Auckland Council Elected Members Survey 2016: Full Report

April 2016

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Auckland Council Elected Members Survey 2016: Full Report

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Executive summary

This report describes the results of the 2016 survey of Auckland Council elected members. It presents detailed results for each question in the survey, exploring differences between these findings and those from the previous survey undertaken in 2014, as well as differences between the perspectives of local board and governing body respondents.

Method and sample

The purpose of the survey was to gauge elected members' satisfaction with the advice and support they have received from Auckland Council employees since the last survey in September 2014. The survey involved a mix of quantitative and open-ended questions, was completed in either hard-copy or in electronic form, and took place between 9 February and 9 March, 2016. A total of 103 survey responses were received, reflecting an overall response rate of 62 per cent, a response rate of 71 per cent for governing body members and 61 per cent for local board members.

Overall satisfaction

Just over half (51%) of all elected members were satisfied with the overall support provided to them by council employees. One in ten (10%) were dissatisfied, and the remainder neutral. This reflects a drop from 64 per cent satisfied in 2014, and was driven by an increase in 'neutral' responses. This suggests that there is a lot more work to do to achieve the goal set by council of lifting the organisation's performance to the target of an 80 per cent overall satisfaction rate.

Figure 1. Overall satisfaction
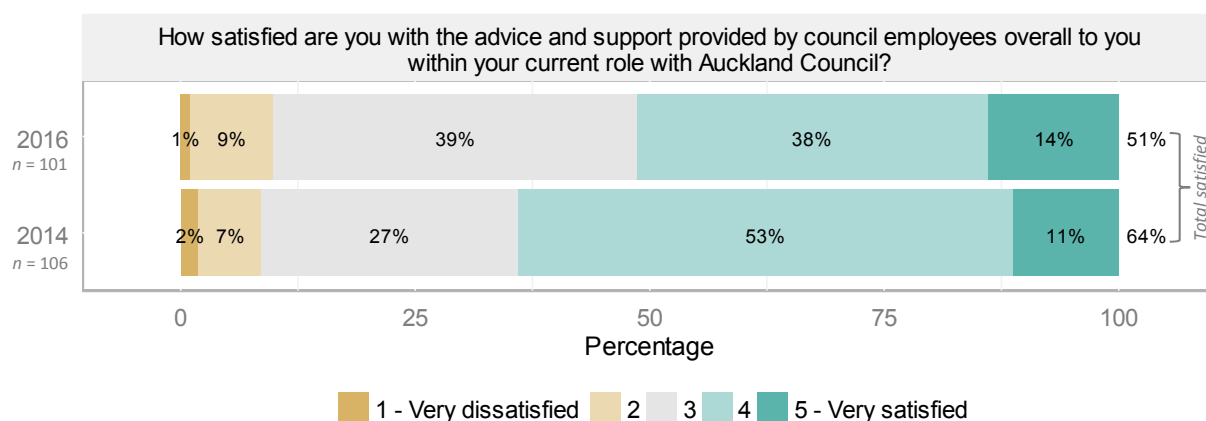
Key drivers of satisfaction

A key driver analysis was conducted to identify which areas of council activity were the strongest 'drivers' of overall satisfaction, as well as where improvement is most needed.

The key driver analysis shows that the organisation is doing well in the following important areas:
- Local Board Services and Local Board Financial Advisory support
- Democracy Services support.

The analysis highlights the following primary areas for improvement:

- The quality of advice provided to elected members, particularly within agenda reports. The detailed analysis in Appendix D shows that:
  - Within agenda reports, efforts should be focused on improving the consideration of options, the use of evidence, local board views, and local impacts
  - Timeliness of all forms of advice requires improvement
- The progress of the Auckland Council family (including the governing body, local boards and Council Controlled Organisations) toward one unified organisation
- Engagement from Auckland Transport.

In addition to the above focus areas, the analysis indicates that further improvements to the following should also be considered:

- Administrative and professional development support
- Engagement from Pānuku Development Auckland
- Local Board Communications Team support
- Community engagement support.

Figure 2. Key drivers of overall satisfaction
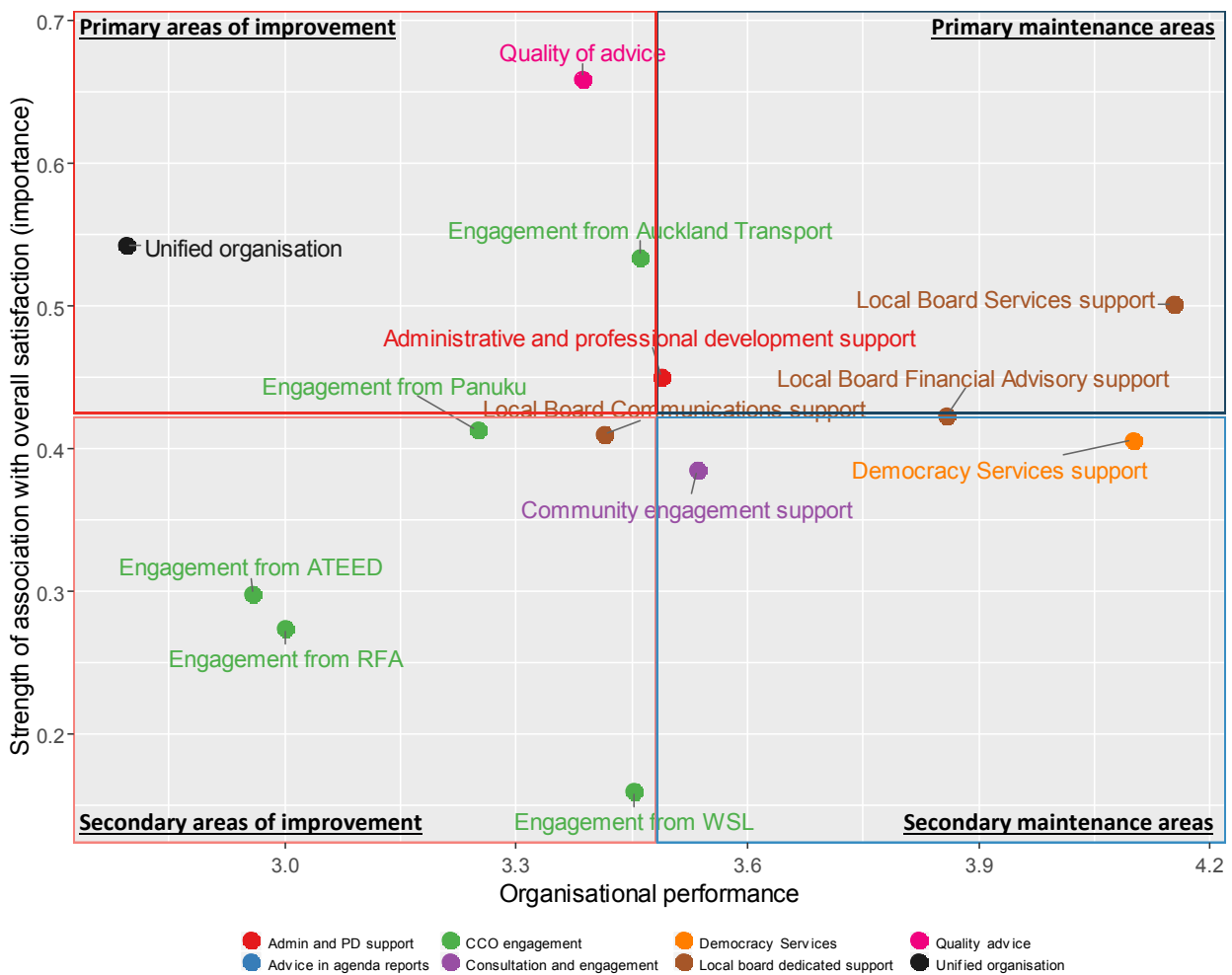
Progress toward one organisation

Approximately one in four elected members (24%) agreed that the council family (including the governing body, local boards and CCOs) was progressing towards functioning as a unified organisation, reflecting a decrease from 33 per cent agreement in 2014. A larger proportion disagreed (36%) or were neutral (40%).

Figure 3. Perceived progress toward one unified organisation

Although elected members were not given the opportunity to explain their rating in a free text box, an interpretation of the responses provided to a range of other survey questions suggests that a number of factors are likely to be contributing to the observed disagreement with this statement. Because this question reflects a complex web of relationships between and amongst local board members, governing body members, council staff and CCO staff, as well as challenges associated with the structures in which elected members and staff work, we looked for themes across the survey that related to any of these issues.

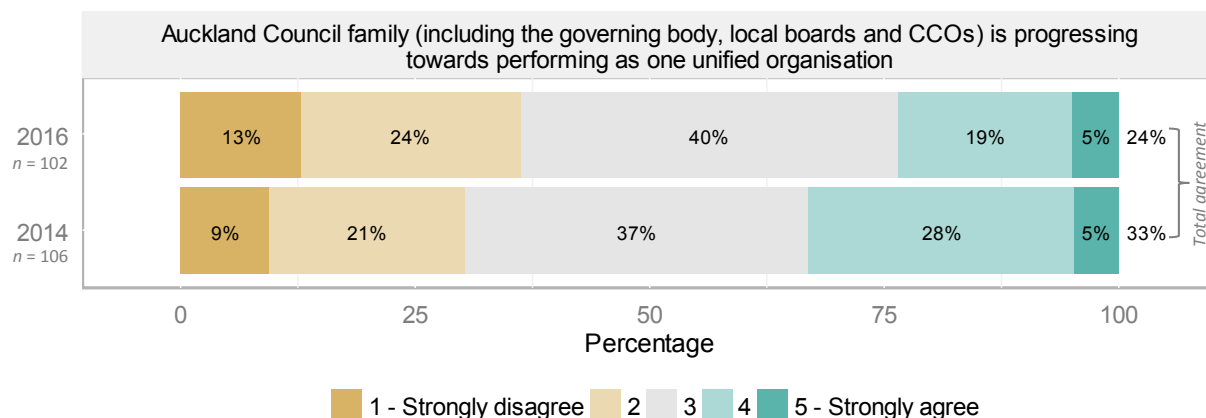An overall analysis of survey comments shows that local board members expressed more dissatisfaction about their relationships and the system in which they work than governing body members. Their dissatisfaction was greatest in the following areas: (i) a perceived lack of understanding and appreciation of their role in the shared governance structure; (ii) the sense that local boards are not given enough decision-making power, autonomy and/or budget allocations; (iii) a lack of recognition of local boards and their priorities by some council staff not in dedicated support roles, and by some members of the governing body and finally, (iv) a lack of accountability to local boards by the CCOs. For elected members overall, two additional issues were raised: (i) the need for better communication and a stronger collaborative approach between departments and across the council organisation; and (ii) the consequences of various restructures for elected members and the need for clarity about the new allocation of responsibilities in these areas.

Quality advice

Over half of elected members were satisfied with the quality of advice provided to them for (and at) workshops (56%), in agenda reports (55%), and in person at council meetings (53%). They were

less satisfied with the timeliness of advice provided by council employees, with only 32 per cent satisfied, and 33 per cent dissatisfied.

Figure 4. Satisfaction with different forms of advice
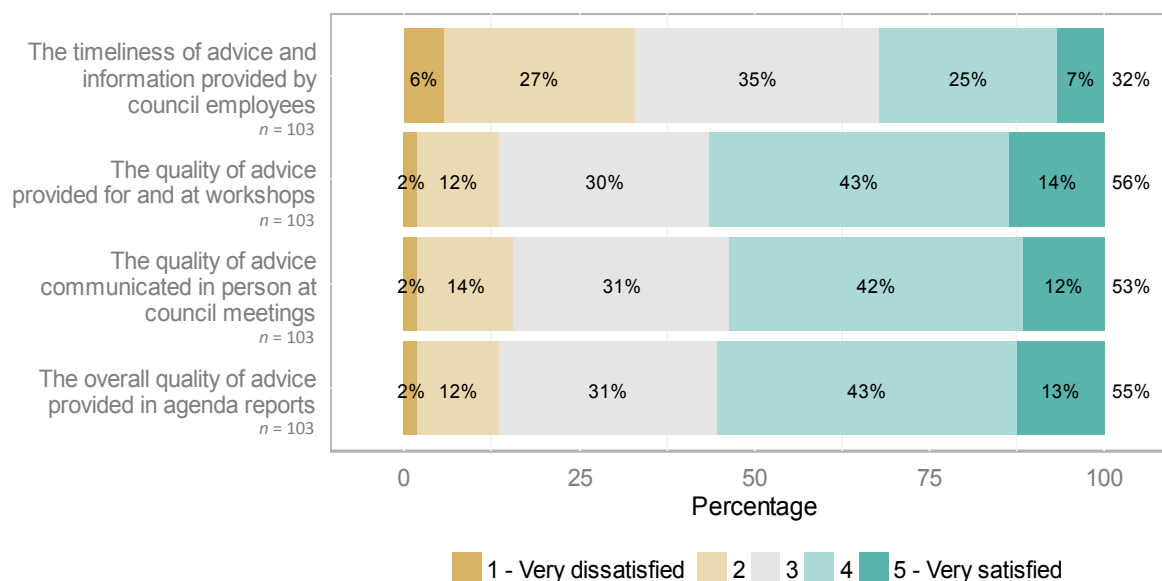
When asked how the quality of advice has changed over time, 43 per cent of respondents reported an improvement over time, 44 per cent no change, and 14 per cent felt it had become worse. Of those who stated the quality of advice had remained the same, the majority (~80-90%) were neutral or satisfied with the advice they receive in agenda reports and in person at meetings and workshops. This indicates that many of the respondents who reported that the quality of advice had stayed the same were already reasonably happy with the advice they were receiving.

Elected members were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of agenda reports. They were most satisfied with the definition of the problem/opportunity (59%) and clarity of recommendations (53%). The levels of satisfaction with all other aspects of agenda reports were relatively low, ranging between 37 and 41 per cent.

Elected members were relatively dissatisfied with the following aspects of agenda reports: local board views (30% dissatisfied), local impacts (25% dissatisfied), and impact assessments relating to the environment (23% dissatisfied) and Māori (22% dissatisfied).

Administrative support and professional development

All elected members were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the administrative and professional development they had received in the last 18 months. The majority of respondents were satisfied with the processes for declarations (62%), support in relation to remuneration and expense management (55%) and technology equipment and support (53%) – although there was also a sizable minority who were dissatisfied with technology equipment and support (22% dissatisfied).

When asked about satisfaction with on-going learning activities and professional development, respondents were more equivocal. Although a large proportion was satisfied (46%), a reasonable proportion was dissatisfied (24%). The explanations for the dissatisfaction provided by respondents were that there are too few options, and that those that are available take place at times and in locations that make it difficult or impossible for some members to attend.

When asked to suggest professional development activities that would help elected members better perform in their role, the following training was suggested: courses to improve competence in the use of technology; training from the Institute of Directors; courses designed to improve interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution; and training on council processes and protocols.

Democracy and advisory support

Governing body members were asked to rate their satisfaction with different aspects of the dedicated support they received from Democracy Services. Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the overall support provided to them by Democracy Services (80%). Satisfaction was particularly high with democracy advice and meeting support (86%).

They were also asked to provide comments and suggestions about the support they had received from Democracy Services since September 2014. Most comments were positive and focused on the contributions of staff at the department, team and individual level. A small number of negative comments addressed the issue of equity in the assignment of councillor support advisors (CSAs) and the increased assistance required to manage the large volumes of emails that elected members receive.

Local board dedicated support

Local board members were asked about their satisfaction with different aspects of dedicated local board support.

The overall satisfaction with the dedicated support provided by Local Board Services was very high (88%). Satisfaction with specific aspects of Local Board Services support was similarly high, although a minority reported dissatisfaction with community engagement advice (9% dissatisfied) and administrative support (9% dissatisfied).

The level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Local Board Financial Advisory team was 67 per cent, while that of the Local Board Communications team was 53 per cent.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to provide further comments in an open-ended question. Again, most comments were positive and tended to focus on the contributions of staff at the department, team and individual level. Areas of dissatisfaction focused primarily on the need for increased staff resources, particularly in relation to those officers that work with more than one local board. Staff turnover and the issues arising from it were also considered important issues.

Some local board members were also unhappy about the decisions and approach of particular Local Board Services staff and about local board office facilities.

