

2019 Auckland Council Elected Member Survey

Summary of results

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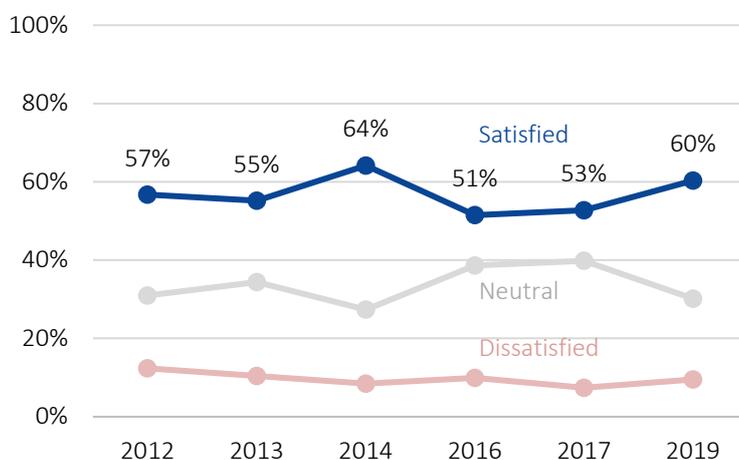
The Auckland Council Elected Member Survey is an important way for the organisation to track elected member satisfaction with the advice and support they have received from Auckland Council and Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) employees. The survey is run every 18 months to track changes and trends over time. Data collection for this year's survey took place between 11 February and 5 March 2019.

A total of 127 survey responses were received, including 11 partially complete responses. This reflects an overall response rate of 75 per cent (an increase from 65 per cent response rate to the 2017 survey); this breaks down to an 86 per cent response rate for the Governing Body and 73 per cent for local boards. Note when considering 2019 Governing Body satisfaction rates that each Governing Body member equates to about a 6 percentage point shift.

Overall satisfaction

Sixty per cent of all elected members were satisfied with the overall support provided to them by council employees, an increase of 7 percentage points since 2017.

Overall satisfaction with advice and support provided by council employees

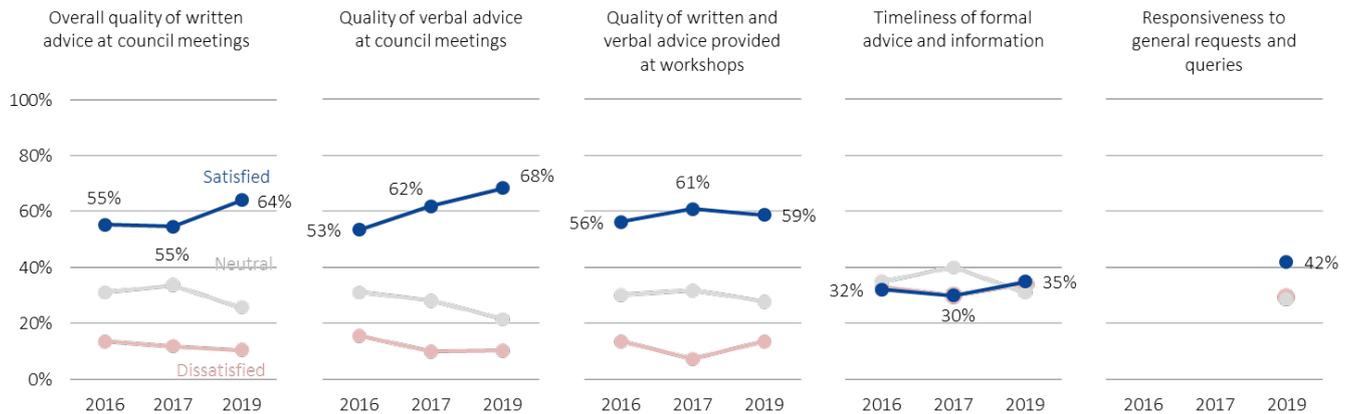


Quality advice

Approximately two-thirds of elected members were satisfied with the overall quality of written (64%) and verbal (68%) advice provided to them for and at formal meetings. Satisfaction with both of these measures has increased since 2017 (by 9 and 6 percentage points, respectively).

Satisfaction with the quality of 'written and verbal advice provided at workshops' was 59 per cent, similar to the level in 2017. As in the previous years, elected members were less satisfied with the timeliness of advice provided by council employees, with only 35 per cent satisfied, although

satisfaction increased 5 percentage points from 2017. The percentage satisfied with the responsiveness to general requests and queries (a new item for 2019) was 42 per cent.



