

Residents' Survey Report

2026

Your views. Our future.

HOW ARE WE DOING?





Research Design.....	3
----------------------	---



Results Snapshot.....	6
Results Snapshot of Council Services.....	7



Survey Results.....	8
Services and Facilities Used or Experienced in the Past 12 Months.....	9
Satisfaction with Services and Facilities.....	10
Issues/Problems with Services and Facilities.....	10
Problems Faced.....	12
How Could Council Improve Services?.....	13
Priorities.....	15
Top 5 Priorities Over the Past Three Years.....	16
Top Priorities by Ward.....	16
Satisfaction with Council's Efforts on Priority Issues During the Last Year....	17
Satisfaction with Council's Economic Development Activity.....	17
Economic Development.....	18
Tourism Central Otago (Destination Management).....	20
Community Development.....	23
Where Do You Find Council Information?.....	25
Satisfaction with Level of Information from Council.....	26
Opportunities to Have a Say in Council Activities.....	28
How You Prefer to Provide Feedback.....	30
Elected Member Performance.....	31
Performance of Councillors.....	31
Performance of Community Board Members.....	33
Elected Members Making Informed Decisions.....	35
Councillors.....	35
Community Board Members.....	36
Contact with Council.....	37
Other Comments.....	39
Quality of Life.....	41



Appendix One: How Representative is this Survey?.....	44
Appendix Two: Promotion of the Survey.....	47
Appendix Three: Let's Talk Traffic Summary.....	48



Research Design



Research Design

Context

This report summarises the results of the 2025-26 Central Otago District Council Residents' Survey. The survey evaluated ratepayer satisfaction with Council services and facilities from July 2025 to June 2026. The survey was carried out between 22 May and 22 June 2026.

This was the eleventh year Council conducted the survey online and the fifth year using the Let's Talk consultation platform.

We received a total of 362 responses to the survey; 357 of those responses came through Let's Talk, and five were received in hard copy. This represents a higher response rate than the previous year (195).

Council carries out an annual survey to:

- | measure how well Council services are delivered during the year
- | identify where services could be improved and highlight areas of high performance
- | identify priorities for the coming year

Method

The 2026 survey was conducted using the Let's Talk Kōrero Mai consultation platform. Respondents were required to register to participate online but hard copy surveys were also available at all service centres and libraries. The survey was promoted throughout the district through media channels, elected members and community outreach efforts. This survey used self-selection sampling.

All surveys are subject to sampling error. Based on a total sample size of 362 respondents, the results shown in this survey are subject to a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 5% at a 95% confidence level.¹ While every attempt was made to achieve a demographically representative sample (age, gender, ward), this was not completely achieved. Gender and ward distributions roughly reflect the district distributions, but the 60+ age group is overrepresented (59%). See Appendix One for more demographic information.

¹ [Your Guide to Margin of Error \(With Calculator\) - Qualtrics](#)

Questionnaire design

Respondents were asked to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a wide range of Council services and facilities.

Notes on reporting conventions

- | This report outlines the feedback on Council services delivered during the 2025-26 fiscal year. However, for reporting simplification, this report will refer to the results as 2026.
- | Resident satisfaction is measured in this report by removing all respondents who answered, 'Don't know/unsure' or 'Haven't used this service or amenity', unless otherwise noted. This was done to accurately compare previous years' data trends. Ward breakdown tables show satisfaction percentages calculated excluding unsure responses.
- | For clarity and ease of reporting, we have combined varying degrees of sentiment (e.g., 'very satisfied' and 'very dissatisfied') into broader 'satisfied' and 'dissatisfied' categories.
- | The number of respondents for each question is 362 unless otherwise noted.
- | This report refers to 'comments' and 'mentions'. A comment is a single submission or response from one individual person. A mention is a specific topic, theme or idea extracted from that comment. Each individual response is one comment, but within that comment there may be a number of different issues raised, which are mentions.
- | AI was used to assist in the analysis of this report.
- | Sewerage was renamed to wastewater in 2026.
- | Questions with an asterisk were mandatory.



Results Snapshot



Results Snapshot of Council Services



What we do well



Libraries

96% satisfied



Kerbside recycling

94% satisfied – Green bin



93% satisfied – Yellow and Blue bins



90% satisfied – Red bin



Sports grounds

94% satisfied



Emergency management (Civil Defence)

92% satisfied



Public toilets

92% satisfied



Council offices reception

90% satisfied



Playgrounds

90% satisfied



Where we could improve



After hours service

68% satisfied



Council communications

66% satisfied



Dog Control (registration and enforcement)

63% satisfied



Environmental health inspections

59% satisfied



Building consents and inspections

50% satisfied



Resource consents

36% satisfied



What has improved the most



Alcohol licensing

89% satisfied in 2026
75% satisfied in 2025



Cemeteries and/or burial process

81% satisfied in 2026
75% satisfied in 2025



Rural recycling drop-off

82% satisfied in 2026
75% satisfied in 2025



Playgrounds

90% satisfied in 2026
84% satisfied in 2025



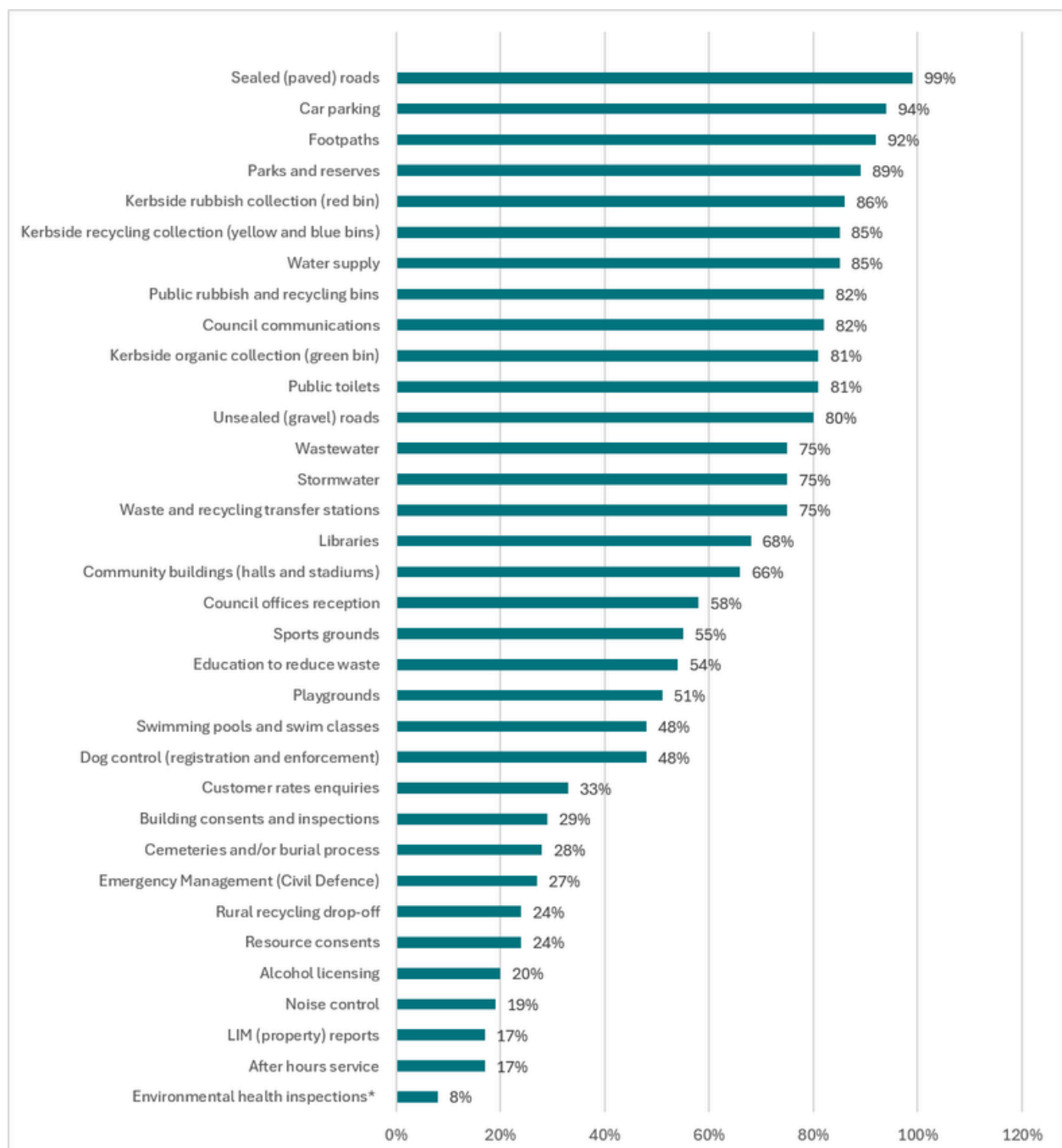
Survey Results



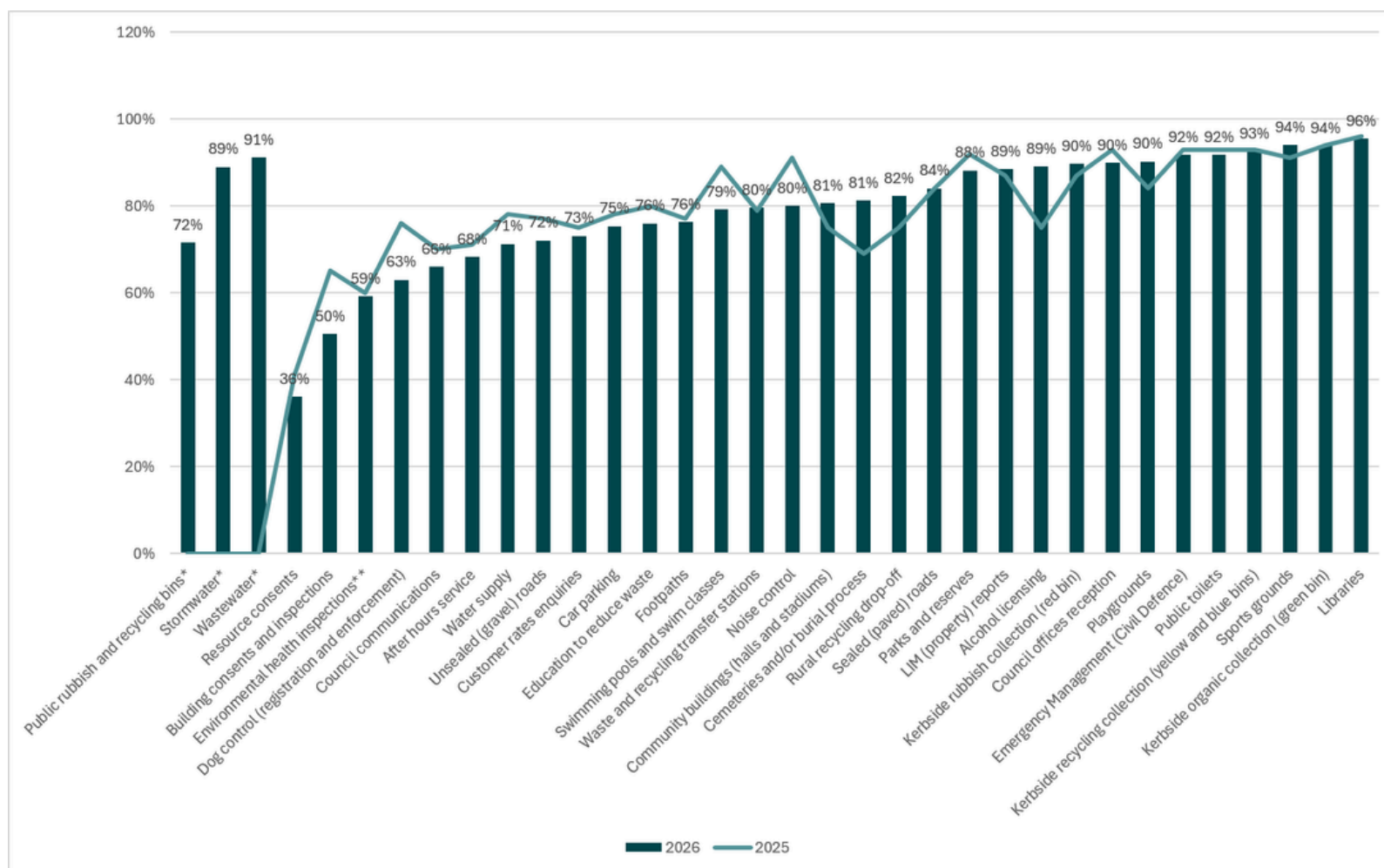
Survey Results

Services and facilities used or experienced in the past 12 months

Respondents were asked to select which of Council's services and facilities they had used or experienced in the last 12 months and to indicate whether or not they were satisfied. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents who have used or experienced each service or facility.



Satisfaction with services and facilities



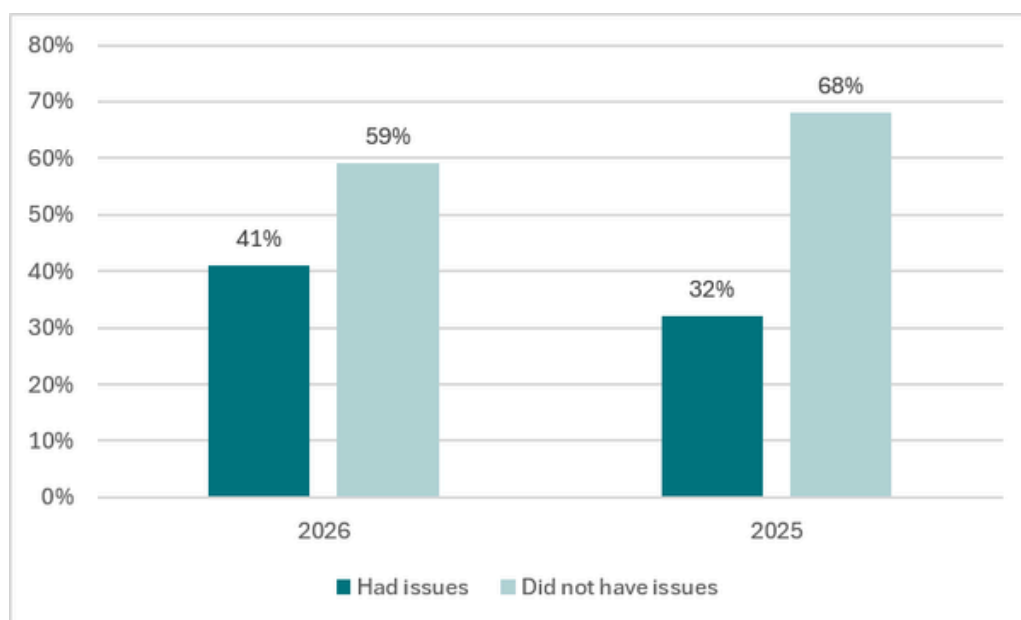
* New in 2026

** Less than 50 responses

The above shows the 2026 results compared to the 2025 results. Overall, there is a slight decrease in satisfaction with Council services and facilities across the board, from 82% satisfaction in 2025 to 79% satisfaction in 2026. Note the new service categories that were added and that the Reuse shop closed in 2023.