Consultation and engagement

Half of all respondents (50%) were satisfied with the support they had received in engaging with communities, with 35 per cent neutral and 15 per cent dissatisfied. In their written feedback, elected members focused on the need to adapt the approach to consultation and engagement for certain groups in order to better connect with young, ethnically diverse and lower socioeconomic communities. Concerns were also expressed about staff turnover and the consultation process for the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan. Staff and their approach to consultation and engagement were the main focus of positive comments made by respondents about this area.

Support from council departments

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall support they had received from elected-member facing departments since September 2014.

Highest satisfaction levels were recorded for Libraries and Information (74%), Finance (65%), Financial Planning and Strategy (63%) and Parks, Sport and Recreation (62%). The greatest dissatisfaction was reported with the Housing Project Office (HPO; 35% dissatisfaction), Plans and Places (33% dissatisfaction) and Communication and Engagement (29%).[1]

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[1] Due to rounding, totals do not always sum to 100.

Figure 5. Support from council departments

	1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very satisfied	Total satisfied
Libraries and Information (n = 99)	1%	4%	21%	43%	30%	74%
Finance (n = 100)	4%	6%	25%	44%	21%	65%
Financial Planning and Strategy (n = 99)	4%	7%	26%	42%	20%	63%
Parks, Sport and Recreation (n = 100)	3%	7%	28%	41%	21%	62%
Infrastructure and Environmental Services (n = 96)	2%	10%	32%	34%	21%	55%
Arts, Community and Events (n = 98)	5%	13%	31%	42%	9%	51%
Civil Defence and Emergency Management (n = 91)	3%	15%	33%	35%	13%	48%
Resource Consents (n = 87)	7%	18%	28%	34%	13%	47%
Te Waka Angamua (n = 93)	11%	11%	32%	30%	16%	46%
Licensing and Compliance (n = 91)	8%	12%	35%	31%	14%	45%
City Transformation (n = 82)	13%	11%	34%	27%	15%	41%
Legal and Risk (n = 86)	9%	16%	34%	24%	16%	41%
Housing Project Office (n = 91)	18%	18%	25%	29%	11%	40%
Community and Social Policy (n = 98)	4%	13%	44%	24%	14%	39%
Communication and Engagement (n = 99)	7%	22%	32%	31%	7%	38%
Auckland Plan Strategy and Research (n = 76)	12%	9%	42%	28%	9%	37%
Plans and Places (n = 98)	12%	20%	35%	24%	8%	33%
Auckland Design Office (n = 71)	15%	10%	42%	18%	14%	32%

Note: Governing body members were also asked about the CCO Governance & External Partnerships team and Chief Economist Unit. The results for these teams can be seen in Figure 36.

In general, positive feedback singled out staff or departments that were viewed as very helpful and/or effective. Some respondents noted with appreciation the departments that provided their boards with a specialist or local advisor. The negative feedback related to the following areas: (i) the need for better communication with elected members about the restructuring of departments; (ii) the need for adequate departmental staffing and issues with high rates of staff turnover leading to lack of consistent support; (iii) the low responsiveness and/or lack of timely follow-up and action; (iv) dissatisfaction with the degree of communication and consultation with local boards on department-related matters impacting their local area; (v) the perception of a lack of understanding on the part of departments of the role of local boards in the governance structure, and finally, (vi) dissatisfaction with the quality of advice received.

Engagement from Council Controlled Organisations

Local board members were also asked about the engagement from specific Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs) since September 2014 or, when relevant, since their inception (i.e. Pānuku Development Auckland). Levels of engagement from CCOs varied, for example almost all local board members had engaged with Auckland Transport (93%) whereas only 59 per cent had engaged with Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA). Levels of satisfaction with aspects of CCO engagement also varied but were particularly high for Auckland Transport relationship managers (78%). Overall improvements in satisfaction levels were evident for Watercare Services Limited (WSL) and Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED). Written feedback on the latter CCO focused on the significant improvement that has taken place since the last survey in 2014.

In addition to the feedback provided on specific CCOs, local board members also made a range of comments about CCOs more generally. The common themes were a lack of recognition of local boards and their priorities; a lack of accountability to local boards; and the importance of good relationships.

Time demands of role and where it is spent

Respondents were asked to reflect on how they spend their time fulfilling their role and the appropriateness of where the balance of their time is spent (e.g. meetings, time with constituents). The responses to this question included a discussion of the heavy time demands of the role, as well as the desire for more time to be available for constituent work rather than in meetings. Local board members in particular raised concerns about the lack of understanding on the part of the broader council family of the division of responsibilities between local board and the governing body. This was viewed by some as potentially leading to a duplication of efforts, or to the under-utilisation of local boards in the broader decision-making process. Respondents expressed the need for more communication and collaboration across council. Other issues included finding ways to more efficiently organise elected member work (sub-committee structures, tabling of agendas, etc.), the desire for additional staff support, and an interest in finding ways to reduce commuting time through technology and better planning of meetings.

Appropriateness of level of decision-making

Respondents were asked to comment on the appropriateness of the level of decisions that they are asked to consider at their meetings. While the majority who answered this question reported that they were satisfied, a number of comments indicated areas that require improvement. For the most part, the feedback clustered in the following key areas: concerns about the way decision-making responsibilities are delegated to local boards and governing body and the level of understanding of these delegations across council; as well as the quality and timing of information required for informed and meaningful decision-making to take place.

Conclusion

This survey has generated useful insights on elected members' satisfaction with the support they have received from Auckland Council staff since 2014. In the previous survey, overall satisfaction

levels for Democracy Services and Local Board Services were already strong, and this year's results are similar. The findings also demonstrate that we can celebrate improvements shown over the previous survey's results in administrative and elected member development support. Regarding support from specific departments, levels of satisfaction increased for: Financial Planning and Strategy; Te Waka Angamua; Arts, Community and Events; Civil Defence and Emergency Management; and the Housing Project Office, although the latter also had an increase in dissatisfaction. In addition, there were notable increases in satisfaction for ATEED and WSL.

Despite these encouraging findings, however, the survey results also suggest that there is a lot more work to do. This is reflected in the notable decline in overall satisfaction rates in comparison to the previous survey. It is also demonstrated in the slightly diminished proportion of respondents who believe that progress is being made towards the Auckland Council family operating as a unified organisation. Also showing a decline since the previous survey are the ratings for overall satisfaction in the quality of advice, and the support received for consultation and engagement. There has also been a decline in satisfaction with the overall support received from the majority of departments and one CCO. The results suggest that in a number of areas, local board members are less satisfied than their governing body peers with the support they are receiving. Even where overall ratings have improved from the previous survey, there is still room for progress towards consistently high rates of satisfaction in the future. The survey results, and the key driver analysis, shed light on areas for future focus: further improve the quality of advice provided to elected members; address the issues impeding progress towards the council operating seamlessly as one organisation; and enhance CCO's engagement with local boards.

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1.0 Introduction

This report outlines in detail the findings of the 2016 Auckland Council elected members survey which ran from 9 February through to 9 March 2016. The purpose of the survey was to measure elected members' satisfaction with the advice and support they had received from Auckland Council employees since the previous survey in September 2014. This is the second survey conducted with the group of governing body and local board members elected in 2013. The council has set a goal of achieving 80 per cent satisfaction with the advice and support provided by council employees overall.

The results will be used for a range of purposes, including the Chief Executive's performance review, departmental performance indicators, and specific workstreams such as quality advice and elected member professional development. As a result of the 2014 survey, the Executive Leadership Team prioritised four key areas for improvement:
- the quality of advice provided in agenda reports
- the timeliness of advice and information
- the financial advice provided to Local Boards
- the communications support provided to Governing Body members.

Because many of the new initiatives in these areas have only just got underway their impact may not be captured in this year's survey.

1.1   Background

Auckland's shared governance structure currently includes 144 local board members sitting in 149 seats,[2] 20 councillors representing 13 wards, and one mayor. These elected members are supported in a number of ways by Auckland Council staff from a range of different departments. It is critical for the effective functioning of local democracy, and for the ultimate success of Auckland as a whole, that this support is effective and appropriate, particularly in the context of ongoing political and organisational change. This report, along with earlier iterations undertaken in 2012, 2013 and 2014, forms a critical part of this constant cycle of assessment, evaluation and improvement.

Throughout February 2016, a number of public debates occurred on Auckland Council's 'out of scope' submissions to the Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel. These debates culminated in an extraordinary meeting of the governing body on 24 February during which they resolved to withdraw some of the council's evidence on residential zoning. These events took place immediately prior to or during the survey period. It is also important to keep in mind that local body elections are due to take place later this year and that elected members may have approached their participation in the survey and their responses to it differently than they might have during a different phase of the election cycle.

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[2] Five local board members hold two seats on different local boards.

1.2 Method

All elected members were sent a hard copy (paper) questionnaire via the internal mail system on 9 February, as well as an email from Stephen Town inviting them to take part. Respondents could either complete the hard copy questionnaire and return it via the internal mail system, or they could complete the survey online if that was more convenient for them. In addition to filling out the surveys online or on paper, governing body members were also offered the option of completing the survey with the assistance of a Democracy Services lead team member. The survey involved a mix of quantitative and open-ended questions and took on average 30 minutes to complete. Overall, 70 respondents completed the survey online, 32 submitted their responses in hard copy and one governing body member elected to be interviewed.

Individuals who had not completed the survey were sent two email reminders over subsequent weeks and Local Board Services PA liaisons followed up with all local board members. The survey was hosted using Engage online survey software, for which Auckland Council has an existing subscription, and a third party (Ubiquity Software Limited) was contracted to administer the data collection in order to ensure the confidentiality of elected members' information throughout the process. The survey questionnaire and method were reviewed and approved by the Auckland Council Human Participants Ethics Committee. Survey question wording is shown within each relevant section (e.g. in relevant figures).

The research team entered all completed paper surveys into the Engage survey system, after which the quantitative data was analysed using the R statistical package and the qualitative data was analysed thematically using QSR NVivo.

1.3 Response rates

A total of 103 survey responses were received, reflecting an overall response rate of 62 per cent, similar to the 65 per cent response rate in 2014. Response rates for different sub-groups are presented in the tables below.

Table 1. Response rates, by elected member type

	Number of sitting elected members	Number of survey responses	Survey response rate %	Percent of survey sample %
Governing body	21	15	71	15
Local board	144*	88	61	85
Sum	165	103		100

* The total number of local board seats is 149, however at the time of the survey five local board members held positions on two local boards each.

The response rate was higher for returning members (79%) than for those in their first term (58%).

Table 2. Response rates, by first vs second term

	Number of sitting elected members	Number of survey responses	Survey response rate %	Percent of survey sample %
Multiple terms	94	74	79	72
First term	50	29	58	28
Sum	144	103		100

1.4 This report

1.4.1 Analysis

Quantitative responses to survey questions were analysed overall and then disaggregated to investigate differences between local board and governing body, between this year's survey and the previous one undertaken in 2014, and between first term and returning elected members. The results of the latter analyses are included in Appendix A and details on the analysis methods used can be seen in Appendix B. Percentages have been rounded in figures and may not sum to 100 in all cases.

1.4.2 Written feedback

Elected members were asked for their comments and suggestions in relation to a range of support services provided to them by council employees. In considering the results of each question, it is important to keep in mind that the implicit assumption in such a request is that things are not working as well as they might. There is a tendency, therefore, to focus on suggestions for improvement rather than those that might be working well.

Verbatim quotes are presented in italics throughout the report. When words have been added to maintain the sense of the passage, or removed to preserve the confidentiality of respondents, they appear in square brackets. When two or more words are left out of a quote this is indicated by '…'. Emphasis in quotes such as capitalisation and underlining has been replicated wherever possible. Each quote is attributed either to a local board (LB) or governing body (GB) member in order to provide context for the reader. Small spelling and grammatical errors have been corrected in quotes, and where abbreviations have been included in comments, they have been written in full on the first iteration. Where respondents provided the names of specific staff members, these have been removed and, where appropriate, replaced with roles to maintain the sense of the quote.

1.4.3 Report structure

The sections in this report follow the order of the broad topic areas addressed in the survey and have been written so that individual sections can be read independently. This may result in some

repetition for those reading the report in its entirety. The overall results are presented first in each section, followed by a comparison of governing body and local board member responses.

This year's responses are also compared to those from 2014 whenever the wording of questions is the same or similar (see Appendix C for a comparison of questions for the 2014 and 2016 surveys). The dominant themes that emerged from an analysis of elected members' written feedback are reported in each section. Verbatim quotes are included throughout to provide the reader with examples of the content of each theme. For ease of reference, elected members' responses to the last three questions in the survey[3] have, where relevant, been categorised by subject and included alongside feedback that focuses on the same issue. For example, comments on the quality and quantity of advice given in response to the question about the time demands of the role have been included in Section 4.0 on quality advice.

Finally, areas of future focus are presented in Section 13.0.

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[3] These questions focused on the time demands of the role and where it is spent; the appropriateness of the level of decision making; and any other comments.

2.0 Overall Satisfaction

Elected members were asked how satisfied they were overall with the advice and support provided to them by council employees.

2.1 Overall results

Just over half (51%) of all elected members were satisfied (provided a '4' or '5' response) with the overall support provided to them by council employees. One in ten (10%) were dissatisfied (provided a '1' or '2' response), and the remainder were neutral (provided a '3' response).

This reflects a 13 percentage point drop from 64 per cent satisfied in 2014, driven by an increase in 'neutral' responses.

Figure 6. Overall satisfaction, 2012-2016
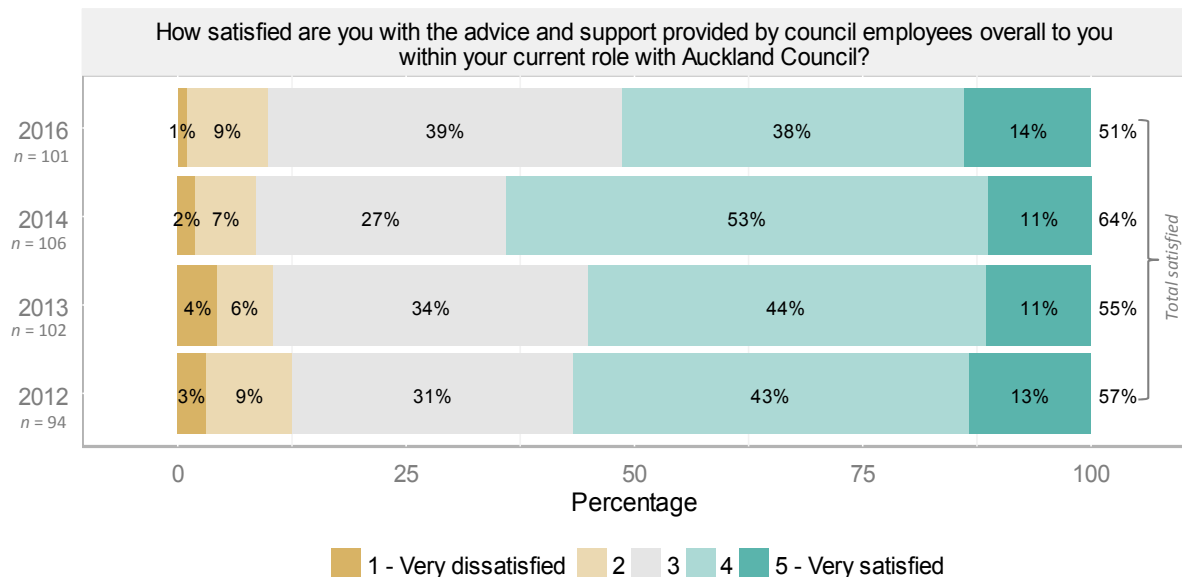
2.2 Difference by elected member type

Overall satisfaction ratings among local board and governing body members were similar, with 51 per cent of local board respondents and 53 per cent of governing body respondents reporting being satisfied overall. Both groups showed a decrease since 2014.

Figure 7. Overall satisfaction, by elected member type

How satisfied are you with the advice and support provided by council employees overall to you within your current role with Auckland Council?

