). In addition, Council voted in 2023 to implement Māori wards in 2023 for the 2025 election. The

consultation focused on the number of councillors, whether to have one or more General wards, whether to have one or more Māori wards, ward boundaries, and community boards.

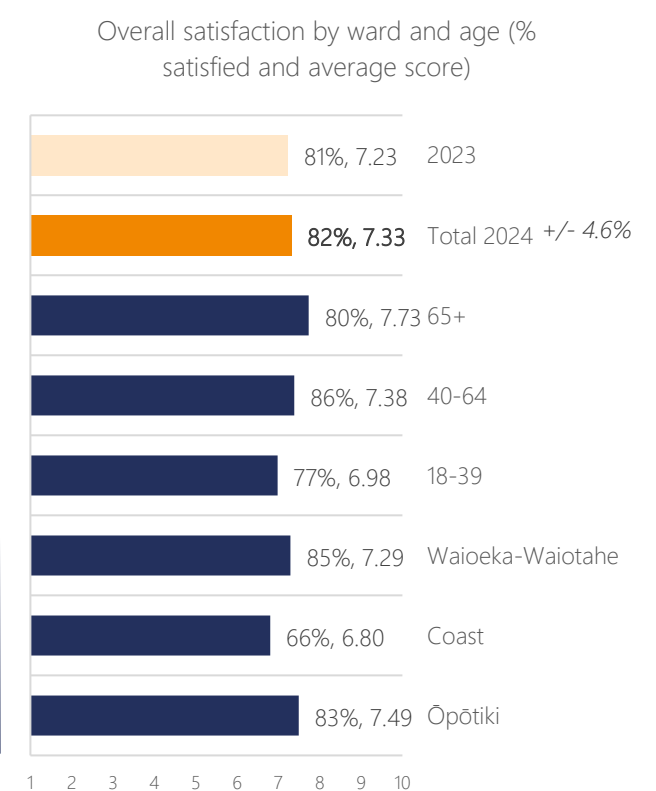
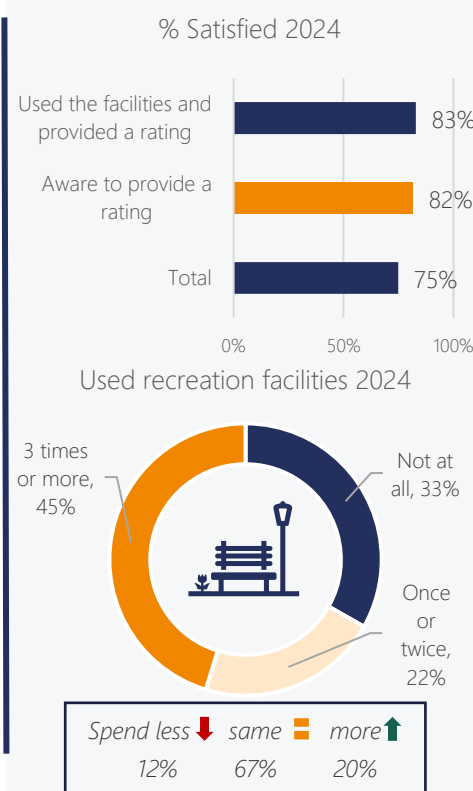
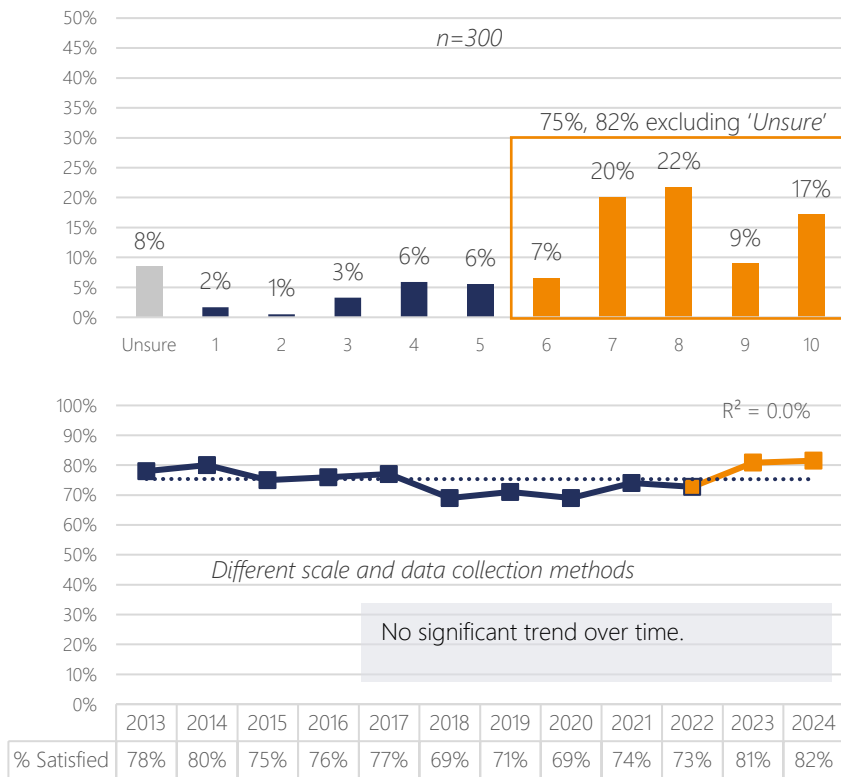
11. Earlier in 2024, suggested reductions to library services sparked debate among Ōpōtiki residents concerned about possible outcomes of reduced service. The Council had indicated cuts to a range of services - including the library, i-Site, event funding and parks and reserves - to mitigate planned rates rises in the forthcoming 2024-34 Long Term Plan. Residents expressed concern that service cuts would limit library access to important local cultural information and for the least resourced community members. In response to public feedback, the Council meeting in March saw councillors direct staff to find savings in other areas in order to reduce the impact on these public services.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – recreation facilities

KPI target **75%**
achieved

- In 2024, 82% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with their experience or knowledge of recreation facilities (on average, 7.3 out of 10). After increasing in 2023, satisfaction remained high in 2024. Collectively, recreation facilities were the second-highest rated services in 2024.
- More respondents stated using recreation facilities often (3 or more times per quarter) in 2024 (45%) compared to 2023 (35%).
- Coast respondents continued to be the least satisfied with recreation facilities, mainly indicating the lack of such facilities in their area.
- No year-on-year differences were observed across age or ward demographic groups.
- Overall, two-thirds of residents preferred seeing the same level of Council funds spent on recreation facilities (67%).



Respondents were asked to rate Council's provision of recreation facilities (e.g. the Skatepark and playground). Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



RECREATION FACILITIES – community feedback

Good facilities / general positive comments - 46%
Good playgrounds / facilities for children - 42%
Skate park good / well used - 35%
Good improvements / upgrades - 16%
Upgrades / improvements / maintenance needed - 11%
Rose gardens / parks good - 7%

Not enough / more needed (general) - 42%
More needed for children / youth - 32%
Upgrades / improvements / maintenance needed - 30%
Concerns about costs / suitability - 6%
Other - 6%
Swimming pool / indoor pool needed - 2%

Top reasons for satisfaction with recreation facilities

23% of all respondents provided a comment

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with recreation facilities

12% of all respondents provided a comment

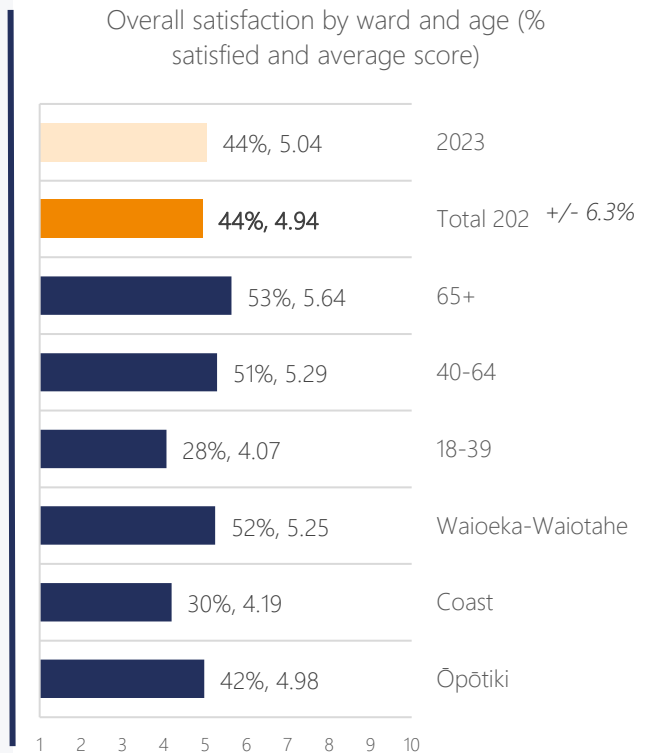
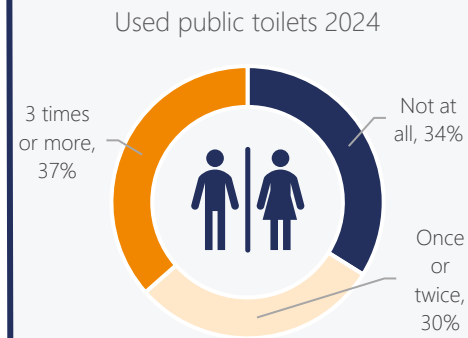
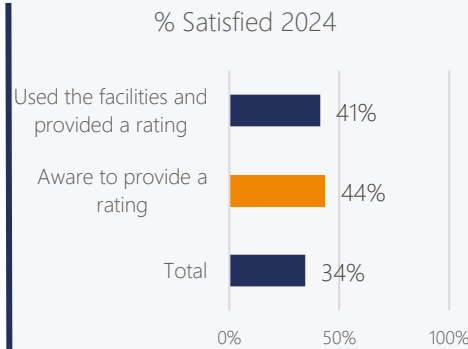
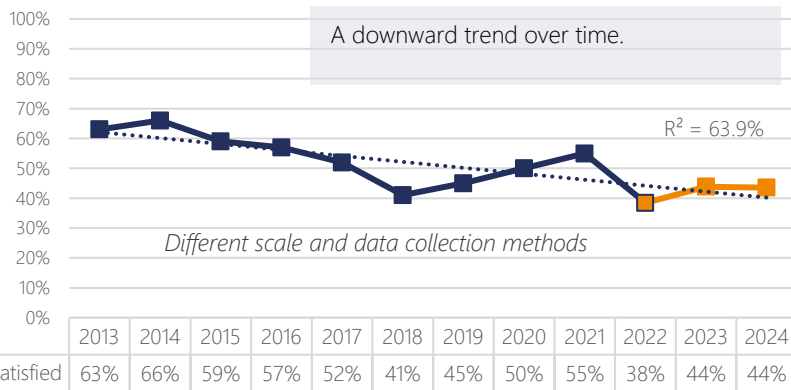
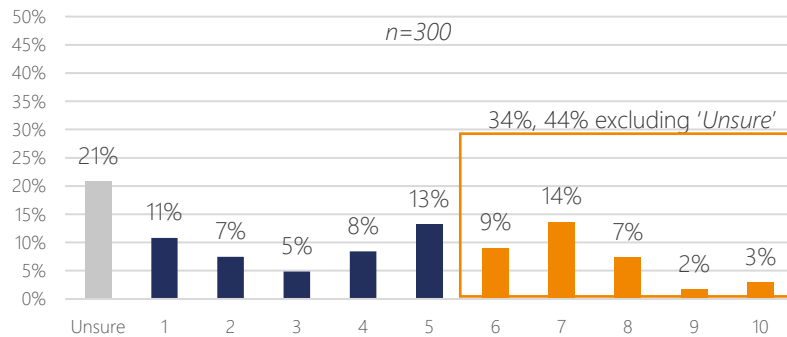
Provision of recreation facilities – open-ended comments sorted into categories.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – public toilets

KPI target **60%**
below

- 44% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with their experience or knowledge of public toilets (on average, 5.0 out of 10) – similar to 2023.
- Fewer Coast respondents were satisfied with public toilets (30%), a decline compared to 49% in 2023.
- 66% of respondents reported using public toilets (up from 59% in 2023).
- There were significant differences by age in 2024, with younger respondents (aged 18-39) being the least satisfied (28%). Younger respondents were also more likely to use public toilets (79%) compared to older respondents.
- The dissatisfaction with public toilets appeared to involve issues of cleanliness, maintenance, and hygiene. Several locations of public toilets were specifically mentioned in the comments (e.g. Hikuwai, Pipi Beds, Te Kaha, Church Street, Woodlands Park).