Issues/problems with services and facilities

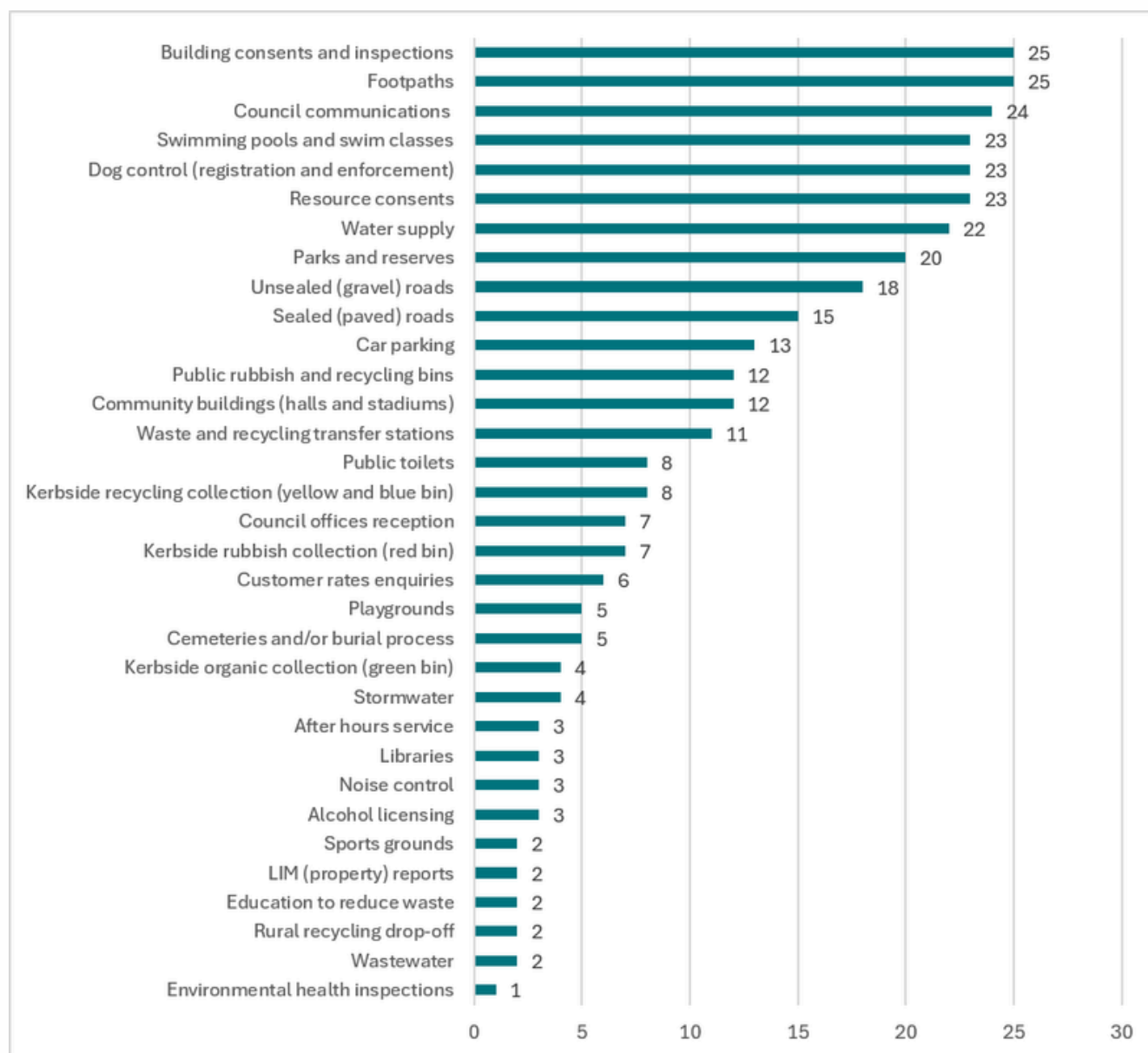
Respondents were asked 'In the past 12 months have you personally experienced any issues or problems with any Council services or facilities?'



The majority of respondents (59%) did not experience issues or problems with any of Council services or facilities. There was an increase in the percentage of respondents who experienced issues in 2026 (41%), when compared to 2025 (32%).

Problems faced

To further identify the specific problem, respondents who indicated that they had problems were asked, 'Please indicate which of the following services or facilities were the subject of your issues or problems.' To answer this question, a drop-down box was provided. Respondents could tick more than one option.



There were 343 problems identified by 149 respondents. The five services or facilities where respondents experienced the most issues or problems were building consents and inspections (7%), footpaths (7%), council communications (7%), swimming pools and swim classes (7%) and dog control (7%).

How could Council improve services?

Respondents were asked, 'In your opinion, how could Council improve services?' A total of 143 comments were received, with a total of 337 mentions.

The information below outlines the commonly mentioned themes that respondents identified where Council could improve services as well as the inclusion of sample respondent comments to demonstrate sentiment.

Comments

Roading (26 mentions) This was the most frequently raised area of concern. Respondents highlighted delayed maintenance of unsealed roads. Specific concerns mentioned include corrugation, dust management, and dangerous drop-offs. Sealed roads also received criticism for edge breaks, potholes, and unsafe intersections.

"Sandflat road needs sealed. It gets used by many vehicles now."

Council communications and customer service (26 mentions) Respondents indicate that they feel ignored and complain of an "insulated" staff culture. Issues range from unanswered emails, unfriendly reception staff, and a perception that community consultation happens after decisions are already made.

"Had to send three complaints before I got a personal response."

Footpaths (21 mentions) Footpaths are consistently identified as safety hazards. The primary complaints concern tree roots breaking the surface, and slippery green mould accumulating during winter months.

"The footpaths in Cromwell... are quite (very) lumpy with roots."

Swimming pools and aquatics (21 mentions) Many respondents noted dissatisfaction with the Cromwell pool heating system. Others expressed concern about oversized swimming classes (exceeding 4-5 children) and inadequate cleaning of shower facilities.

"Pool heating is not sufficient in winter to meet heating requirements of all pools and showers."

Dog control (21 mentions) Dog owners expressed frustration about the Sandflat Road pine forest closure and that council failed to consult or collaborate on solutions. Others complained of dog faeces on sports fields and lack of enforcement of roaming dogs.

"We need a formal dog exercise off leash area away from cycle ways."

Parks, reserves, cemeteries and playgrounds (21 mentions) Primary concerns include a lack of shade sails over playgrounds, poor contractor maintenance of street verges/greenways, and inadequate rubbish bin provision.

"For a hot climate town we have worst record of shade providing street trees... Centennial Ave looks like a wild West town."

Water supply (18 mentions) Respondents expressed some anxiety around water rates and usage costs. Other issues raised include water discolouration (lime scale/rusty water), inadequate storage capacity for peak populations in Naseby, and poor inter-departmental liaison when addressing burst pipes.

"Cost of water is going to be a barrier to people and create a public health risk."

Waste and recycling (18 mentions) Feedback includes frustration around the loss of the "Wastebusters" facility, confusing rules for yellow recycling bins, the absence of soft plastics recycling, and a need for more public rubbish bins in reserves to stop littering.

"The council has removed a lot of rubbish bins including around McNaulty inlet."

Building consents and inspections (17 mentions) Respondents perceive the building consent process as unnecessarily rigid, disjointed, and disconnected from the financial realities of construction delays. Respondents also noted that requests for information are slow, and specific rules (such as PIMs for transportable buildings) are deemed bureaucratic overreach.

"Lack of communication. Untimely responses. General disorganisation."

Resource consents and planning (17 mentions) Respondents indicated that consenting often lacks common sense and consistency. Users report being given incorrect advice (paying for unneeded consents), experiencing significant delays, and feel that planners sometimes regulate subjective preferences rather than mitigating genuine environmental effects.

"I was told last year I needed a RC... I found out shortly after this isn't true... wouldn't give back the consent fee."

Community buildings and facilities (10 mentions) Respondents raised concerns over the financial planning for the new Te Puna Mahara - Cromwell Memorial Events Centre.

"Cromwell Memorial Hall is another example of 'nice to haves' with no documented financial plan."

Priorities

Respondents were asked, 'Please tick up to four priority issues that you consider Council should give high priority to in the next one to three years.'*

Rank	Priority	Number of responses	2025 Ranking
1	Water supply	104	1
2	Footpaths	74	4=
3	Economic Development	55	3
4	Community Development	54	9
4	Car parking	54	5
6	Sealed (paved) roads	52	7=
6	Parks and reserves	52	7=
6	Unsealed (gravel) roads	52	16
9	Wastewater	49	2
10	Swimming pools and swim classes	43	10
10	Resource consents	43	23
10	Building consents and inspections	43	18

The top priority, water supply, is consistent with previous years. Support for Economic Development and Footpaths also remained high, with Community Development moving up in priority from being ranked 9th in 2025, to 4th in 2026. Wastewater dropped in priority from 2nd in 2025 to 9th in 2026.

Top five priorities over the past three years

The table below shows the priorities identified in 2026 compared with the previous two years.

	2026 Priorities	2025 Priorities	2024 Priorities
1	Water supply	Water supply	Water supply
2	Footpaths	Wastewater	Reuse shop
3	Economic development	Economic Development	Footpaths
4	Community development	Footpaths	Wastewater
5	Car parking	Reuse shop	Sealed (paved) roads

The top priority, water supply, is consistent with previous years. Footpaths, economic development, community development, and car parking were all identified as high priorities.

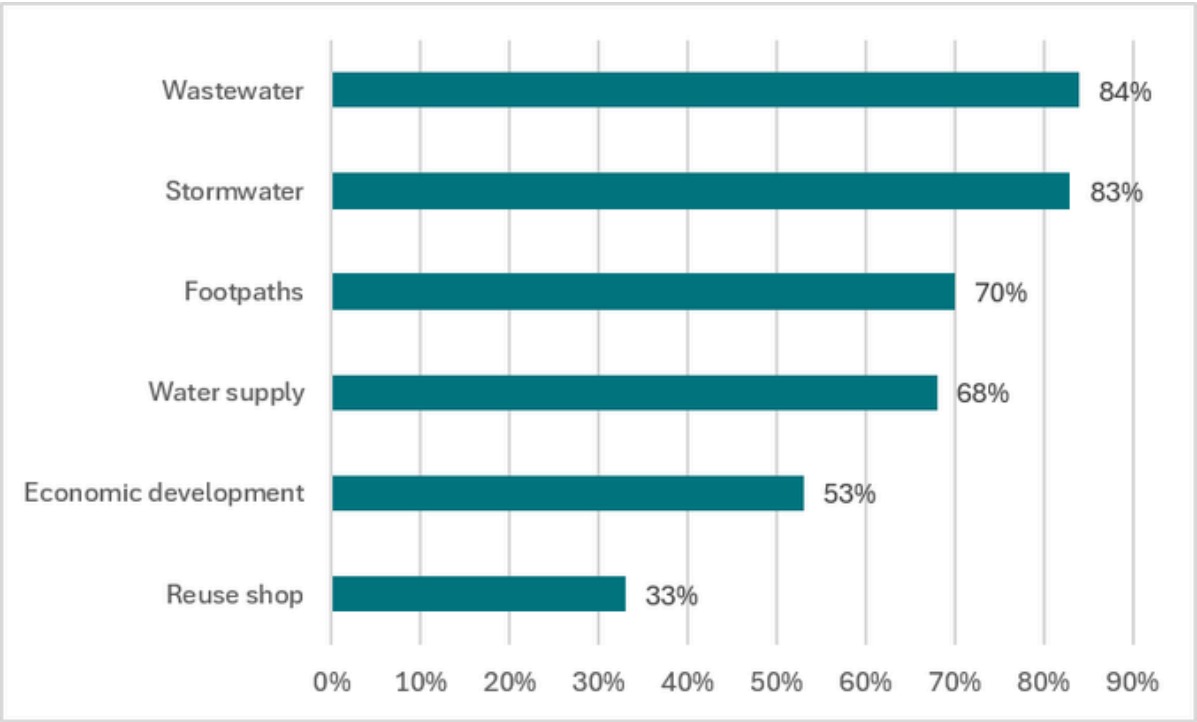
Top priorities by ward

The table below identifies the top priority services in each ward for 2026 and 2025. They are listed in priority order for that ward.

Ward	2026	2025
Cromwell	1. Water supply 2. Car parking 3. Footpaths	1. Water supply 2. Wastewater 3. Economic Development
Vincent	1. Water supply 2. Wastewater 3. Footpaths	1. Water supply 2. Reuse shop 3. Wastewater
Maniototo	1. Unsealed (gravel) roads 2. Water supply 3. Sealed (paved) roads	1. Water supply 2. Council's elderly persons' housing 3. Wastewater
Teviot Valley	1. Footpaths 2. Water supply 3. Community buildings	1. Wastewater 2. Community halls and stadiums 3. Water supply

Satisfaction with Council’s efforts on priority issues during the last year

Respondents were asked ‘Please indicate how satisfied you are with the Council’s efforts on these issues during the last year’.



n=277

*Reuse shop closed in 2023

Respondents indicated satisfaction with wastewater (84%), stormwater (83%), footpaths (70%), water supply (68%) and economic development (53%).

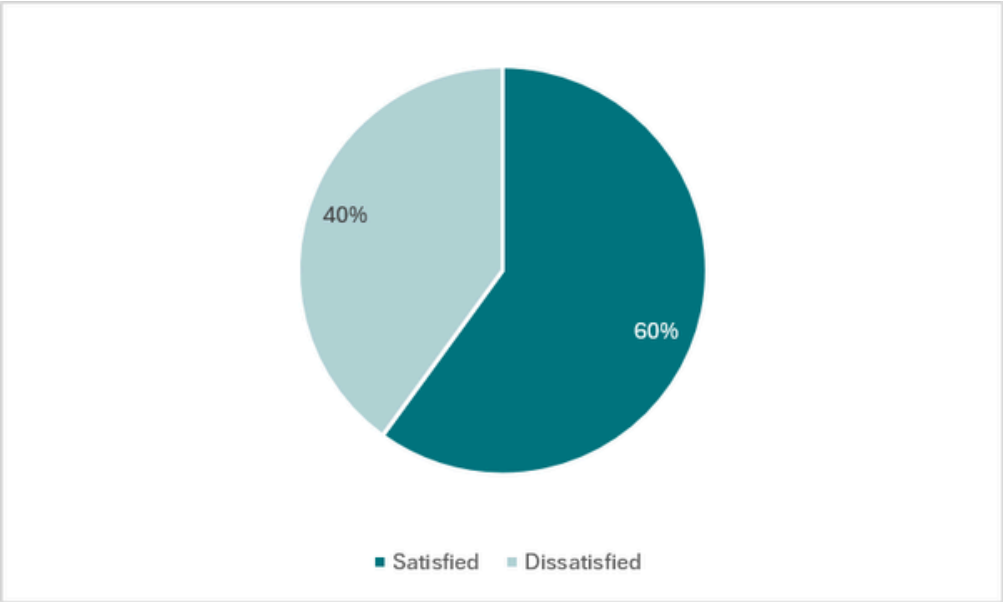
Satisfaction with Council’s economic development activity

The following statement was presented to respondents: “Economic development activities over the past 12 months have focussed on workforce attraction and youth employment, supporting business startups, increasing digital connectivity, creating a new economic development strategy, commercialising waste fruit, and regional collaboration.”

Note: Economic Development activities change from year to year. As a result, satisfaction is evaluated on an annual basis only.