					2016	2014
Local board *n = 86*	1% 9%	38%	40%	12%	51%	62%
Governing body *n = 15*	7%	40%	27%	27%	53%	75%

Percentage

■ 1 - Very dissatisfied ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - Very satisfied
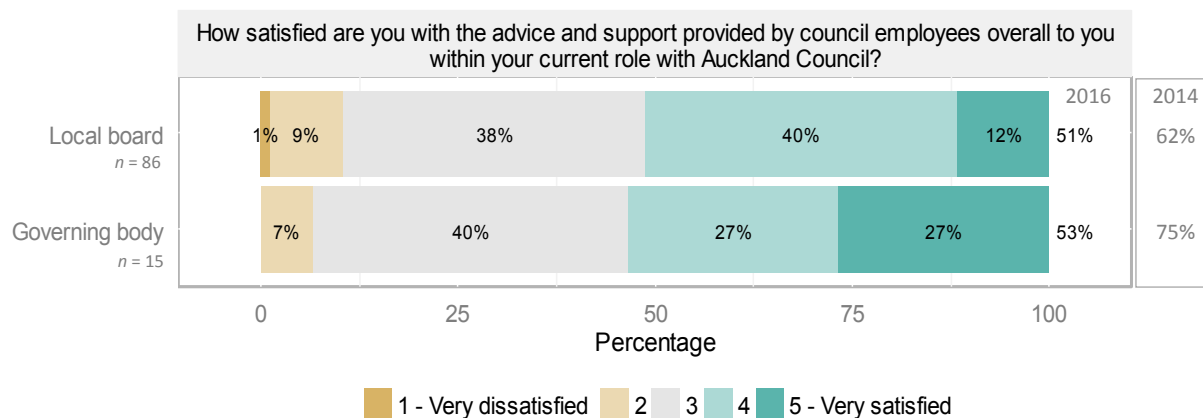
2.3 Key driver analysis

A key driver analysis was conducted to identify which areas of council activity were most strongly related to overall satisfaction ('Strength of association with overall satisfaction (importance)' in Figure 8 and Figure 9).

When the 'importance' of each survey question was plotted against how well elected members feel council is doing in relation to each survey question ('Organisational performance' in Figures 8 and 9), the resulting graph can be split up into quadrants to identify key areas for improvement. In particular, the upper left quadrant identifies areas where improvement is both most needed and is likely to have the most impact on elected members' overall satisfaction with council: activities in this quadrant have a strong relationship with overall satisfaction (they are 'key drivers'), but have been identified by elected members as areas of poor performance. An interpretation of each quadrant can be seen in Figure 8.

Note, although this analysis identifies key 'drivers' of satisfaction, it is identifying associations rather than *causal* relationships. It should be used only as an overall guide to what improvements are likely to have the strongest flow on effect on overall satisfaction. For more information on the analysis method used, see Appendix B.

Figure 8. Key drivers of overall satisfaction: interpretation

The key driver analysis shows that the organisation is doing well in the following important areas:
- Local Board Services and Local Board Financial Advisory support
- Democracy Services support.

The analysis highlights the following primary areas for improvement:
- The quality of advice provided to elected members, particularly within agenda reports. The detailed analysis in Appendix D shows that:
    - Within agenda reports, efforts should be focused on improving the consideration of options, the use of evidence, local board views, and local impacts
    - Timeliness of all forms of advice requires improvement
- The progress of the Auckland Council family (including the governing body, local boards and Council Controlled Organisations) toward one unified organisation
- Engagement from Auckland Transport.

In addition to the above focus areas, the analysis indicates that further improvements to the following should also be considered:
- Administrative and professional development support
- Engagement from Pānuku Development Auckland
- Local Board Communications Team support
- Community engagement support.

Figure 9 shows an overview of the key driver findings. Further detail, including individual satisfaction items (e.g., different types of advice), can be seen in Figure 61 in Appendix D.

Figure 9. Key drivers of overall satisfaction: simplified results
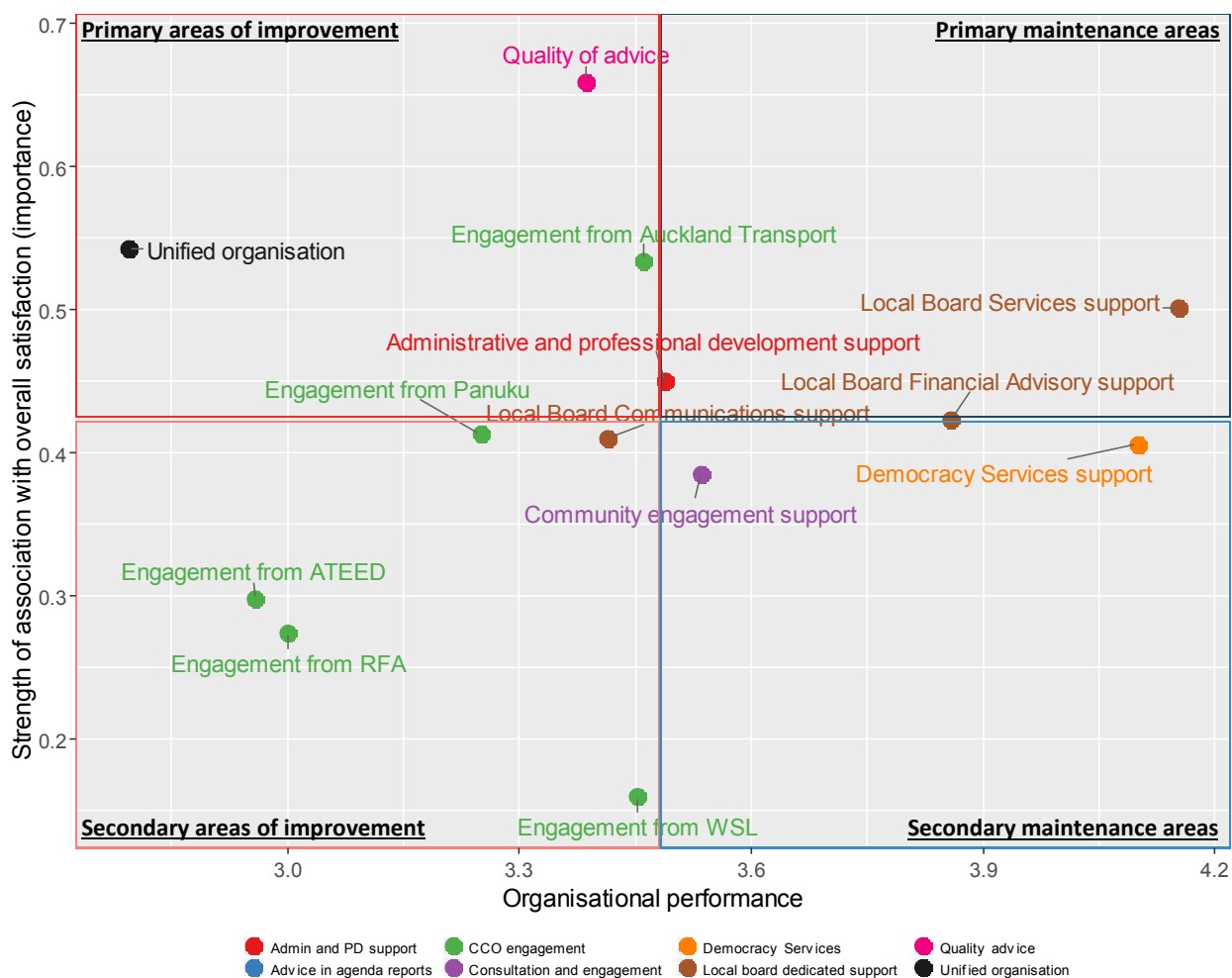
2.3.1 Changes since 2014

As a result of the 2014 survey, three key drivers were chosen by the Executive Leadership Team as key areas for improvement:

- the quality of advice provided in agenda reports
- the timeliness of advice and information
- the financial advice provided to Local Boards

Tracking how these areas have changed since 2014 shows that satisfaction with advice provided in agenda reports and timeliness of advice have both decreased slightly, while the strength of association with overall satisfaction has increased. That is, both areas have become more important as areas for improvement. Performance in relation to financial advice provided to Local Boards has improved, and, possibly as a consequence, this has become a less important driver of overall satisfaction.

2.3.2 Differences by elected member type

Local board and governing body members had similar drivers of overall satisfaction, with one exception: progress toward one unified organisation. The strength of association between unified organisation and overall satisfaction was much stronger for local board members. Both groups rated it similarly in terms of how satisfied they were with council's progress in this area. For local board members, unified organisation was located in the upper left area of the graph, whereas for governing body members it was located in the bottom left area. This indicates that progress toward one unified organisation is a significantly more important issue for local board members than for governing body members.

3.0 Progress Toward One Organisation

Elected members were asked to what extent they agreed that the Auckland Council family (including the governing body, local boards and CCOs) is progressing towards performing as one unified organisation.

3.1 Overall results

Approximately one in four elected members (24%) agreed (provided a '4' or '5' response) that the council family is progressing toward performing as a unified organisation. A larger proportion disagreed (provided a '1' or '2' response; 36%), or were neutral (provided a '3' response; 40%).

There was a 9 percentage point decrease in agreement as well as a 6 percentage point increase in disagreement from 2014.

Figure 10. Perceived progress toward one unified organisation, by year

Although elected members were not given the opportunity to explain their rating in a free text box, an interpretation of the responses provided to a range of other survey questions suggests that a number of factors are likely to be contributing to the observed disagreement with this statement. Because this question reflects a complex web of relationships between and amongst local board members, governing body members, council staff and CCO staff, as well as challenges associated with the structures in which elected members and staff work, we looked for themes across the survey that related to any of these issues.

An overall analysis of survey comments shows that local board members expressed more dissatisfaction about their relationships and the system in which they work than governing body members. Their dissatisfaction was greatest in the following areas:

- the frustration felt by local boards at a perceived lack of understanding and appreciation of their role in the shared governance structure

- the sense that local boards are not given enough decision-making power, autonomy and/or budget allocations
- the sense that the separate levels of decision-making were not yet complementing one another effectively, and instead were sometimes in competition
- a lack of recognition of local boards and their priorities by some council staff not in dedicated support roles, and by some members of the governing body
- a lack of accountability to local boards by the CCOs.

For elected members overall, two additional issues were raised:
- the need for better communication and a stronger collaborative approach between departments and across the council organisation
- the consequences of various restructures (e.g. Parks, Sport and Recreation; and Arts, Community and Events) for elected members and the need for clarity about the new allocation of responsibilities in these areas.

For further information on these themes refer to Sections 9.0, 10.0, 11.0 and 12.0.

3.2 Differences by elected member type

In line with the themes discussed above, local board members were less likely than governing body members to agree that council is progressing toward performing as a unified organisation (21% and 40% agreed, respectively). The agreement for local board members reflects a decrease of 11 percentage points since 2014.

Figure 11. Perceived progress toward one unified organisation, by elected member type
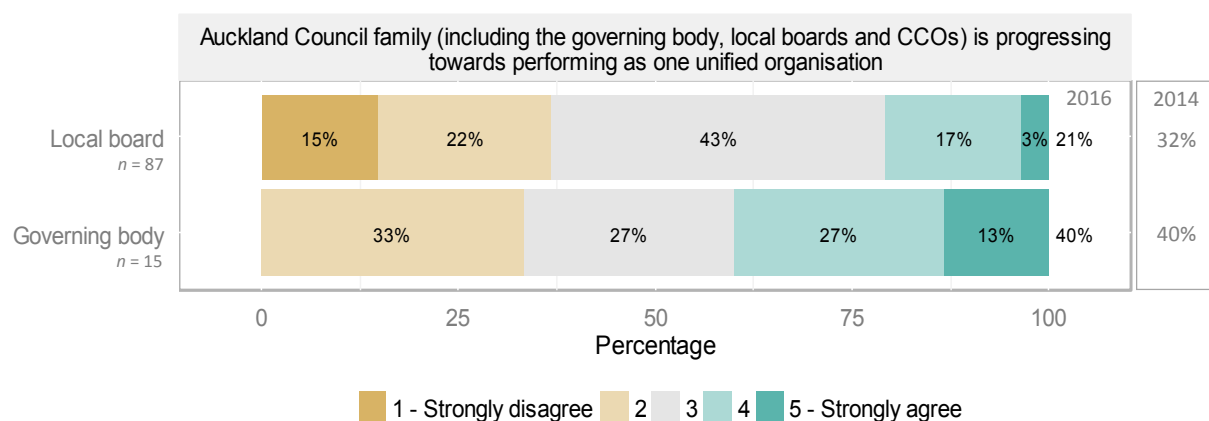
4.0 Quality Advice

Elected members were asked a number of questions about the quality of advice they receive. These questions focused on their satisfaction with different forms of advice, whether they perceived that the quality of advice had changed over their tenure, and their satisfaction with specific aspects of agenda reports.

4.1 Types of advice provided

4.1.1 Overall results

The majority of elected members were satisfied with the quality of advice provided to them in agenda reports (55%), in person at council meetings (53%), and for (and at) workshops (56%). They were less satisfied with the timeliness of advice provided by council employees, with only 32 per cent satisfied, and 33 per cent dissatisfied.

Figure 12. Satisfaction with different forms of advice
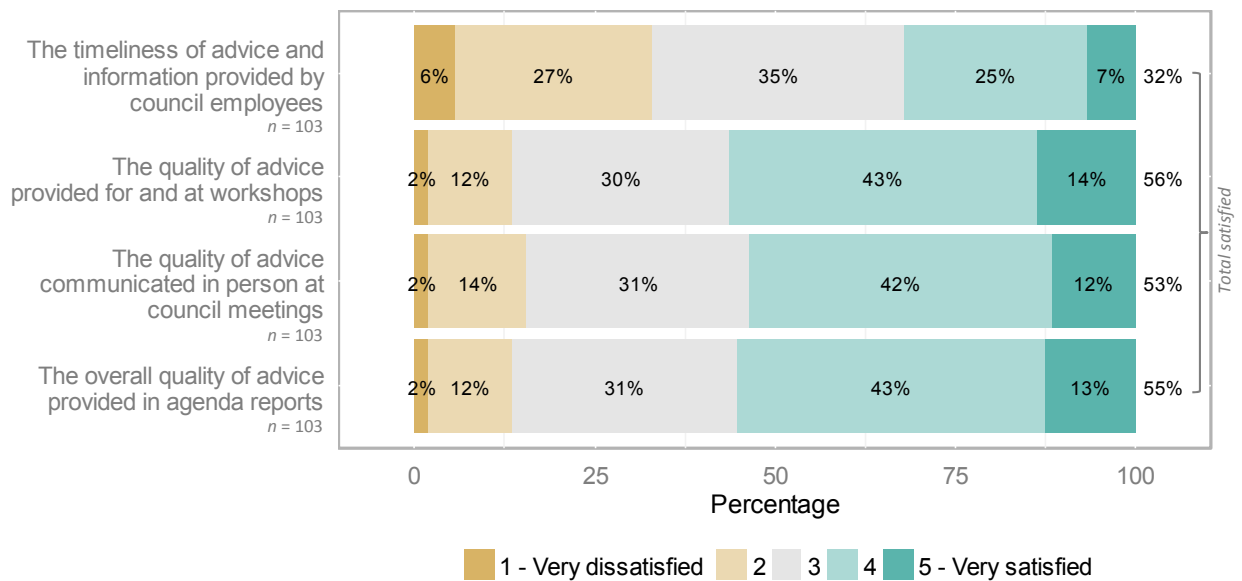
4.1.1 Changes since 2014 survey

Figure 13 below shows that there was a slight decrease in satisfaction between 2014 and 2016 in relation to advice provided in agenda reports (5 percentage points) and the timeliness of advice provided by council employees (6 percentage points).