Respondents were asked to rate Council's provision of public toilets (e.g. cleanliness and quality). Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



PUBLIC TOILETS – community feedback

Clean / good standard – 78%

Other – 7%

Dirty / need cleaning - 85%

Need fixing / upgrading / maintenance - 30%

Not enough / need more - 13%

Should be manned / more open hours - 11%

Top reasons for satisfaction with public toilets

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with public toilets

5% of respondents provided a comment

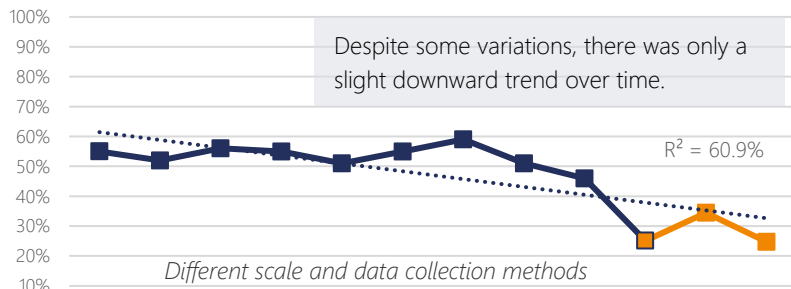
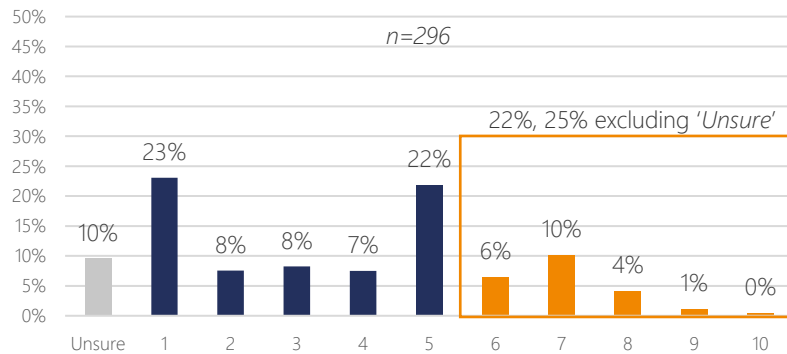
36% of respondents provided a comment

Provision of public toilets – open-ended comments sorted into categories.

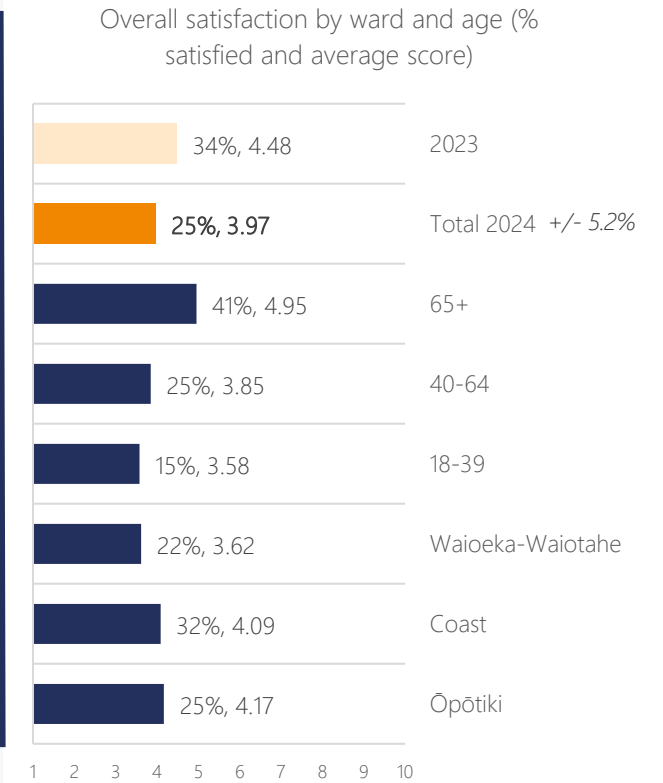
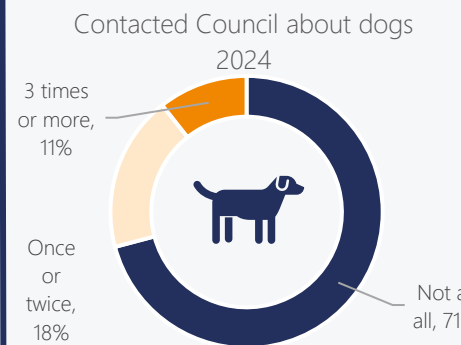
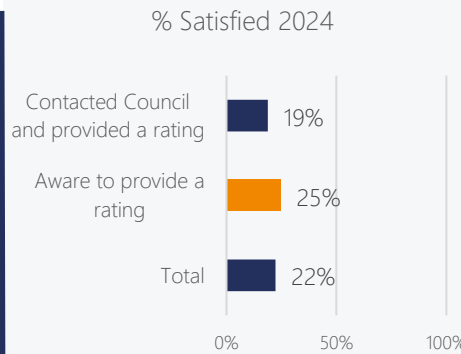


SERVICES AND FACILITIES – dog control

- 25% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with their experience or knowledge of dog control (on average, 4.0 out of 10). This result was down compared to 2023, but on par with 2022.
- Waioeka-Waiotaha respondents, and respondents aged under 65, provided lower ratings compared to previous year.
- 23% of respondents provided the lowest rating (1 out of 10) – the most frequent response.
- Respondents aged under 65 were less satisfied with the service; although higher, only 41% of respondents aged 65+ were satisfied with dog control.
- Only a small proportion of respondents indicated contacting the Council about dogs in 2024 (29%, similar to 2023).
- Many respondents expressed concerns about the large number of roaming dogs, describing them as a nuisance, dangerous, and potentially aggressive.



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
% Satisfied	55%	52%	56%	55%	51%	55%	59%	51%	46%	25%	34%	25%



Respondents were asked to rate Council's dog control. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



DOG CONTROL – community feedback

Good service / no problem – 69%

Poor animal control service / no response / not effective – 31%

Unfair fines / registration fees / poor value – 16%

Always dogs roaming - 84%

Unsafe / bad reflection / impact on town - 23%

Poor animal control service / no response / not effective - 21%

Poor targeting / Responsible owners

/ easy dogs targeted - 10%

Unfair fines / registration fees / poor value - 3%

Other - 3%

Top reasons for satisfaction with dog control

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with dog control

2% of respondents provided a comment

47% of respondents provided a comment

Provision of dog control – open-ended comments sorted into categories.

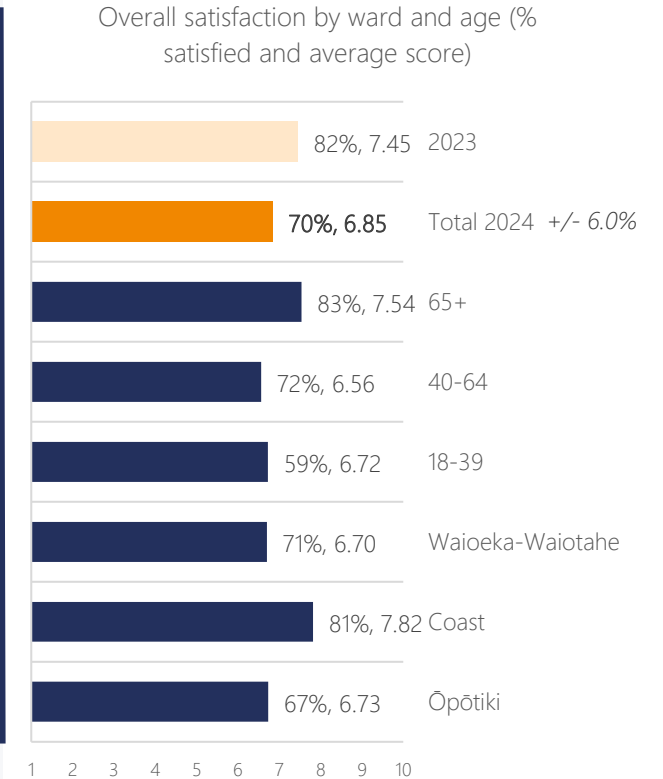
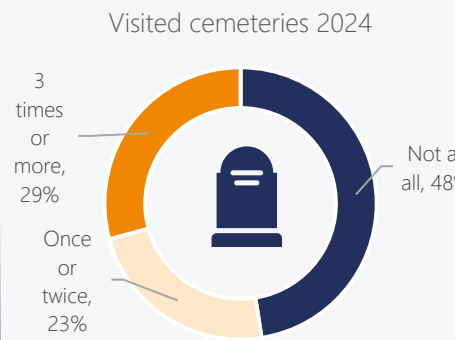
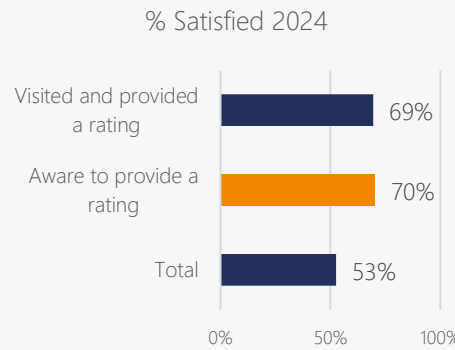
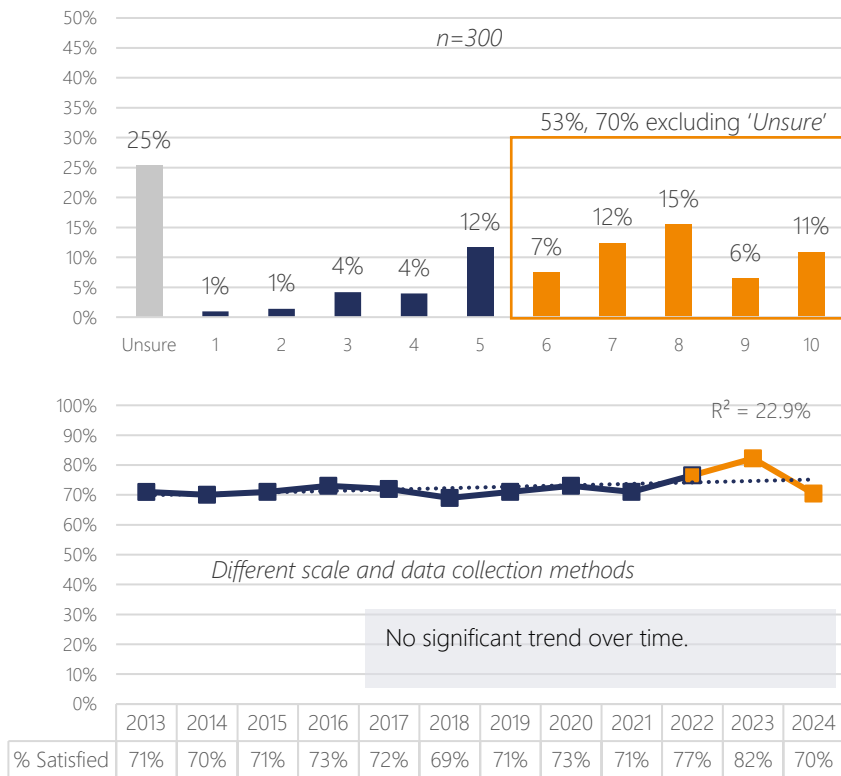


SERVICES AND FACILITIES – cemeteries

KPI target 70%
achieved

- 70% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with their experience or knowledge of cemeteries (on average, 6.9 out of 10). Satisfaction with cemeteries declined in 2024, but was on par with the historical average.
- The main year-on-year decline was observed amongst Waioeka-Waiotaha and younger respondents.

- Half of respondents (52%) recalled visiting a cemetery in the district (similar to 2023).
- More younger respondents (18-39) reported visiting a cemetery (66%); however, their satisfaction (59%) was lower compared to older respondents (65+).
- Generally, more respondents suggested required maintenance of cemeteries (e.g. look unkempt, lawns unmown, etc.).