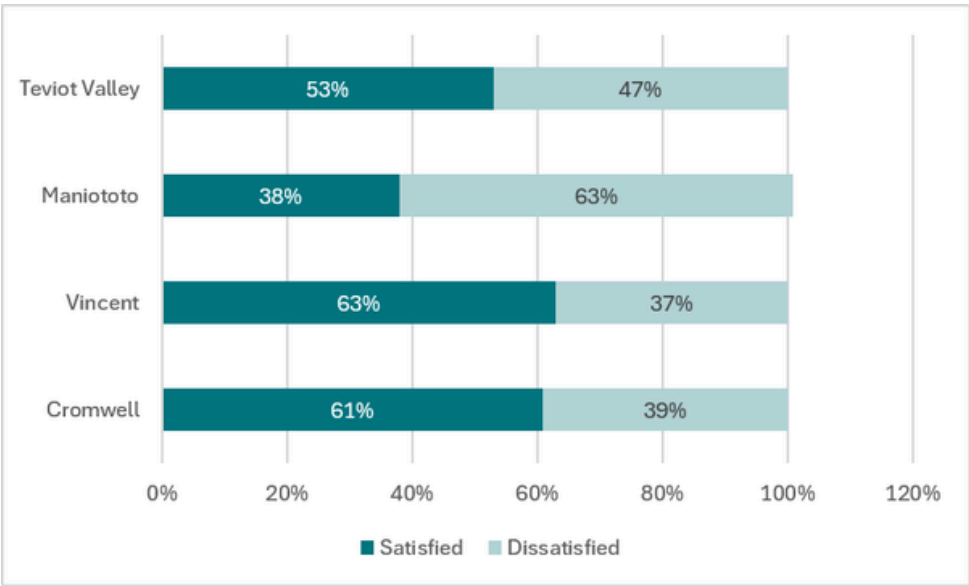
Economic Development

Respondents were asked, ‘How satisfied are you that these are the right types of economic development activity for council to be involved in?’*



n=246

By ward



In 2026, 60% of survey respondents were satisfied with the council’s economic development activities; 40% were dissatisfied. The ward that was the most satisfied was Vincent (63%) and the ward with the least satisfaction was Maniototo (38%).

This was a new question in 2026, so comparative data from previous years is unavailable.

Comments

There were 109 comments received and 192 mentions.

Town planning and development (29 mentions) Respondents emphasised the need to modernise town centres (especially Cromwell Mall) and ensure infrastructure precedes further town development and subdivision approvals.

"I don't want CODC to lose its identity by over development so we still can enjoy our scenery that makes Central Otago unique."

Rates and financial management (20 mentions) Respondents were highly concerned about rates increases. They recommend fiscal prudence, cost recovery, and prioritising core services over 'nice-to-have' projects.

"Personally, this stuff is great, as long as the basics get done first. Rates are for water, sewerage, rubbish, etc. - everything else is only to be done IF there is excess..."

Communication (20 mentions) Some respondents indicated a need for improved transparency and better communication regarding Council's economic development initiatives and tangible outcomes of rates expenditure.

"Think council remit here needs to be clearer and ensure it is not duplicating cost and time and effort of what Central Government needs to be driving in this regard."

Strategy and mandate (14 mentions) Respondents questioned the Council's role in driving economic growth, with many suggesting the private sector should lead. The need for tangible evidence of outcomes was noted.

"More should be left to the companies that will benefit from it."

Environment management and sustainability (13 mentions) Respondents stressed the importance of protecting the region's stunning landscapes. Some noted the debate over the environmental impacts of major projects, such as the Santana mine and solar farms.

"Environmental protections need to be part of economic strategy."

Business support and enablement (10 mentions) These respondents want Council to actively assist start-ups, provide shared workspaces, support local contractors, and reduce internal red tape that hinders business.

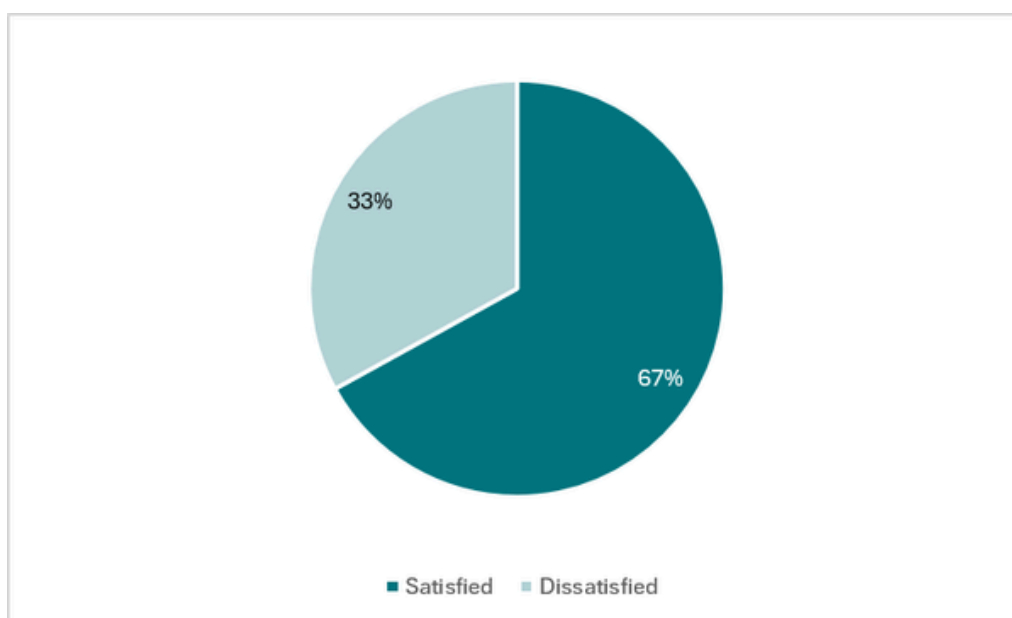
"The region would benefit from a shared workspace/business center in Alexandra."

Youth support and employment (10 mentions) While generally supportive of youth employment initiatives like MTFJ, some residents feel it should not be funded by general rates or that employment support should extend beyond just youth.

“Doing well, but more needs to be done for young people who have already left school.ie following up with them individually once they’re out of the school system.”

Tourism Central Otago (Destination Management)

Respondents were asked, ‘How satisfied are you that visitors to the district enrich the quality of life for residents?’*

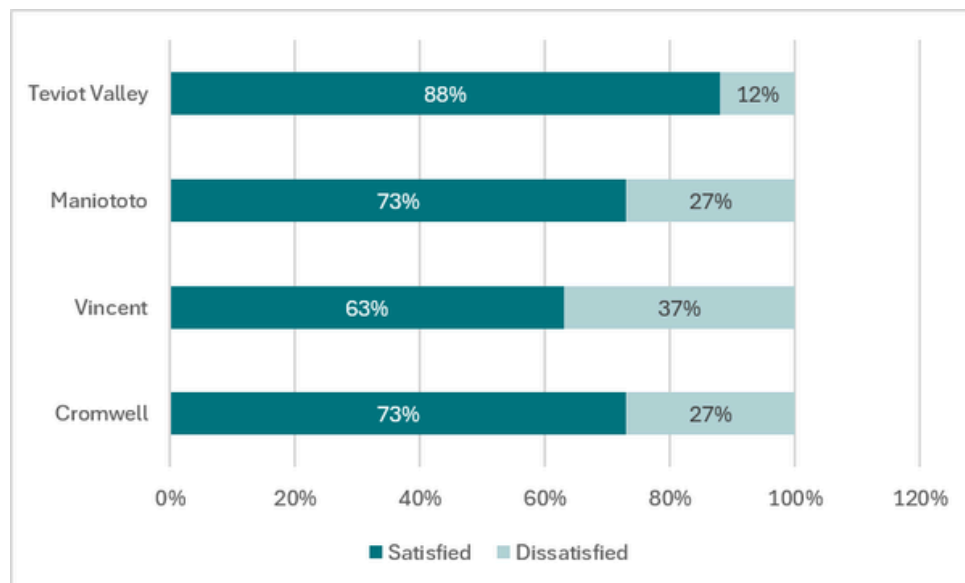


n=295

The results indicate that 67% of residents are satisfied that visitors enrich the quality of life for residents, while 33% are dissatisfied.

This was a new question in 2026, so comparative data from previous years is unavailable.

By ward



Teviot Valley ward is most satisfied (88%) with Tourism (Destination Management) and Vincent ward is least satisfied at 63%.

Comments

There were 114 comments received and 152 mentions.

Council role (32 mentions) Many respondents held the view that Council should not be funding destination marketing or acting as a tourism agency. Concerns about costs of supporting visitors is a burden to ratepayers. Some urged the Council to refocus its budget on core infrastructure, regulatory certainty, and essential community services.

"Not a major Council role as there are enough tourism ventures around that could work together."

Economic benefits (21 mentions) Respondents recognised the financial value visitors bring to the district. Many held the view that tourism spending sustains local hospitality businesses, small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), and provides vital employment opportunities and community vibrancy.

"Visitors to the district spend money at local businesses which is good for residents."

Environmental impact (21 mentions) Respondents expressed frustration regarding the negative environmental impacts of tourism. It was noted that there have been issues with litter, dog faeces, overflowing public toilets, overwhelmed supermarkets, and poorly managed freedom camping sites like Lowburn.

"Increase in rubbish and dog poo in Cromwell greenway during peak seasons."

Cycling trails (14 mentions) Respondents praised the district's cycle trail network and noted that cyclists are viewed as high-value, sustainable visitors who stay longer. Some called for continued support for infrastructure support, safe biking paths, and clearer signage.

"Cyclist tourism is very good for our area."

Visitor information (13 mentions) Respondents expressed frustration regarding the lack of physical visitor information centres since previous closures. Some feel current alternatives lack professional training and want central information hubs restored in key towns.

"There is nowhere for visitors to go and get information bout the area since the iSite was closed in 2020."

Quality of life (13 mentions) Respondents indicated that tourism does not tangibly enrich daily life. Some expressed the frustration that while some businesses may profit, the average local sees little improvement to their personal quality of living and often feels sidelined.

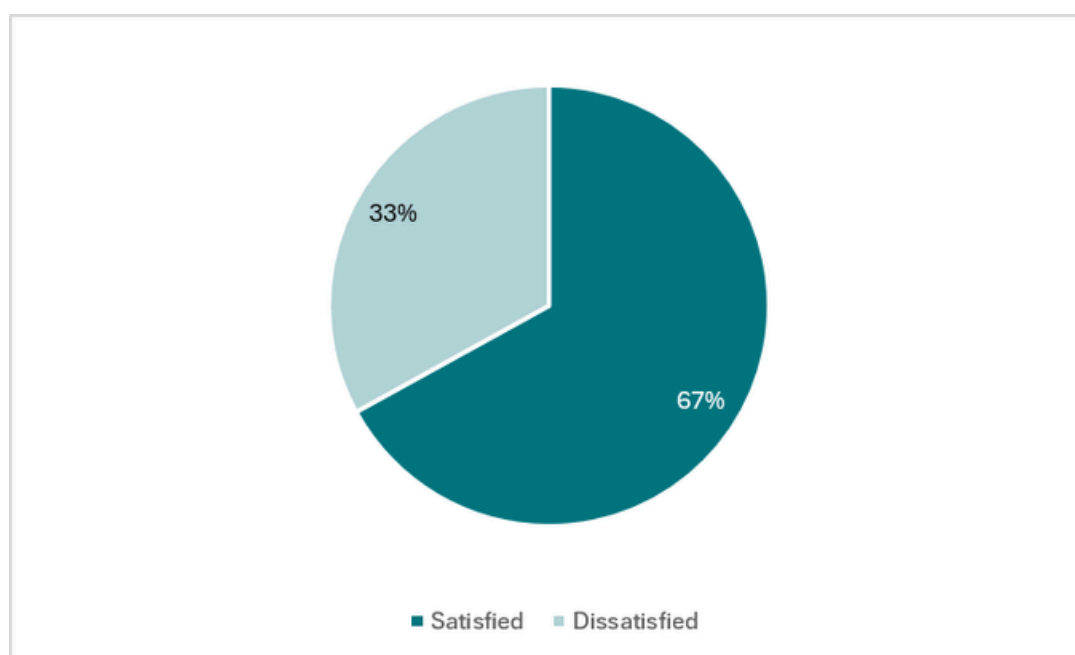
"There appears no recognition that too many tourists endangers tourism's social licence."

Cromwell and Alexandra town centres (11 mentions) Respondents commented on the lack of appealing town centre experiences to capture visitor attention and spend, especially the Cromwell Mall. Some view the current town centres as "eyesores" that fail to encourage interaction and extended stays.

"Would love to see the mall be a better representation of Cromwell."

Community Development

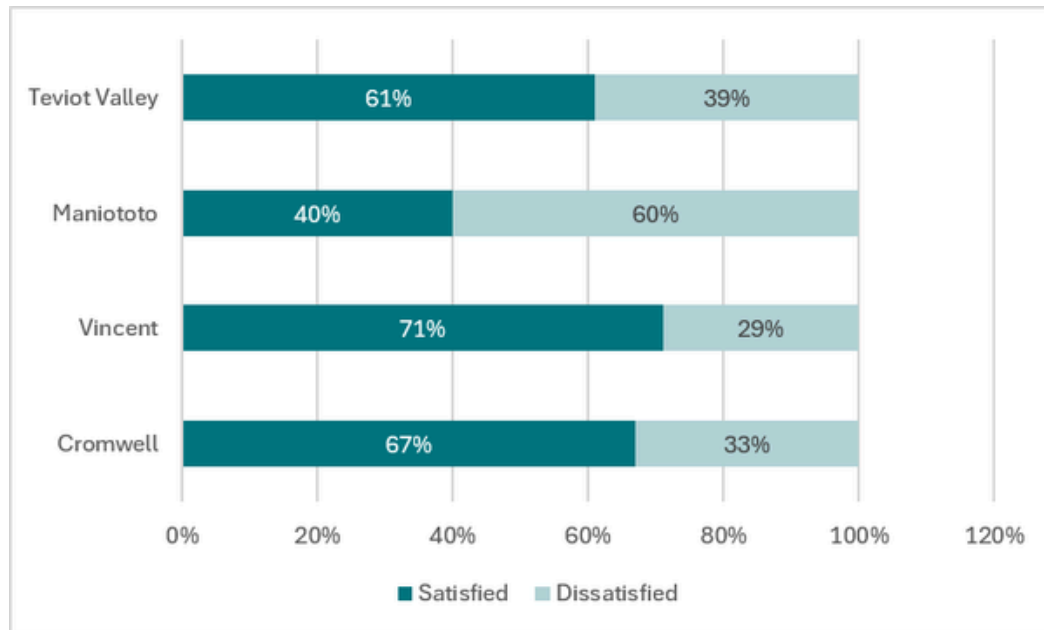
Respondents were asked, 'How satisfied are you with the Community Development focus on community planning, grants administration, community outreach and community advocacy?'



n=219

The results indicate that 67% of residents are satisfied with the current Community Development focus, while 33% are dissatisfied.