Figure 13. Satisfaction with different forms of advice, by year

The overall quality of advice provided in agenda reports

	1	2	3	4	5	
2016 *n = 103*	2%	12%	31%	43%	13%	55%
2014 *n = 106*	1%	8%	31%	50%	10%	60%

The timeliness of advice and information provided by council employees

	1	2	3	4	5	
2016 *n = 103*	6%	27%	35%	25%	7%	32%
2014 *n = 106*	8%	17%	37%	32%	6%	38%

Legend: ■ 1 - Very dissatisfied ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - Very satisfied
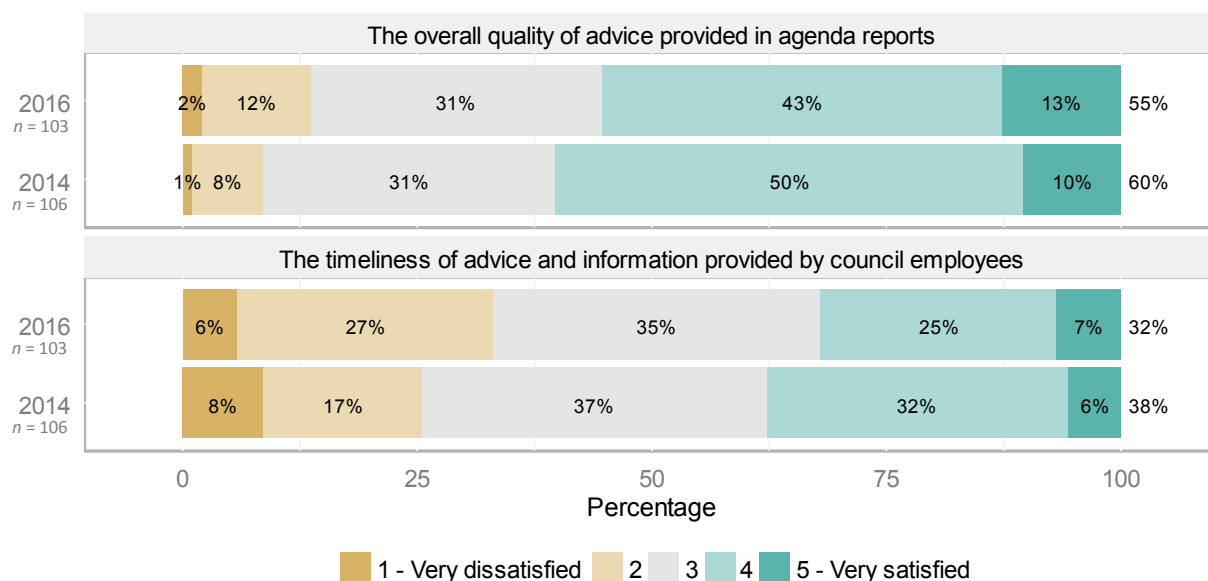
4.1.2 Differences by elected member type

Local board and governing body members were broadly similar in their satisfaction with the quality of advice received in person at workshops (56% and 60%, respectively) and council meetings (52% and 60%), although local board members were considerably less satisfied with the timeliness of advice and information provided by council employees (27% of local board members compared with 60% of governing body members), and advice provided in agenda reports (53% compared with 67%).

When compared to 2014, governing body members showed a notable increase in satisfaction with the timeliness of advice and information (from 38% to 60%), whereas local board members showed a decline (from 38% to 27%).

Figure 14. Satisfaction with different forms of advice, by elected member type
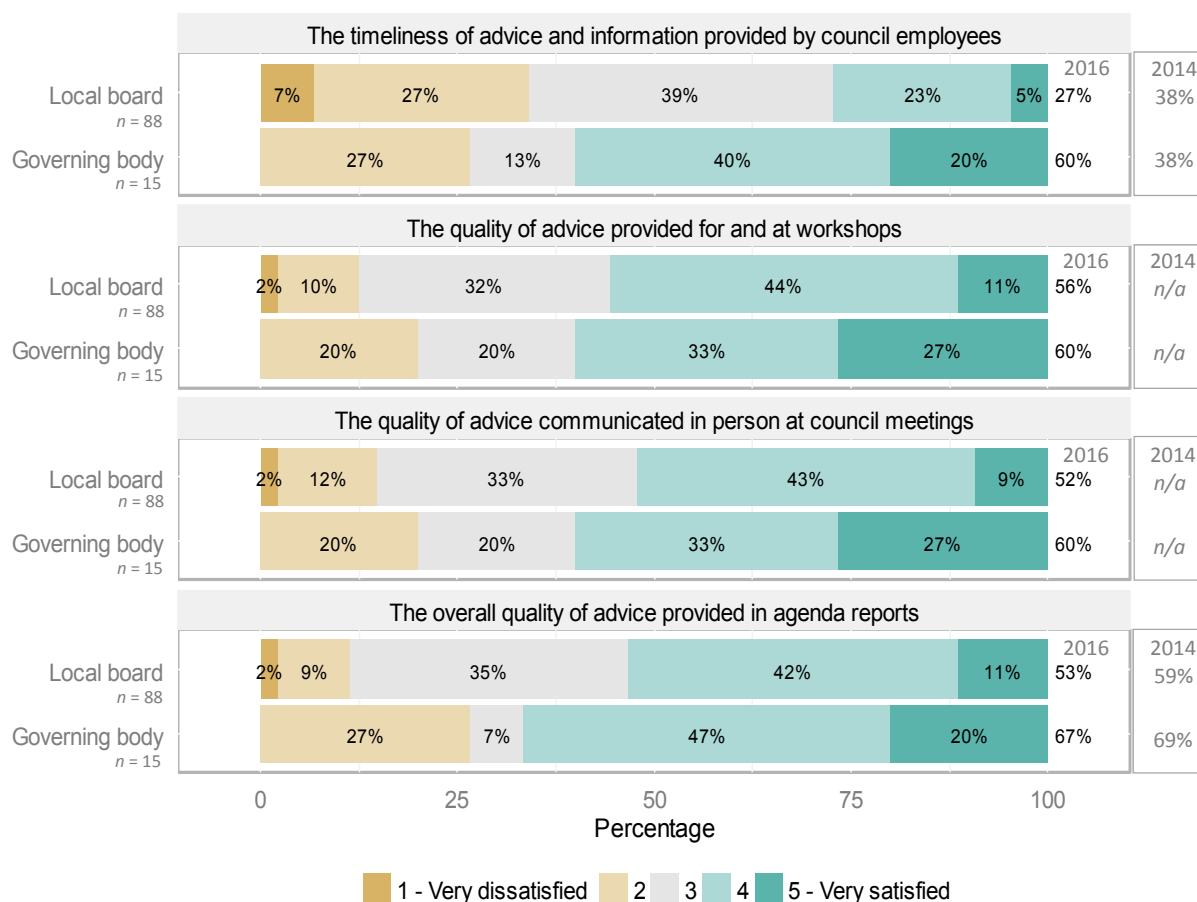
4.2 Quality of advice over time

4.2.1 Overall results

When asked how the quality of advice had changed over time, 43 per cent reported an improvement over time, 44 per cent no change, and 14 per cent a decrease in quality.

The results reflect a worsening since 2014,[4] driven by a decrease in the proportion of elected members stating that the advice has improved, and an increase in those feeling the quality of advice has stayed the same or worsened. Note that only returning members were asked this question in 2014, as the survey occurred only 11 months after the 2013 election.

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[4] Note that the question in 2014 referred specifically to 'policy advice', whereas the question in 2016 referred more broadly to just 'advice'.

Figure 15. Perceived change in the quality of advice, by year

Thinking about the advice you have received in your role to date, has the quality improved, remained the same, or worsened over time?

Year	Worsened	Remained the same	Improved
2016 (n = 101)	14%	44%	43%
2014 (n = 65)	6%	23%	71%

Legend: Worsened | Remained the same | Improved
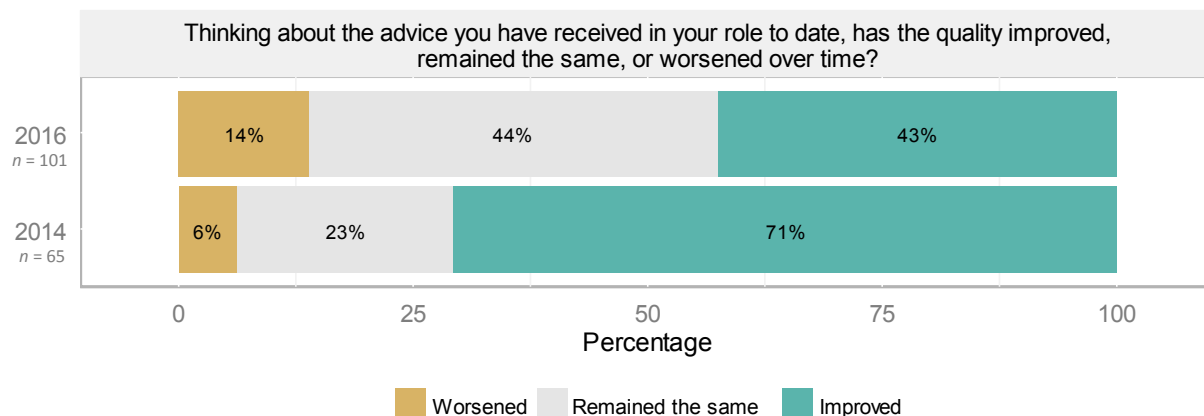
Comparing the answers of first and multiple term elected members to this year's question (see Figure 50 on p. 80) shows that those in their first term are more positive about the change in advice over time. Only 3 per cent of first term members reported that the quality of advice has worsened over time, while 18 per cent of returning members reported this to be the case.

It is also worth noting that because this question is about relative change, the interpretation of 'staying the same' should be guided by the overall level of satisfaction with advice received.

What we find when we look at the relationship between this question and overall satisfaction with the advice received in agenda reports, for instance (see Table 3 below), is that the majority (57%) of those who said the quality of advice had stayed the same were satisfied with agenda report advice. Most of the remainder were 'neutral' (34%), and only a minority were dissatisfied (9%). This indicates that many of the respondents who reported that the quality of advice had stayed the same were already reasonably happy with the advice they were receiving.

Table 3. Change in quality of advice by satisfaction with advice received in agenda reports

		Perceived change in quality of advice		
		Worsened	Remained the same	Improved
Satisfaction with advice provided in agenda reports	Dissatisfied	50%	11%	7%
	Neutral	14%	41%	26%
	Satisfied	36%	48%	67%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

4.2.2 Differences by elected member type

A greater proportion of governing body members felt that the quality of advice was improving over time (60% compared with 40% of local board members). Similar proportions in both groups felt that the quality of advice was getting worse, however. While both groups of elected members showed a

decline since 2014, the decline was greater for local board members (31 point compared to 10 point decrease).

Figure 16. Perceived change in the quality of advice, by elected member type
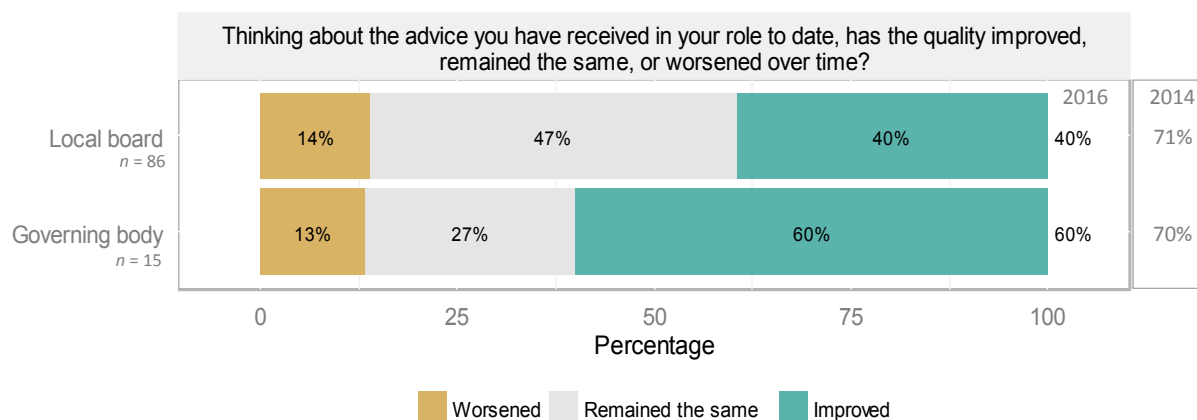
4.3 Agenda reports

4.3.1 Overall results

Elected members were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of agenda reports. They were most satisfied with the definition of the problem/opportunity (59%) and clarity of recommendations (53%). The levels of satisfaction with all other aspects of agenda reports were relatively low, ranging between 37 and 41 per cent.

Participants were particularly dissatisfied with the following aspects of agenda reports: local board views (30% dissatisfied), local impacts (25% dissatisfied), and impact assessments relating to the environment (23% dissatisfied) and Māori (22% dissatisfied).

Additional analysis[5] suggests that 'consideration of options', 'the use of evidence', and 'the definition of problem/opportunity' most strongly impact on whether elected members are satisfied overall with the agenda reports they receive.

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[5] Using regression analysis.

Figure 17. Satisfaction with different aspects of agenda reports
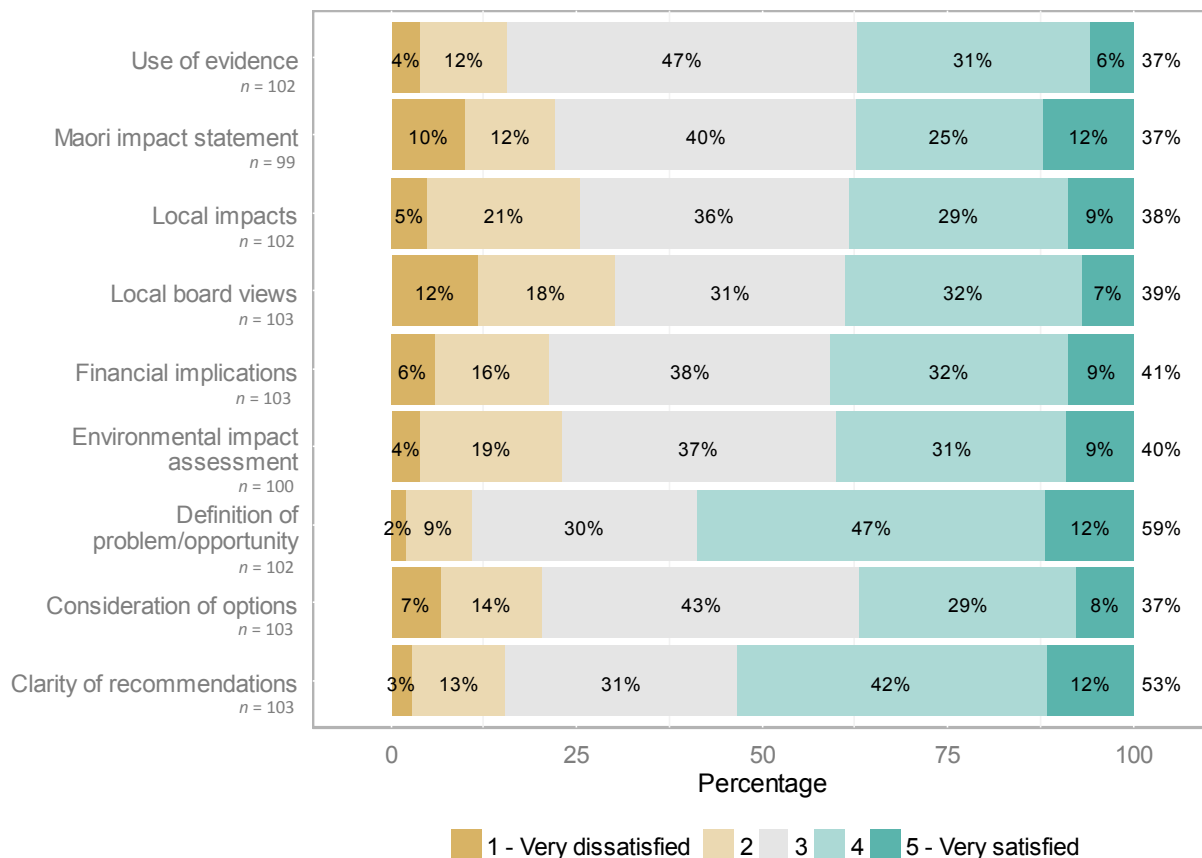
4.3.2 Differences by elected member types

Governing body members were more satisfied with all aspects of agenda reports, with satisfaction ratings ranging between 3 and 26 percentage points higher than local board members. Local board members were notably less satisfied than governing body members about local impacts (34% vs 60%, respectively), local board views (35% vs 60%), definition of problem/opportunity (55% vs 80%), and clarity of recommendations (50% vs 73%).

Figure 18. Satisfaction with different aspects of agenda reports, by elected member type

	Use of evidence				
Local board	n = 87	5% 11%	47%	31%	6% 37%
Governing body	n = 15	13%	47%	33%	7% 40%

	Maori impact statement				
Local board	n = 84	12% 12%	40%	25%	11% 36%
Governing body	n = 15	13%	40%	27%	20% 47%

	Local impacts				
Local board	n = 87	6% 23%	37%	28%	7% 34%
Governing body	n = 15	7% 33%		40%	20% 60%

	Local board views				
Local board	n = 88	14% 19%	32%	31%	5% 35%
Governing body	n = 15	13% 27%		40%	20% 60%

	Financial implications				
Local board	n = 88	7% 16%	38%	33%	7% 40%
Governing body	n = 15	13% 40%		27%	20% 47%

	Environmental impact assessment				
Local board	n = 85	4% 20%	39%	29%	8% 38%
Governing body	n = 15	7% 13% 27%		40%	13% 53%

	Definition of problem/opportunity				
Local board	n = 87	2% 9%	33%	44%	11% 55%
Governing body	n = 15	7% 13%	67%		13% 80%

	Consideration of options				
Local board	n = 88	7% 16%	42%	28%	7% 35%
Governing body	n = 15	7% 47%		33%	13% 47%

	Clarity of recommendations				
Local board	n = 88	3% 14%	33%	41%	9% 50%
Governing body	n = 15	7% 20%	47%	27%	73%

Percentage: 0   25   50   75   100

1 - Very dissatisfied   2   3   4   5 - Very satisfied

Note: This question was not asked in 2014.

