



# people's panel



## Communicating With Council – Customer Experience Survey

November 2011

---

## 1 Table of Contents

1	Table of Contents.....	2
2	Key Findings.....	3
3	Background.....	4
3.1	Survey background .....	4
3.2	About the People’s Panel.....	4
3.3	Methodology .....	4
4	Survey results .....	6
4.1	Interaction with Auckland Council.....	6
4.2	Frequency of interacting with Auckland Council .....	6
4.3	Method of interaction.....	7
4.4	Reasons for contacting or interacting with Auckland Council.....	8
4.5	Complexity of interactions .....	9
4.6	Methods used to contact Auckland Council .....	9
4.7	Preferred method of contacting or interacting with council.....	11
4.8	Reasons for preferred method of interacting with Auckland Council .....	14
4.9	Satisfaction with most recent interaction with council .....	20
4.10	Areas for improvement .....	20
4.11	Other comments.....	24
5	How were the results used?.....	25
	Appendix I Questionnaire with tables: .....	26
	Appendix II Respondent profile .....	31

### Key findings

- 67% of panellists had interacted or contacted the Auckland Council in the last three months.

**Of the panellists who had interacted or contacted the Auckland Council in the last three months:**

- 76% had interacted or contacted the council twice or more in the last three months.
- Most common methods for contacting or interacting with the council:
  - 59% - visiting the website
  - 50% - ringing the call centre,
  - 33% - email
  - 30% - phoning a specific department or council staff member
- 64% had contacted or interacted with the council to obtain some information.
- 71% felt that their most recent interaction or contact with the council was relatively straightforward.
- Over 80% were satisfied or more than satisfied with their most recent interaction with council.
- 71% of panellists had used their preferred method to contact council.
- Of those panellists who had not used their preferred method to contact council, 69% did so because the nature of the matter meant that they had to interact with council via this particular method.
- Suggested areas for improvement were:
  - Council to give feedback and follow up
  - A more user friendly and up-to-date website
  - Faster response times
- Single preferred method for contacting or interacting with council (all panellists)
  - 26% - ringing the call centre
  - 24% - email
  - 21% - visiting the website
  - 17% - phoning a specific department or council staff member

These results provide a better understanding of how customers like to communicate with council and will help guide future improvements in the provision of customer services.

### **3 Background**

#### **3.1 Survey background**

Auckland Council interacts with many thousands of customers each day by providing information, answering queries, completing requests for service, and receiving feedback. The call centre alone handles on average 11,000 calls a day and many more Aucklanders use the council website, call staff directly or contact the council in writing.

To help Auckland Council improve the service it provides to Auckland residents, we asked the People's Panel about the experiences they've had interacting with council e.g. contacting council staff directly (via the call centre, email, letter, fax, or face to face) or by visiting the Auckland Council website.

We wanted to investigate Panellists preferred way of contacting council, how often they contact council and for what reasons. We asked panellists to exclude all interactions with the People's Panel.

The following report aims to summarise the key trends and comments identified from the survey.

#### **3.2 About the People's Panel**

The People's Panel aims to provide an opportunity for Aucklanders to get involved with a range of council issues, giving feedback by regularly completing online surveys and getting involved with focus groups and other activities as needed.

The panel ideally supplements other research, consultation and engagement activities used to provide public perceptions to help inform decision-making processes. Panellists are recruited to be 'typical' members of the public – that is they include members of the public who come from a range of backgrounds and a range of levels of involvement with the council.

At the time of surveying there were 6,890 people registered with the panel, with representation from residents of each local board area and by age group and ethnicity. The People's Panel is not yet representative of Auckland and further recruitment is under way to improve participation from particular areas, age groups and ethnicities.

For more information about the People's Panel, visit [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/peoplespanel](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/peoplespanel)

#### **3.3 Methodology**

This survey was open from 30 September to 6 October and one reminder was sent to those who had not completed the survey. Two \$50 movie passes were offered to encourage panellists to participate. In total 2,465 completed surveys were received.

It is important to note that participation in the People's Panel is voluntary and as such, the demographic and geographic distribution of panellists responding to this survey does not reflect the general population of Auckland. For this reason, results should not be considered representative. However there is value in the feedback from this research and presented in this report as it gives a perspective of a key stakeholder group.

Caveats to be aware of:

- Results are not statistically representative of the Auckland region but serve as an initial indicator.

The feedback has been analysed in two ways:

- For the tick box questions, responses to each option have been reported as proportions of the total sample and presented as charts and/or tables.
- Responses to open-ended questions ranged from one-word answers to lengthy comments with several points and ideas. Key themes from these comments have been identified and ordered by frequency. A selection of comments has been included in the report, to illustrate these themes.

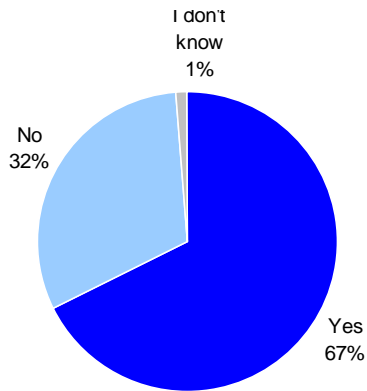
Please note that results in tables presented in this report may not sum to 100% because multiple responses were allowed for some questions and/or as a result of rounding.

## 4 Survey results

### 4.1 Interaction with Auckland Council

Two-thirds of respondents had interacted with council in some way (excluding People’s Panel contact) in the three months preceding the survey (July, August and September 2011).

#### Have you interacted with council (directly or through the website) in the last 3 months?

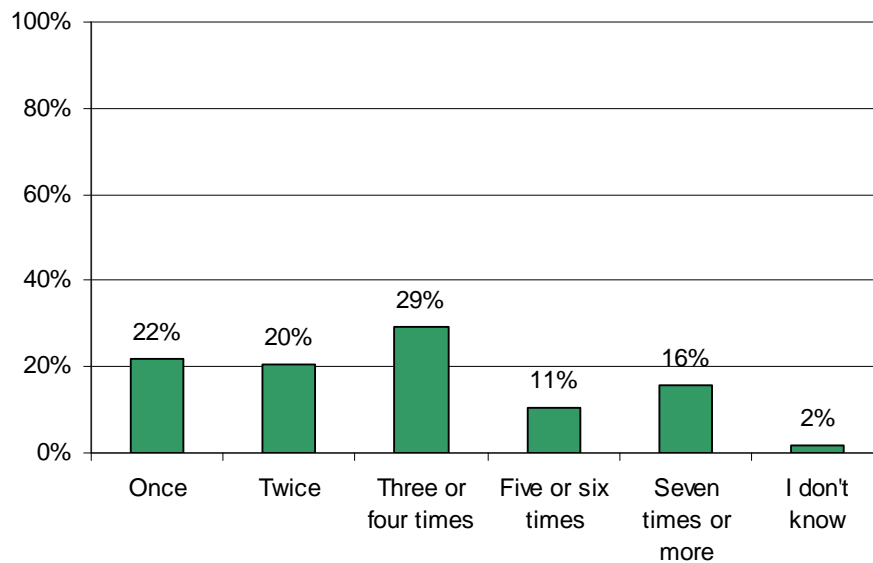


Base: All respondents n=2465

### 4.2 Frequency of interacting with Auckland Council

Over 80% of the panellists who had interacted with the council had done so at least twice in the three months from July to September 2011.