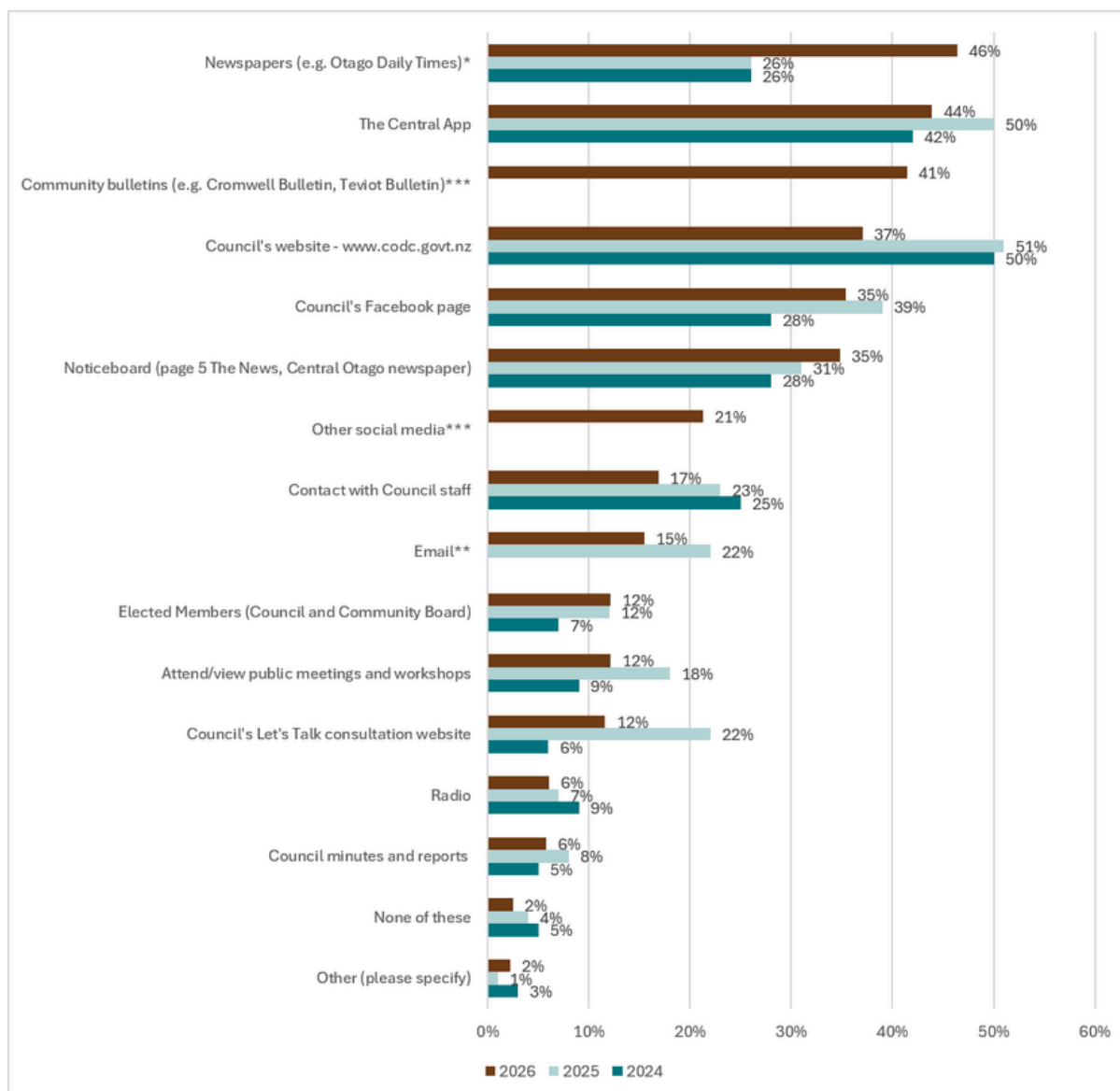
By ward



Comments were not requested on this question.

Where do you find Council information?

The graph below compares the results from 2026 with the previous two years. Respondents were able to select more than one.



*Renamed in 2026

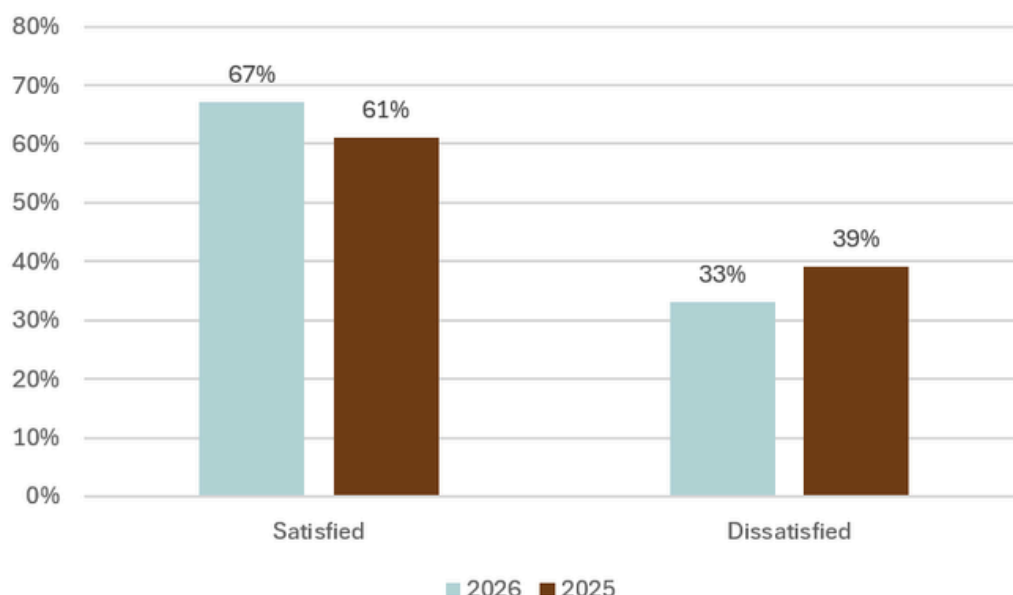
**Added in 2025

***Added in 2026

This year, 'community newspapers' was renamed 'newspapers' and was the place most people obtained Council information (46%). Another key source of information was the Central App (44%), although it has dropped from 50% in 2025 and 'community bulletins', which is a new category this year sits at 41%. Council's website continues to be an important source of information (37%), but has dropped from 51% in 2025. Council's Facebook page has dropped from 51% in 2025 to 37% this year. Noticeboard saw a slight increase from 31% in 2025 to 35% in 2026. 'Other social media' was a new category this year.

Satisfaction with level of information from Council

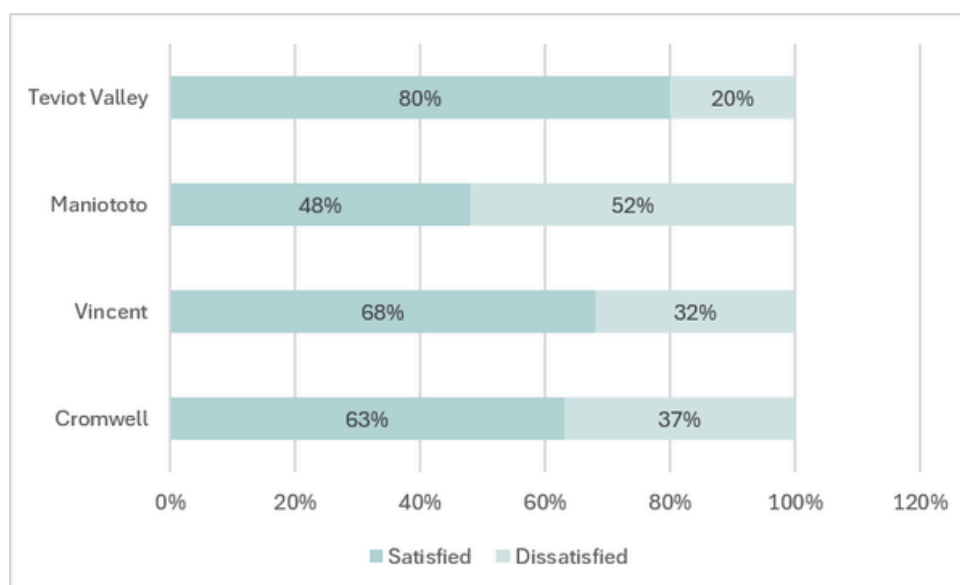
Respondents were asked, 'Please tell us whether or not you are satisfied with how well you have been kept informed by Council.'



n=326

The majority of respondents (67%) were satisfied with how well they had been kept informed by Council, which is an increase from 61% in 2025.

By ward



Teviot Valley ward is most satisfied (80%) with how Council has kept them informed. Vincent ward (68%) and Cromwell ward (63%) also have high satisfaction rates. The Maniototo is mostly dissatisfied (52%) with the way Council has kept them informed.

Comments

There were 75 comments received and 98 mentions.

Trust (33 mentions) Many respondents feel disconnected from the Council's actual decision-making process. Some describe consultation as a "tick-box" exercise, noting that decisions often seem finalised behind closed doors before public input is even sought. Some noted the need for genuine, proactive dialogue rather than reactive messaging.

"Too much secrecy around council decisions and no readily available information."

Communication channels (29 mentions) Respondents had different views about how they prefer to be reached. Many feel frustrated by an over-reliance on Facebook and clunky website navigation and would prefer direct email alerts and printed local bulletins. Conversely, others feel digital is the only practical way forward but suggest that platforms such as Central App need better maintenance.

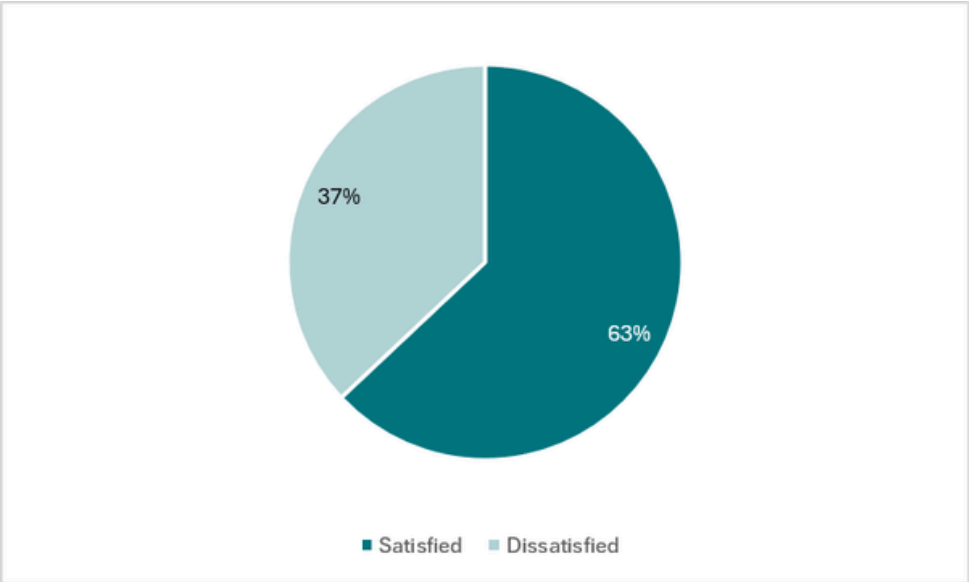
"There just isn't enough clear information coming out from Comms. The FB page has too many posts in one day so it's a stream of information you have to sift through. The website - it takes four clicks to try and find where the live online meetings are this is not a good experience."

Positive feedback on communication (16 mentions) These respondents are happy with the Council's communication. Positive remarks highlight the weekly mayoral updates on the Central App, the usefulness of the Facebook page, and the highly approachable nature of frontline staff.

"I feel quite well informed... I think Council do a great job at transparency and communications."

Opportunities to have a say in Council activities

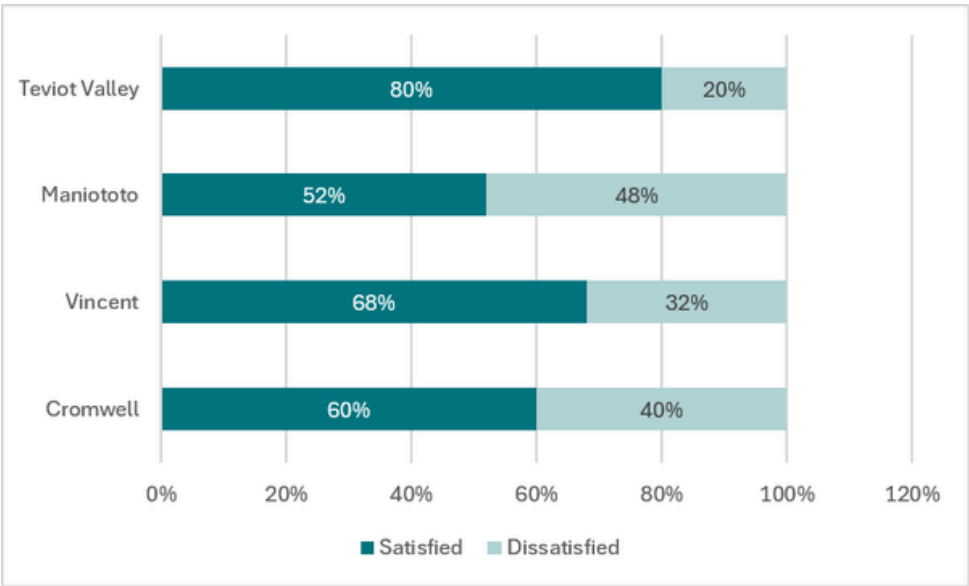
Respondents were asked, ‘Please tell us whether or not you are satisfied that you are given adequate opportunities to have your say in Council activities.’



n=295

In 2026, 63% of respondents were satisfied that they were given adequate opportunities to have their say in Council activities, down from 80% in 2025.

By ward



Teviot Valley ward was the most satisfied with opportunities to have a say in Council activities (80%), followed by Vincent ward with 68% satisfied.

Comments

There were 86 comments received and 121 mentions.

Trust (40 mentions) This was the most dominant theme that came through on this question. Nearly half of all respondents expressed frustration that the Council does not genuinely listen, overrides majority opinions, and proceeds with predetermined agendas behind closed doors. Some described the consultation process as superficial window-dressing.

"I made comments all the time. People agreed. But nothing ever changed. So I gave up."

Engagement (22 mentions) Respondents expressed a desire for engagement to be modernised and more accessible. Key barriers mentioned include overly complicated "wordy" documents, short submission timeframes, and consultation events scheduled during working hours. Some mentioned the need for "plain English", quick social media polls, and evening sessions.

"Need to change the thinking and move with the times. People are time limited and can't make workshops, etc."

Transparency (18 mentions) This theme highlights a breakdown in ongoing communication. Respondents feel there is poor follow-up after submissions, a lack of transparency around what is discussed at meetings, and a disconnect where unelected staff (rather than elected officials) seem to hold the power.

"How would we know what is about to get discussed at council, the notes of meetings coming up tell us nothing, then we hear nothing of what was discussed/ agreed on."

Personal responsibility (13 mentions) These respondents indicated satisfaction with the current opportunities, acknowledging that Council does well in certain areas, or noting that a lack of engagement is often due to the public's own apathy or failure to participate.

"We are given adequate opportunities to have our say however I think only a small percentage of ratepayers actually participate in discussing any matters rationally. The majority are usually very vocal in giving their opinions after the timeline given."

Local issues (11 mentions) Respondents pointed to several infrastructure projects as points of contention or examples of poor consultation. Issues mentioned include the Sandflat Road Pines, Roxburgh Entertainment Centre Rebuild, Solar Farm and Three Waters.

"CODC has failed to listen to the community over the Roxburgh cinema rebuild and the 3-waters/waters done well concerns."