4.4 Written feedback

Elected members were asked to provide comments or suggestions about the quality of the advice they had received from council officers since the last survey was undertaken in September 2014.

Overall, elected members' answers to this question focused more on those aspects of quality advice considered problematic and/or inadequate.[6] Each of these key themes is discussed below in turn, providing an overview of the substance of each along with several illustrative verbatim quotes. Towards the end of this section we examine the positive themes to emerge from this part

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[6] As noted in Section 1.4.2, asking participants for 'suggestions' is likely to be read as 'suggestions for improvement', a framing that may have elicited a greater focus on the negative aspects of advice rather than those things that are working well.

of the survey. Many comments and suggestions, both positive and negative, focused on elected members' experience of particular departments. These have been analysed alongside other department-specific feedback and are presented in Section 9.0 or included in department-specific reports.

Respondents reported three distinct staff problems: those associated with high staff turnover, some of which was related to restructures; those caused by council officers' lack of skill and/or experience; and lastly those perceived to be the result of poor attitude, as these elected members explain.

> *It's the turnover of staff [that] is the problem, especially with the [ ] portfolio I'm involv[ed] with; we [were] just about to have a plan sorted out for the year and another new officer come in and [we were] back to square one again. (LB)*

> *In the last round, the officers that were once in the role have moved on due to the restructuring - the officer that replaced [them] was not up to speed. In the workshop the information was confusing, [so] that when the report was presented to the subsequent business meeting, [it was] such a shambles the chair went through line by line items that usually are passed in a block recommendation. (LB)*

> *One staff member is downright rude to elected members [ ]. Sometimes we require robust discussions but her attitude towards us should improve. (LB)*

> *Recently there have been occasions where staff have refused to speak or return phone calls to me when enquiring on behalf of constituents. (LB)*

A perceived lack of integrity observed in some staff was another key issue. These behaviours included the perception of bias; the manipulation of elected members and the misrepresentation of their positions; and duplicity. The quotes below are illustrative.

> *In specific instances the advice has been clearly slanted leading to poor decisions - this can then tend to colour reporting as a whole. When overtly slanted reports are presented, reinforced by officer comments in justification then a degree of circumspection then inevitably flows through to other items. (GB)*

> *… on a small number of occasions in particular areas of work it is clear that individual officers or departments provide advice based on their own pre-determined positions rather than the objective perspective expected. (LB)*

> *When council officers disagree with [a] local board request or recommendations, too often [a] delaying tactic or the use of excessive financial estimates are used to dissuade the local board from their desire to provide the best for the communities. (LB)*

We have been asking for independent advice for a long time. (GB)

Timeliness also featured prominently in elected members' qualitative responses, reflecting the views expressed in Figure 12, where one third (33%) were dissatisfied with the timeliness of advice and information provided by council employees. As articulated in the quotes below, a lack of timeliness can have negative flow-on effects - an inability to make informed decisions by a set deadline, for example, or a limited expression of local views in council decision-making.

When I asked for [   ] advice I got it at 1.50 for [a] 2 pm meeting. (GB)

Local board staff are excellent with providing information but often appropriate advice from council and governing body staff is far too late being provided as there always seems to be [a] last minute rush to get local board views. (LB)

Timing of receiving advice makes a big difference as to the quality. Because various local boards' opinions differ, when generic information is presented there is often little time to get quality information to a board in time for good decision making. (LB)

Local boards (or perhaps only ours) are the last to hear about issues, receive advice or have the opportunity to comment. It seems to me that by the time we have… it is already too late for us to influence anything. (LB)

A lack of clarity in the provision of advice was also considered problematic, as these elected members explain.

Removal of "council speak" would be an improvement. (GB)

[   ] presented at a workshop a large in-depth paper and asked the local board to prioritise the work, which was a specialist topic. It was difficult to [prioritise] as there was little guidance on staff's recommendation and why in a succinct way. It left the board overwhelmed with information that the lay person would not fully understand. (LB)

Too much information, not as sharp as [it] should be. (GB)

Timeliness, perceived bias and a lack of clarity were also common themes in elected members' specific references to the quality of written reports. In addition to these issues, respondents also drew attention to the legibility and structure of reports and to the negative impact of repetition and a lack of detail on their overall readability.

Sometimes the timeliness can still leave a lot to be desired. (LB)

Staff in some areas still seem to believe they are the decision makers and our job is simply to rubber stamp their ideas meaning their reports often are structured to support that view. (LB)

Our local board has refused to accept only one agenda report … NOT because of disagreement with the subject matter, but the quality of the writing ... In our resolution we asked that the report be re-presented, but the response from staff was that we had refused to take part in the decision making. So we had one badly written, almost unintelligible report, and deliberate misunderstanding of our resolution. (LB)

The continued assumption by staff with greater knowledge on an issue than us, that we know what they are talking about so they leave finer detail out of reports that is vital for consideration. (LB)

I will keep saying some of the reports written for lay people are not in clear, concise, simple English. With such [a] diverse population base, it is important that Auckland Council (AC) officers speak to intermediate level students so language chosen in AC publications and AC reports [is] easy to understand. (LB)

Written reports have a formula which means content is often repeated making the reading long and slow. This becomes annoying and builds disregard. (LB)

Elected members also commented on particular parts of reports such as the section focusing on options.

… it is hard to get reports that are objective and consider options and the pros and cons of the options dispassionately. It is often obvious that staff have already reached a decision on their own and the report reflects that. (LB)

Would appreciate different options put more clearly. (GB)

Māori and local impacts were also an area of concern. The quotes below provide possible explanations for the 30 per cent of respondents in Figure 17 who were dissatisfied with the way local board views are presented in agenda reports, the highest proportion of unfavourable ratings of the range of advice presented in agenda reports.

Māori impact statements are bland and do not really address the impacts. They seem to be template responses with little assessment of impacts. (LB)

We have also noticed often that local impacts are either not identified or treated cursorily. (LB)

At times the information presented is not made relevant to the local board area. It is important for us to have a regional overview, but we should still drip down to the local. (LB)

In addition to these comments on specific aspects of the advice provided to elected members, respondents also made a number of general comments about the overall quality of advice. The most common of these is that the advice provided is variable, although some participants also noted an improvement over time.

Advice remains variable - some departments are better than others at engaging with local boards and giving weight to our input and local perspective. (LB)

It is hard to make general comments about advice, since it varies so much in different contexts. (LB)

Some teams have started producing excellent reports however this is not applicable across the council. (LB)

This is hard to average out, as there is a lot of variation in report writing, though on the whole the standard is improving as various departments come to grips with the role of local boards and what they need to make a quality decision. (LB)

In general reports are getting better through reduction of repetition and greater clarity in [the] production of options and recommendations. (LB)

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, some elected members made positive comments about the quality of advice provided by council officers. Many of these relate to specific departments and are included in Section 9.0 or in department-specific reports, while others focused on staff and the positive nature of their relationships with elected members.

Our advisors are mostly dedicated and well informed on options. (LB)

Happy with the quality of advice and the way that it is delivered. Having good well informed staff is a huge benefit. (LB)

Our relationship is open and our contact works to get the best out of what we have available to us. Takes a "why not, let's look into it and see what we can do" approach. Feels more like a team working together. (LB)

As noted in Section 1.4.3, comments about policy advice made by elected members in response to other survey questions are also included here.

Local Board members noted that they 'are drowning in papers and issues' and suggested a number of changes that could address this:

- better and more concise reports
- providing information in forms other than reports to workshops or meetings
- briefer communications on minor issues, with links to point interested elected members to more in-depth analysis
- clear advice on all available options rather than a suggested way forward
- fewer meetings and workshops, more reliance on memos.

A number of these responses related specifically to workshops:
- reading material to peruse before cluster workshops to allow members to understand the details
- more substance and less spin at workshops
- schedule workshops at the start of the term
- encourage attendance at workshops.

Encourage all members to attend the workshops so they are better informed and so that our meetings are more productive. Attendance at workshops should also be recorded and communicated to the public. Low attendance of workshops should be exposed as a neglect of duty. The expectation that the attendance at formal meetings is all that is required is not good enough. (LB)

Relatedly, a number of elected members identified the volume and quality of the information provided to them as an impediment to their engagement in decision-making.

What comes to us is mostly appropriate, what is a problem is the volume of material and its repetitive nature plus lack of executive summary. (LB)

Too often the information contained in reports to local boards is of a general nature relating to Auckland wide projects, events and/or issues and is not orientated toward our specific local board or when it does make mention of the LB it is only in [a] brief or cursory manner. (LB)

The feedback provided by governing body respondents focused on the need for decision-making information to be clearly marked as such, and the desire for a more thorough report on the Independent Māori Statutory Board (IMSB) and iwi-related issues.

Adequate time to review the issue at hand and provide feedback was also an issue:

High-level policy matters that relate to our community must continue to be brought to us at the earliest possible chance … as well as all local issues no matter how minute (e.g. changing rooms in parks or Auckland Transport roading upgrades). What's more important

than what comes to us and when is how it comes to us. It needs to be fully informed, presented by people who can answer our questions, and with a willingness to take our feedback fully into account. (LB)

Set a reasonable limit on the length of time allocated for feedback from Local Boards. Often the times are very short and it is difficult to take the matter to a board meeting. (LB)

Sometimes council officers come way too late for our local board to make timely resolutions. They need to be more organised. (LB)

5.0 Administrative and Professional Development Support

All elected members were asked about their satisfaction with the administrative and professional development support they had received over the last 18 months.

5.1 Administrative support

5.1.1 Overall results

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the support provided for fulfilling their requirements to make declarations (62%), support in relation to remuneration and expense management (55%) and technology equipment and support (54%) – although there was a sizable minority who were dissatisfied with technology equipment and support (22%).

Figure 19. Administrative support
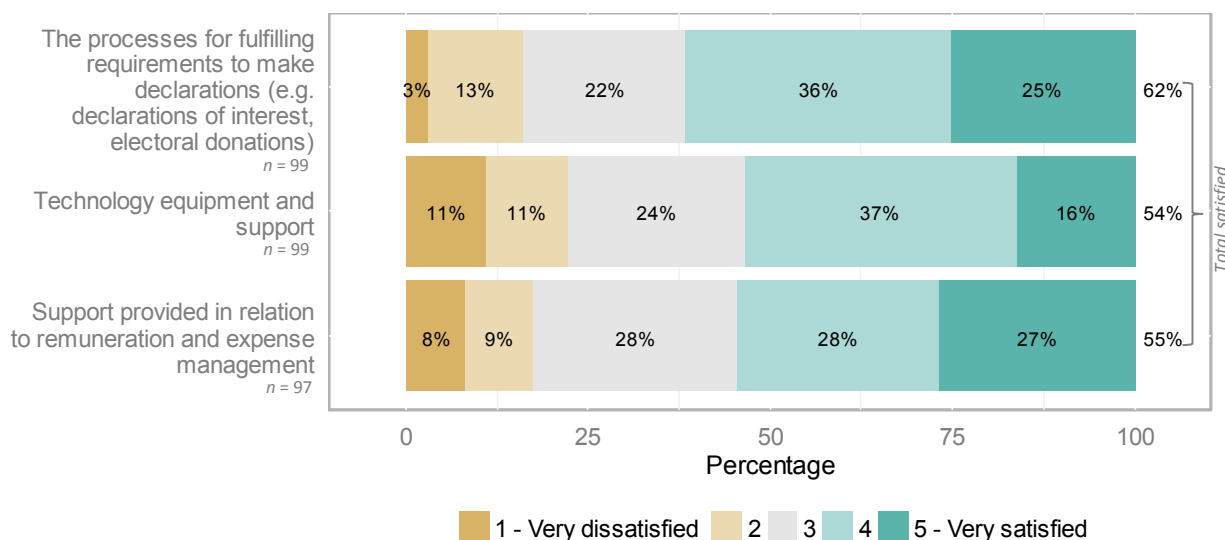
5.1.1 Changes since 2014 survey

There was a slight positive trend between 2014 and 2016 in satisfaction with administrative support, with satisfaction increasing by between 4 and 10 percentage points across the different types of support provided.

Figure 20. Administrative support, by year
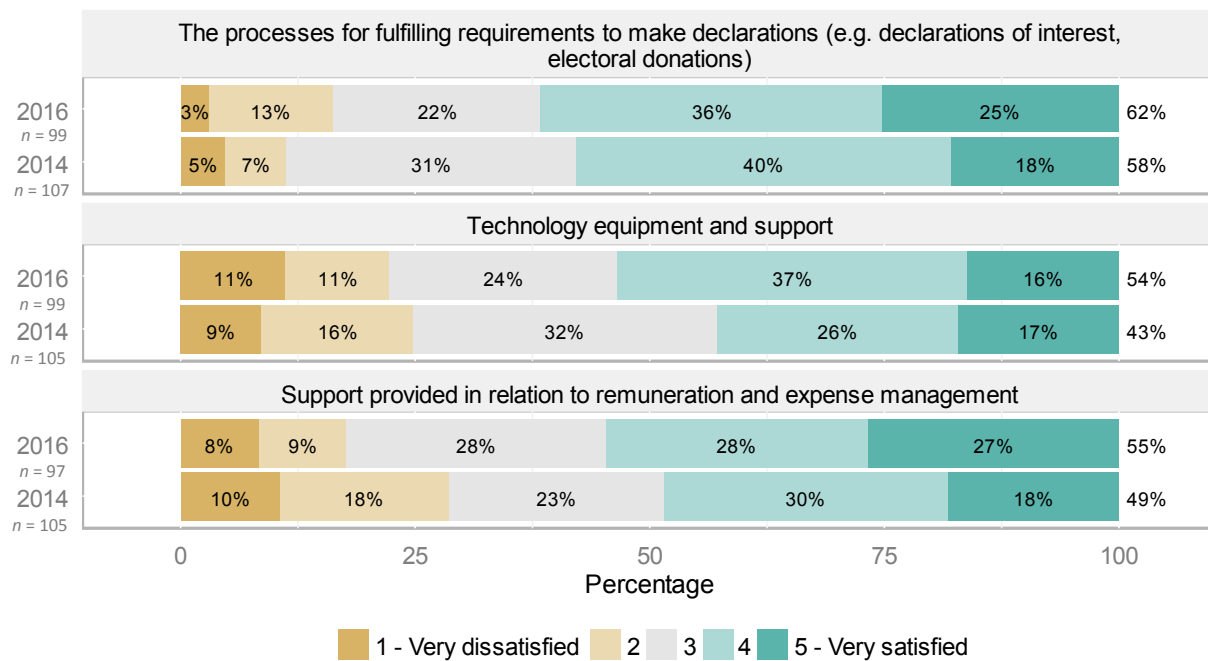
5.1.2 Differences by elected member type

Governing body members tended to be more satisfied than local board members with all types of administrative support provided by council staff, with satisfaction between 16 and 30 percentage points higher for governing body members. Increases in satisfaction since 2014 were seen for both governing body and local board members across all types of support.