#### How many times you have contacted the council or visited the council website in the last 3 months

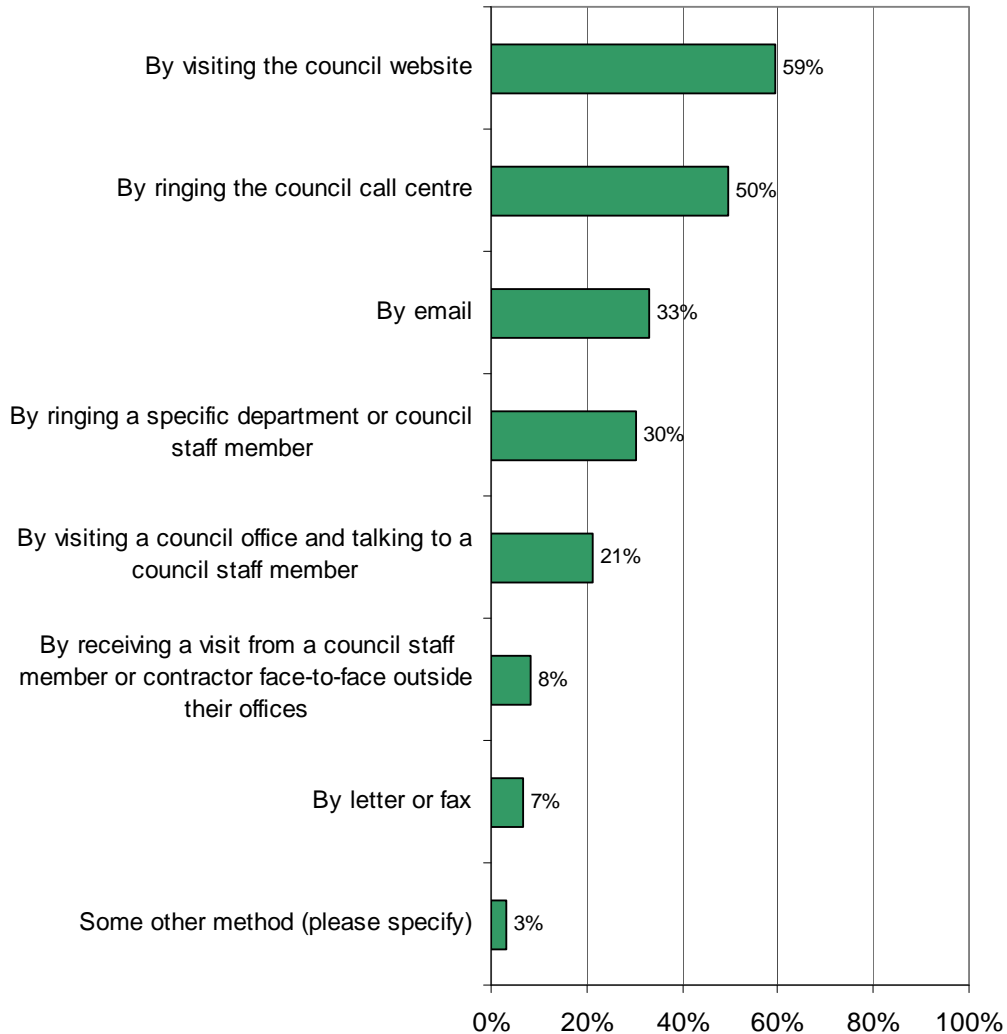


Base=Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1646

### 4.3 Method of interaction

Many panellists who had interacted with council during the nominated period said that they had used more than one method. Visiting the council website (59%) and ringing the council Call Centre (50%) were the most common ways of interacting with Auckland Council. One third had contacted the council by email and a similar number (30%) had rung a specific council department or staff member.

**In the last 3 months (since July 2011), how have you contacted or interacted with council?**

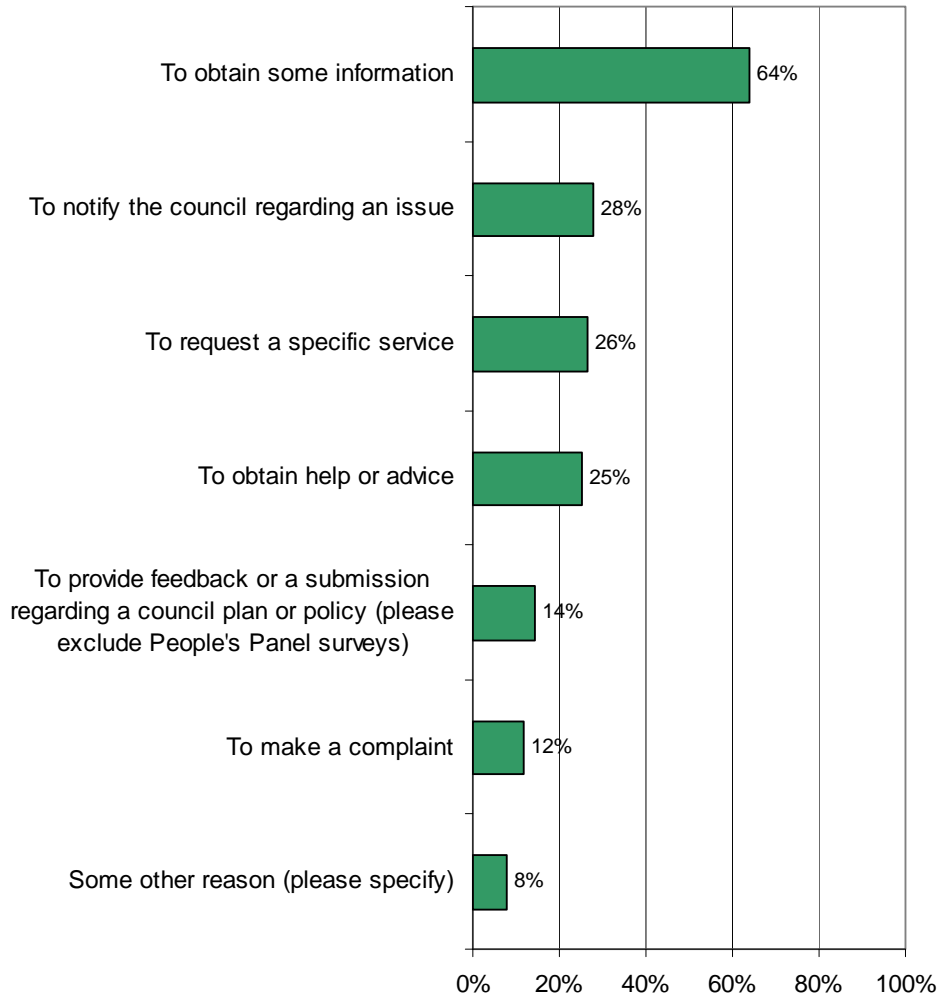


*Base Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1646*

#### 4.4 Reasons for contacting or interacting with Auckland Council

Seeking information was the main reason for interacting with council. Almost two-thirds of those who had contacted council or visited the website did so to obtain some information. Notification of a particular issue, requesting a specific service and seeking help or advice were each given as reasons for interacting with council by approximately one quarter of respondents.