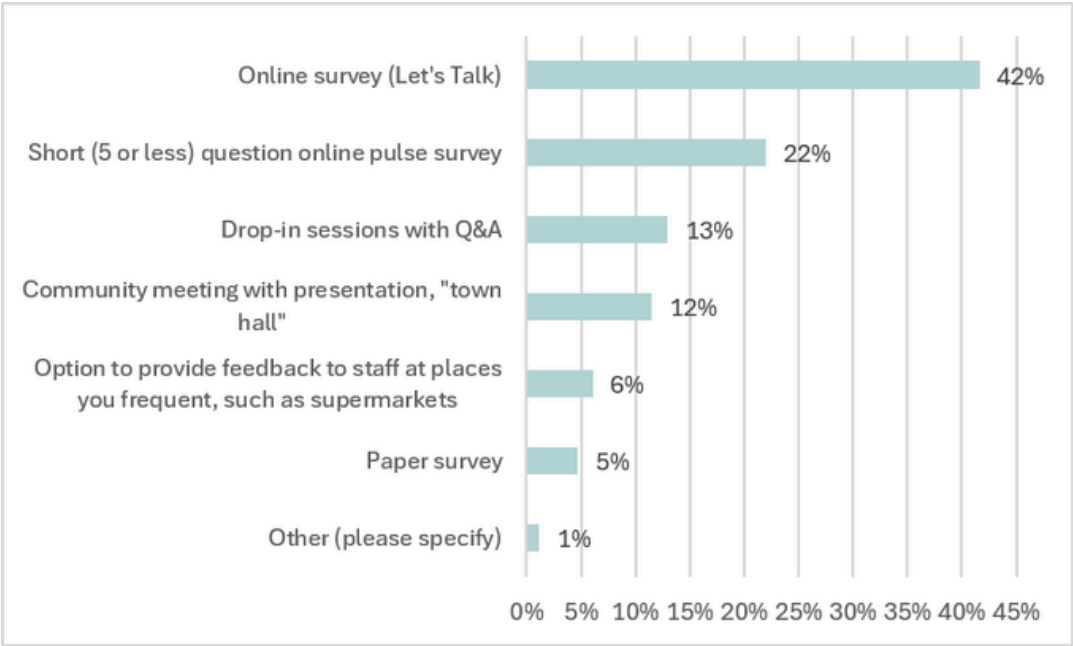
Comments

Facility naming (10 mentions) This theme captures varying perspectives when naming Te Puna Mahara | Cromwell Memorial Events Centre. Respondents highlighted a perceived demographic or cultural bias and suggested that Council actively ignored the majority’s desire for an English name in favour of a Māori name.

“With regard to the naming of the new Cromwell hall, why did the Council give a Maori name when the great majority of submitters wanted an English name.”

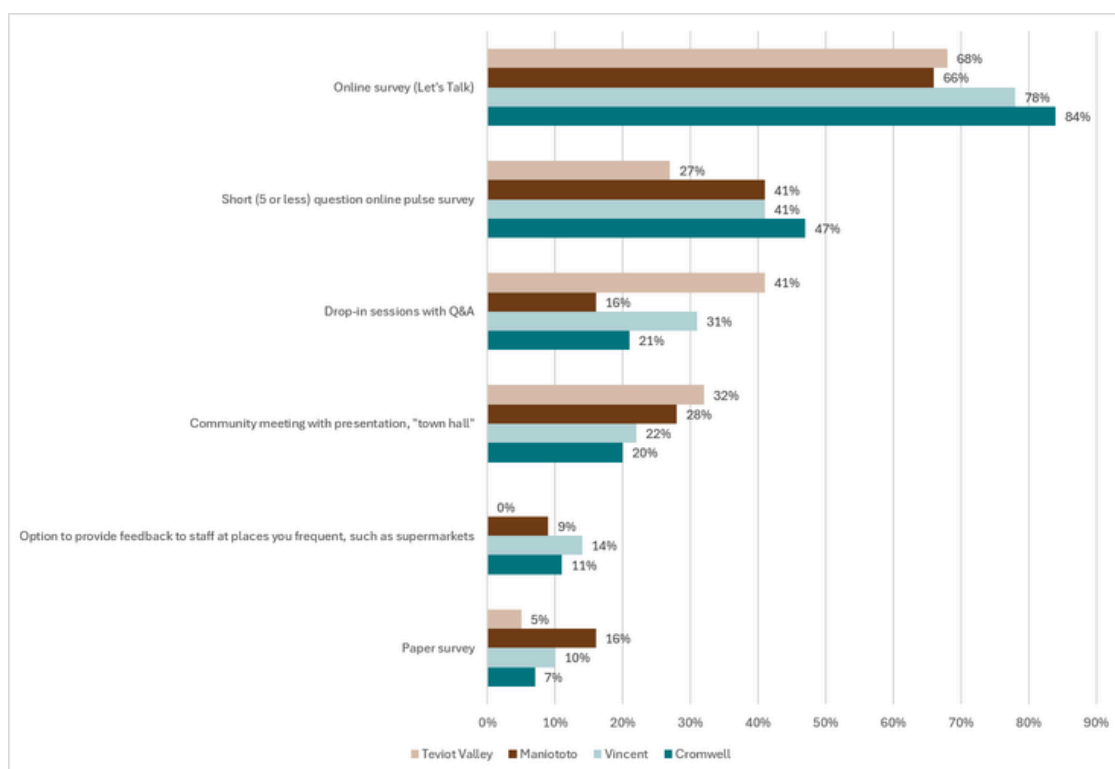
How you prefer to provide feedback

Respondents were asked, ‘We sometimes ask for feedback from the public to help make important decisions. How would you prefer to provide feedback?’ Respondents were able to select more than one.



n=678

By ward

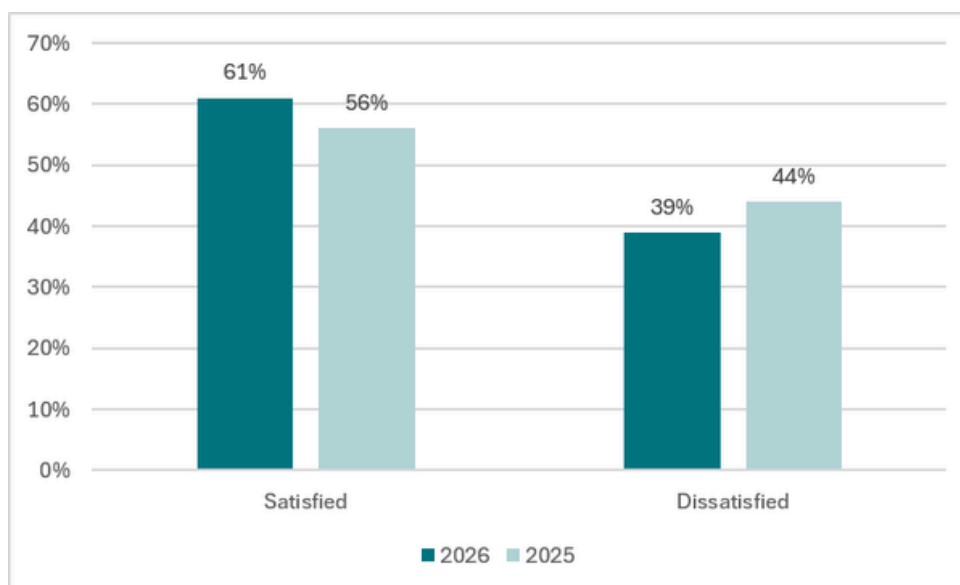


Elected Member Performance

Performance of Councillors

'Please tell us how you feel about the performance of your elected councillors in the past 12 months.'

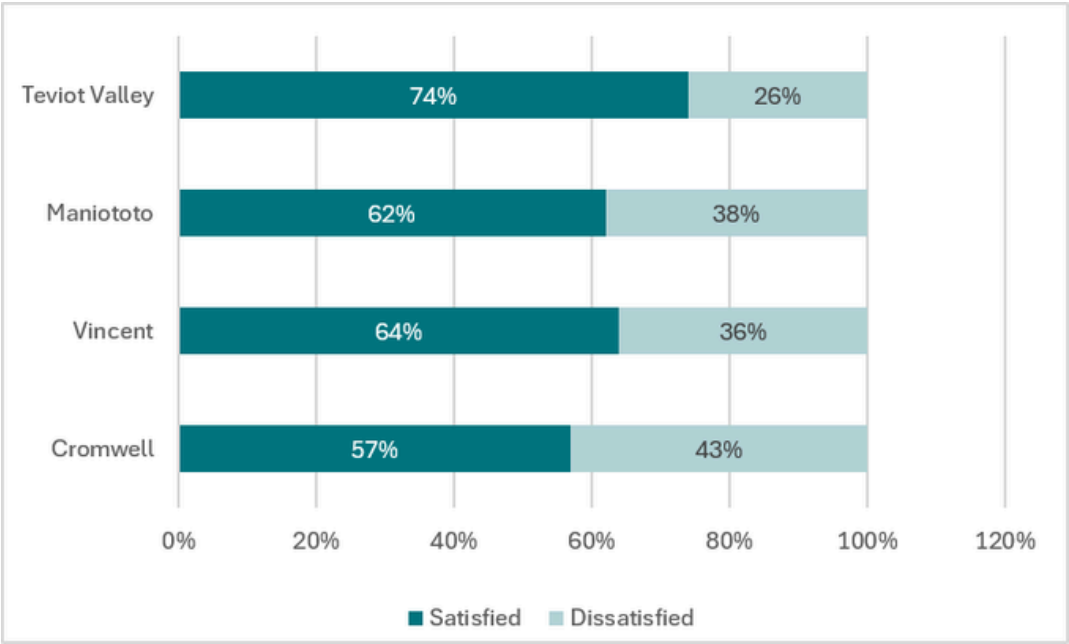
2026 compared to 2025



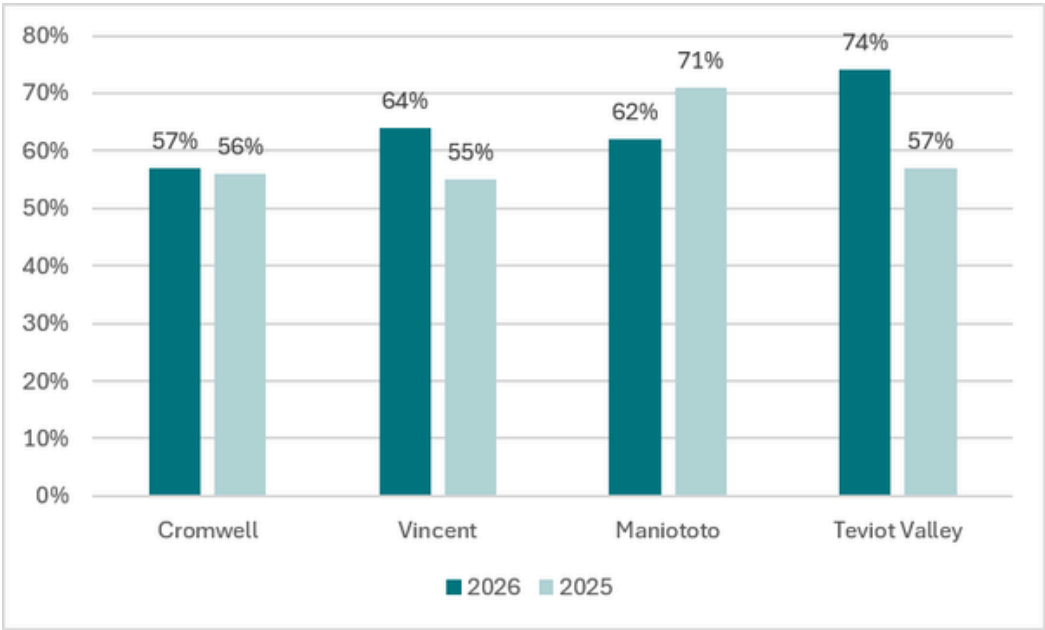
n=295

In 2026, 106 respondents (29%) indicated that they were 'Unsure/don't know'. Of those who did state an opinion, respondent satisfaction with the performance of councillors in the past 12 months increased from 56% in 2025 to 61% in 2026, indicating a positive shift in public perception of councillor performance.

By ward



2026 compared to 2025



Satisfaction in all wards showed positive improvement from the previous year, with the exception of Maniototo.

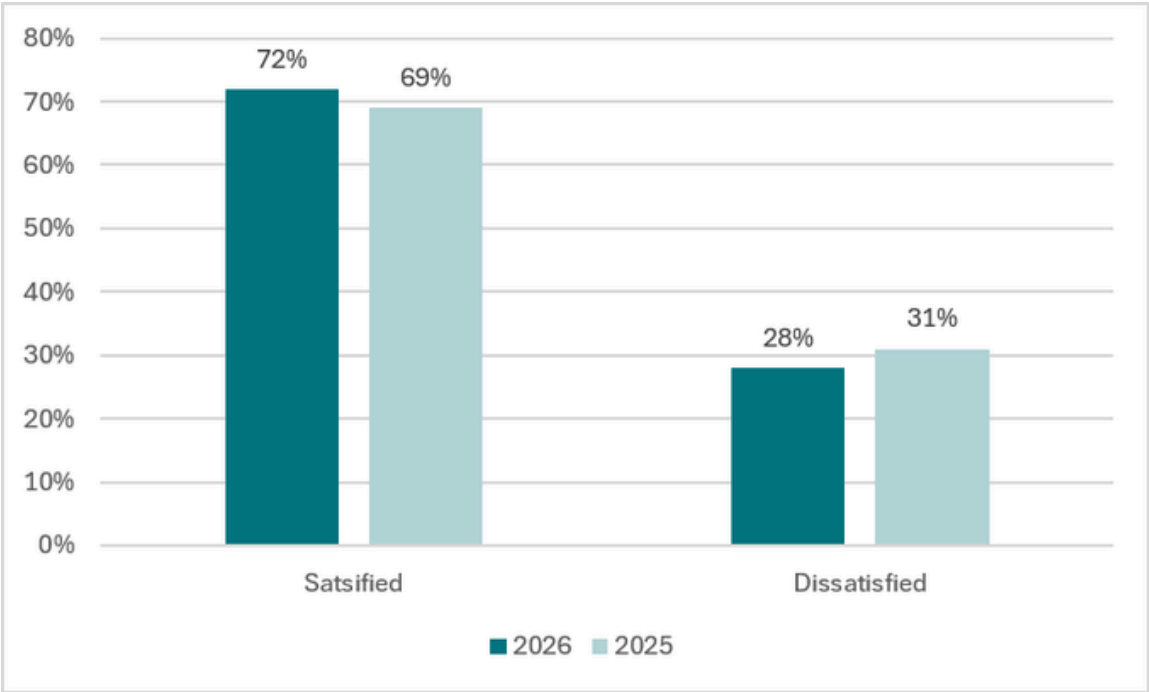
Elected Member Performance

In 2026, 113 (31%) of respondents indicated that they were “Unsure/don’t know”. The charts below represents those who commented that they were either satisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of their local community board.

Performance of Community Board members

Respondents were asked, ‘Please tell us how you feel about the performance of your elected local community board members in the past 12 months.’