Figure 21. Administrative support, by elected member type
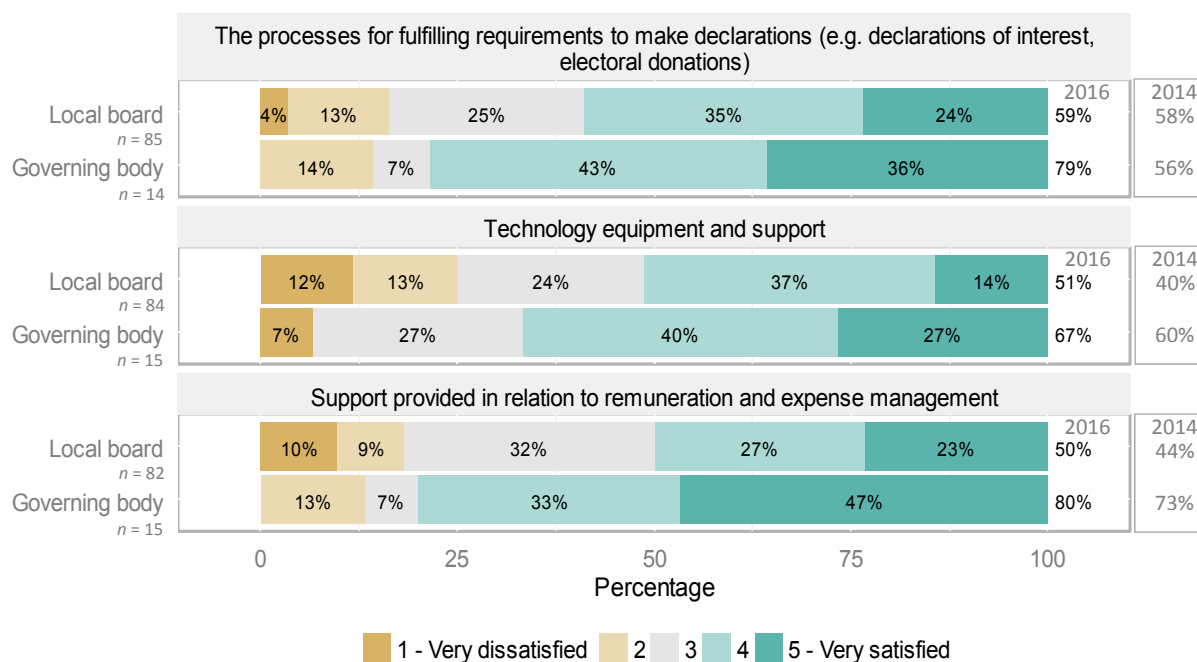
5.1.3 Written feedback

Respondents provided both positive and negative feedback on the administrative support provided to elected members. Those comments and suggestions at the positive end of the spectrum focused on the overall support provided in this area, noting that it was '*all good*' (LB), that they were '*happy with support*' (LB) and that '*admin support [is] generally very good*' (GB). Others were concerned more specifically with the contributions of staff at individual, team or department level; and the technology itself.

> *The technology team has provided exemplary service. (GB)*

> *This has been excellent solely due to the presence of my CSA. (GB)*

> *Remuneration and expense assistance I have found excellent. Technology equipment and support provid[ed] [by] the local board staff is also excellent. (LB)*

> *IS managed transition to new phone seamlessly when I experienced technical issues. Very responsive. (LB)*

> *I have to say that I am very fortunate to have a wonderful PA in [   ] who is very helpful and if she doesn't know the answer she will go to great lengths to find out. (LB)*

> *[I] have never personally had ANY issue when contacting support staff and their response times were impressive. (LB)*

Cell phone works well as a phone and an email base. (GB)

Technology, equipment and support given to me were very good. (LB)

Negative comments and suggestions focused on remuneration and expense management; and technology.

Until recently, the only advice we received re this was nitpicky. I have not made a claim for expenses since early in my term - too much bother. (LB)

Repeatedly suggested that expenses be on excel spreadsheet - in industry we were doing this in the 80s. No feedback on expenses - very difficult to know what has been paid. Attended feedback meeting in November NOTHING HAS HAPPENED SINCE!!! (LB)

Expense management is average. Payments on pay slip do not always have a sufficient description of adjustments or expense payments written on the slip. Method of applying the threshold distance deducted from elected member (EM) home to the office is applied regardless of whether or not the EM has already been to the office on a given day. (LB)

The tech support has been excellent - it's just a pity … since the tech itself has not been great and, as with others, I have had to have bugs fixed in connectivity, portability, phones dropping calls, data, defaulting to weird dates and so forth. (LB)

Technology support has been useless - I do not have a separate council computer and use my personal computer for council emails. I cannot attach reports (no facility to do so) to emails using council site and have to use my personal email address to staff for reports. (LB)

The laptops and phones we have are our offices. I have had periods unable to get my laptop to connect and/or work in council buildings; unable to connect while roving; unable to print in council buildings … If I see an email in my phone, it doesn't always show in my laptop - the syncing doesn't always work. (LB)

Please, please, please, better tech[nology]. My laptop has disconnected twice while I have been filling out this survey and we are lucky I haven't lost data. Also - laptops that have connectivity to overhead projectors, etc. Ridiculous to turn up to brief stakeholders at a community engagement event and not be able to show my presentation! (LB)

In addition to feedback that was broadly negative or positive, some elected members made suggestions about more effective ways of using technology.

Given size of board area we need to make use of teleconferencing which would save time and money - this has been ignored despite repeated requests. It takes me an hour to drive to the local board office and the other members have the same issue. Some meetings could be done through teleconferencing. (LB)

The new council should dispense with [computer] monitors, desk phones and individual printers and provide councillors with Apple 7, MacBook 12 or ipad only. And dispense with hard copy agendas. (GB)

A local board member suggested that local board meetings be webcast to allow members of the public access to the deliberations and decision-making process that takes place at this level:

Webcast all local board meetings, so we can better engage with our constituents whilst still performing our roles as decision-makers. It also will remove the suspicion around what we deal with in our meetings. (LB)

Similarly, a number of local board members expressed the need to reduce the time they spent commuting to meetings. Their suggestions included clustering meetings together to save on travel time, organising meetings in different locations around Auckland, and providing better technological support for video conferencing for remote participation in meetings when appropriate.

Meetings between LBs and GB need to be timetabled better as we travel so much into the city. (LB)

[The] requirement to travel to [the] CBD for a ten minute presentation to governing body or CCO submission [is] ridiculous (3-4hrs). (LB)

Better use of technology for meetings - saves time and expense of staff and EM's travel. Not all meetings need to be face to face. (LB)

5.2   Professional development

5.2.1   Overall results

Although a large proportion of elected members were satisfied with ongoing learning activities and professional development (46%), a reasonable proportion was dissatisfied (24%) with the offerings in these areas.

Figure 22. Professional development support
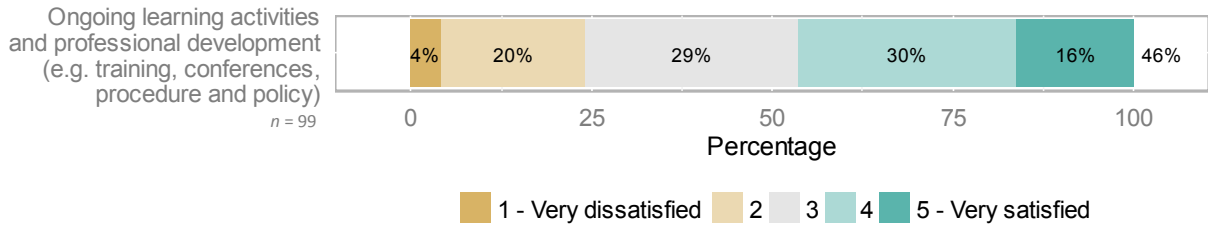
5.2.1 Changes since 2014 survey

Satisfaction with ongoing learning and professional development support increased 9 per cent from 37 per cent in 2014 to 46 per cent in 2016.

Figure 23. Professional development support, by year
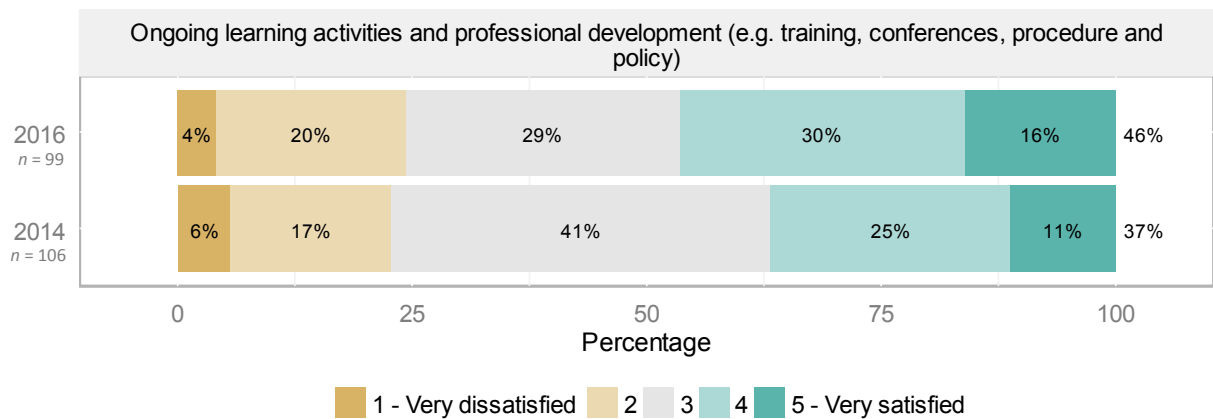
5.2.2 Differences by elected member type

Local board members were less satisfied than governing body members with the ongoing learning and professional development activities offered to them (44% compared to 60%). Both groups showed an increase from 2014, although the increase was larger for governing body members (35 point increase compared to a 5 point increase for local board members).

Figure 24. Professional development support, by elected member type

Ongoing learning activities and professional development (e.g. training, conferences, procedure and policy)

Member type	1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very satisfied	2016	2014
Local board (n = 84)	5%	21%	30%	31%	13%	44%	39%
Governing body (n = 15)		13%	27%	27%	33%	60%	25%
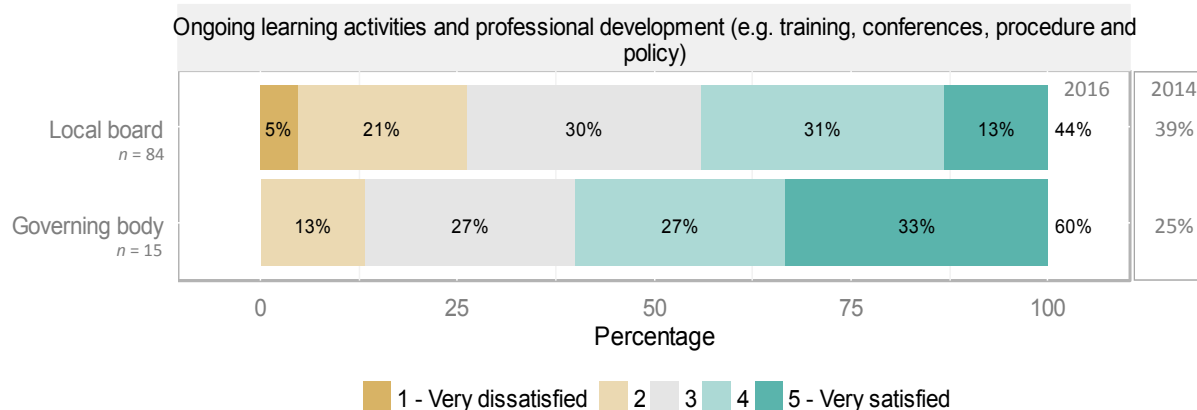
5.2.3 Written feedback

Those who were dissatisfied with professional development support were asked to provide an explanation for the low rating they gave. Their responses fell into two main themes: that there are too few options; and that those that are available take place at times and in locations that make it difficult or impossible for some members to attend. For example:

What else has there been, until the last couple of weeks, at the near-end of the term? I've been able to go to a couple of events that I have nominated, but I have been extremely disappointed by the lack of learning opportunities council has offered me as a board member. (LB)

Need more of it and better communication [about it]. (GB)

Insufficient options timing wise, to attend courses. Courses cancelled; distance to travel too far, need more local presentations in evenings. (LB)

I took part in a focus group, and explained that many local board members were working and thus could not access professional development with the current set-up. I felt that options for evenings and weekends would be greatly beneficial. However, after the process, all subsequent workshops were during a work day. (LB)

Although this comment box was included to enable elected members to explain their negative ratings of ongoing learning and professional development, several respondents included positive comments about this area, two of which are included below.

I get good support for outside conferences, but it would be helpful to have [the] opportunity to have professional development with other elected reps inside council. (LB)

Auckland Conversations has been absolutely fantastic, and a wonderful source of learning. (LB)

All respondents were asked to provide comments and suggestions about professional activities that would assist them to better perform in their roles. The most prominent themes were: (i) specific course subjects, training providers and the interpersonal skills required for elected members to perform well; (iii) the timing and location of training courses; (iii) positive comments about existing training; and (iv) problems experienced accessing training.

Looking first at subjects, providers and interpersonal skills, elected members mentioned courses to improve their competence in the use of technology; training from the Institute of Directors; courses designed to improve interpersonal skills; and training on the machinery of local government such as meeting and workshop protocols and the structure and function of the council organisation. The following quotes illustrate these sub-themes.

[I] would like to learn more about [the] technical capabilities of my computer. I know that I could do things better and more effectively. (GB)

Many board members, although not me, need ongoing tech learning - as do some support staff. It is unforgiveable that council, which intones stuff about making Auckland innovative and agile, is so lacking in tech innovation itself. I understand that IS has been struggling with huge infrastructure issues that would have been poorly prepared for by the transition process, but that is no excuse for the lack of other innovation. Staff and board members need ongoing skills development to support such innovation. Many board members are woefully ignorant and council must not pander to them. (LB)

[Institute of] Directors' course would be the next appropriate training for councillors GB - 50/50% share would be ideal cost share. (GB)

Managing a board and interacting with staff well is essential for a chair but we've never been given structured support on this. (LB)

Intra-personal relationships between elected representatives (ERs) and managing conflict. Identification of ER working styles within local board ERs. How to identify and leverage ER strengths (personal, political, social, intelligence, emotional). (LB)

I was a first time chair this term and despite this being my [ ]th term it was a huge step up from being a regular board member and I would have appreciated a little more guidance around the role of chair, which at times can be a lonely position yet thoroughly enjoyable. (LB)

Each councillor should be given maximum exposure to understand [the] machinery of local government. (GB)

The timing and location of training courses was also an important factor for respondents.

> *[I] have not availed myself of these opportunities as they are often at times that I cannot make as I have other roles and due to the role of a board member being part-time. (LB)*

> *The professional development offered is fantastic but time constraints mean it is challenging to participate. (GB)*

> *As an experienced politician I am finding it difficult to get to a lot of the development offerings that really interest me. [They] are held in the city and I have difficulty in getting there due to the high demands of my job as chair, especially [as] it is usually another night out for me when I have so many late nights in my job. (LB)*

Elected members also made a number of positive comments about current learning and development opportunities.

> *The courses suggested and provided by Local Board Services are an absolute life saver. (LB)*

> *I think what the council offer is excellent. (LB)*

In addition to the challenges of course timing and location, several respondents identified additional difficulties, as these elected members explain.

> *Good topics but very fraught with some LB members participating - still adversarial even in a prof[essional] development sense. This has put me off attending. (GB)*

> *I would have liked to attend more training, but am very mindful of the opinion of my fellow board members who regard all training as a waste of rate payer money and threaten to advertise my wastefulness. There are so many interesting courses that are promoted. I feel uncomfortable about asking to attend a course that has a fee, e.g. an external course, because of the costs. I feel that it puts the LB staff and my chair in a difficult position when they also have to defend the spend. It would be much easier if the stigma of the cost of training was removed. Training should be encouraged and supported. (LB)*

> *I would like professional development but it has not been clear what I can attend. (LB)*

6.0 Democracy Services Support

Governing body members were asked about their satisfaction with different aspects of the dedicated support they received from Democracy Services.[7]

6.1 Overall results

Governing body members reported high levels of satisfaction with the overall support provided to them by Democracy Services (80%), increasing 5 percentage points from 2014. Satisfaction was particularly high with democracy advice and meeting support (86%).

One respondent was dissatisfied with the strategic and policy advice provided, and two were dissatisfied with the support provided by their Councillor Support Advisor (CSA).