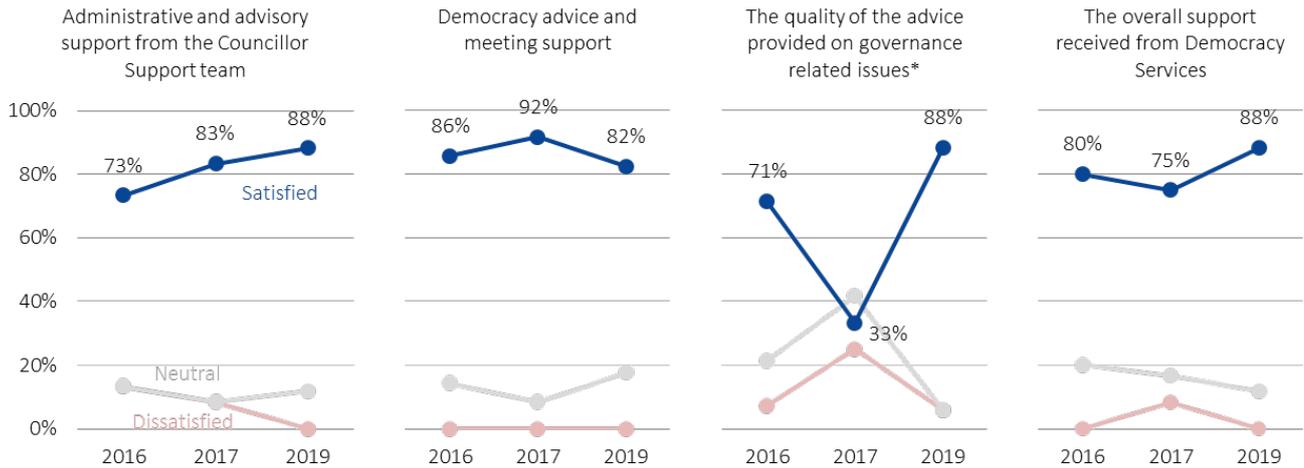
When asked to provide comments or suggestions for improvement, respondents highlighted inconsistency in the quality of advice across council teams, with some providing excellent and highly responsive advice, and others providing poor quality and tardy advice. Consistent with the satisfaction ratings above, approximately half of all commenters noted experiencing poor timeliness of advice.

Elected members were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of agenda reports. They were most satisfied with the executive summaries (74%) and the clarity of recommendations (68%). The levels of satisfaction with all other aspects of agenda reports remained relatively low, ranging between 41 and 52 per cent; however, for eight out of the nine items for which historic data were available, the levels of satisfaction have increased.

Participants were particularly dissatisfied with the following aspects of agenda reports: local board views (20% dissatisfied), consideration of options (19% dissatisfied), financial implications (17% dissatisfied) and assessment of impacts (17% dissatisfied).

Democracy and advisory support

Governing Body members reported high levels of satisfaction with the overall support provided to them by Democracy Services (88%), an increase of 13 percentage points since 2017. Satisfaction decreased for democracy advice and meeting support (82%, from 92% in 2017); but there was a moderate increase in satisfaction for the Councillor Support Advisor (CSA) support (88%). Satisfaction with the quality of the advice provided on governance-related issues was also high, at 88 per cent (note this item was clarified this year due to reported misunderstanding of the item last year).