Respondents were asked to rate Council's provision of cemeteries (e.g. maintenance and tidiness). Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



CEMETERIES – community feedback

Tidy / clean / well maintained – 93%
Other – 5%
Good staff – 4%

Not tidy / need maintenance - 75%
Other - 23%

Top reasons for satisfaction with cemeteries

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with cemeteries

20% of respondents provided a comment

13% of respondents provided a comment

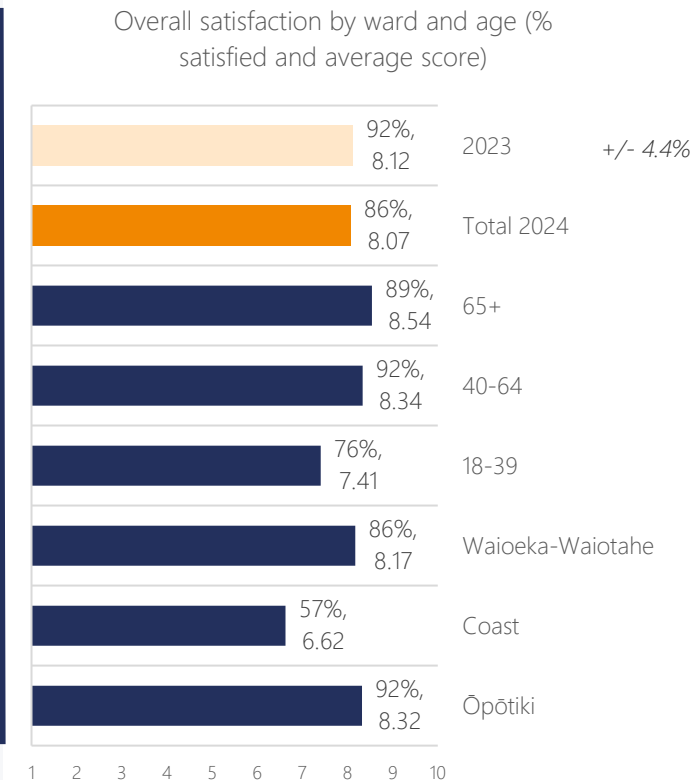
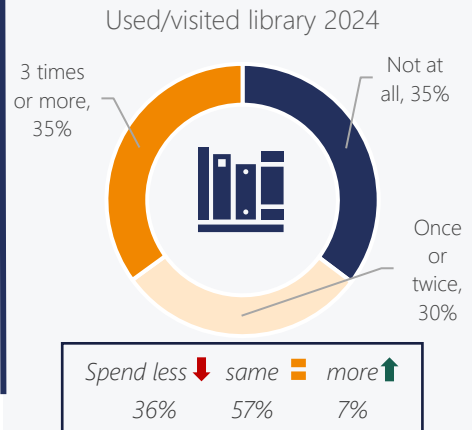
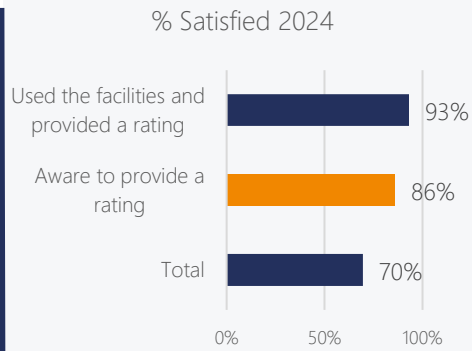
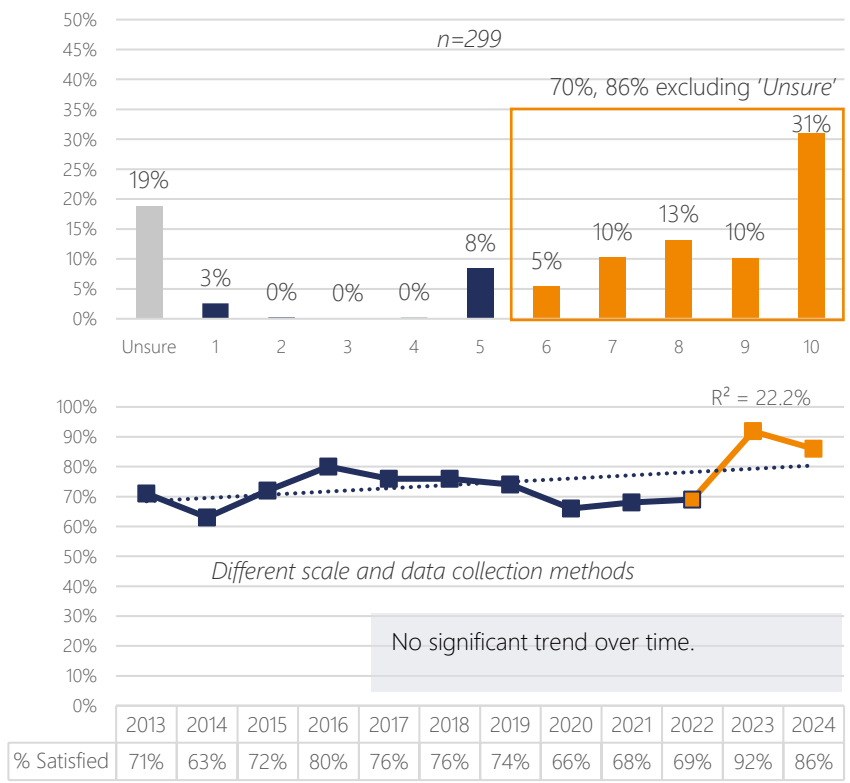
Provision of cemeteries – open-ended comments sorted into categories.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – library services

KPI target **85%**
achieved

- Collectively, library services were the highest rated in 2024. After peaking in 2023, satisfaction with libraries declined slightly, but remained highly positive. 86% of respondents were satisfied with library services, with 31% providing the highest rating (10-out-of-10) in 2024.
- Satisfaction with library services was lower amongst Coast respondents, with additional year-on-year decline (57% in 2024 vs. 79% in 2023).
- 65% of respondents reported visiting the library facility or using library services (up from 58% in 2023). Satisfaction was higher among users.
- Younger respondents (18-39) tended to be less satisfied with library services (76%); however, 68% still stated using the library in 2024.
- Out of all services, the library remained the most selected area for lower Council spending. However, more respondents preferred maintaining the same level of spending in this area in 2024. Some respondents disapproved of Council's initial public discussion to reduce library hours and services.



Respondents were asked to rate Council's district library facilities and services. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



LIBRARY SERVICES – community feedback

Good facility / building / general satisfaction - 89%

Good staff - 36%

Good resources / Good for children - 20%

Other - 6%

Brand new - 5%

Deserves more funding / hours / support - 4%

Top reasons for satisfaction with library services

47% of respondents provided a comment

Limited open hours / access - 55%

Poorly used / utilised / too big - 24%

Other - 21%

Concerns about cost / original library fine - 16%

Staff issues / too many / poor service - 10%

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with library services

3% of respondents provided a comment

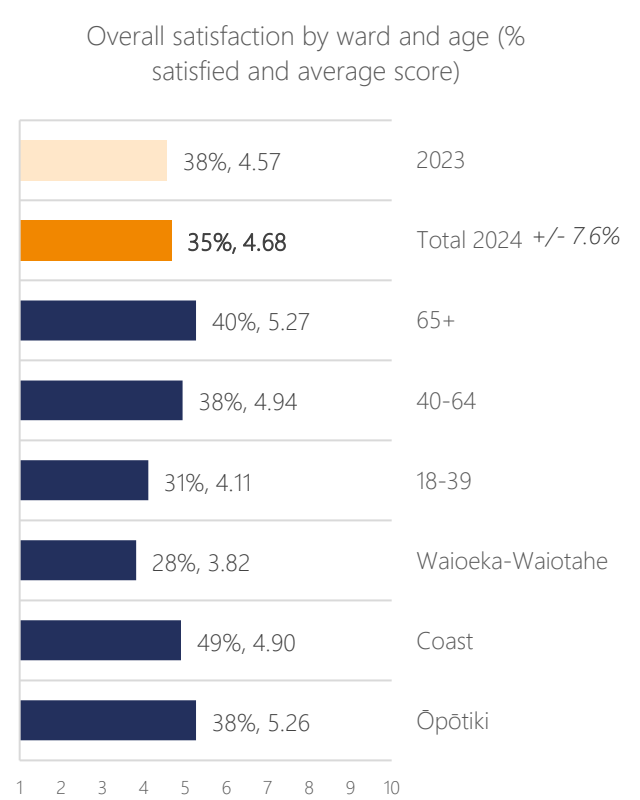
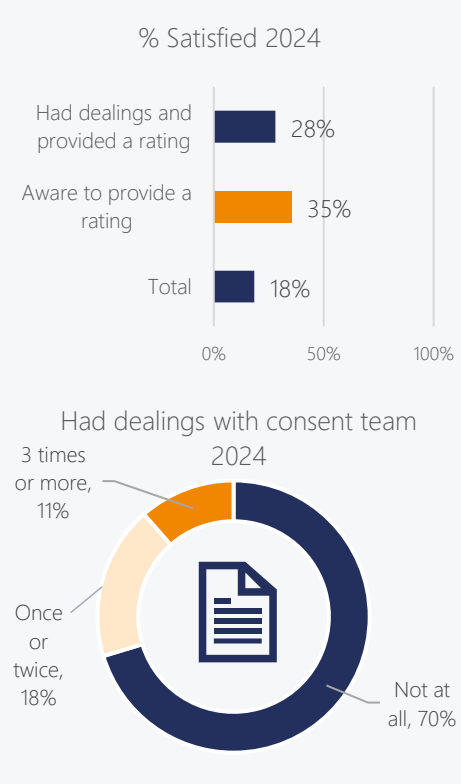
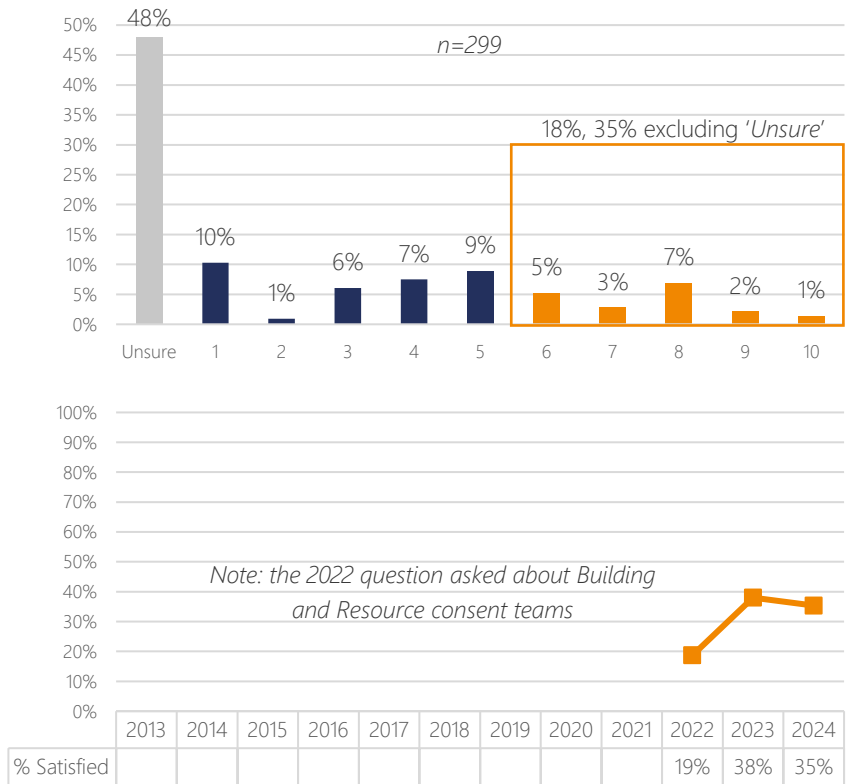
Provision of public libraries and library services – open-ended comments sorted into categories.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – building consent team

KPI target 70%
below

- 35% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with their experience or knowledge of building consent services (on average, 4.7 out of 10). Overall satisfaction remained on par with 2023.
- Only a small proportion of respondents recalled dealing with the building consent team in 2024 (30%), and half of respondents (48%) could not provide a rating due to lack of knowledge. Satisfaction was lower among service users.
- Satisfaction with building consents was lower amongst younger respondents (18-39); this same group was also more likely to report dealing with the building consents team in 2024 (41%).
- Open-ended comments suggested that the process of obtaining consents in Ōpōtiki was slow and costly.