##### Reasons for contacting or interacting with Auckland Council



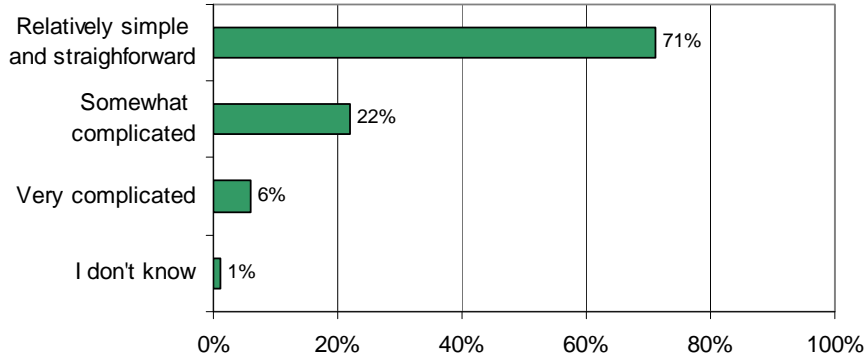
Base Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1646



#### 4.5 Complexity of interactions

Most panellists (71%) described their most recent interaction with council as relatively simple and straightforward.

##### Complexity of interactions with council

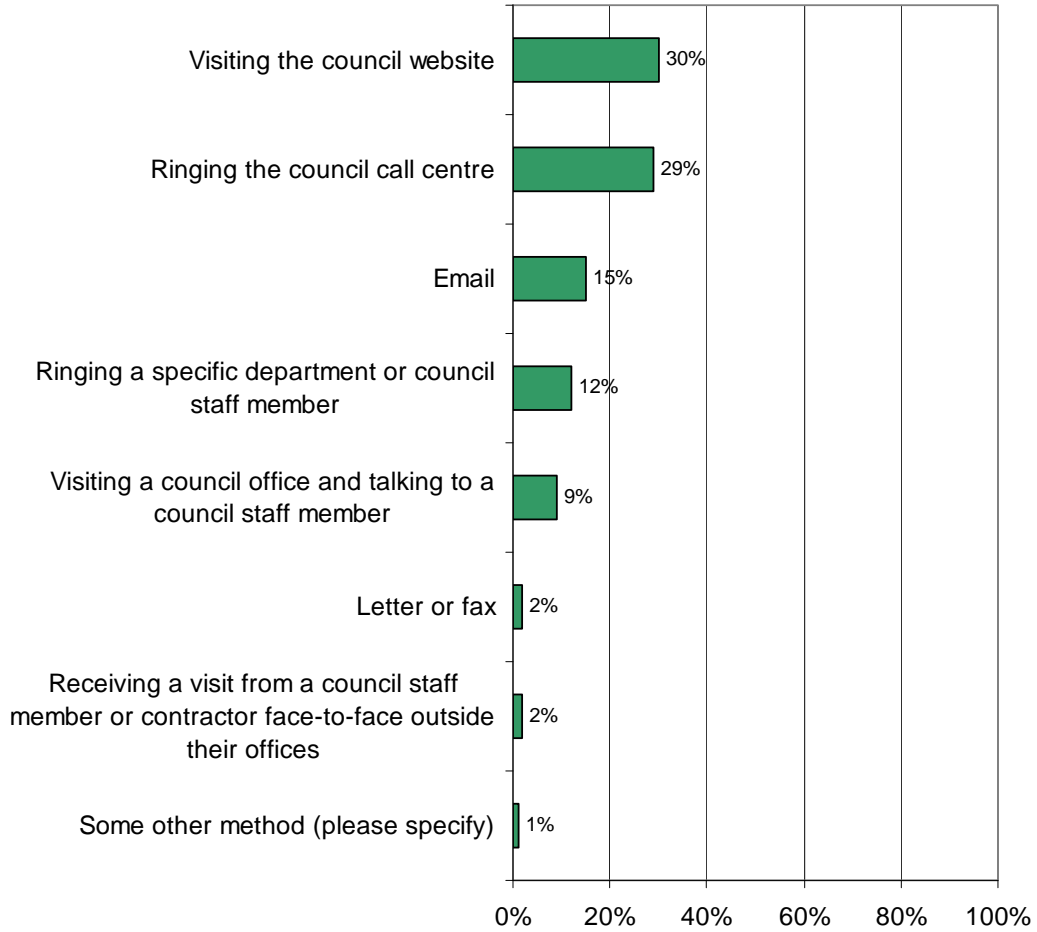


Base=Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1663

#### 4.6 Methods used to contact Auckland Council

Visiting the council website and ringing the council call centre were the main ways panellists interacted with Auckland Council. Panellists were asked to identify the method used in their most recent interaction with council –selecting the one they spent the most time on if more than one method was used. The website and the call centre were the principal contact methods for almost equal numbers of panellists (30% and 29% respectively). Fewer respondents used email (15%) or rang a specific department or council staff member (12%).

**What method did you use in your most recent contact or interaction with council?**

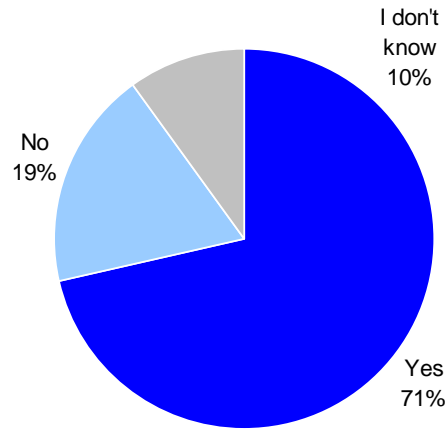


*Base=Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1663*

#### 4.7 Preferred method of contacting or interacting with council

Most panellists (71%) said the method they used in their most recent interaction was the way they preferred to engage with council.

##### Is this your preferred way of contacting or interacting with council?

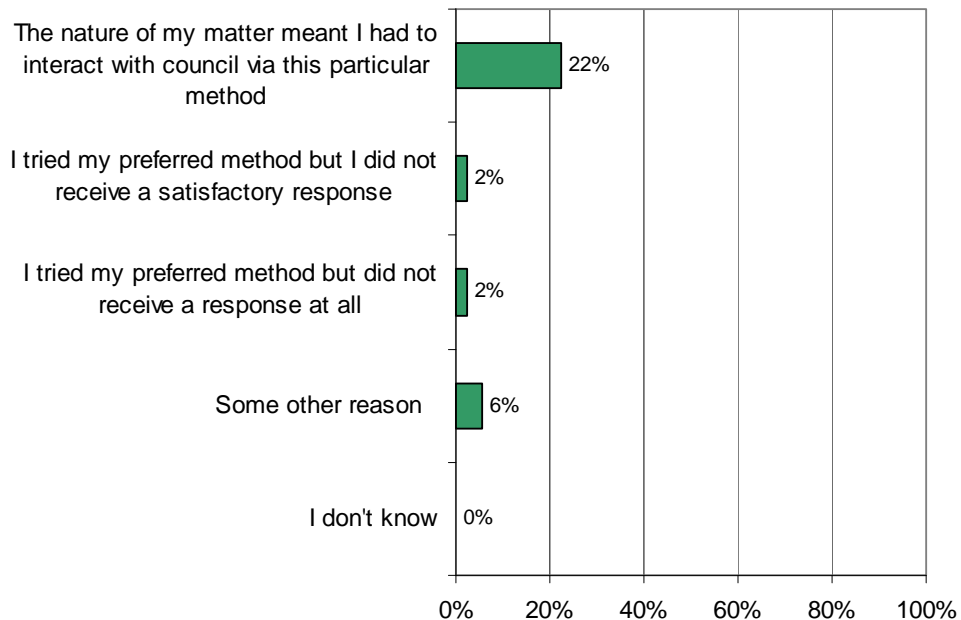


Base=Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1663

Of those who were not able to use their preferred method, 69% said the nature of the matter of concern meant they had to use the method they had chosen. Some panellists said they had tried their preferred method, but either had no response (7%) or an unsatisfactory response (7%).