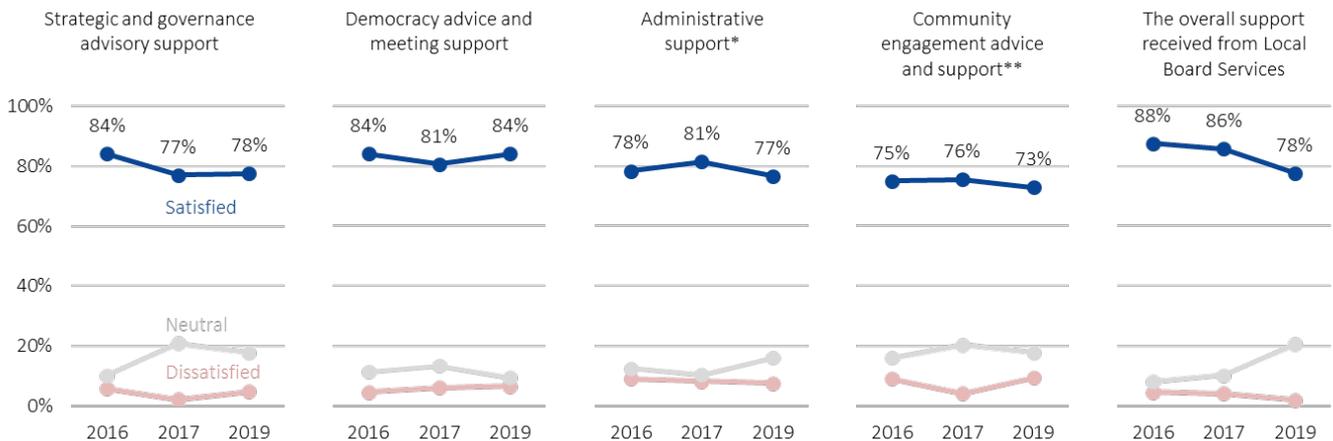


Local board dedicated support

Local board members were asked about their satisfaction with different aspects of dedicated support received from Local Board Services, as well as the Local Board Communications team, the Local Board Financial Advisory Services team, and the Local Strategic Broker team.

The overall satisfaction with the support provided by Local Board Services was high at 78 per cent, although this reflects an 8 percentage point decrease from 2017. Satisfaction with the range of Local Board Services support functions was similarly high (varying between 73% and 84%).

Satisfaction with the Local Communications team support remained stable at 55 per cent, while the satisfaction with the Local Board Financial Advisory team support increased substantially to 87 per cent (up 25 percentage points from 2017). Satisfaction with the Local Strategic Broker team was a new item this year, and was 65 per cent.



Administrative and development support

In this year's survey, the questions about technology equipment and support – previously a single item - was split into two questions, probing satisfaction with technology equipment and technology support separately. The results showed the elected members were more satisfied with technology support (64%) than technology equipment (53%). Satisfaction with the combined “technology equipment and support” was 67% in 2017 and 54% in 2016.

The results for the ease of making declarations (e.g. declarations of interests and gifts) remained stable at 64 per cent; while the satisfaction with the Kura Kāwana decreased to 54 per cent (from 65% in 2017, although this was still an increase from 46% in 2016).

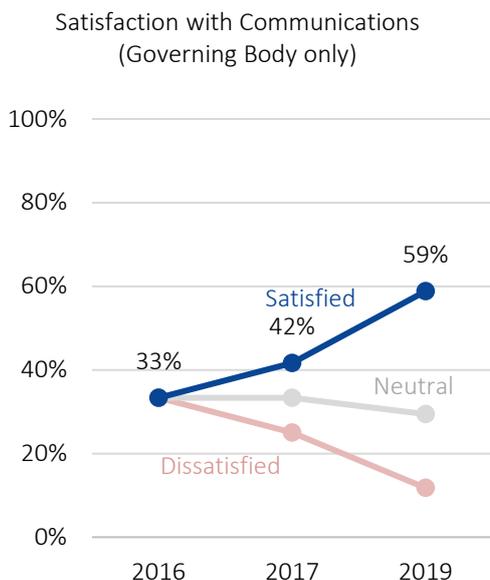
Advice and support from council departments

Governing Body and local boards members were asked to rate their satisfaction with various departments over the last 18 months. Unlike in the previous years, the two groups of elected members were not asked the same questions and were not asked about all the departments.