Respondents were asked to rate Council's building consents team. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



BUILDING CONSENT TEAM – community feedback

Good service – 94%

Not sure – 6%

Top reasons for satisfaction with building consents

6% of respondents provided a comment

Process too slow - 57%

Too much red tape / bureaucracy - 39%

Poor staff / communication - 33%

Costs - 12%

Need more staff / resources - 6%

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with building consents

43% of respondents provided a comment

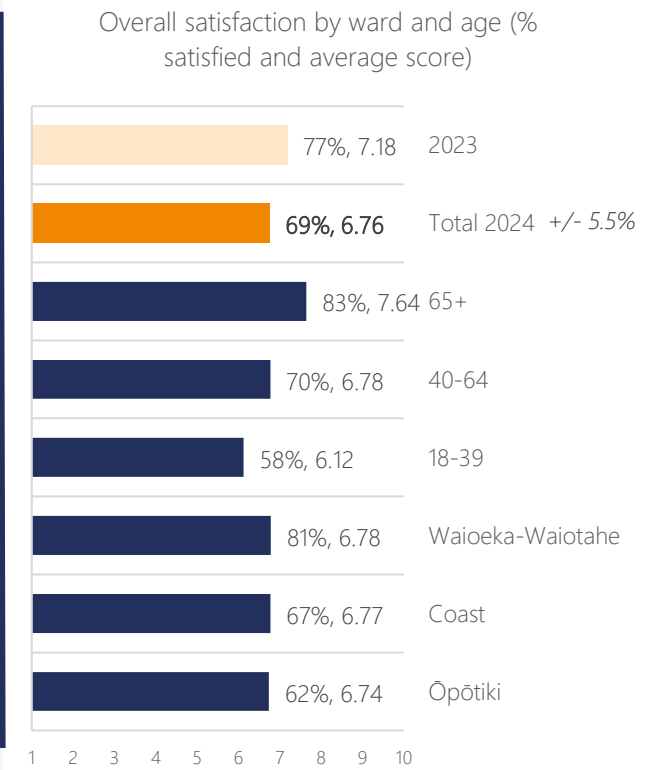
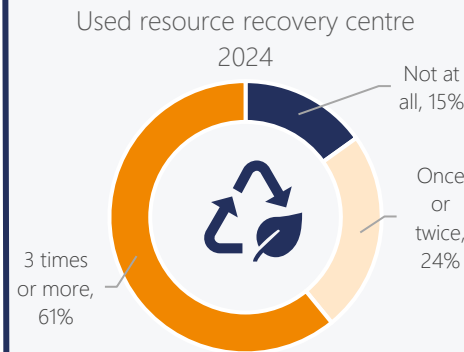
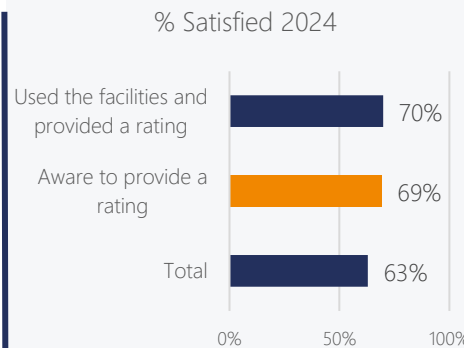
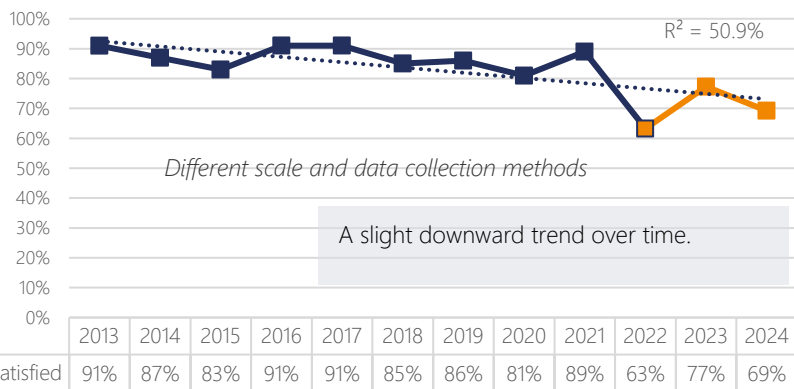
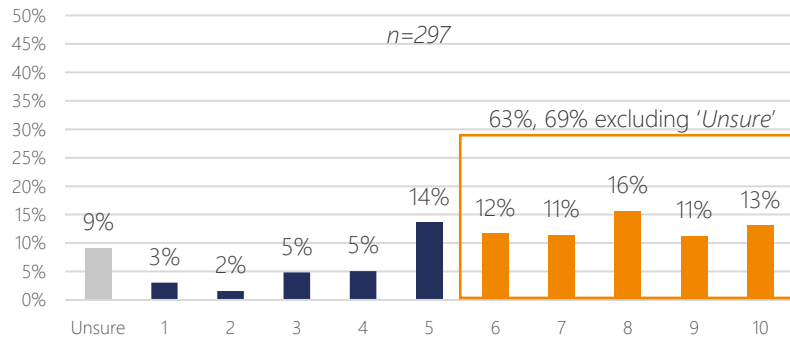
Provision of building consents – open-ended comments sorted into categories.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – resource recovery centre

KPI target **80%**
below

- 69% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with their experience or knowledge of Resource Recovery Centre (on average, 6.8 out of 10).
- Overall satisfaction declined in 2024 (although remaining above 2022 levels), with an overall downward trend over time.
- The main year-on-year decline was observed in Coast and Ōpōtiki wards, and among younger respondents (18-39).
- 85% of respondents reported using these facilities in 2024; 91% of respondents aged under 65 were among facility users. At the same time, younger respondents (18-39) were the least satisfied in 2024.
- Many users expressed frustration over the high cost of using the facility, especially considering they already pay rates. Complaints also included inconsistent prices for similar loads depending on the attendant. Some respondents were particularly dissatisfied with the increased fees.



Respondents were asked to rate Council's Resource Recovery Centres. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRE – community feedback

Good facility / service - 82%

Good staff - 42%

Improvements needed - 14%

Reasonable charges - 13%

Concerns about costs / inconsistent charges - 75%

Improvements needed - 42%

Poor service - 24%

Top reasons for satisfaction with Resource Recovery Centre

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with Resource Recovery Centre

24% of respondents provided a comment

14% of respondents provided a comment

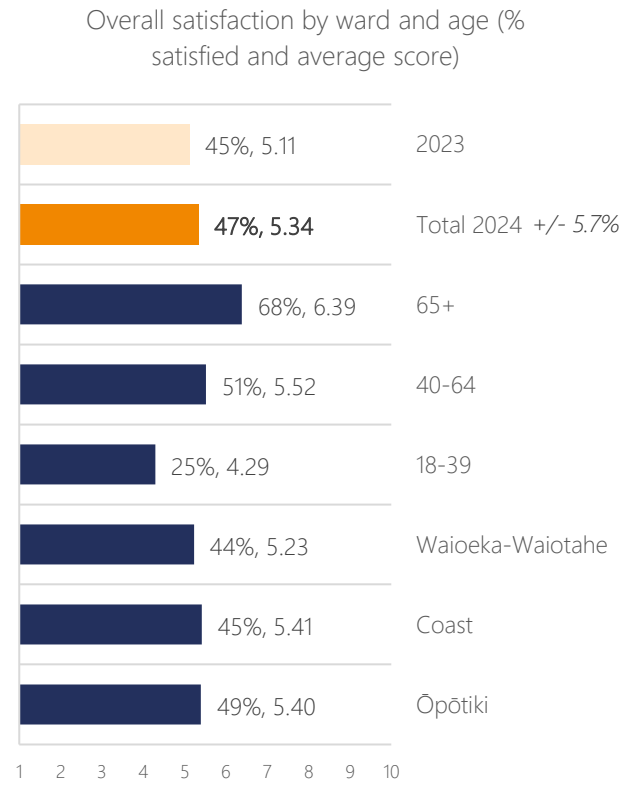
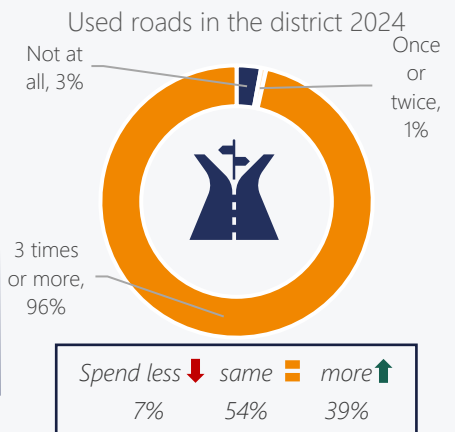
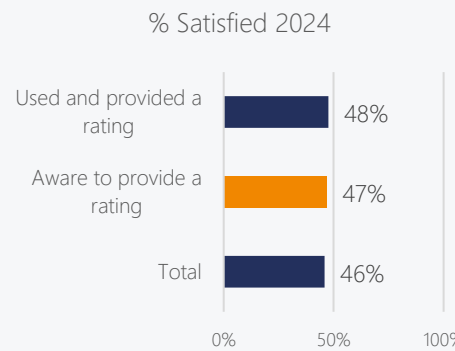
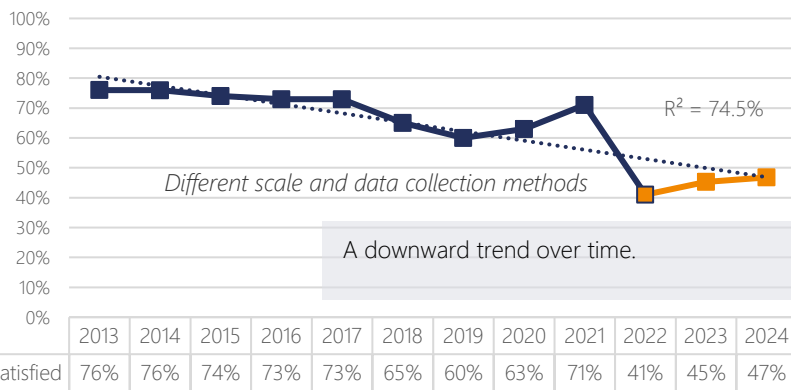
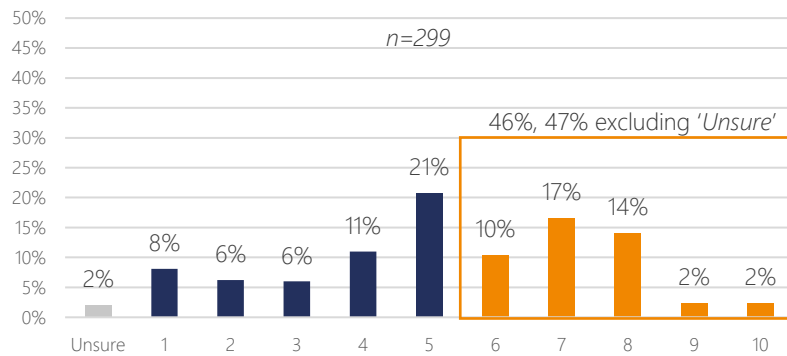
Provision of Resource Recovery Centre – open-ended comments sorted into categories.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – safety of district roads

KPI target 80%
below

- 47% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with safety of district roads (on average, 5.3 out of 10); most respondents (97%) indicated using roads in the district.
- Satisfaction with road safety remained consistent in the past 3 years.
- Open-ended comments suggested that roads in the area require better maintenance, with a need for urgent Council attention and improvements to address potholes and temporary repairs.
- Satisfaction varied by age. Respondents aged under 65 tended to be less satisfied (especially those aged 18-39), compared to older respondents (similar to 2023).
- Roads were residents' most noted area for more Council spending (39%); however, fewer respondents preferred increased Council spending in this area compared to 2023.