Figure 25. Democracy and advisory support
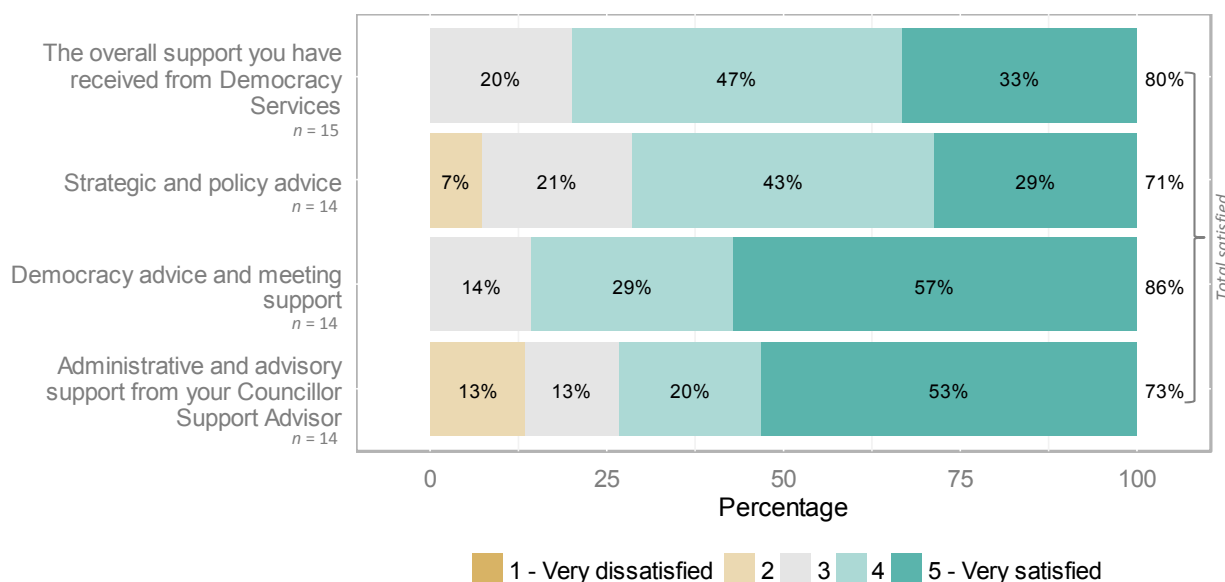
6.2 Changes since 2014 survey

Levels of satisfaction reported by governing body members in 2016 were similar to those presented in 2014.

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[7] This question was not asked of local board members, as board member are provided with dedicated support by Local Board Services.

Figure 26. Democracy and advisory support, by year
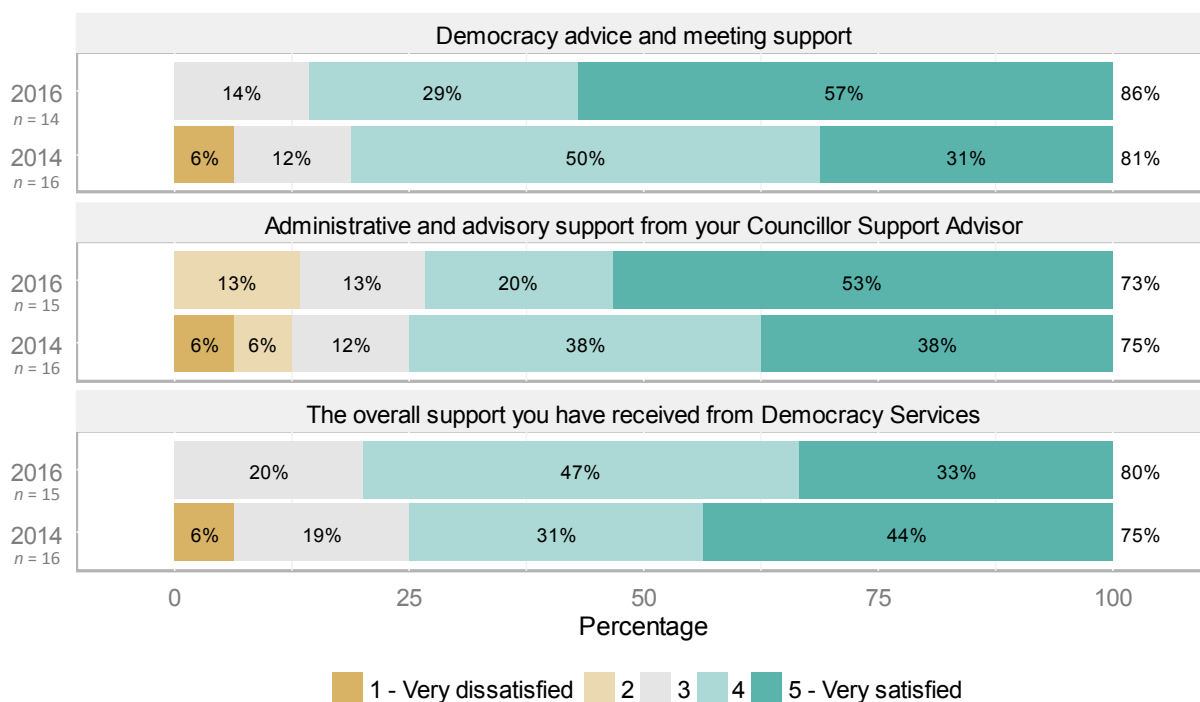
6.3 Written feedback

Governing body members were asked to provide comments and suggestions about the support they had received from Democracy Services since September 2014. The predominance of positive comments focused on the contributions of staff at the department, team and individual level and reflects the largely positive ratings of the department contained in Figure 25.

> *Team leaders have been very helpful in working to get CSAs for me. Democracy services staff are all very efficient at communicating, friendly, respectful and work very hard to do what's needed and any extras.*

> *The councillor support advisor programme has worked well and has meant that constituent requests have been handled in a much improved manner. Also the link between councillors and departments of council has improved for me. I get good responses to requests for information which gives me confidence that requests are taken seriously.*

> *My CSA is professional, absolutely critical to my day to day functioning. [They are] strategic and able to solve any ratepayer issues as they arise. And critically is responsible for integrating my role across the organisation.*

The small number of negative comments addressed the issue of equity in the assignment of CSAs and the increased assistance required to manage the large volumes of emails councillors receive.

I am concerned that until recently I have had to share a 'councillor support advisor' with two other councillors while some councillors have one. This was not fair to the advisor nor the three councillors. From this week I share a support advisor with just one [councillor]. But why the lack of equity?

Improvements in addressing the barrage of emails [are] required.

The following suggestion focuses on how the support provided by CSAs might be improved:

Now that the CSAs have settled in it would be helpful, on occasions, for them to accompany the councillors when we meet constituents and attend some meetings off site. Take notes and see the problems from their perspective. (GB)

7.0 Dedicated Support for Local Boards

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

7.1 Local Board Services overall results

The overall satisfaction with the dedicated support provided to local board members by Local Board Services was very high at 88 per cent, reflecting a 4 per cent increase from the results obtained in 2014. Satisfaction with specific aspects of Local Board Services support was similarly high, although a minority reported dissatisfaction with community engagement advice (9% dissatisfied) and administrative support (9% dissatisfied).

Figure 27. Local board dedicated support
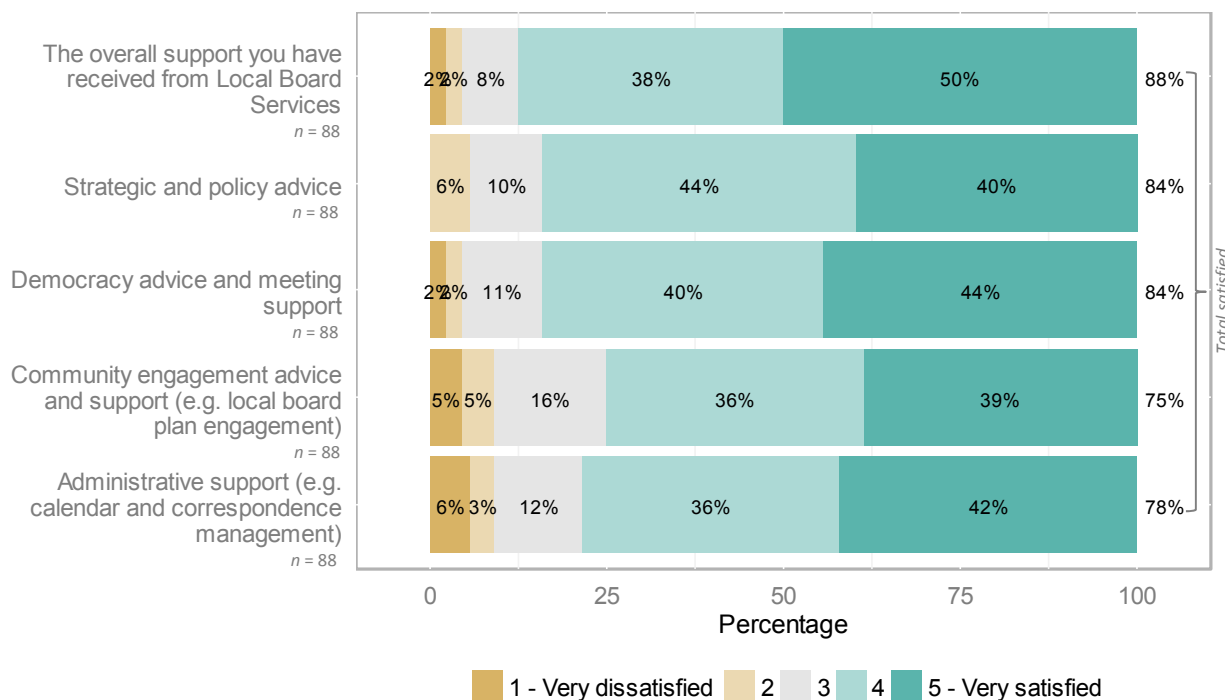
Satisfaction across the range of support provided by Local Board Services was similar to that seen in 2014.

Figure 28. Local board dedicated support, by year
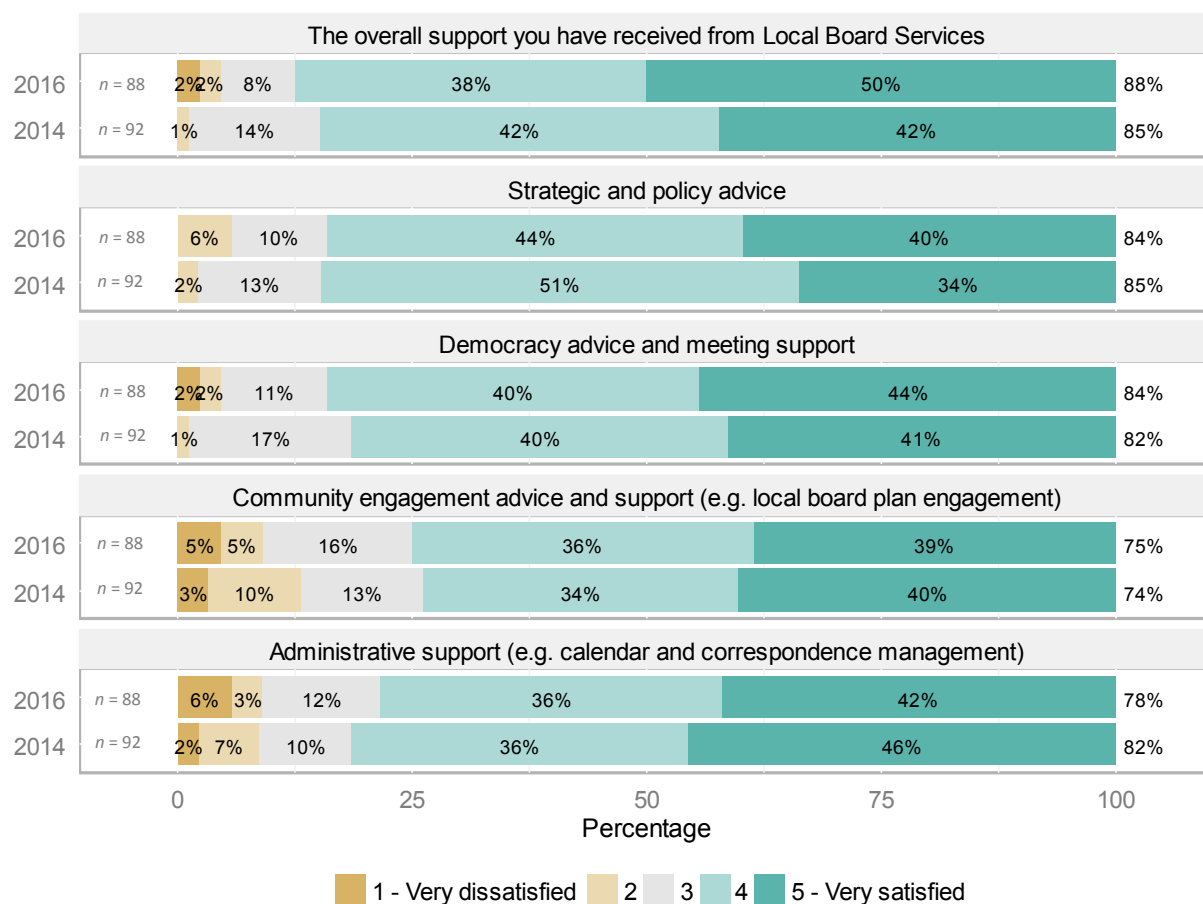
Local board members were also asked to provide comments and suggestions about the support they had received from Local Board Services since September 2014. In line with the feedback on Democracy Services outlined in the previous section, positive comments predominated and focused largely on the contributions of staff at the department, team and individual level. These reflect the generally positive ratings of the department contained in Figure 27.

The one department that is over-performing 24/7. They go well beyond the call of duty.

[The] manager [of] Local Board Services is excellent, very helpful and approachable, willing to give advice to EMs. [ ] is well respected and valued by the chairs of the LBs.

This is the best department and I could not function as an elected member without them.

I continually rely on Local Board Services, for their experience and knowledge in navigating the council family, particularly for diary management and the things I sometimes struggle with.

Local Board Services staff are excellent and really understand what the board is trying to achieve.

The support we get from specific staff is almost universally excellent. It has made a particularly big difference to me as a chair having a good permanent PA for the board.

[   ] Local Board support staff 10/10. Very competent and professional! No bias. All good.

Local Board Services have provided a professional team of staff which work damn hard to ensure officers understand the role of co-governance and what boards' responsibilit[ies] are.

Turning now to areas of dissatisfaction, local board members focused primarily on the need for increased staff resources, particularly in relation to those officers who work with more than one local board.

I think we are probably one of the more 'active' boards with most of the LB members virtually full time trying to fulfil the needs of our community. Thus the LB officers are run ragged and there seems to be no ability to get more LB staffing as all boards are treated 'equally' in terms of staffing.

I do feel our local board staff are stretched in terms of resources to assist us.

I would like a lot more dedicated engagement support and also some more advisor support from Local Board Services for our board. Engagement is the core function of local boards, and I believe will become more so over time as more and more plans and so on are confirmed, and we need more hours for our board.

There is not enough staff cover when Local Board Services (LBS) staff are sick, on training courses or attending team meetings. Our team are lovely people and always pleasant and professional. However, there is a feeling that they are over worked or not as time management focused. This means that board decisions can be delayed because the research, analysis, or reporting is not being prepared in a timely manner. I feel that as a board we can cross from governance into management because of the lack of experience of our LBS team.

Our staff are excellent and do the best they can. However, there are many times that they are overloaded with work - work demands are rather "lumpy" and requests, sometimes urgent, can't be managed. This impacts on how I can carry out my duties. I think over certain periods of a LB calendar extra staffing would be beneficial.

My biggest concern with LBS is the workload on staff when balancing several boards and chairs. It is impossible for one person to remain 'on their game' if managing more than two boards.

Staff turnover and the issues arising from it were also considered important issues, reflecting the same concern expressed in Section 0 on quality policy advice.

> *Consistency of officers would be good [as] too many move off to other jobs.*

> *Once again a high level of turnover of the good staff.*

> *I would say it disappointed me that we had a few changes of staff that didn't help in having a cohesive approach.*

Some local board members were also unhappy about the decisions and approach of particular Local Board Services staff.

> *Some staff think they can tell you how it is and what should be done depending on the thoughts of others. We had a situation recently where something came to a board meeting, I asked how this could be on the agenda and was told 'The chair insisted' - this is crazy! [The] Relationship [Manager] (RM) should stand to what the rules are not find ways to bend them for the benefit of a chair.*

> *Subject Matter Expert (SME) advisors who pick up work they should be doing that currently often falls to [Local Board Advisors] LBAs or elected members, e.g. taking notes and updating portfolio plans. (LB)*

> *I don't feel that my LBS team are as proactive as I would like. Agenda items for portfolio briefings are often driven by the elected members. We don't know what we don't know. With this in mind I would like the experts to be more proactive, and this to be driven by the LBS team.*

> *While good, there is the tendency to ensure local boards and board members 'toe the line'. I don't think Local Board Services is proactive in advocating for board recognition within the bureaucracy.*

> *Greater support at the portfolio level to plan strategically, develop and monitor work programmes.*

Local board offices were also of concern for some elected members.