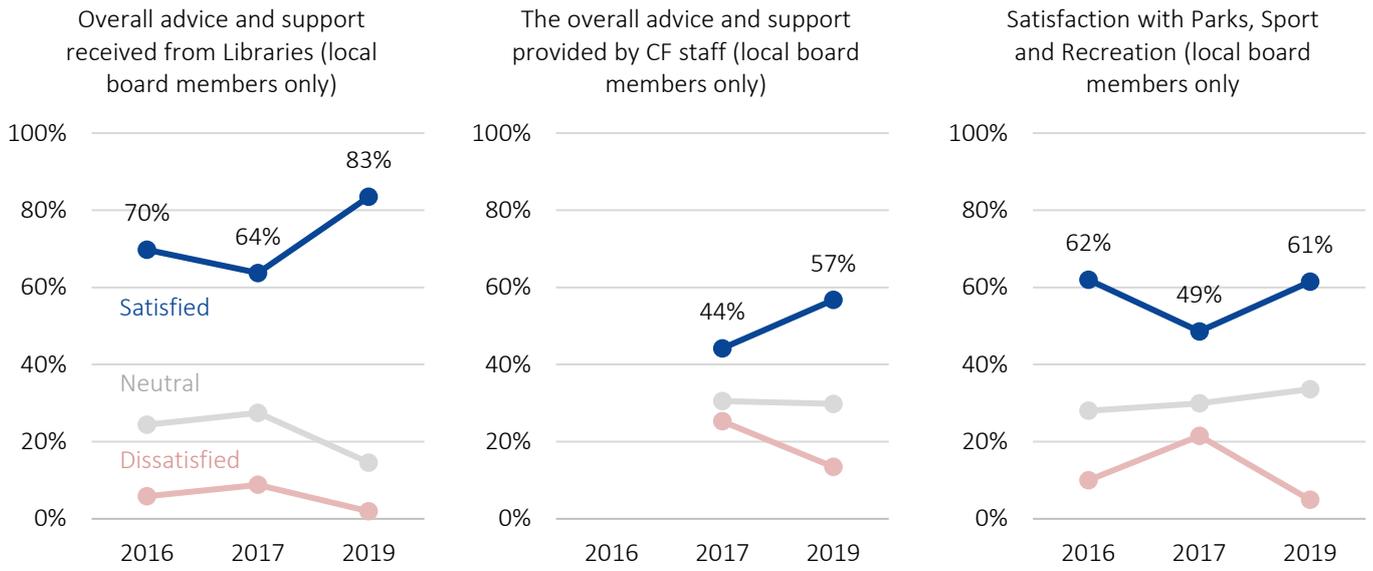
For Governing Body members, the highest levels of overall satisfaction were recorded for Infrastructure and Environmental Services; Parks, Sports and Recreation; Financial Strategy and Planning, and the Chief Economist Unit (76% for all).

For local board members, the highest levels of overall satisfaction were recorded for Libraries and Information (83%, a notable increase from 64% in 2017); Infrastructure and Environmental Services (62%); and Parks, Sports and Recreation (59%). In addition, local board members reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with aspects of Plans and Places work, such as Local Spatial Plans (73%), Notices of Requirement for Public Works (70%), and Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) Plan Changes (59%).

For Governing Body, a notable increase in satisfaction was seen for Communications, increasing to 59 per cent (from 42% in 2017 and 33% in 2016).



For local boards, there were notable increases in satisfaction with the overall advice and support provided by Libraries and Information (an +18 percentage point increase), Community Facilities (a +13 percentage point increase), and Parks, Sport and Recreation (a +12 percentage point increase).



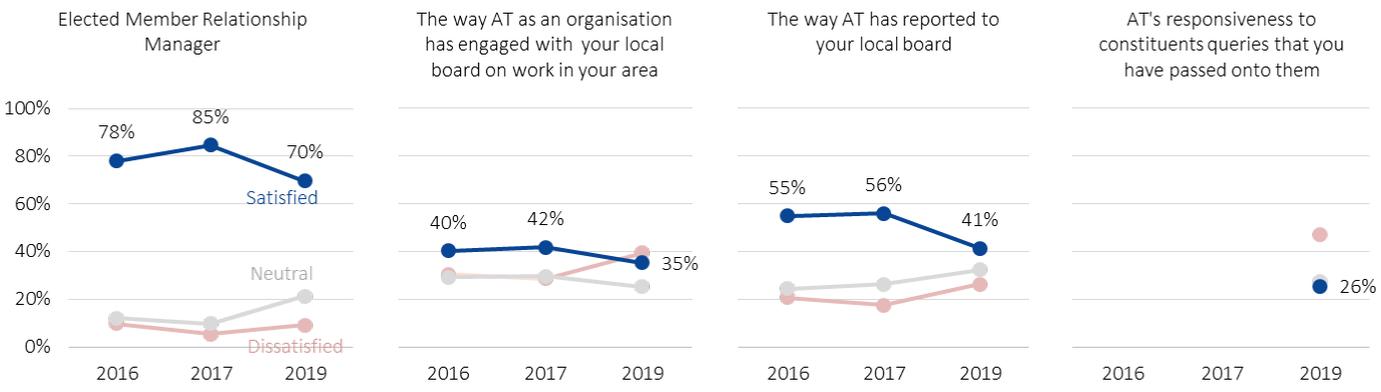
Engagement from Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs)

Governing Body and local board members were asked about their satisfaction with engagement from CCOs. Governing Body members were asked specifically about CCO reporting, the way CCOs have engaged with them and provided advice, and the overall performance of the CCOs as organisations. Local board members, on the other hand, were asked a variety of questions tailored to the nature of their interactions with each CCO.