Respondents were asked to rate safety of the district's roads (excluding state highways). Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



SAFETY OF DISTRICT ROADS – community feedback

Good condition / service – 79%

Other – 21%

Top reasons for satisfaction with road safety

4% of respondents provided a comment

Potholes - 46%

Poor quality / sealing / repairs - 37%

Poor street / footpath maintenance - 34%

Speeding / lack of speed reduction - 23%

Unsafe - 19%

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with road safety

28% of respondents provided a comment

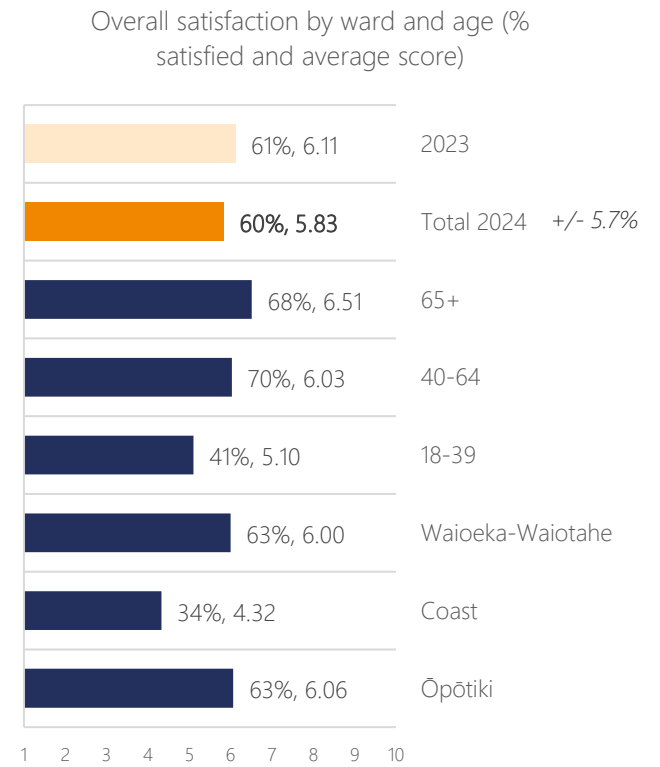
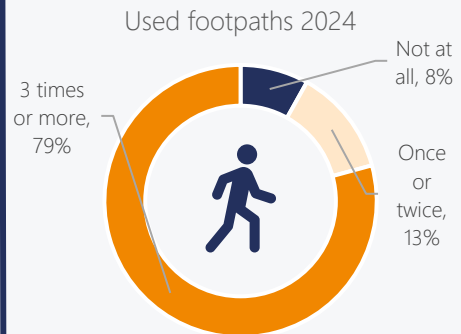
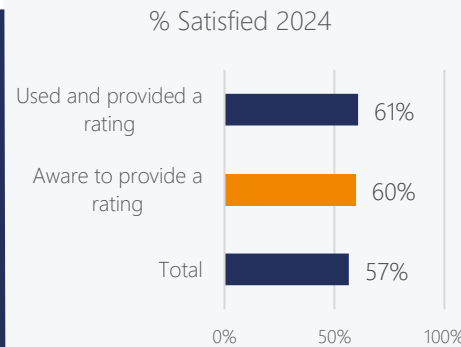
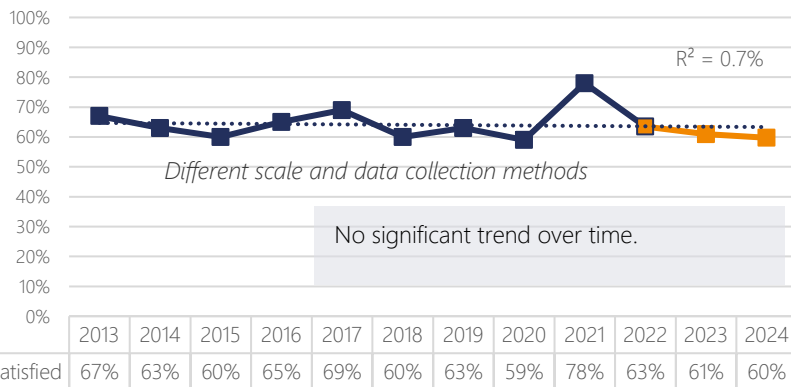
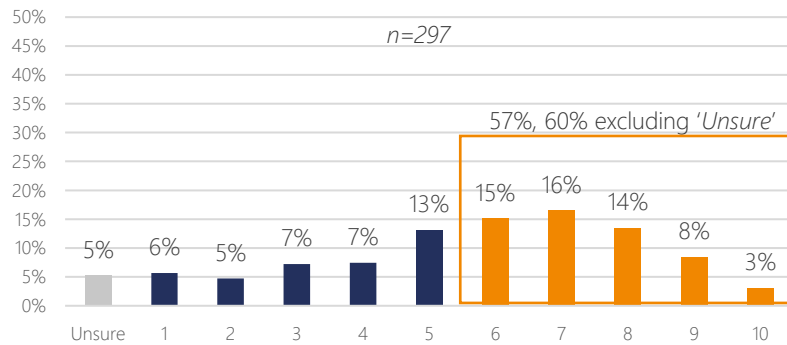
Road safety – open-ended comments sorted into categories.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – footpaths

KPI target **70%**
below

- 60% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with footpaths in the district (on average, 5.8 out of 10); most respondents (92%) indicated using footpaths in 2024.
- Satisfaction with footpaths remained consistent in the past 3 years.
- The comments reflected on a need for comprehensive planning, maintenance, and investment in footpath infrastructure to ensure safety, accessibility, and usability for all residents.
- Respondents highlighted issues with the condition and maintenance of existing footpaths. Common complaints included uneven surfaces, cracks, overgrowth, and insufficient cleaning.
- Fewer Coast ward respondents (69%) reported using footpaths compared to those from other areas in 2024. Consequently, satisfaction with footpaths was lowest in the Coast ward.
- Satisfaction with footpaths was also lower among younger respondents (18-39).



Respondents were asked to rate Council's provision of footpaths. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



FOOTPATHS – community feedback

Good / no issues / general satisfaction – 68%

New / improved / PGF funded paths good – 31%

Cleaning / maintenance needed - 41%

Repairs / upgrades needed - 41%

Lack of footpaths - 34%

Slippery / unsafe - 21%

Other - 4%

Top reasons for satisfaction with footpaths

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with footpaths

12% of respondents provided a comment

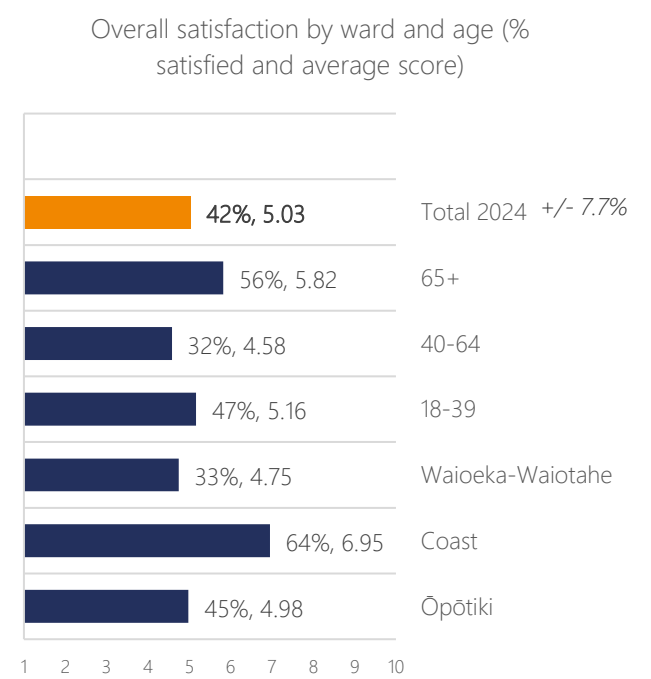
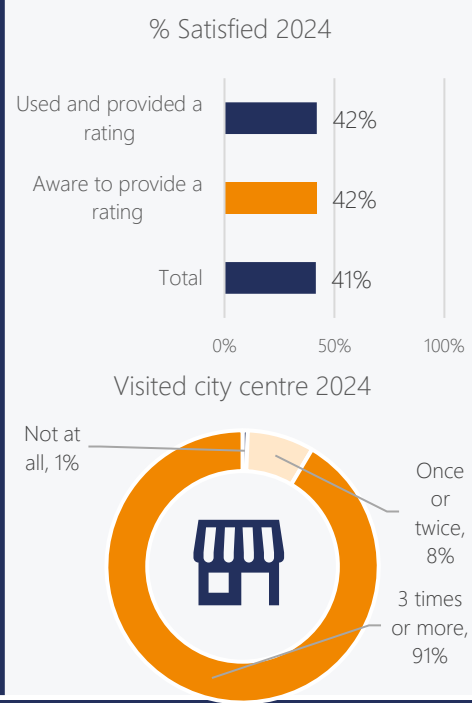
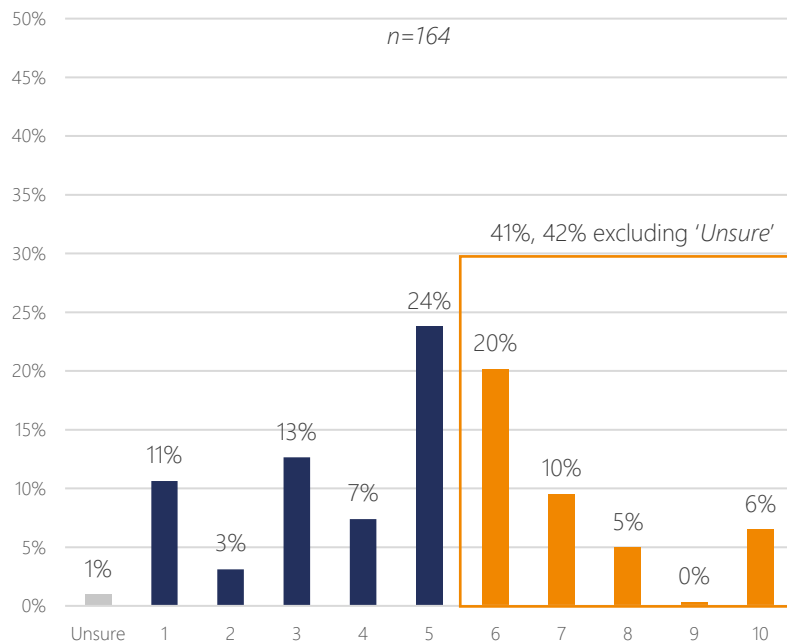
24% of respondents provided a comment

Provision of footpaths – open-ended comments sorted into categories.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – city centre

- A new question in 2024 asked respondents about Council’s developing and maintaining of a vibrant town centre.
 - 42% of respondents who provided a rating were satisfied with the city centre (on average, 5.8 out of 10); most respondents (99%) indicated visiting the city centre in 2024, with 91% doing so 3 or more times.
 - Satisfaction with the city centre was lower among respondents aged 40-64, and from Waioeka-Waiotaha and Ōpōtiki wards.
- The comments highlighted a strong desire for positive change and investment in the city centre to address issues of decline, maintenance, and safety concerns, and to create a more attractive and inviting environment for residents and visitors alike. Respondents expressed concerns about the deteriorating condition of the city centre, citing rundown buildings, unkempt streets, and outdated infrastructure. There was also widespread dissatisfaction with the high number of closed and empty shops in the city centre, detracting from the vibrancy and attractiveness of the area and contributing to a sense of decline.



Respondents were asked to rate Council’s developing and maintaining a vibrant town centre (as an enjoyable meeting place for all people). Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well
 New question in 2024 from Q3.



CITY CENTRE – community feedback

Nothing in particular / Good as is - 95%

New facilities / shops / services needed - 51%

CBD / buildings need reinvigoration / beautification - 71%

Empty shops / businesses closed - 24%

Tourist / visitor appeal / promotion - 20%

Crime / gangs / homeless - 16%

New facilities / shops / services needed - 16%

Infrastructure / footpaths - 14%

Business owner responsibility / should comply with standards - 14%

Top reasons for satisfaction with city centre

Top reasons for dissatisfaction with city centre

6% of respondents provided a comment

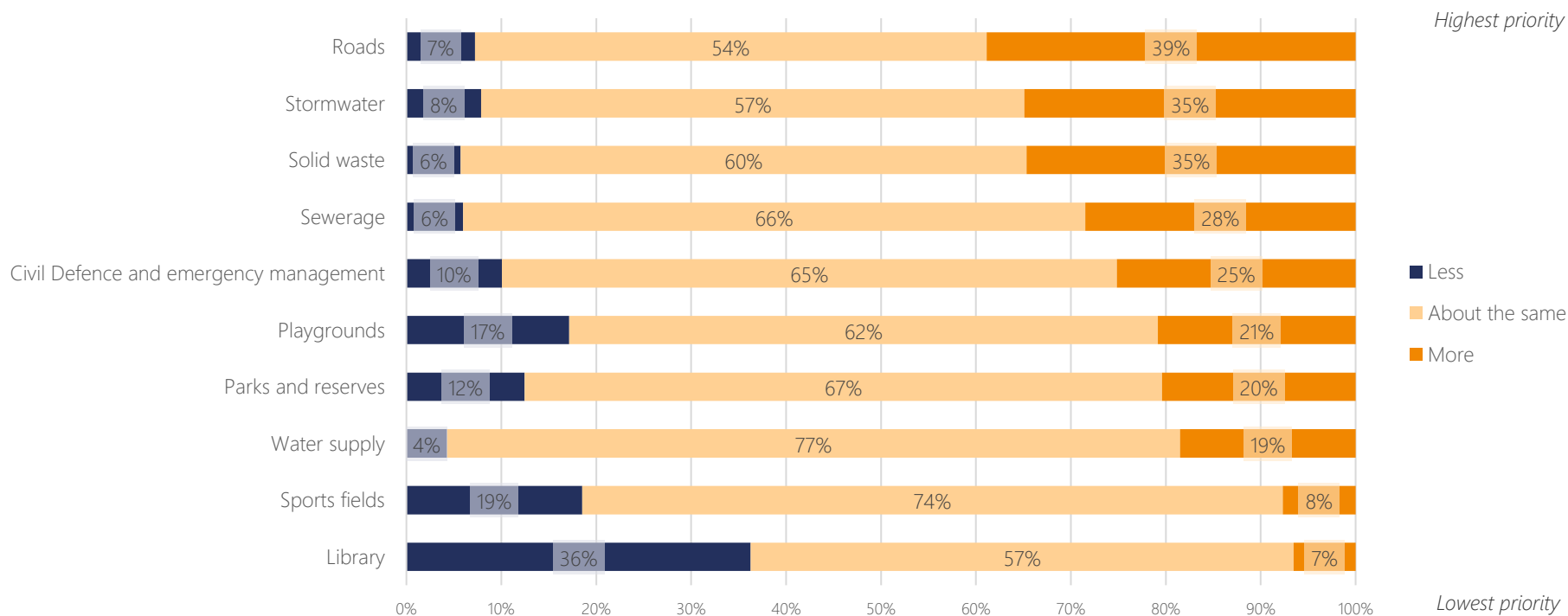
34% of respondents provided a comment

Developing and maintaining a vibrant town centre – open-ended comments sorted into categories.