A number of respondents commented that while their preferred method of contact might be different, on this occasion it was easier, quicker or more convenient to use the method they chose.

##### Why did you use this method, rather than your preferred method?



Base=Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1663

The preferred means of contacting or interacting with council was established for three separate groups:

- Group A –those who had interacted with council in the 3 months of the survey period **and** used their preferred method
- Group B - those who had interacted with council in the 3 months of the survey period who had **not used** their preferred method
- Group C – those who had **not interacted** with council in the 3 months of the survey

When the responses of these different groups are compared differences can be seen in preferred methods of interacting with council.

In Group A (panellists who had used their preferred method) the two preferred ways to interact with council were visiting the website and contacting the call centre - each favoured by 31%.

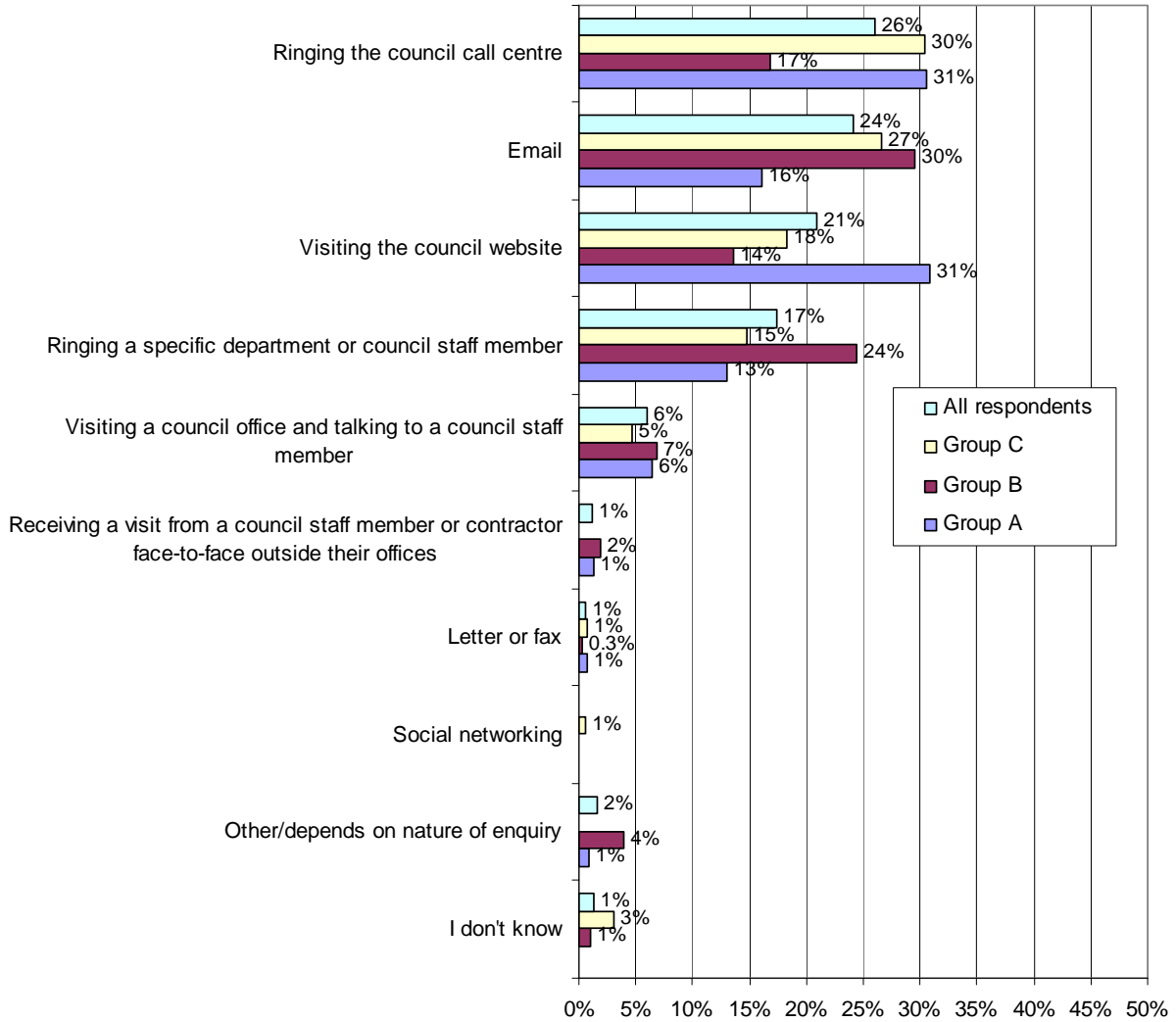
In Group B (panellists who had not used their preferred method) over 50% said they generally preferred to have contact by email (30%) or by ringing a specific department or staff member (24%). There was less interest in using the call centre (preferred by 17%) or the website (14%).

Group C (panellists who had no interaction within the survey period) most commonly preferred using the call centre (31%) or email (27%) when they needed to contact council. Using the website was the third most popular method in this group (preferred by 18%) followed by calling a specific department or staff member (15%).

Over all the respondents, calling the call centre was the most popular method of interacting with Auckland Council, followed by email (24%) and visiting the website (21%). There was little interest in sending a letter or fax, or in using social media (such as Facebook or twitter). A number of panellists made the point that their preferred method of interacting with council depended on the reason for the interaction or that a combination of methods of contact was often used.

The results show while the council website meets the needs of many, especially those who want frequent interaction with council, there is still a preference, even in a internet-savvy group such as the People's Panel – for contact with individuals by phone or by email when interacting with council. Aucklanders also value having a variety of ways in which to contact or interact with council.

**What is your preferred method of contacting or interacting with Auckland Council?**



Base: All respondents n=2465

#### 4.8 Reasons for preferred method of interacting with Auckland Council

Panellists were asked the reasons for their preferred means of contacting or interacting with Auckland Council. Their responses are summarised below.