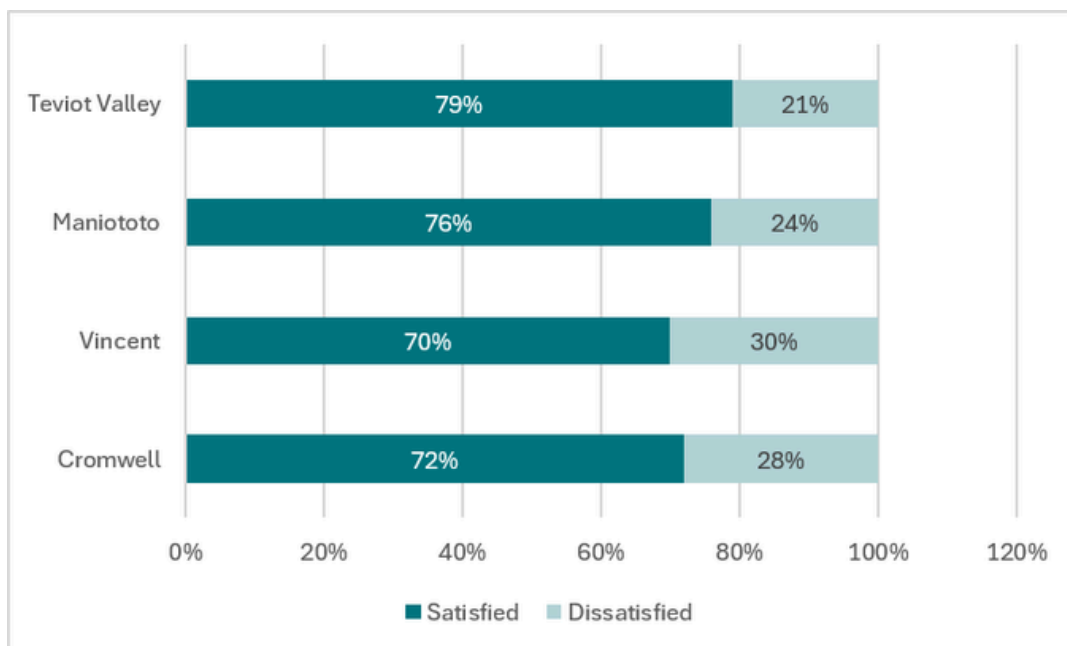
2026 compared with 2025



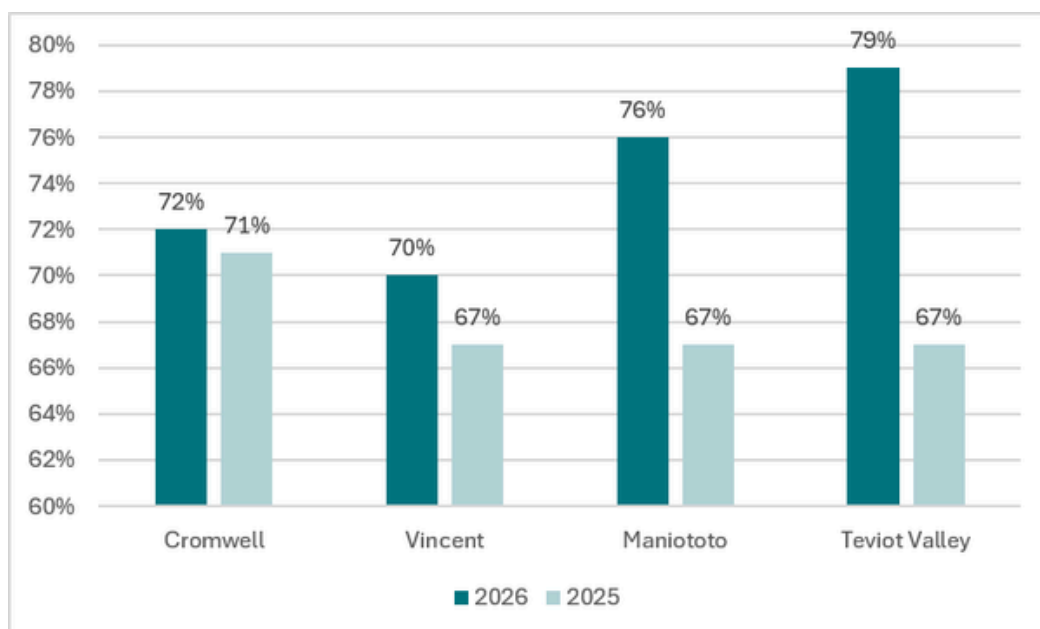
n=248

Similar to councillors, respondent satisfaction with the performance of community board members in the past 12 months increased slightly from 69% in 2025 to 72% in 2026.

By ward



When looking at the breakdown between wards, Teviot Valley respondents expressed the highest levels of satisfaction (79%), up from 2025 (67%). All community board satisfaction rates increased in 2026 compared to 2025.

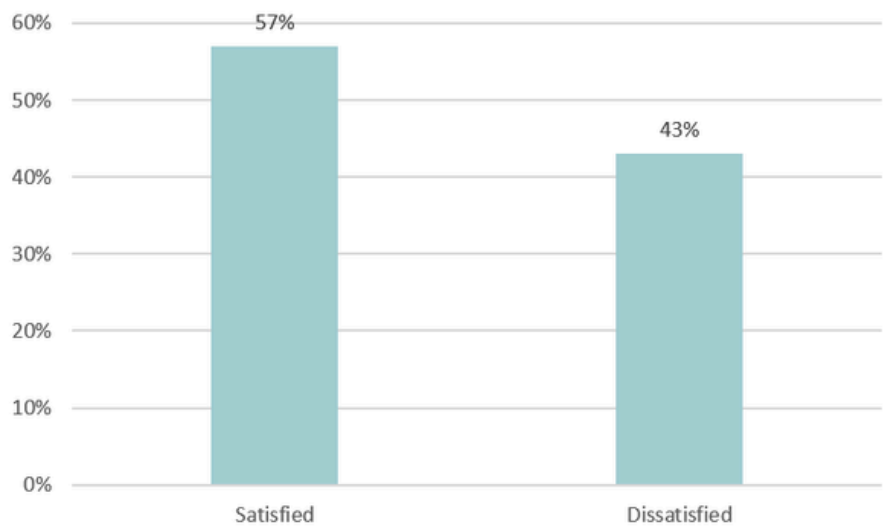


Elected members making informed decisions

Councillors

Respondents were asked ‘Please tell us how you feel about whether councillors are responsible, competent, and have made informed decisions over the past 12 months.’*

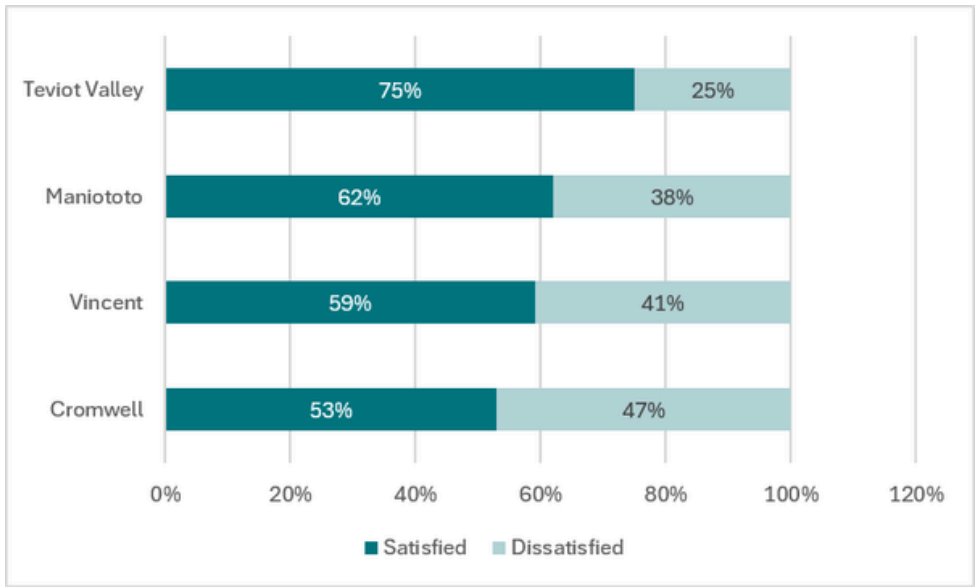
The chart below represents those who stated that they were either satisfied or dissatisfied.



n=246

Respondent satisfaction with the informed decision making by councillors was 57%. This was a new question in 2026, so comparative data from previous years is unavailable.

By ward



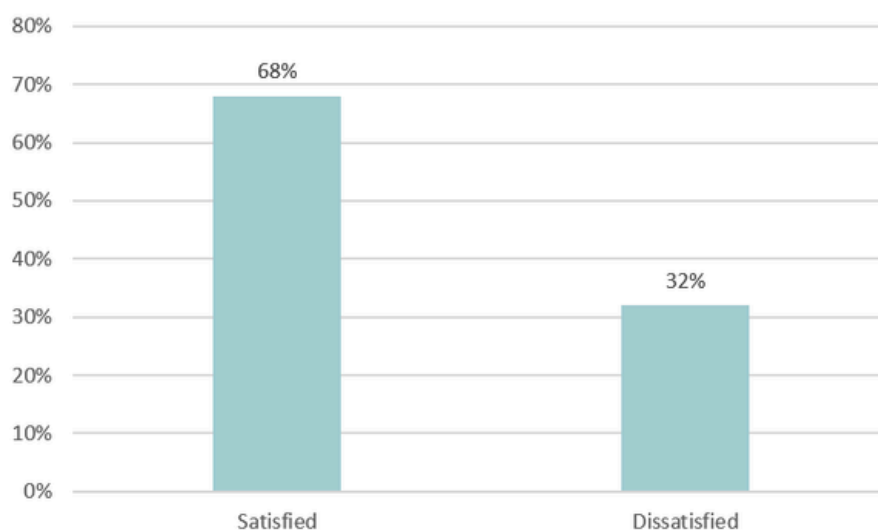
When looking at the breakdown between wards, Teviot Valley Ward respondents expressed the highest levels of satisfaction (75%).

Elected members making informed decisions

Community Board members

Respondents were asked 'Please tell us how you feel about whether community board members are responsible, competent, and have made informed decisions over the past 12 months.'*

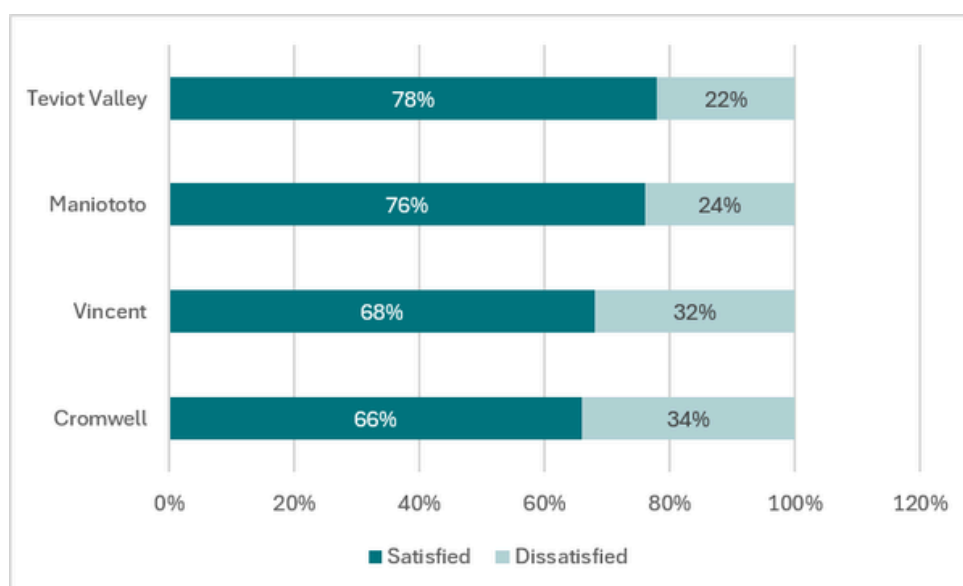
The charts below represent those who stated that they were either satisfied or dissatisfied.



n=239

Respondent satisfaction with the informed decision making by community board members was 68%. This was a new question in 2026, so comparative data from previous years is unavailable.

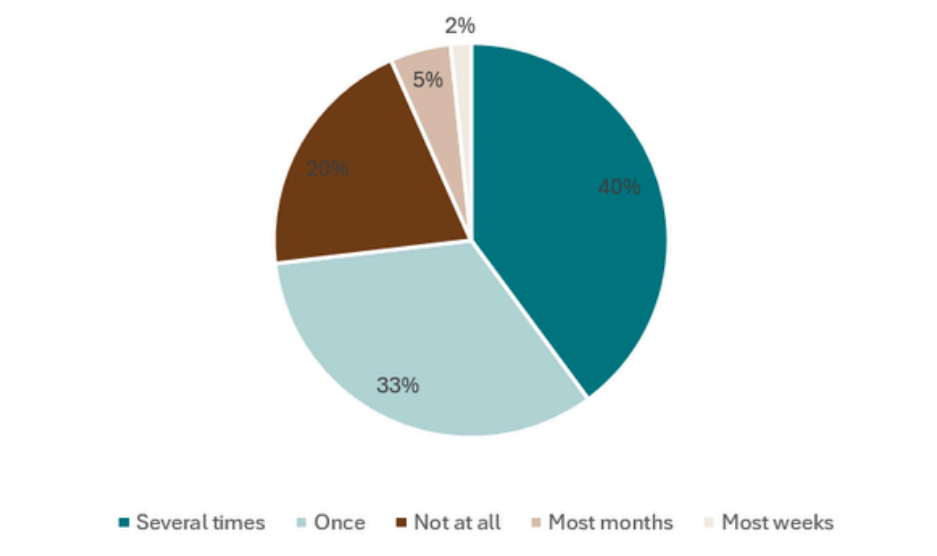
By ward



When looking at the breakdown between wards, Teviot Valley Ward respondents expressed the highest levels of satisfaction (78%).

Contact with Council

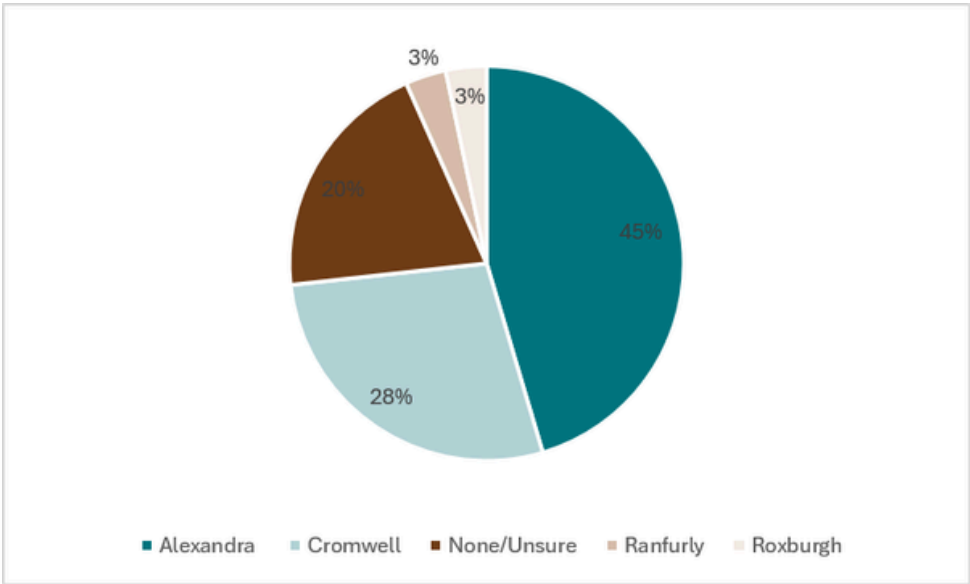
Respondents were asked, ‘How often have you contacted Council in the last 12 months?’



n=361

The vast majority of respondents either indicated that they had contacted Council ‘several times’ (40%) or ‘once’ (33%). Others noted that they had not contacted Council at all (20%).