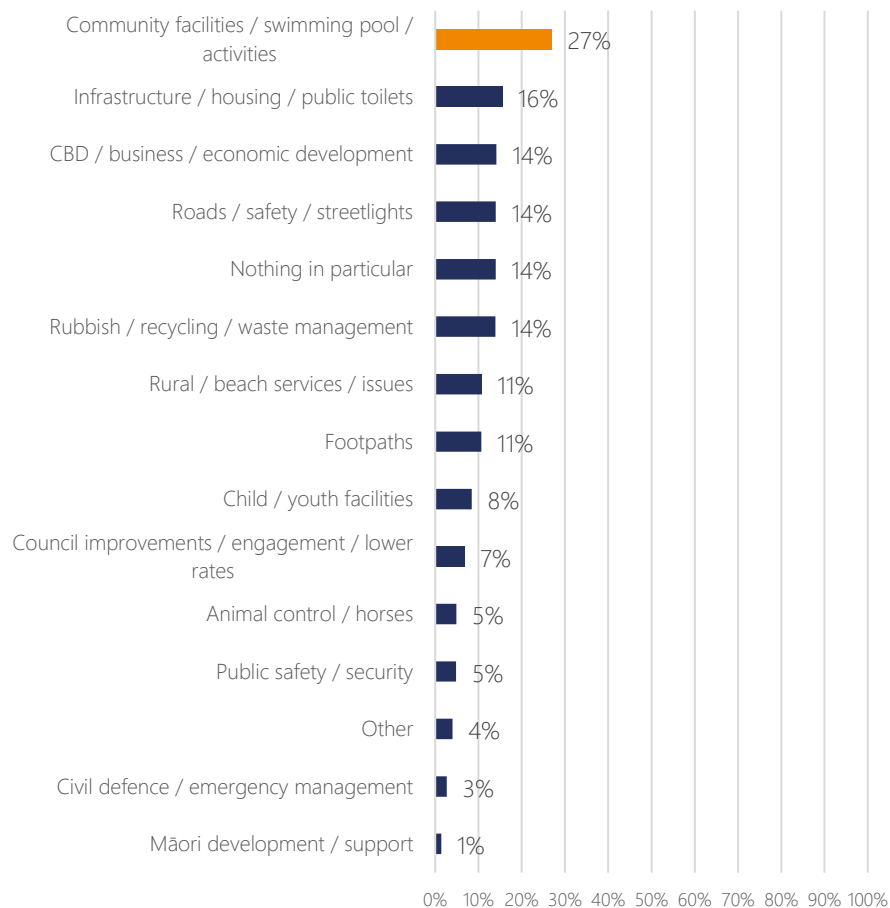


SERVICES AND FACILITIES – spending priorities

- In 2024, respondents were less inclined to suggest any increased Council spending, with the majority preferring to maintain the same spending across all services and facilities.
- The top preferred investment areas in 2024 continued to be roads (39%), waste management (35%) and stormwater (35%).
- Library facilities continued to be the area most identified for less Council spending, although more respondents preferred the same amount of spending.
- Respondents who were less satisfied with Council performance overall, emphasised spending on sports fields.
- Coast ward respondents were more likely to suggest more spending on roads (47%), parks (28%), sports fields (18%), playgrounds (34%), library (15%), and civil defence (47%).
- Respondents aged 40-64 were most likely to suggest spending more on core Council water services (sewerage 35%, stormwater 49% and water 29%), and waste management (41%). Respondents aged under 40 were more likely to suggest more spending on parks (32%) and playgrounds (36%).
- Respondents from rural areas were more likely to highlight spending on roads (47%).

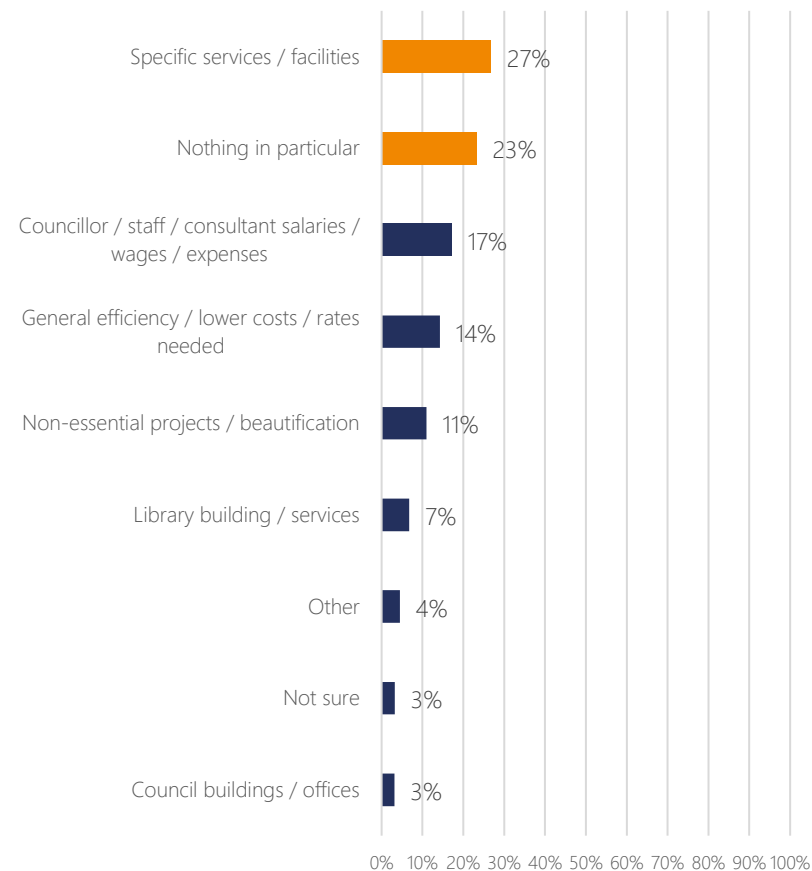


Spend more (free-text feedback sorted into categories) - 61%



Spend less (free-text feedback sorted into categories) -

38%



In addition, residents provided other free-text comments in relation to Council spending more (61%) and less (38%).

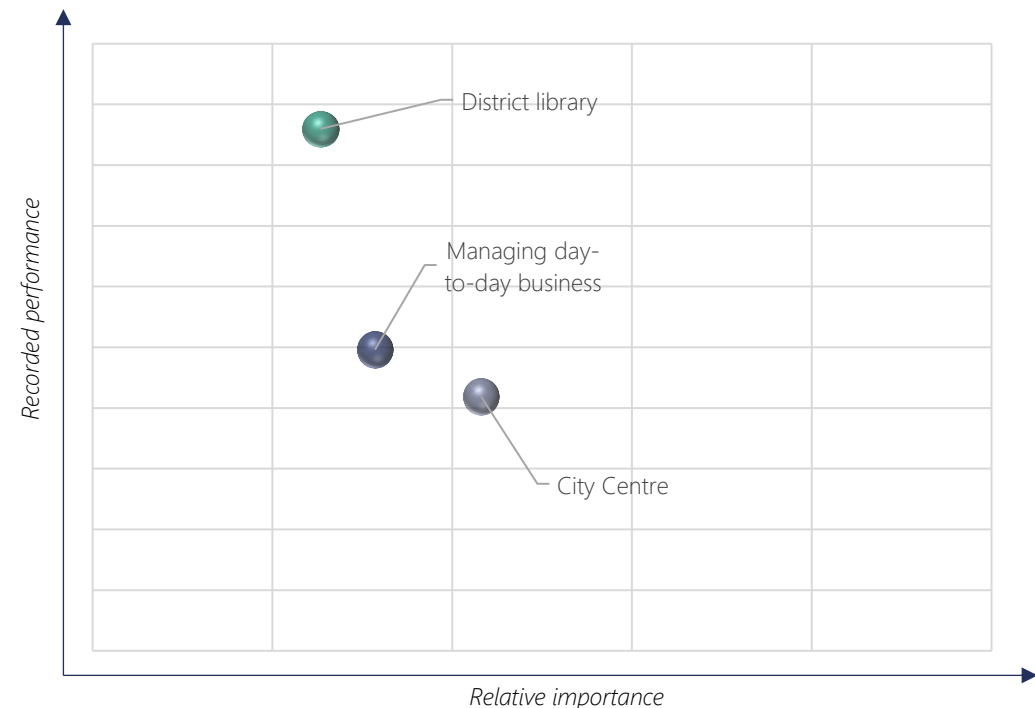
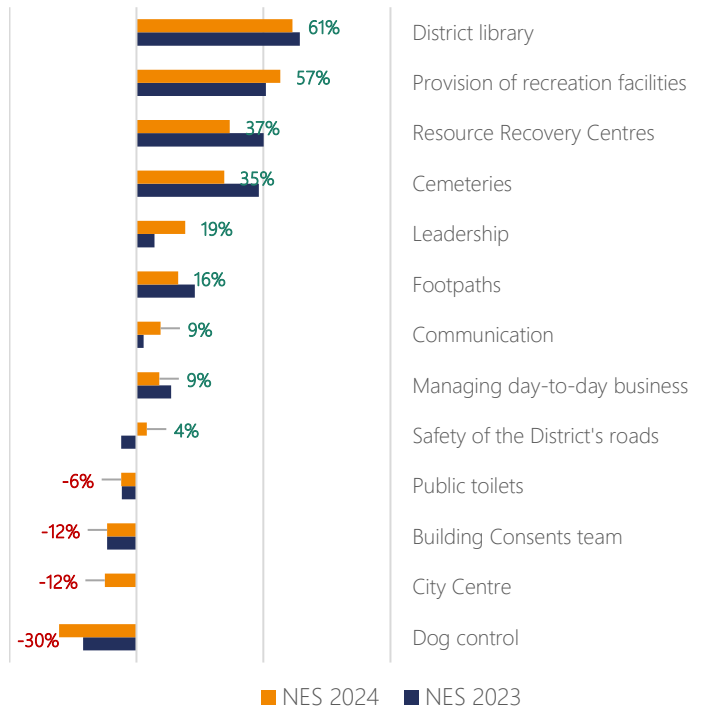
The top mentioned area for additional investment continued to be 'community facilities/activities' (e.g. sports facilities for children, community pools, 'Community/College Pool', 'Kids facilities', 'The coast could have a little more for playgrounds', 'The town needs a proper sports facility').

23% of respondents who commented on areas for less Council spending said 'nothing in particular'. The most mentioned area for lower spending was specific services and facilities (e.g. 'Social services is not a council function', 'Ensure that spend on facilities like sports are limited to reflect their use by whole community', 'Cycle paths', 'Harbour redevelopment').



SERVICES AND FACILITIES – potential improvements

- Based on Net Emotional Scores (NES), four areas with negative NES (i.e. more negative than positive perceptions) were identified within the community. The most negative scores were recorded for dog control (similar to last year).
- Roads, communication and leadership improved in 2024, with roads also resulting in a positive NES for the first time since 2022.
- Across services, the level of impact each service has on overall satisfaction with Council services and facilities varies.
- Three services demonstrated the highest relative importance or level of impact, one being the newly introduced attribute related to the city centre. Another area with significant room for improvement was the management of day-to-day business operations, particularly in terms of value for money.