##### Reasons for preferring calling the council call centre (26% of all respondents)

###### General themes

- Can get it sorted straight away
- Like to speak to a person
- Easier to call and talk than try and find out information on the website
- Easier than going in person
- Information is up-to-date
- Immediate response
- Know someone is accountable
- The person either knows the correct information or can direct you to someone who does
- Emails take too long and don't always get responded to
- Can explain a problem

##### Reasons for preferring ringing the council call centre - selection of comments

- *"You get to speak to a human."*
- *"If there are any supplementary questions or clarifications needed then it is better to sort it out with someone directly rather than back and forth by email, for example. "Also more personable way to interact."*
- *Simple and fast. The website is often difficult to navigate and it's not always easy to find the info I want/need."*
- *"Calls are answered promptly and staff are knowledgeable and efficient, and very pleasant."*
- *"Because you can talk directly to someone and have an interactive conversation. Present your case and get answer or an action resulting. That is the theory anyway. Reality doesn't quite achieve this."*
- *"Easy, can do it when and where suits me. Always good service."*
- *"Find out answer or outcome or correct process quicker. Plus website is too outdated and keeps sending you to old council website as the new one has not been updated yet. i.e. Food grades"*
- *"It seems more personal. Also with the new amalgamation I have found it difficult to know who to phone ie. Manukau, call centre etc. The websites have been difficult to navigate during this time also - different boroughs have had different protocols and policies for different things such as change of address or licensing your dogs."*
- *"Because you are actually speaking to a human not a machine."*
- *"Phoning is my preferred way if there is a complex issue regarding a series of questions and answers and if I need immediate feedback. Otherwise email is preferred."*

## Reasons for preferring email (24% of all respondents)

### General themes

- Avoids phone queues
- Convenient for everyone
- When you are working it is difficult to take time off to visit a council office or make a phone call – email is convenient
- There is a record of what is 'said' / the interaction
- Written reply is sometimes preferable to verbal reply
- Easier and quicker for customer – but sometimes the response is slower
- If its not urgent it's an easy way to deal with the council
- Can store and access information at a later date
- Emails fit around work and children
- Can attach relevant documents

### Reasons for preferring email- selection of comments

- *"Can do it at any time and there is no waiting time. Staff can go and find answers before they reply. Staff do get back so it is reliable."*
- *"I can send an email through out of office hours and have a written record of what I've said."*
- *"It gives me a chance to gather my thoughts and I can send emails at any time of the day."*
- *"It doesn't require real time contact so communication can be more fluid. Information and documents can be moved between Council and Public easily and quickly."*
- *"I prefer email because it gives the chance to think about your response, and are able to detail better in writing. It's also more convenient."*
- *"Because it means I can get my point across easily, and it is easier to remember everything I may need to ask or find out about without being lost for words or trying to remember everything."*
- *I am able to express the issue in as much or as little detail as I perceive to be necessary. I am able to send attachments if needed. Then I receive a reply in what I consider to a fair & reasonable time frame."*
- *"It is quick and easy so it is my preferred primary contact method. After that, and if it is required, then I like to follow up with a telephone call, which is my preferred secondary contact method. I find this order of contact methods is best because once it has been established what I am looking then I am advised the best number/person/department to contact."*
- *"Emails are best for getting across more complex matters, and make attaching material easy."*

## Reasons for preferring to visit the council website (21% of all respondents)

### General themes:

- Easier and faster than other methods
- Forms and information are available on the website
- Easy to log service calls and have a record of what was logged
- Can use it anytime
- No queues or waiting
- Can be done at customers convenience
- Has contact information
- Don't need to interact with a person
- Good for simple stuff
- Often find other information while looking

## Reasons for preferring to visit the council website - selection of comments

- *"I think the website is a very good source of information and I can access it when it suits me rather than only during business hours which can be difficult for me."*
- *"Because waiting for a call centre person can be painful. I'd rather not waste time sitting on the phone."*
- *"Can see the information I need and then contact the council if I need further information."*
- *"Requires no personal interaction. Does not disturb staff."*
- *"Because I get the information I need straight away without waiting on hold or waiting for an email or letter."*
- *"I can do it in my own time, and the noise of my children playing doesn't interrupt like it does phone calls."*
- *"Because it is a first point to find an answer to a question. If not, second step is to contact Council directly."*
- *"It should have all up-to-date information that will allow me to review for my needs and to enable me to be informed and make decisions."*
- *"No waiting times and less likely to get conflicting information. When I ring up I get told different things depending on who I speak with whereas there is more uniformity to the published information on the website (guess as there is no recourse if you publish incorrect info)."*
- *"Prefer to be independent and self-sufficient and am antisocial."*
- *"I can refer back to the information if I need to again later."*

## Reasons for preferring to ring a specific department or council staff member (17% of all respondents)

### General themes

- Get an immediate answer to a query
- Get an answer from someone who knows what they are talking about
- Good for urgent action
- Easier to resolve than email exchanges
- Direct method of communication
- Get first hand information
- Some matters are not suitable for online activity
- Don't have to wait for email response
- Easy to get the issue sorted



### Reasons for preferring to ring a specific department or council staff member - selection of comments

- *"Because I can deal with the matter then & there."*
- *"When you want to discuss something or get some advice it is most useful to call as answers might produce more questions which can be answered immediately. I have been having contact with council with regard to our house building so personal interaction can be more useful than the website or emails."*
- *"Easier to resolve than email exchanges."*
- *"If I know the department or staff member then I'll go straight to them. Even if the call is for another reason, that staff member can often point me in the right direction, to another staff member. As opposed to the call centre staff, who often need a very full explanation, and can often direct you to the wrong place. I'd rather talk to someone who works 'in' the Council, rather than Call Centre that 'services' the public."*
- *"You don't feel like you're being 'passed around.'"*
- *"Most direct method of communication."*
- *"Convenient, accessible, immediate, can also leave a message."*
- *"Because I can get 'general' feedback on consenting issues. Council is very reluctant to put things in writing."*
- *"Quickest and most personal approach."*
- *"It is the easiest way for me - not able to travel to the city and do not have internet access during the day at work."*

### Reasons for preferring to visit a council office and talking to a council staff member (6% of all respondents)

#### General themes

- Can talk to some one face to face
- Can't get fobbed off
- Communication more accurate
- Clarity on issues
- You have a name and face
- Can explain a problem more clearly
- Details of issues can be presented visually
- Can control the nature of the interaction and result more
- Can read the body language of the council staff member
- Depends on what it is about – for explaining plan etc this is the simplest way
- Last resort option when other methods have failed

### Reasons for preferring to visit a council office and talking to a council staff member - selection of comments

- *“Because you can see how staff treat visitors and see whether, if they say that they will try and contact the relevant person (if it turns out not to be them), that they actually try to do that while you are present.”*
- *“You get the information first hand and paper copies of relevant documents.*
- *The staff can also give you other information or contacts at the same time.*
- *If you email via the Council website you do not receive a reply to your query the same day and often get diverted around different Council departments.*
- *Also you have to print out any documents required when using the Internet website system. Customer service is more reliable at face verbal level as can't get phone conversation cut off like when you are speaking to someone on a phone.”*
- *“Because I can judge the knowledge of the person answering the questions if I can look them in the eye. They can generally show me the rules that they are relying on*
- *“It is a more effective way of discussing issues and putting forward the views of my community.”*
- *It's much easier as when dealing with alterations and drains. Something could be mentioned at the meeting that you hadn't thought of. Which can be dealt with in the same meeting saving countless emails backward and forwards.”*
- *“Visiting the office and speaking to the staff member is a last resort when all else seemed to have failed. It is a desperate last resort option when Council services fail.”*

### Reasons for preferring to receive a visit from a council staff member or contractor face to face outside their offices (1% of all respondents)

#### General themes:

- Feels as if they are more interested in the matter
- For building related issues this is the best and sometimes only way
- Get to talk to the person responsible
- Personal
- Strengthens the relationship

### Reasons for preferring to receive a visit from a council staff member or contractor face to face outside their offices - selection of comments