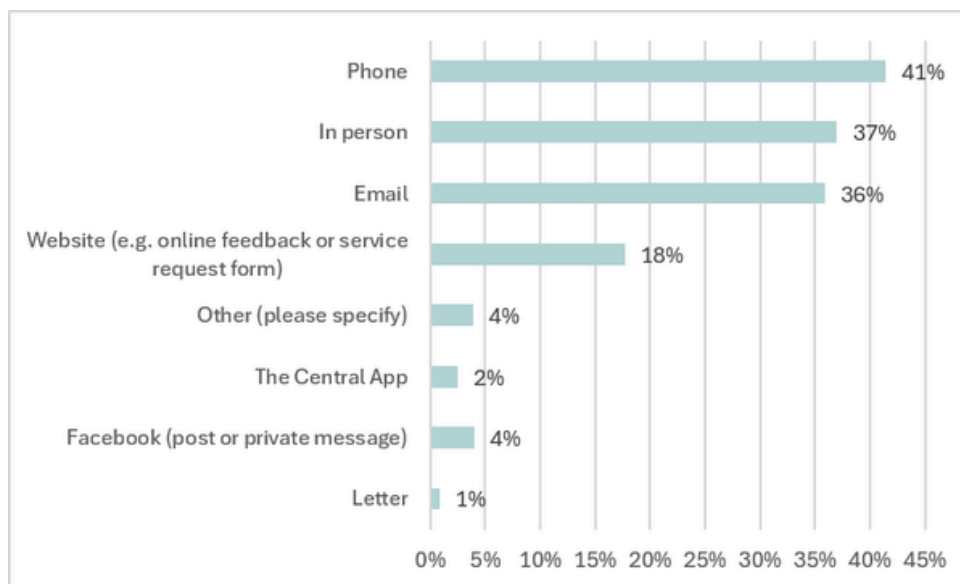
‘Which CODC office did you have the most contact with in the last 12 months?’ Respondents were able to select more than one.



n=359

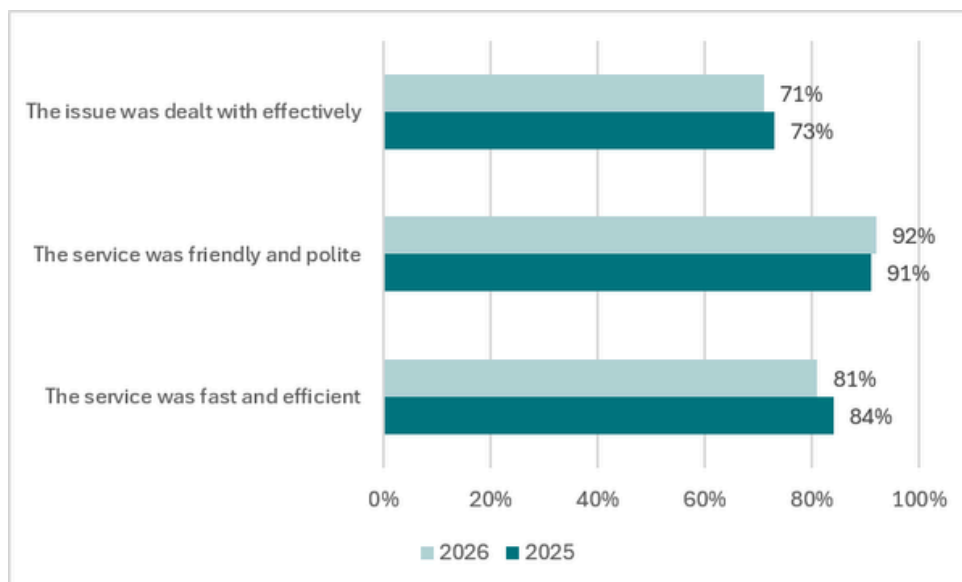
The Alexandra office was the primary point of contact for many (45%) respondents. Twenty per cent reported having no contact with any Council office. The Cromwell office was the primary contact for 28% of respondents. The Ranfurly and Roxburgh offices each accounted for 3% of contacts.

'How did you make contact with Council?' Respondents were able to select more than one.



The most common methods of contacting the Council were phone (41%), in person (37%) and email (36%); these three methods account for the majority of contact. Use of the website was notably lower (18%).

'Thinking of the initial contact or response you received, how satisfied were you with the following...'



Those who responded to this question indicated a high level of satisfaction with their initial contact or response from Council.

Other Comments

Respondents were asked, 'If you have any other comments or thoughts about CODC's services or facilities, please let us know below.'

There were 148 comments received and 218 mentions.

Core infrastructure (44 mentions) These comments reflected a desire to go "back-to-basics". Issues noted include resolving chronic water leaks, removing lime from potable water, improving road surfacing (including gravel roads), and providing better, more cost-effective waste management.

"Stop the vanity projects and stick to core infrastructure only. Reducing rates to end users should be your primary focus."

Affordability (39 mentions) Many expressed concerns regarding consecutive, steep rate increases. Some were critical of the Council's financial management.

"Reduce costs and burden on ratepayers, be effective with funding instead of constant increases exceeding inflation."

Facilities and Parks (35 mentions) Many respondents noted appreciation for new developments such as Te Puna Mahara, while others criticised the construction of Te Puna Mahara and in particular the inclusion of a Māori name. Poor local facility provision was also noted, as well as concerns regarding access to dog parks.

"Cromwell is incredibly under serviced for sporting facilities and it is most definitely going to get worse."

Communication (33 mentions) A disconnect was noted between elected officials, Council staff, and the community. Some cited poor consultation and a sense that public feedback is ignored.

"Concerned about lack of democracy in Council and the overriding of ratepayers wishes (especially when there has been a majority decision made by the ratepayers)!"

Customer service (21 mentions) Frontline staff, as well as local building inspectors, received praise from respondents. However, there was some dissatisfaction noted regarding interactions with back-office “faceless” staff, long waits on service requests and internal silos.

“All the council staff I have interacted with over the last year have been very responsive, helpful and friendly.”

Dog management (19 mentions) This theme was largely driven by a reaction to a recent decision to ban public access to the Sandflat Road pine forest. Some dog owners felt alienated, citing rising registration fees without corresponding facilities.

“The dog owner community had tried on many occasions to get appropriate, safe and suitable dog exercise area including a fenced dog park over many years. This keeps getting pushback and now even exercise areas are being removed, but rego continues to rise. What are dog owners getting in return for the rego?”

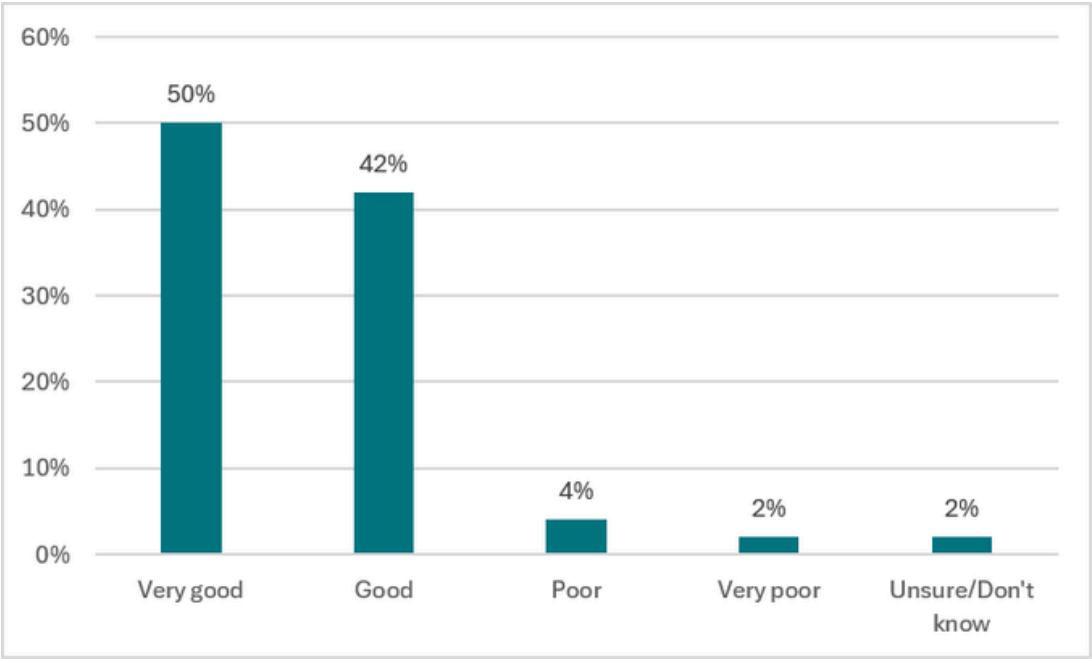
Planning, building consents (16 mentions) Consenting and planning processes are viewed by respondents as overly bureaucratic, contradictory, slow, and expensive.

“Major problem with district plan and slow renewal. Building control is inefficient and difficult to work with.”

Quality of life

These are new questions this year and are designed to gauge the overall quality of life of those living in our district. To highlight the strength of respondent feedback, this chart breaks down the ‘Good/Very Good’ and Poor/Very Poor’ results.

Respondents were asked, ‘Would you say that your overall quality of life is very good, good, poor, very poor or unsure/don’t know.’

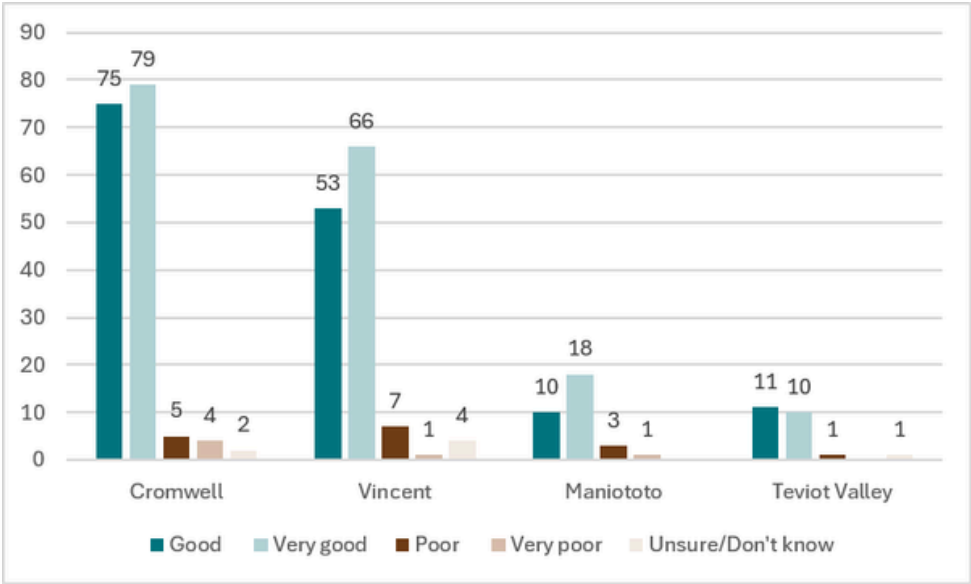


n=360

Respondents overwhelmingly felt that their overall quality of life is either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (92%).

By ward

Of those who indicated their ward, the chart below captures their overall quality of life, broken down by ward. Due to low response rates in some wards, whole numbers are used rather than percentages.

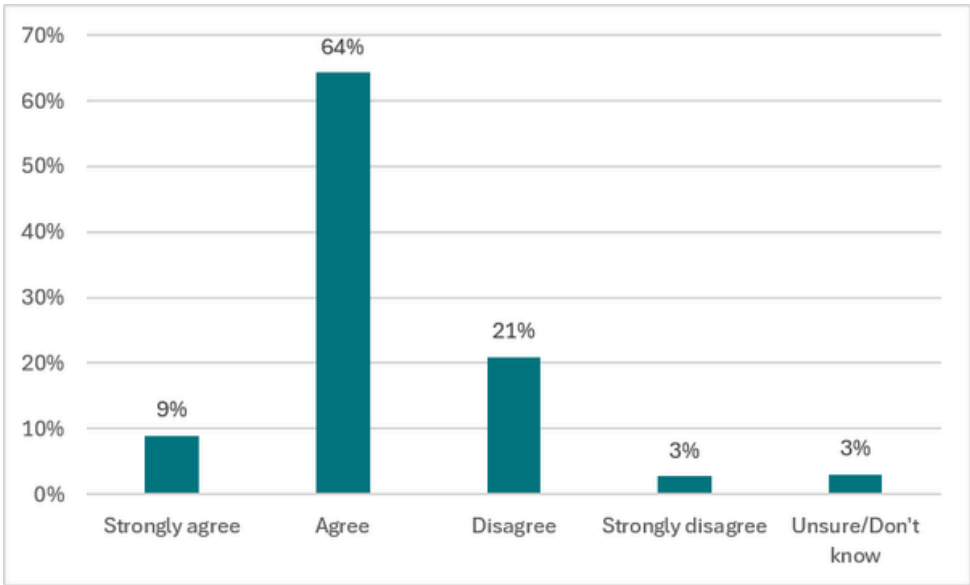


n=351

These numbers indicate that the majority of respondents, regardless of location in the district, feel that their overall quality of life is either 'good' or 'very good'.

'How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?'

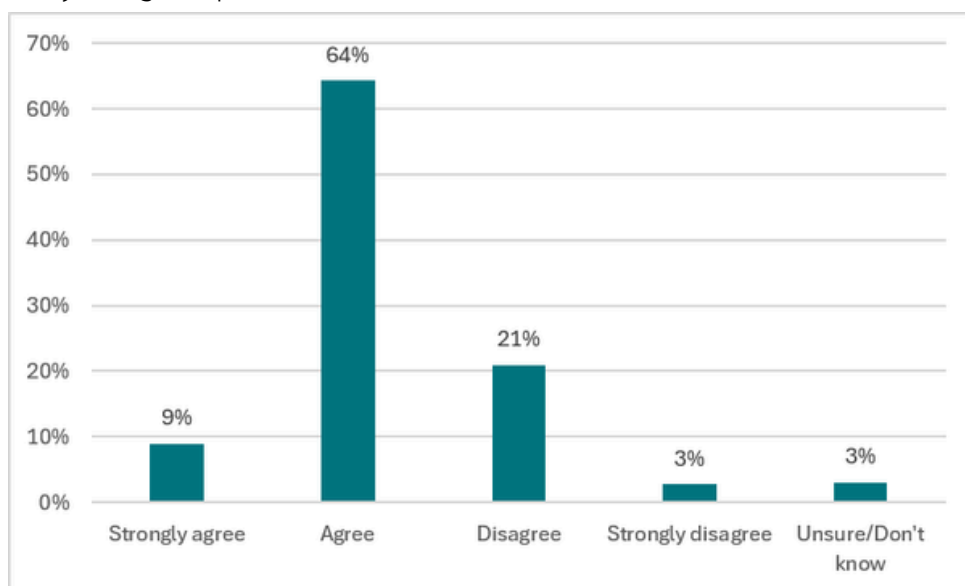
- I feel really happy with how my community looks and feels.



n=357

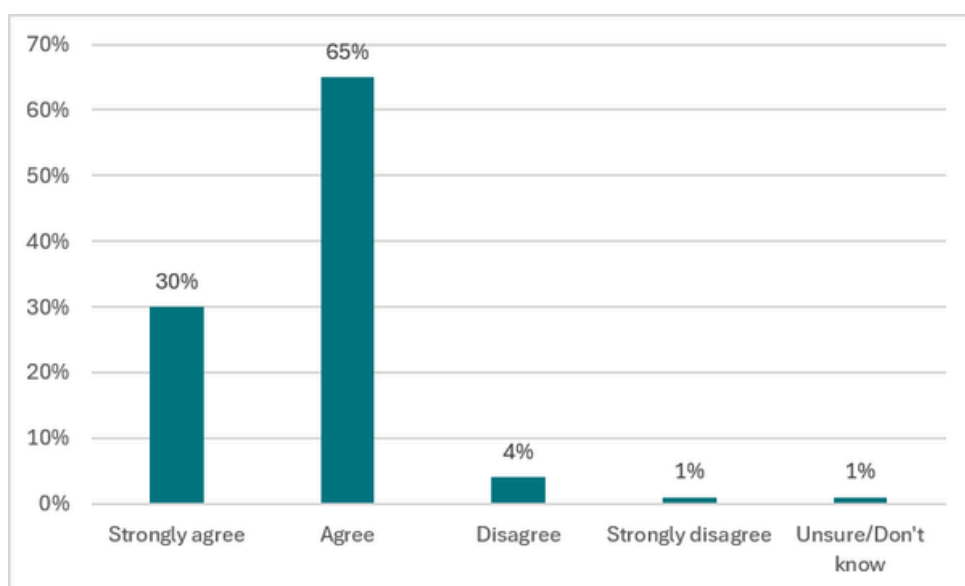
- My community is a great place to live.