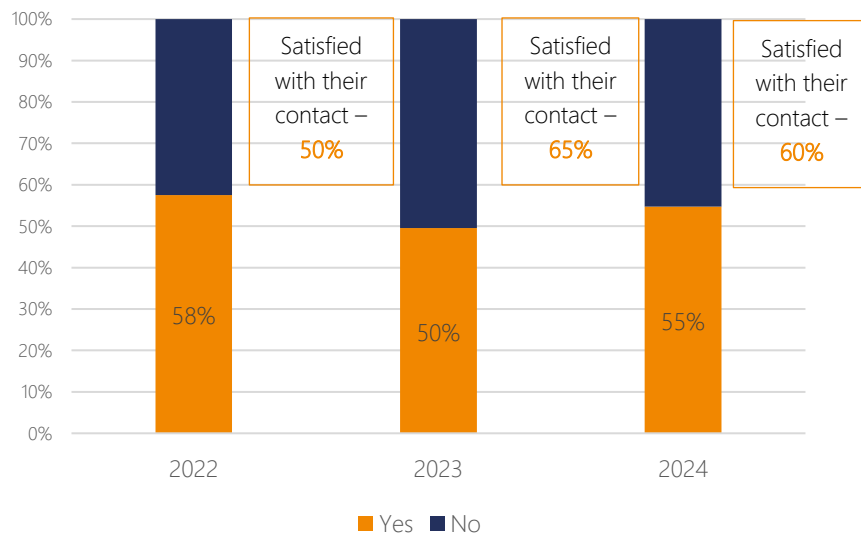




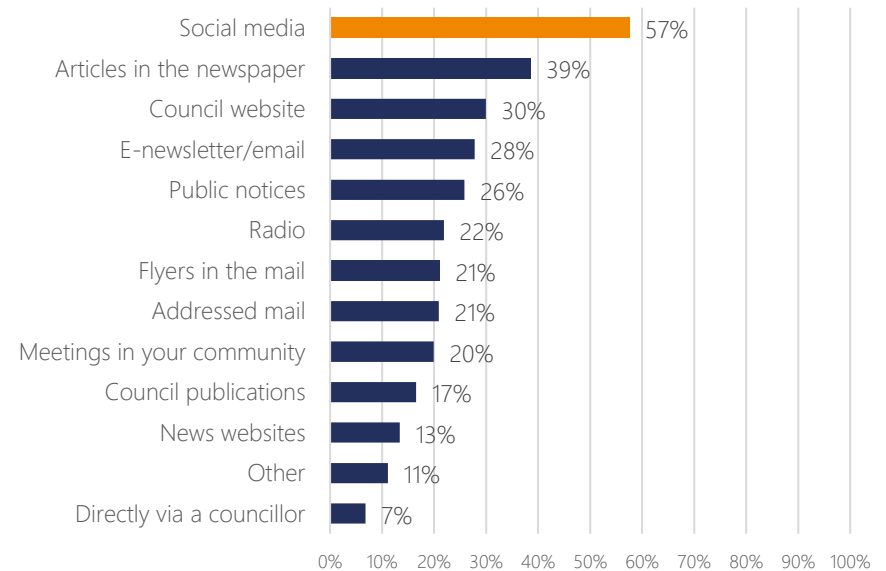
CONTACT WITH COUNCIL

- Overall, half of respondents (55%) in the last year stated they had contacted the Council (within the 3-month recall period each quarter).
- In 2024, 60% of respondents who had contacted the Council directly were satisfied with this contact (similar to 65% in 2023). Younger respondents (aged under 40) tended to be less satisfied (41%) compared to respondents aged 40+.
- 'Social media' was the most preferred method for Council communications, for over half of all respondents in 2024 (57%, up from 49% in 2023). The second most cited method was 'Articles in the newspaper' (39%).
- There was a large contrast in communication method preferences between younger and older residents, suggesting that a wide mix of channels was still necessary for adequate communication across the community.

Have made a direct contact with the Ōpōtiki District Council?



Preferred communication method



Preferred communication method
18-39 residents

- Social media – 87%
- Public notices – 38%
- Council website – 32%

Preferred communication method
40-64 residents

- Social media – 60%
- Articles in the newspaper – 38%
- Council website – 38%

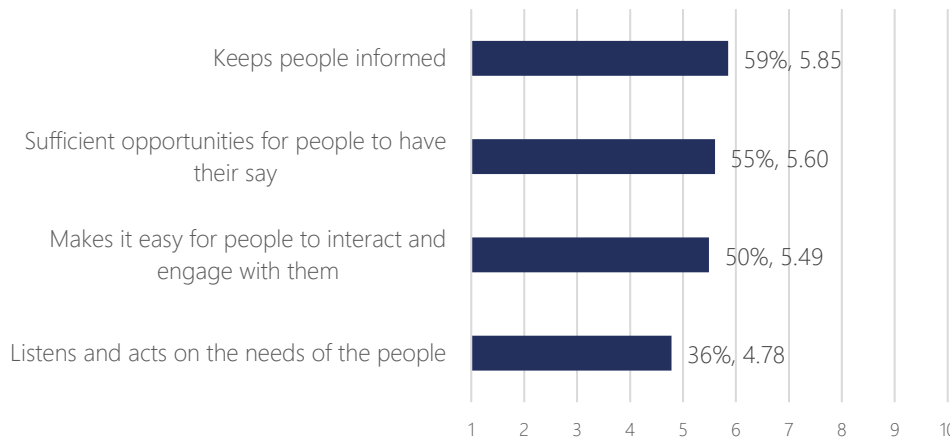
Preferred communication method
65+ residents

- Articles in the newspaper – 58%
- Flyers in the mail – 33%
- Email – 15%

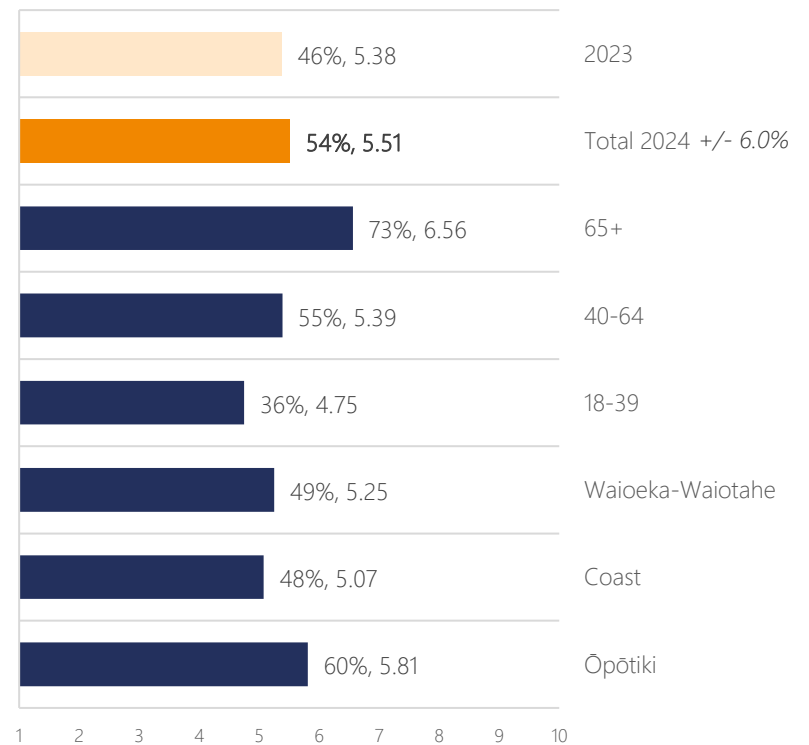


COMMUNICATION – communication with residents

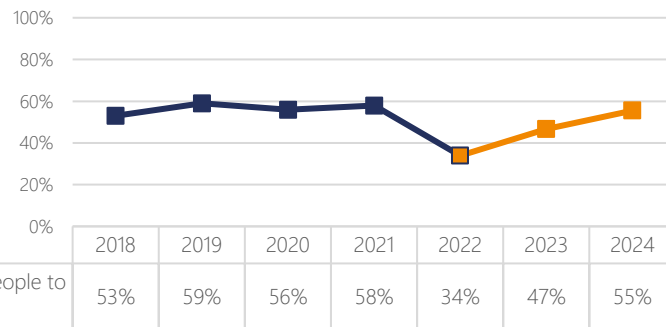
- Overall, 55% of respondents were satisfied with Council performance in communicating with residents – a continuous improvement since 2022.
- The key year-on-year improvement in communication was observed among older respondents (65+) and those from Ōpōtiki ward.
- Most communication attributes remained on par with 2023, with keeping people informed (59%) showing a slight improvement and being the best performing in 2024.
- Younger respondents generally provided lower ratings across all four attributes, expressing their lowest satisfaction for listening and acting on the needs of the people (8%).



Overall communication (% satisfied and average score)



KPI target 60%
Within margin of error



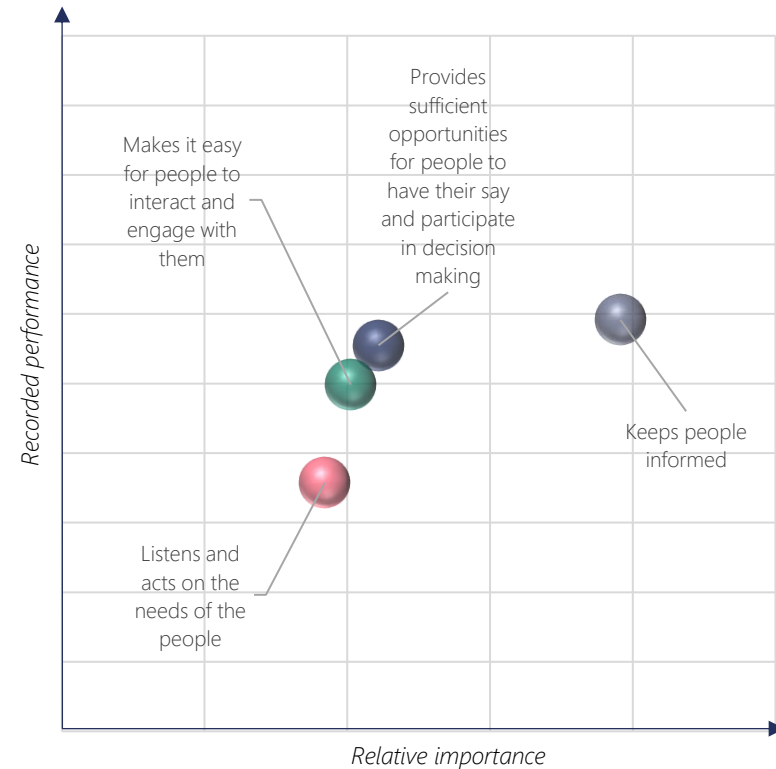
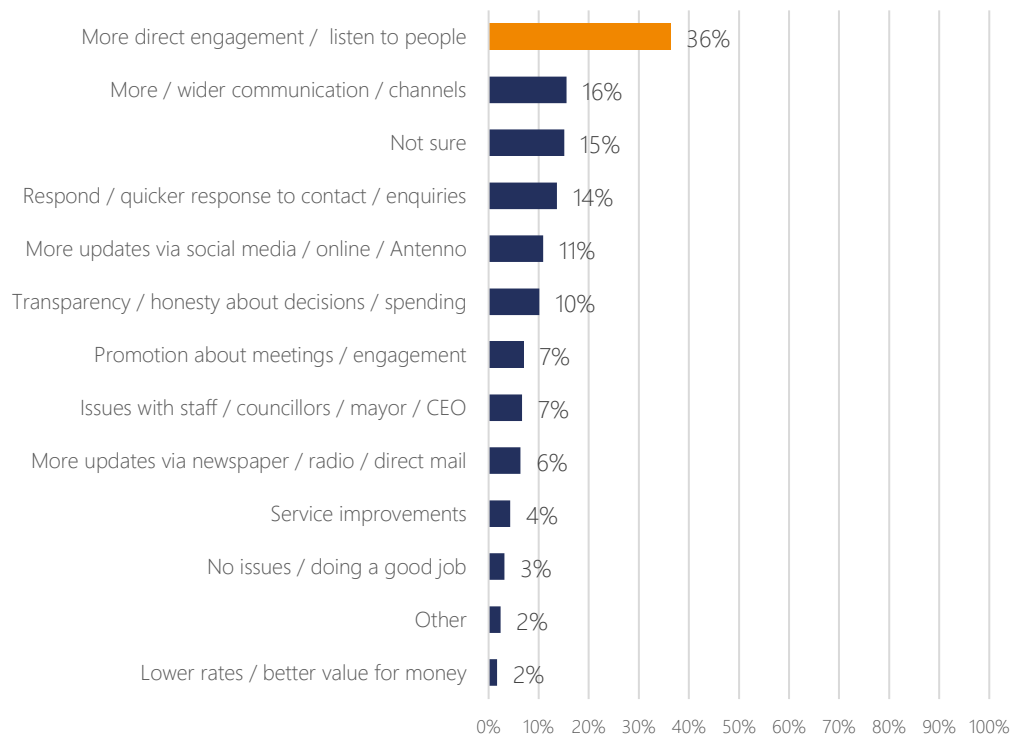
Respondents were asked to rate Council's performance in the communication areas. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



COMMUNICATION – improvements

- All four related statements significantly contributed to overall satisfaction with communication. One statement in particular exhibited greater improvement potential (*'listens and acts on the needs of the people'*).
- 69% of residents provided further comments in relation to communication improvements.
- The top cited improvement was *'more direct engagement/listen to people'*.
- There was a strong desire for more interaction between the Council and the community. Suggestions included more open forums, public meetings, and opportunities for residents to voice their concerns and suggestions, and for the council to actively listen to the concerns and suggestions of residents, and to act upon them accordingly. Timely responses to enquiries and feedback was particularly important for younger respondents.