- *“More information can be communicated. It's important to have a relationship [with an officer] - some one you can get to know, not a faceless email or call centre that could be anywhere in the world. Your field staff are excellent and usually seem pretty knowledgeable about local issues and needs.”*
- *I feel that when they visit you it feels more like they are interested in the matter at hand.”*
- *“To be able to show first hand the problem/s arising and discussing possible solutions.”*
- *“It gives me more confidence about Council taking the time and interest of promptly taking the matter in hand, a more personal, an opportunity for further information and better understanding, avoiding misunderstanding or misinterpretation of any issue therefore resulting a more satisfactory conclusion for both parties.....most appreciated.”*
- *You actually talk to somebody, and if nothing happens they become accountable instead of someone faceless.”*

**Reasons for preferring social networking and social media sites (e.g. Facebook, twitter ) (0.2% of all respondents)**

**General themes**

- Easy way to access information
- Immediacy of response
- Tweets highlight new or interesting content on the website

**Reasons for preferring social networking and social media sites - selection of comments**

- *Facebook is easy, and like most people I spend a lot of time on there. Being able to send a message to the council (as opposed to posting on the wall) would be a great alternative to using email."*
- *" With Twitter I usually get a response quickly, that is direct and to the point"*
- *"I get your tweets to my phone and if there is something of interest to me I have the link to get that information online. It allows me to choose what I'm interested in. it gives me an easy way to get more information about that topic.*

**Other/Depends on the nature of the enquiry (2% of all panellists)**

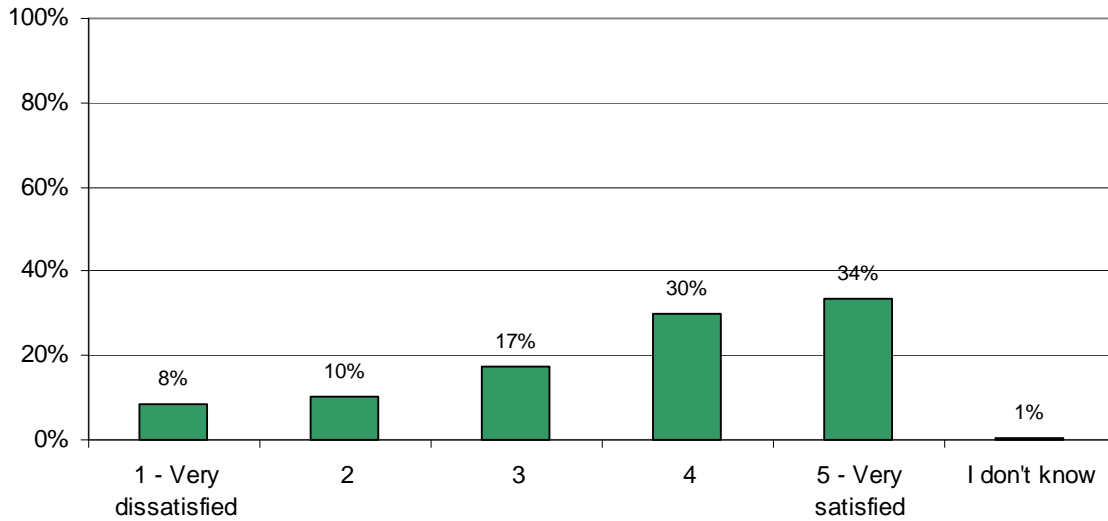
- Method preferred depends on nature of the enquiry or concern – no one method sufficient
- A number of different methods might need to be used to resolve a particular matter
- Residents need a variety of ways to act with council

**Other/Depends on the nature of the enquiry selection of comments**

- *"Sometimes it is better to call and speak to a specific person e.g planning or building matters, sometimes the call centre is quick, and sometimes all you need to do is look at the website.No one method will suffice for all enquiries.*
- *Depends on WHY I want to interact - for dumping, call centre appropriate, for info then website/staff/office appropriate*
- *the more ways the public can interact with their council the better*

#### 4.9 Satisfaction with most recent interaction with council

Most panellists (64%) were happy with their last contact or interaction with council – 30% said they were satisfied and 34% very satisfied. In total 18% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



*Base=Respondents who had interacted with Auckland Council in 3 months from July 2011 n=1663*

#### 4.10 Areas for improvement

Panellists were asked how council could have made their most recent contact or interaction better for them. Many commented that they were happy with their experience and that there was little council could do to improve it. However a number of improvements were suggested in the call centre, website and other areas of council's customer service. These are summarised below.

##### Website

##### Key areas for improvements

- Simpler and more user friendly site
- Better navigation
- Migration of legacy council information into Auckland Council site
- Consistent and regularly updated information
- Documents in a more accessible format

### Improvements to website – selection of comments

- *“I can't find a lot of information on your site despite clicking around in circles for it. Some things you have published in brochures, but that same information isn't online. It's quite hard to get the brochures, or to find out the information by phone ... it really all needs to be online, up-to-date and easy to find.”*
- *“I find some of the layout of the website non-intuitive, and the embedded search function isn't particularly great. There aren't that many pathways to categories of information - e.g. clusters of related information that draw the eye and draw the user along 'natural' pathways.”*
- *“I think the Council website could be better arranged - for the novice it is quite hard to navigate.*
- *“Having relevant, up to date info”*
- *“Integration of the old council and new council web sites would be good. The info on the old site is really useful. Could be archived and accessed from the new site?”*

### Responses and feedback - key areas for improvement

- Return calls, fast response to queries, emails
- Provide feedback and progress reports on a particular issue
- Give prior notice that council staff or contractors were going to visit a property
- Follow through with promises made for further contact, feedback

### Improvements to feedback and response times – selection of comments

- *“Follow up call to let me know the outcome of my complaint”*
- *“Meet their undertaking to keep me informed about a particular issue*
- *“The call was handled well but no action has happened, phoned at least twice on same issue”*
- *“The Phones team are excellent. It's the people who hide behind their answer phones then don't return messages who let the side down. Badly.”*
- *“They could have let me know they were coming onto my property to do some work.*
- *Responding to e-mails in a timely fashion.*

### Call centre - key areas for improvement

- Better customer service training
- Shorter waiting times
- More knowledgeable staff
- Ability to speak English clearly

### Improvements to call centre – selection of comments

- *“Give the call centre staff full training about the functions of the council plus what customer service means”.*
- *“You need to have really experienced people on the phone systems who know how the new council works, what matters are being dealt with by whom, the current state of policy development, and exactly who or what the caller should do if there is no effective response”*
- *“[Make sure] that the first and front person on the phone or desk is able to be understood .Good English. The person I spoke to was very good”*
- *“The person was not able to answer my questions so just said 'call back later or check our website'. I had already looked at the website was not able to get an answer to my questions”.*
- *“Answer the phone quicker”*

### General staff - key areas for improvement

- Allow easier direct access to staff members
- Staff should have a better understanding of council processes and be able to either be able to answer a question themselves or quickly establish who can.
- Be more direct, and provide accurate and complete information

### Suggested improvements - general staff

- *“I fail to see why I can't have council staff DD dial numbers (without the staff member giving it to me after eventually reaching them). Reception not authorised to give out numbers. Staff always on answer machine, Staff don't return calls”.*
- *“The chap I spoke to had no idea how to contact another council member. All employees should have access to a work contact phone list for all other council workers”*
- *I received information that was only partly correct. The information was incomplete, which someone should have noticed. Then they would have seen that they didn't give me the right answer.*
- *Honesty would be a great start. Competence would also help.*
- *“The person who received my correspondence (and replied to it) either does not have the required knowledge or did not understand the issue (the latter I suspect)”*

### Other areas for improvement

- Acknowledging mistakes, don't create the problem in the first place
- Resolve the problem or fix it sooner
- Update records so that information does not have to be repeated  
Processes too complicated, too much bureaucracy

### Other improvements - a selection of comments

*“By making a visit to the place where I had indicated that there was a problem, instead of refusing to acknowledge it.”*

*“Solving the problem I complained about, rather than simply explaining why it couldn't be solved”*

Although the survey highlighted a number of areas where council could improve customer service and interaction, many panellists (approximately one-third) expressed satisfaction with their most recent interaction with council and could not suggest ways in which it could have been improved.