n=358



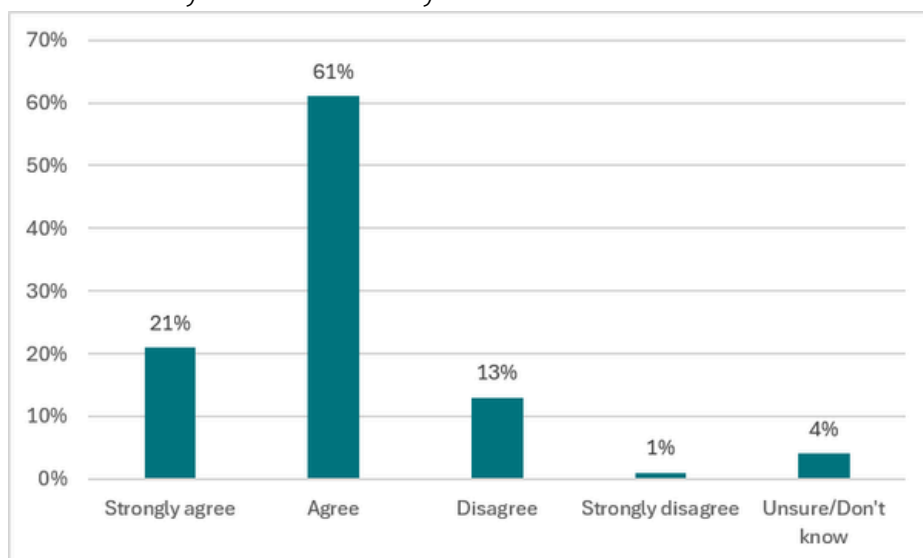
- I feel safe in my community.

n=358



- I feel a sense of community with others in my local area.

n=358



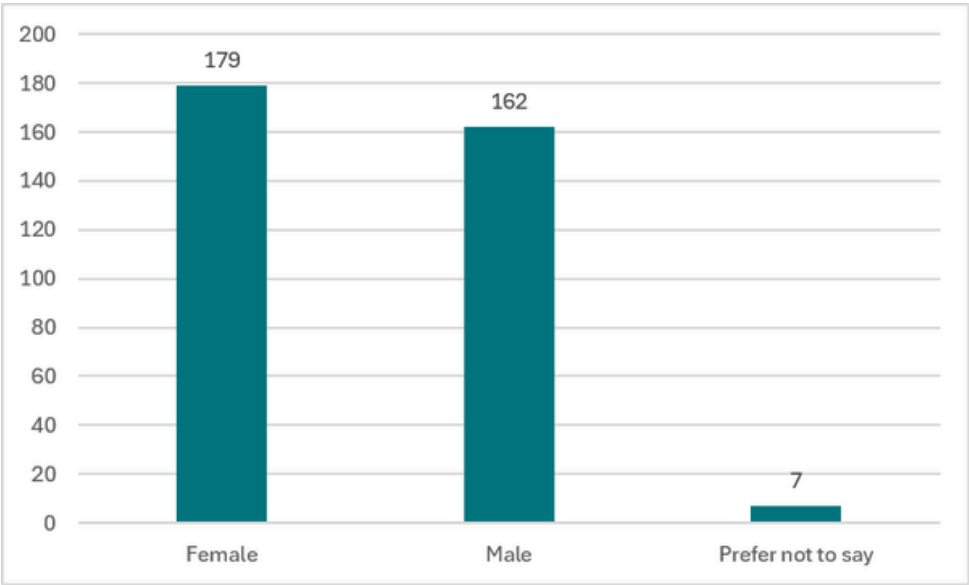


Appendices

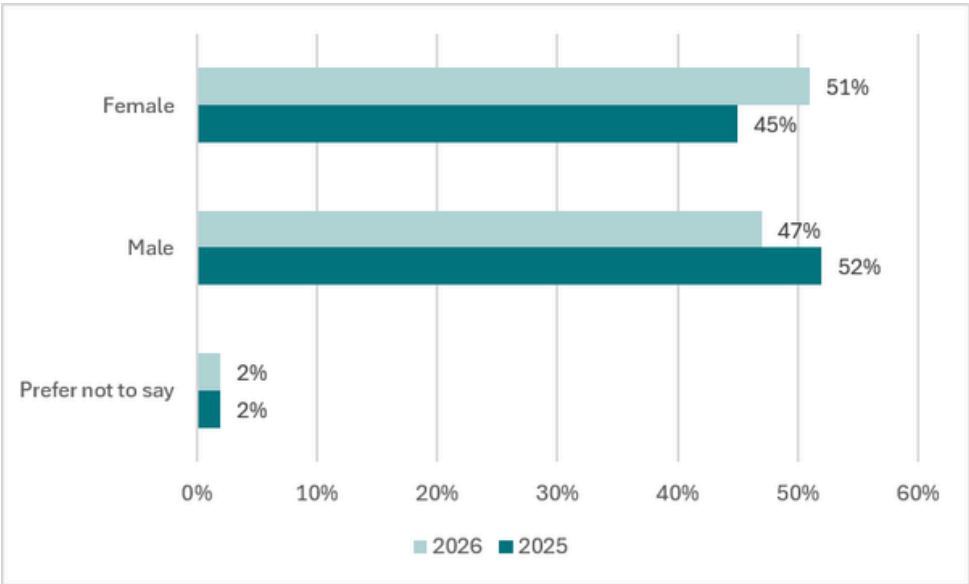


Appendix One: How representative is this survey?

Gender

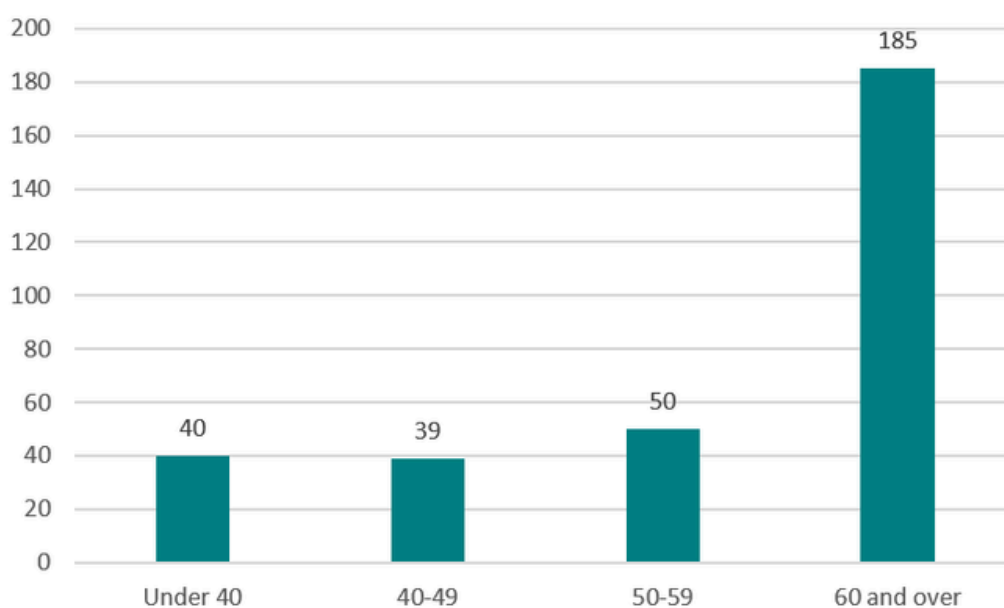


n=348

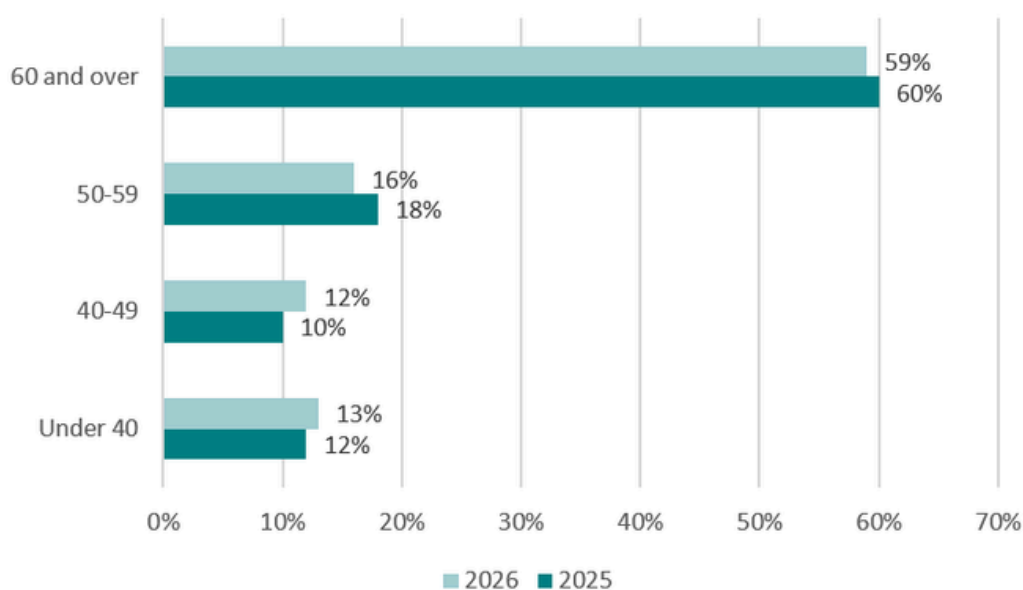


Female respondents (51%) slightly outnumber male respondents (47%) in 2026.

Age

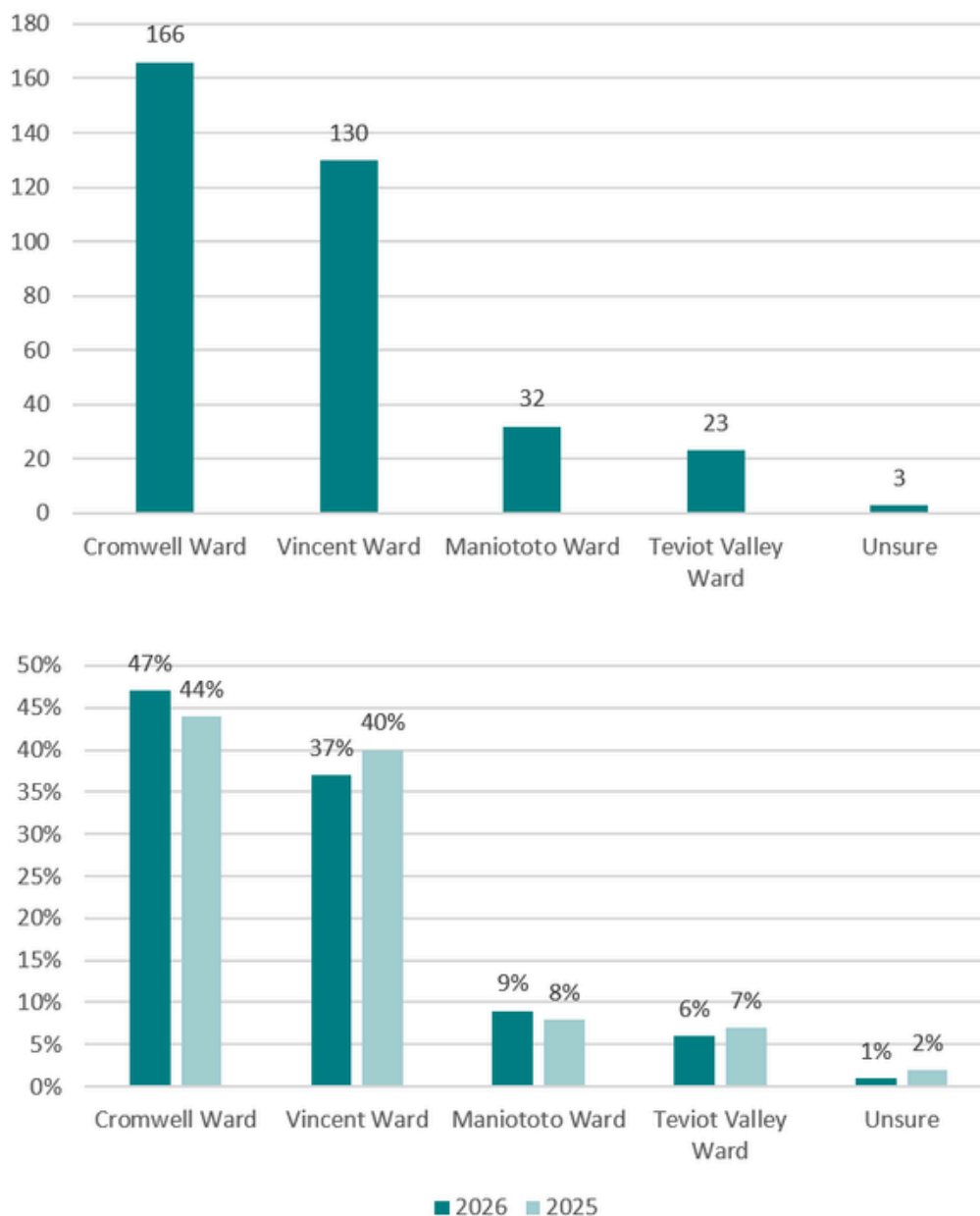


n=314



The under 40 (13%) and 40–49-year age group (12%) increased when compared to 2025. There were fewer respondents 50–59 years old (16%) and there were slightly fewer age 60 and over (59%) when compared to 2025.

Ward



n=354

Response rates by ward remain somewhat consistent between 2026 and 2025 and roughly reflect the population distribution in the district.

Appendix Two: Promotion of the survey

Promotion of survey

Hard copy surveys available at all Council offices and libraries.

Elected members encouraged to promote the survey in their community.

Council's Facebook page posts throughout the campaign.

Featured on public display screens in Council receptions, libraries and pools.

Email databases. Some respondents were prompted to participate via an email sent to those who have elected to pay rates electronically (8,555 recipients). Others were prompted to participate via an email sent to Let's Talk participants who indicated an interest in being informed of Council community engagement (1,154 recipients).

Promotion of the survey through advertising:

- o The News (CODC Noticeboard, p. 5)
- o Central App
- o Teviot Bulletin
- o Cromwell Bulletin

Promoted at social service and business network meetings.

Appendix Three: Let's Talk traffic summary

Visitors Summary

Total visits: 2.5k

- Maximum visitors per day to the project page: 492
- **Aware** visitors: 2.1k An aware visitor has made at least one single visit to the site or project.
- **Informed** visitors: 1.4k An informed visitor has taken the next step and clicked on something.
- **Engaged** visitors: 362 An engaged visitor has contributed in some way or participated in a survey or quick poll.

Channel Summary

- Direct visits: 1656 – visitor typed the URL or clicked a link in an email
- Social visits: 171 – traffic generated by social media
- Email: 385 – traffic that arrived via direct email campaigns within Let's Talk (such as a newsletter)
- .Gov sites: 59 – any site with a .gov or .govt that refers traffic to the consultation
- Search engines: 39 – traffic generated via search engines such as Google
- Referrals: 184 – traffic from links on any other non-government website