Auckland Transport (AT)

Governing Body members had moderate levels of satisfaction with the way AT had engaged and provided advice (44%), but lower satisfaction with quarterly reporting (38%) and AT’s overall performance as an organisation (31%) – with particularly high levels of dissatisfaction (56% dissatisfied) with the latter measure.

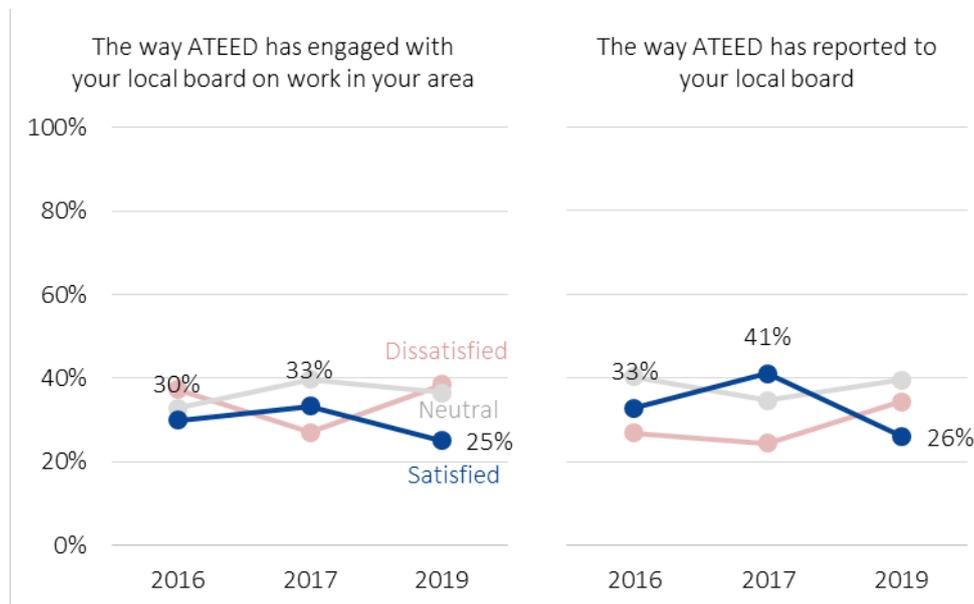
Local board members reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with their board’s AT relationship manager (70%, although this decreased -15 percentage points from 2017). Satisfaction was low-to-moderate for engagement (35%), reporting (41%) and responsiveness to constituent queries (26%). This reflects a decrease in satisfaction from 2017 of 7 per cent for engagement and 15 per cent for reporting.



Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED)

Governing Body members were moderately satisfied with ATEED’s engagement (63%), quarterly reporting (50%) and overall performance as an organisation (56%).

Local board members were less satisfied with ATEED’s engagement (25%) and reporting (26%), reflecting a decrease from 2017 of 8 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.



Watercare Services Limited

Governing Body members were moderately-to-highly satisfied with Watercare’s engagement (81%), quarterly reporting (81%) and overall performance as an organisation (69%).

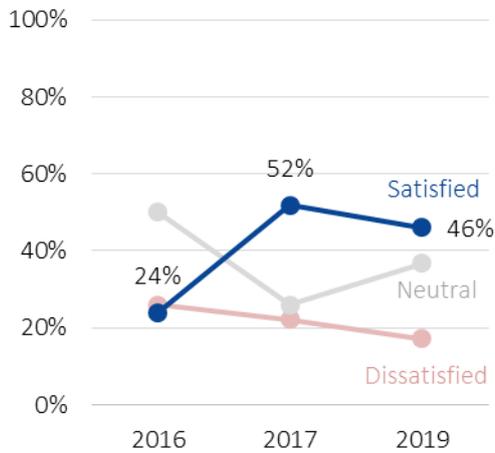
Local board members rated it to be moderately easy (64%) to get information from Watercare when they needed it, and the majority (71%) reported liking the idea of Watercare providing more information that board members could share with their communities.

Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA)

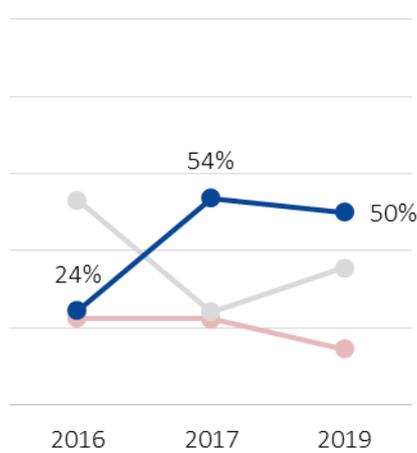
Governing Body members were moderately satisfied with RFA’s quarterly reporting (50%), and other communications regarding particular developments or news (50%). They were less satisfied with RFA’s overall performance as an organisation (38%).

Local board members were moderately satisfied with RFA’s engagement (46%) and quarterly reporting and other information received from RFA (50%), reflecting a decrease from 2017 of 6 per cent and 4 per cent respectively.

The way RFA has engaged with your local board



The quarterly reporting and other information received from RFA



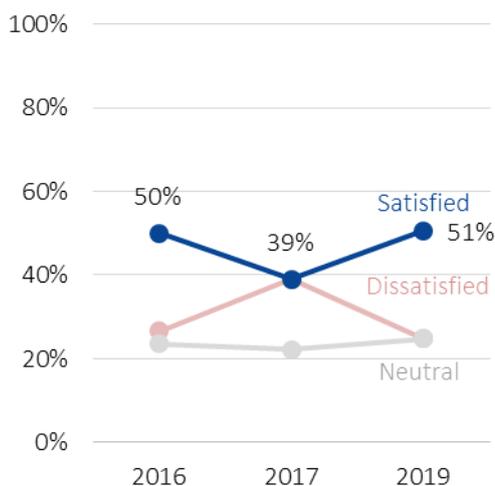
Panuku Development Auckland

Governing Body members were moderately satisfied with Panuku’s quarterly reporting (44%), regular disposals reports (56%), the quality and timeliness of advice from Panuku staff (44%) and Panuku’s overall performance as an organisation (44%).

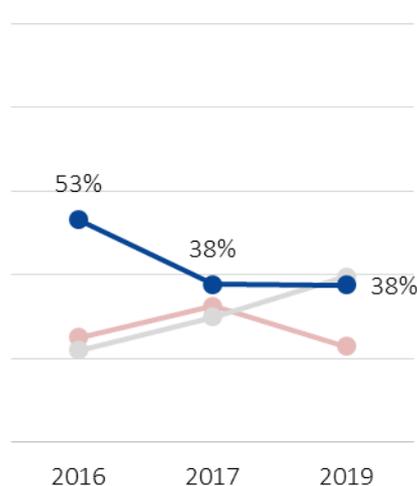
In relation to Panuku priority projects, those local board members who has such a project in their area were generally satisfied with the clarity of direction Panuku has provided in relation to the project(s) (60%), and their engagement with the Panuku Senior Lead Team and Project Directions in relation to the project(s) (58%).

Local board members were moderately satisfied with Panuku’s staff overall (51%), an increase of 12 per cent from 2017 but less satisfied with Panuku’s six-monthly reports (38%).

Engagement with Panuku staff overall



Panuku's six-monthly reports



Conclusion

This year's survey has generated useful insights into elected members' satisfaction with the support they have received from Auckland Council and CCO staff over the previous 18 months.

Notable increases in satisfaction were seen for:

- Overall satisfaction
- Quality advice (particularly in relation to advice for and at formal meetings)
- Democracy Services support
- Local Board Financial Advisory support
- Parks, Sport and Recreation
- Communications (for Governing Body members)
- Libraries and Information
- Arts, Community and Events
- Community Facilities
- Panuku general staff engagement

Despite these encouraging findings, the survey results also suggest that considerable work still remains. Although satisfaction has increased, many measures of satisfaction are still sitting around 50-60 per cent.

Many elected members took the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions revealing areas where improvements will have a big impact on elected members' overall satisfaction. As a result, Auckland Council has identified the following areas of focus:

- Continue Quality Advice push, including a focus on improved timeliness of advice and responsiveness of staff to elected member queries.
- Further focus on establishing a culture of staff impartiality and respect for the elected member role and governance structure.
- Develop individual department actions to respond to the survey findings and report those to Auckland Council Executive Lead Team and elected members after 3 months, and their progress after 12 months.