#### Satisfied with customer experience

- *"It was great - unless they were psychic and anticipated my call they could not improve :)"*
- *"The person I talked to was great. I can't think how she could have made the interaction any better"*
- *"I have to say it was excellent; I telephoned today regarding a dog problem near our farm, and after speaking to the person who actually answered the phone, she put me directly through to our local dog control officer... how good is that!"*
- *"It was very good and I was very surprised. The person was polite, friendly, listened to me then responded appropriately."*
- *"This latest interaction could not have been better. I emailed my request one evening. Within 2 days I had confirmation of the email. And today to my pleasure the request has been completed. Excellent experience all round. Thank you."*
- *"Website is fine and relatively easy to find what you are looking for"*

#### 4.11 Other comments

At the end of the survey panellists were asked if they had any other comments they would like to add. Most of those who answered this question expanded on themes already covered early – emphasising the need for high quality customer service from staff and for timely responses and feedback or making further suggestions for improvements. A number complimented council on the way their contact or interaction was handled. Other comments related to areas outside the area of customer experience, such as rates, recent council events or waste management. A selection of these comments is given below.

#### Q9A Other comments about interacting with the council

##### Do you have any other comments about interacting with council you would like to add?

- *Perhaps more publicity demonstrating your services , and how to contact them would be nice. I had to call the Noise Abatement Officer one night by looking up his address in the telephone directory. Why not include a list of after hour contacts with yr rates demand?*
- *When requesting a service the wait period should be told to you or the staff should have contact with you so that they see whether your needs have been attended to.*
- *Listen to us!*
- *Whatever contact I have had over the last couple of years has worked well, whether talking to a person or using the website.*
- *My preferred method of contact depends on the reason for the contact - will range from website for general info, submissions, forms to e-mail or phone for specific people. 2. Do not like having to pay for mobile calls to some officers, unless it is out of hours or urgent - some officers seem to only want to be contacted by mobile at all times. 3. I used the direct line number on an officers card and got the operator rather than being able to dial the ext directly. I was asked whether my call was expected and who I was and put through except the officer wasn't there and the operator then came back and asked if I wanted to leave a voice mail message - what a drawn out procedure instead of me just dialling the ext. (Although I do like getting a person instead of an automated operator if I don't know who I want)*
- *For straightforward matters I'm happy to use email or phone so long as the response to email is prompt. For slightly more complicated matters, I prefer to talk on the phone.*
- *A more friendly, less bureaucratic approach would be helpful*
- *Absolutely, I have never had an easy resolution to the problem that I have. I don't believe that it matters whether your speaking face to face with someone or via the phone, or email. you need to know how it is that the matter is resolved. a satisfied customer is all that matters. its always backing one self with the proper information and resolving the matter.*
- *Again, if you want to have happier customers than you need to focus on a solution to the need, using empathy, and be part of the solution.*
- *At least your call centre is in Auckland! However, the person in the call centre only had general knowledge and was not a specialist, necessitating the call being put through elsewhere. I would have preferred to speak to the right person first time.*
- *Best to offer a variety of communication channels - and do not make everything online only as many people do not use computers.*
- *Call Centre staff appear to be well trained to be courteous and helpful*
- *Correspondence through email with an assurance that we will get an instant response would be a better faster way beside calling the call center..the only downside to contacting a call centre is the waiting time before a call is finally answered..but so far my call to council was handled in a professional manner and the waiting time was not long at all.*
- *Don't even think about replacing the call centre with computer-directed answerphone services to save money. The council call centre is better than any other organisation I've dealt with lately.*



## **5 How were the results used?**

These results provide a better understanding of how customers like to communicate with council and will help guide future improvements in the provision of customer services.

## Appendix I Questionnaire with tables:

### Q1

In the last 3 months (since July 2011), have you interacted with Auckland Council by contacting us directly or visiting the Auckland Council website? <i>This might include emailing, writing or faxing council, phoning the call centre or a staff member, visiting a council office or staff member, receiving a visit from a council staff member, or visiting the website.</i> <i>Please do not include any contact with the People's Panel or visits to the People's Panel webpage.</i>	Number of responses n=2465	% of responses 100%
Yes	1,663	67%
No	778	32%
I don't know	24	1%

Base: All panellists who completed the questionnaire n=2465

### Q2A –Q4B asked of panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011

#### Q2A

In the last 3 months (since July 2011), how many times have you contacted council or visited the council website?  <i>Please do not include any contact with the People's Panel or visits to the People's Panel webpage.</i>	Number of responses n=1646	% of responses 67%
Once	361	22%
Twice	336	20%
Three or four times	484	29%
Five or six times	174	11%
Seven times or more	262	16%
I don't know	29	2%

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=1646

#### Q2B

In the last 3 months (since July 2011), how have you contacted or interacted with council? <i>Please select all that apply.</i>	Number of responses n=1646	% of responses 67%
By ringing the council Call Centre	817	50%
By ringing a specific department or council staff member	497	30%
By visiting a council office and talking to a council staff member	348	21%
By receiving a visit from a council staff member or contractor face-to-face outside their offices	137	8%
By visiting the council website	977	59%
By email	542	33%
By letter or fax	110	7%
I don't know	8	0%
Some other method (please specify)	49	3%

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=1646

**Q3A**

Why did you contact or interact with council? <i>Please select all that apply.</i>	Number of responses n=1658	% of responses 67%
To obtain some information	1,053	64%
To obtain help or advice	416	25%
To request a specific service	433	26%
To notify the council regarding an issue	461	28%
To make a complaint	193	12%
To provide feedback or a submission regarding a council plan or policy (please exclude People's Panel surveys)	238	14%
I don't know/ can't recall	6	0%
Some other reason (please specify)	132	8%

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=1658

**Q3B**

Would you say your most recent interaction with council was...	Number of responses n=1663	% of responses 67%
Relatively simple and straightforward	1,188	71%
Somewhat complicated	360	22%
Very complicated	100	6%
I don't know	15	1%

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=1663

**Q4A**

Thinking about your most recent contact or interaction with council, what contact method did you use? <i>Please select one only - if you used more than one method please select the one you spent the most time using.</i>	Number of responses N=1663	% of responses 67%
Ringling the council Call Centre	485	29%
Ringling a specific department or council staff member	205	12%
Visiting a council office and talking to a council staff member	151	9%
Receiving a visit from a council staff member or contractor face-to-face outside their offices	28	2%
Visiting the council website	496	30%
Email	244	15%
Letter or fax	31	2%
I don't know	4	0%
Some other method (please specify)	19	1%