Suggested communication improvements

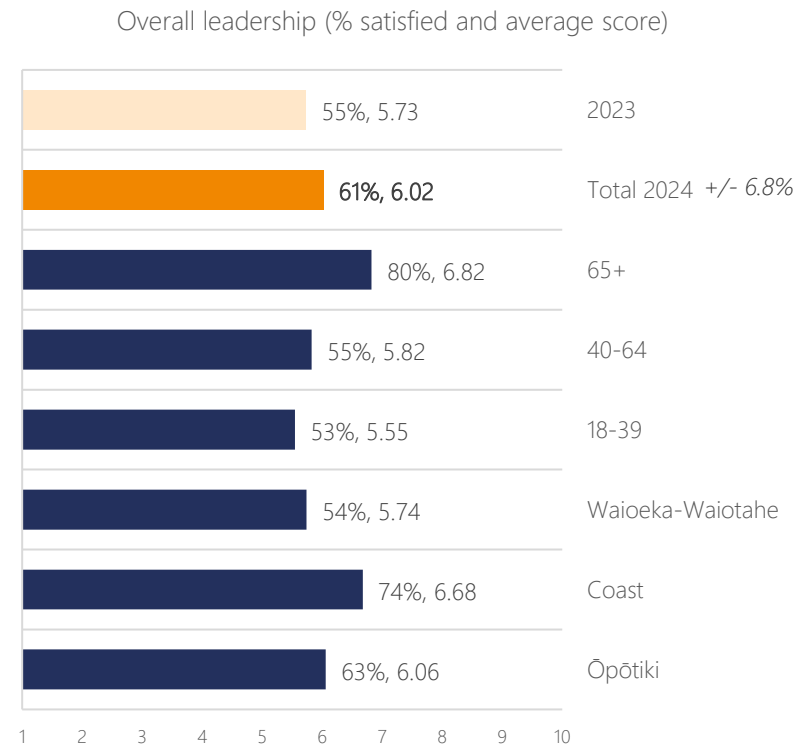
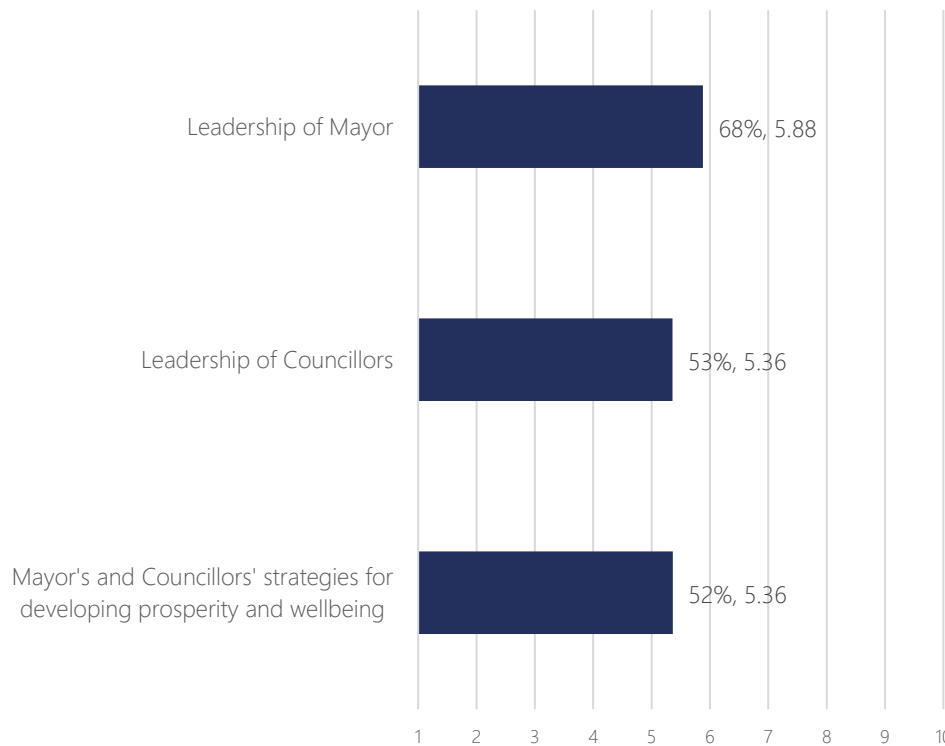




COUNCIL LEADERSHIP – performance

KPI target 75%
below

- In 2024, satisfaction with leadership of Mayor (68%) improved significantly, showing a continuous increase since 2022 (37%).
- Satisfaction with Councillors (53%) and prosperity and wellbeing strategies (52%) remained on par with 2023.
- As a result of the strong influence of Mayoral leadership perceptions, satisfaction with overall leadership also increased (61%) in 2024. However, this satisfaction was still lower among respondents aged under 65.

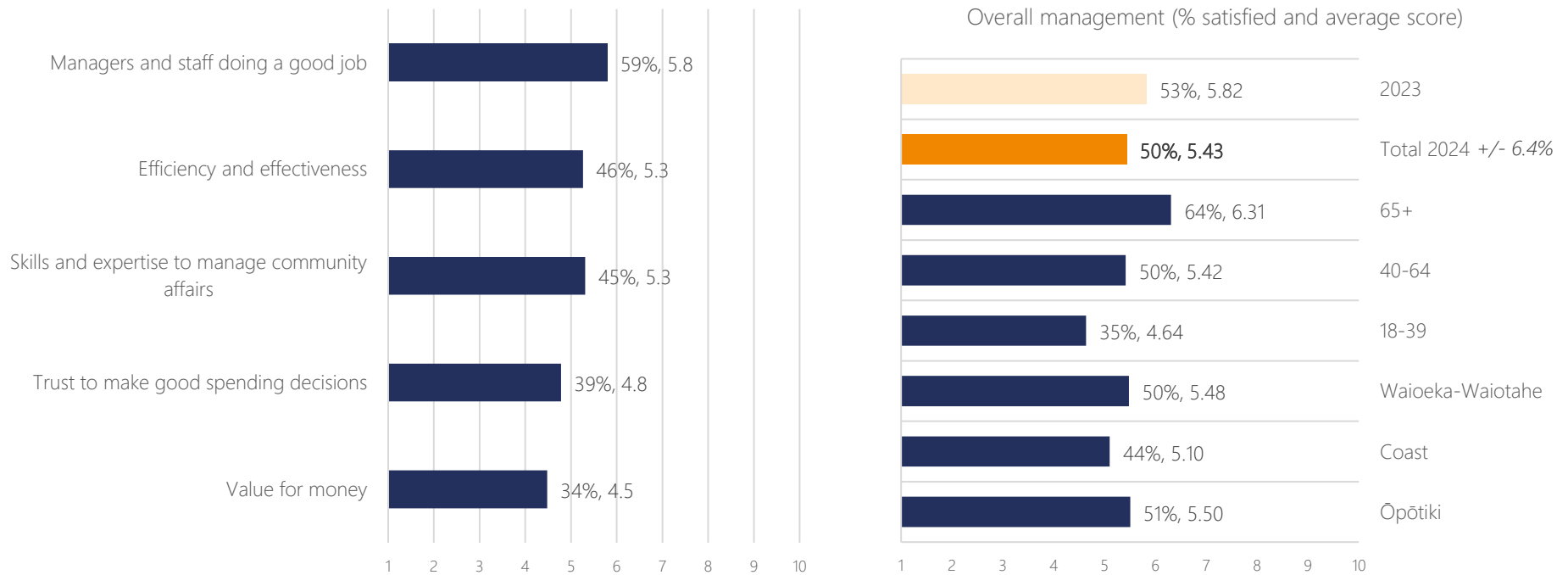


Respondents were asked to rate Council's performance in relation to leadership. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



MANAGEMENT — day-to-day performance

- Overall, half of respondents (50%) were satisfied with Council’s performance in managing day-to-day business (similar to 53% in 2023).
- Most management attributes showed satisfaction ratings consistent with 2023. Only the efficiency and effectiveness attribute showed a decline in 2024 (46%) compared to 2023 (54%).
- Value for money generally represented the greatest improvement opportunity, receiving the lowest satisfaction score but exhibiting a strong impact on overall satisfaction with Council management.
- Overall, satisfaction with Council day-to-day management was consistent across wards and other demographic groups. Only age was a significant factor, with younger respondents (18-39) being the least satisfied with Council management overall, and particularly with value for money (15%), trust in making good spending decisions (20%), and skills and expertise (19%).

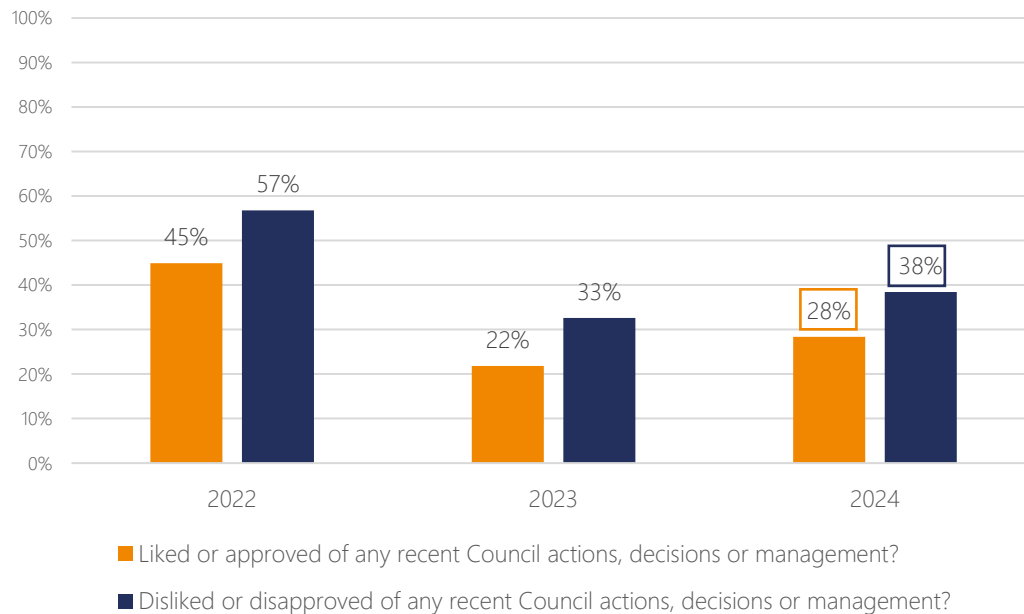


Respondents were asked to rate Council’s performance in relation to day-to-day management. Scale: 1-not at all well and 10-extremely well.



POLICY AND DIRECTION

- Overall, more respondents in 2024 reported both approving or disapproving of any Council actions compared to 2023.
- 28% of respondents expressed approval of recent Council actions. This included Council's general upgrades and developments to parks, skateparks, and public spaces; as well as infrastructure development, such as roads and footpaths. A number of comments referred positively to harbour and wharf development, and good communication and leadership from the Council (particularly highlighting positive work of the Mayor).
- 38% of respondents expressed disapproval. Rates increases were by far the most mentioned public concern, followed by waste management and particularly increase Resource Centre fees.



- Facility / skatepark / playground / parks upgrades
- Road / footpath maintenance
- Harbour / wharf development
- Council / Mayor performance / communication
- Retaining library service / hours
- Other
- Events / Matariki / Waitangi Day
- Service provision

Liked or approved

- Rates increases
- Waste / Resource Recovery management / fees
- Council spending / lack of action / decision making
- Reduced library / i-Site hours / service
- Environment / land / property issues
- Harbour / wharf / marina upgrades
- Library signage / spending
- Other
- Roads / speed limits
- Animal control / registration
- New Council building

Disliked or disapproved