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=1663

**Q4B**

Is this your preferred way of contacting or interacting with council?	Number of responses n=1663	% of responses 67%
Yes	1,188	71%
No	309	19%
I don't know	166	10%

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=1663

Q5A asked of panellists who had used preferred method in their last interaction with council

**Q5A**

Why is {answer selected at 4A} your preferred way of contacting or interacting with council?	Number of responses n=1156	% of responses 47%
--	-------------------------------	-----------------------

Open text

Base: Panellists using preferred method in last interaction with Auckland Council who completed this question n=1156

Q6A- Q6C asked of those panellists who had not used preferred method in last interaction with council

**Q6A**

You indicated that {answer selected at 4A} is not your preferred method of contacting or interacting with council... Which of the following best describes why you used this method?	Number of responses n=308	% of responses 12%
---	------------------------------	-----------------------

The nature of my matter meant I had to interact with council via this particular method	212	69%
I tried my preferred method but did not receive a response at all	21	7%
I tried my preferred method but I did not receive a satisfactory response	22	7%
I don't know	2	1%
Some other reason (please specify)	51	17%

Base: Panellists who had not used preferred method in last interaction with Auckland Council n=308

**Q6B**

In general, what is your most preferred way to contact or interact with council?	Number of responses n=308	% of responses 12%
--	------------------------------	-----------------------

Ringling the council Call Centre	52	17%
Ringling a specific department or council staff member	75	24%
Visiting a council office and talking to a council staff member	21	7%
Receiving a visit from a council staff member or contractor face-to-face outside their offices	6	2%
Visiting the council website	42	14%
Email	91	30%
Letter or fax	1	0%
Via social networking and social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	2	1%
I don't know	4	1%
Some other method (please specify)	14	5%

Base: Panellists who had not used preferred method in last interaction with Auckland Council n=308

**Q6C**

Why do you prefer this method of contacting or interacting with council?	Number of responses n=281	% of responses 11%
--	------------------------------	-----------------------

Open text

Base: Panellists answering Q6B who completed this question n=281

Q7A and Q7B asked of panellists who had interacted with council July-Sept 2011

**Q7A**

Overall, how satisfied were you with your most recent contact or interaction with council? <i>Rate on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is Very dissatisfied and 5 is Very satisfied.</i>	Number of responses n=1663	% of responses 67%
1 - Very dissatisfied	139	8%
2	169	10%
3	287	17%
4	498	30%
5 - Very satisfied	560	34%
I don't know	10	1%

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=1663

**Q7B**

How could council have made this contact or interaction better for you?	Number of responses n=1088	% of responses 44%
Open text		

Base: Panellists who had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 who completed this question n=1088

Q8A and Q8B asked of panellists who had not had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011

**Q8A**

In general, what is your most preferred way to contact or interact with council?	Number of responses n=802	% of responses 33%
By ringing the council Call Centre	244	30%
By ringing a specific department or council staff member	118	15%
By visiting a council office and talking to a council staff member	38	5%
By receiving a visit from a council staff member or contractor face-to-face outside their offices	1	0%
By visiting the council website	146	18%
By email	213	27%
By letter or fax	6	1%
Via social networking and social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	5	1%
I don't know	24	3%
Some other method (please specify)	7	1%

Base: Panellists who had not had interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 n=802

**Q8B**

Why is this your preferred method?	Number of responses n=629	% of responses 26%
Open text		

Base: Panellists who had not interacted with Auckland Council July-Sept 2011 who completed this question n=629

Asked of all panellists

**Q9A**

Do you have any other comments about interacting with council you would like to add?	Number of responses n=897	% of responses 36%
--	------------------------------	-----------------------

Open text

*Base: All respondents who answered this question n=897*

*Q10A –Q10G Demographic questions asked supplement existing panel data and for internal use only*

<b>Q10A What is your first name (the name you prefer to be called)</b>
<b>Q10B Are you ...(Male,Female,Other, Prefer not to say)</b>
<b>10C Which age group do you belong to)</b>
<b>10D Which suburb or town do you live in?</b>
<b>10E Which ethnic group do you belong to?</b>
<b>10F What is your total household income?</b>
<b>10G Which of the following types of phone do you have in your home?</b>
<b>10H How do you access the internet?</b>

## Appendix II Respondent profile

	People's Panel Number of responses (n=2465)	People's Panel Percentages (%)	Statistics NZ Percentages (%) 2006 census data
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	1324	54%	51%
Male	1133	46%	49%
Other	1		
Prefer not to say	7		
<b>Age</b>			
15 – 24 years	73	3%	20%
25 -34 years	304	12%	19%
35 – 44 years	539	22%	21%
45 – 54 years	531	22%	17%
55 – 64 years	537	22%	12%
65 – 74 years	372	15%	7%
75 years or over	94	4%	6%
Prefer not to say	14	1%	
<b>Ethnicity*</b>			
European	2170	88%	55%
Māori	119	5%	11%
Pacific Peoples	93	4%	15%
Asian	170	7%	18%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	36	1%	1%
Other Ethnicity (includes New Zealander nfd)	57	2%	8%
Prefer not to say	2	0%	
<i>*Please note as this question was multiple response percentages don't add to 100%</i>			
<b>Local Board</b>			
Albert-Eden	263	11%	7%
Devonport-Takapuna	98	4%	4%
Franklin	99	4%	4%
Great Barrier	6	0%	0.1%
Henderson-Massey	151	6%	8%
Hibiscus and Bays	184	7%	6%
Howick	149	6%	9%
Kaipatiki	161	7%	6%
Mangere-Otahuhu	43	2%	5%
Manurewa	51	2%	6%
Maungakiekie-Tamaki	111	5%	5%
Orakei	216	9%	6%
Otara-Papatoetoe	40	2%	6%
Papakura	45	2%	3%
Puketapapa	69	3%	4%
Rodney	154	6%	4%
Upper Harbour	59	2%	3%
Waiheke	32	1%	1%
Waitakere Ranges	106	4%	3%
Waitemata	314	13%	5%
Whau	102	4%	5%
Other	3		
I'd rather not say	9		

	People's Panel Number of responses (n=2465)	People's Panel Percentages (%)	*
<b>Household income</b>			
I prefer not to say	445	18%	
Less than \$20,000	89	4%	
\$20,000 - \$39,999	218	9%	
\$40,000 - \$59,999	256	11%	
\$60,000 - \$79,999	258	11%	
\$80,000 - \$99,999	281	12%	
\$100,000 - \$149,999	428	18%	
\$150,000 - \$199,999	227	9%	
\$200,000 or above	145	6%	
I don't know	38	2%	
Other (please specify)	53	2%	
<b>Telecommunications</b>			
Landline telephone (i.e. fixed phone)	2,253	91%	
Mobile phone	2,263	92%	
I have no phone at home	14	1%	
Another type of phone	77	3%	
I prefer not to say	35	1%	
<b>Internet use</b>			
Broadband access at home	2,251	91%	
Broadband access at work	1,230	50%	
Mobile phone access	596	24%	
Broadband access somewhere else (e.g. libraries, tertiary institutions, etc.)	201	8%	
Dial up access at home	82	3%	
Dial access at work	9	0%	
Another type of internet access (please specify)	50	2%	
I prefer not to say	32	1%	
<i>Demographic stats collected from this and previous surveys</i>			
<i>* Equivalent census data either not available or obsolete</i>			