> *Board office not always open (week days) when needed.*

> *There is a lingering frustration on our Board [ ] about the organisation's slow action on establishing a permanent office for the board.*

Another expressed the desire to run community consultation activities on weekends when their constituency was most likely to be available and receive access to their offices as well as staffing to assist with this:

> *Supporting community clinics would be helpful. We have a thriving market adjacent to our local board office that brings thousands of people into the area - but it's Saturday morning. While it seems a no-brainer to have elected members available at the office those mornings, and members are keen, we are not trusted to be in the office out of business hours, so the clinics can't happen. (LB)*

7.2 Local Board Financial Advisory and Communications team support

The level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Local Board Financial Advisory team was 67 per cent, up 3 percentage points from 2014, while that of the Local Board Communications team was 53 per cent, up 6 percentage point from 2014. A reasonable proportion of local board members were dissatisfied with the Local Board Communications team support (24% dissatisfied).

Figure 29. Local board dedicated financial advice and communications support
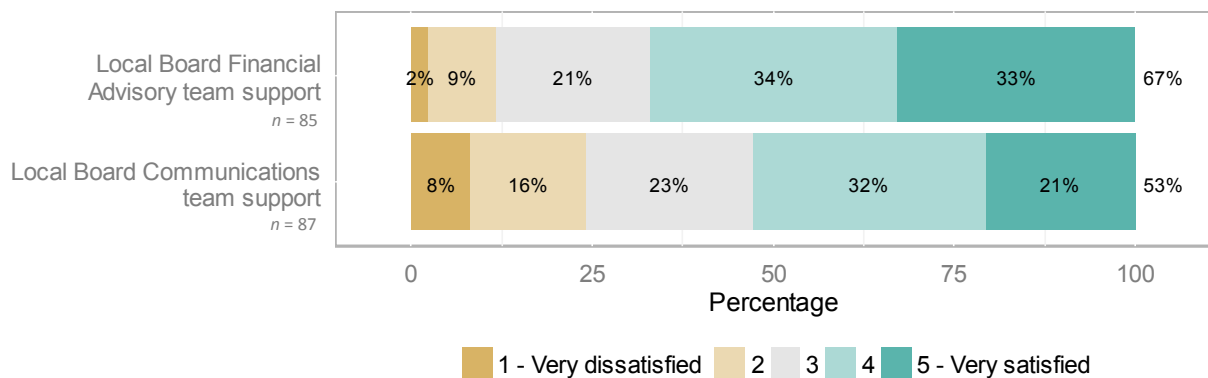
Figure 30. Local board dedicated financial advice and communications support, by year
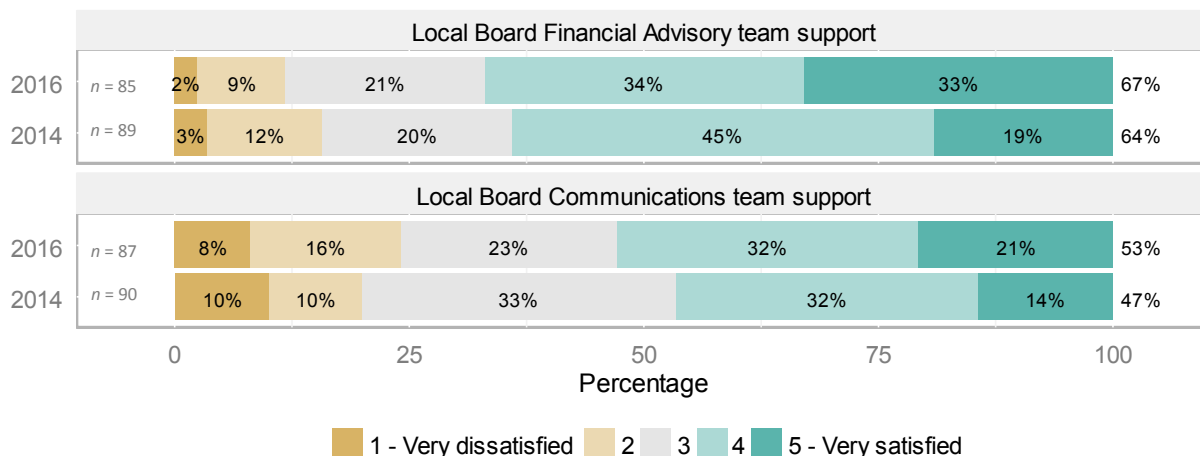
In line with the 67 per cent of local board members presented in Figure 29 who were satisfied or very satisfied with the Local Board Financial Advisory Services team, the qualitative feedback on this area was generally positive. Respondents commented on the excellence of particular staff or the team generally, but also noted the overall improvement that has occurred in this area. This may be related to the prioritisation of this area for improvement by the Executive Leadership Team after the 2014 survey.

I have been impressed by our financial advisor as he is a good communicator, listens and follows up.

I am indeed fortunate but my financial advisor provides quality advice and lateral solutions to get good value for money for our community.

Our financial advisor is excellent. This isn't my portfolio, but I always feel that if I ask a question I will receive a quality answer.

LB Financial Advisory Team: awesome. Our advisor has a sound understanding of our board and community and can explain things at what I call a kindergarten level! It's crucial to all boards that they have sound guidance around their budgets.

The finance team has continued to get better and better, they face challenges in terms of being able to break down data specific to LB areas but this is continually evolving and has increased significantly since the first term of council.

Local Board Financial Advisory Team, getting better with quality advice - always helpful and prompt.

I feel privileged to have this dedicated set of people looking after us … [   ] is a gem.

Dissatisfaction with the services provided by Local Board Financial Advisory Team focused mostly on the clarity and accuracy of the advice provided.

> *After six years, specific problems are:*
> *- mismatch between regional and local financial information*
> *- lack of clarity about 'buckets', who is responsible for them, and means of expending the buckets*
> *- difficulty regarding going specific versus global in terms of budget line items.*

> *Each year the local board has encountered difficulty with the lack of accurate budget figures not being provided in a timely manner so that the LB can sign off its end of year budget and local board plan.*

Some local board members believed that the problems stemmed from the broader system rather than individual staff members, as these respondents explain.

> *The board's financial advisor is fine, but the system is still lacking.*

> *The support we get from our financial advisor is good, but she is operating within a system that is not responsive to the needs of local boards, e.g. we often end up with budget lines called something confusing that doesn't really match what we are trying to do and it cannot be changed.*

The qualitative feedback on Local Board Communications reflects the lower levels of satisfaction expressed in Figure 30. Some respondents expressed general dissatisfaction, '*not impressed with comms at all, sorry*' while others provided more specific feedback: on the appropriateness of reporting lines between local board chairs and communications staff; and on the difficulty of managing local communications requirements with centrally directed processes.

> *[The] communications team meet solely with the chair but perhaps they should meet with all the elected members too to discuss what is happening/what's coming down the pipeline/what's being advertised elsewhere. Then the information may flow more easily and a wider picture may emerge of what's happening. Although the chair is the key contact, there is opportunity lost and the chair doesn't always share or pass info on or know what's happening in other EM's workstreams.*

> *All our comms are approved by the chair, the board doesn't get a say on what is being published etc. - the full board should have to approve with no delegated authority.*

> *Our LB local team very good to work with … but communications from central comms not of good quality. E.g. letter re annual plan to groups muddled and boring and not good quality.*

Our local board comms support is excellent (and greatly improved over the last few years) but let down by the wider organisation.

Comms is hopeless. Constrained by central team so little autonomy. Everything dumbed down and standardised.

Local communications were also viewed as constrained by the council brand and style. The comments suggested that respondents would like communications to be more proactive and innovative.

The comms team seem to be hampered by a need to be formulaic and not innovative. It's great they're now updating Facebook, but it's pretty dull stuff. Comms should be much more lively and flexible.

Staff are not as proactive at identifying media opportunities. The communications team need to rely on the rest of the LBS team, who are at times reluctant to take a picture or to promote an activity. To move promotion away from elected personalities and to reflect on the good work of a local board, a more proactive and timely media response is required. Council should receive more credit [for] the great work and projects it delivers for our community. We need to improve in this area. Project budgets and project managers need to reflect the importance of good communications with the public.

Whilst they have improved immensely for us it is still a concern that our individuality as a board is somewhat curtailed when wanting to express ourselves in a way that our community understands and not in a, shall we say, stuffy council speak manner.

A lack of staff resources and the difficulties created by staff turnover were also mentioned.

Communications - adjusting to another new staff member again!

Both members do a great job, however both members are dedicated to several boards. So it can be tricky catching up and keeping on top of things. If you miss a catch up meeting it can take a while to find another date.

We don't have enough comms resource, and it is functional support whereas more strategic advice here would be useful.

Nonetheless, a number of local board members made positive comments about local board communications, some focusing on the excellence of particular staff, others noting the good performance and/or improvement of the department overall.

Communications have improved in recent times, prior [to that] it was too slow to turn things around.

Our comms advisor I can rely on to follow up on our concerns. She understands how important it is for us to have great relationships with local media. We meet every fortnight and [additionally] if required. She helps us get our story out there in the community in a responsive and positive way.

8.0 Consultation and Engagement

All elected members were asked about their satisfaction with the support they had received since September 2014 in engaging with communities to increase their participation with, and understanding of, Auckland Council.

8.1 Overall results

Half of all elected members (50%) were satisfied with the support received in engaging with communities, with 35 per cent neutral and 15 per cent dissatisfied.

This represents a 13 percentage point change since 2014. This change was driven by a 14 percentage point increase in neutral responses; overall dissatisfaction did not change meaningfully (although there was a small reduction in the percentage of those who were very dissatisfied).

Figure 31. Community engagement support, by year
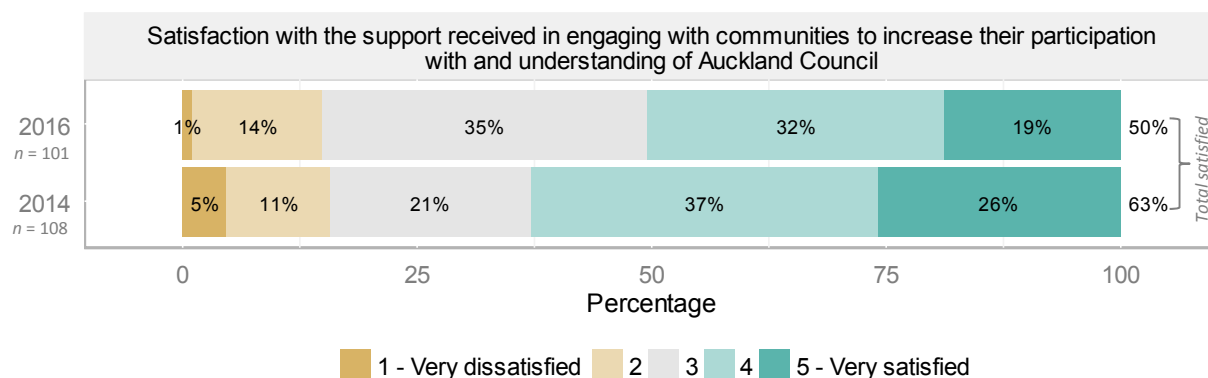
Reflecting the even balance between participants who rated their satisfaction with consultation and engagement positively (50%) and those who were neutral or negative (50%) in this year's survey, elected members expressed both appreciation for, and criticism of, the work undertaken in this area. Respondents focused on the need to consult and engage differently with some groups in order to better connect with young, ethnically diverse and lower socioeconomic communities.

If I could improve anything there would be a greater focus on reaching our hard to reach communities and I think that our comms and engagement advisor is making progress here. (LB)

[We need] a greater focus on the younger generation. (GB)

Community engagement [is] probably the weakest of our activities. [It] tends to focus on the same old groups with the same old issue. We fail significantly in engaging communities,

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failing to reach a good cross section. Types, times and methods of engagement need a serious overhaul. (LB)

More focus should be given to low-income communities, who are the most poorly represented in council processes, rather than simply focussing on ethnic diversity. (LB)

Staff turnover was also considered an issue in relation to the quality of community consultation and engagement.

The regular change in personnel means the advisor doesn't really know the local board area which is a big challenge. (LB)

The comm engagement position has changed personnel often with inevitable results - this more than most needs local knowledge. (LB)

The consultation around the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (PAUP) was also an issue for some.

The early consultation with communities around the PAUP was great - Subsequent flagged changes under 'out of scope' umbrella, which have had no opportunity for public consultation, is disgraceful… (LB)

Always difficult to meet the expectations of the community who are so often hard to engage until there is a problem. The PAUP is the one area that the community have struggled to understand and quite rightly feel ignored on some topics. (LB)

Staff and their approach to consultation and engagement were the main focus of positive comments made by respondents about this area.

The willingness to get out to events with a council stand is excellent from our local board services. It is also a great support to elected members too. (LB)

Even though communities can become consultation weary, the collaborative approach, balanced with small community involvement and respect of our local knowledge has meant it has worked for me. (LB)

We consult far more frequently and far more effectively than legacy councils, to the point where people in the community complain of consultation fatigue. Our general engagement has also increased dramatically and in particular, local boards are in a great position to fulfil one of their main mandates to be in touch with communities. This requires effective staff with LBS which we fortunately have had. (LB)

Specific consultation exercises are often done very well in my opinion, with staff flexible about what will meet our community's needs. I particularly appreciate being able to try new things and assess them. (LB)

This is where our staff for the [   ] Board excel. (LB)

8.2 Differences by elected member type

Local board respondents had higher levels of satisfaction with engagement support than governing body members (52% and 40%, respectively), although governing body members' satisfaction increased notably by 21 percentage points from 2014, whereas local board members' satisfaction decreased 19 percentage points.

Figure 32. Community engagement support, by elected member type
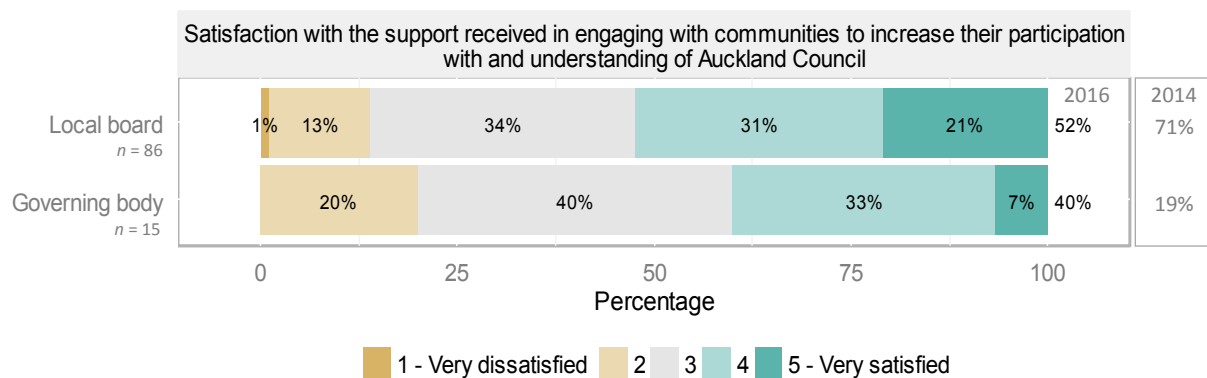
An analysis of the qualitative feedback provided by local board versus governing body members reveals quite disparate reasons for the quantitative ratings presented in Figure 32. Members of local boards note that local consultations work well but that they are let down by a lack of co-ordination around dates for regional events and those undertaken by different parts of the organisation.

I work very closely with the engagement officer in drafting out our plan of attack with consultation and engagement. We are damn good at it. However, other arms of council who are doing consultation are not very considerate about us. Sick and tired of finding out meetings are being held on the same night as our annual plan meetings. Or we have several different arms of council all in the one township in one week for public consultation … It is very noticeable to our residents that we are not working together as one council. We need to smarten up! (LB)

I have been extremely critical of the Long Term Plan (LTP) Have Your Say process, and also [the] communication of [the] unitary plan process to our community - to be advised that dates had been set by regional team. In our wards of [   ] a lot of working class

communit[ies] are not available at 3.30pm in one venue. But when I have carried out my own investigation, no one would take responsibility for the regional schedule. (LB)

I think consultation and engagement support has improved but I think there are still a number of issues particularly where we are let down by the wider organisation
   - We have provided detailed feedback on various consultation rounds but have never received any acknowledgement of our concerns or response as to how those concerns will be addressed
   - We are not receiving all the feedback relevant to our local board area and only find this out when we double check
   - Local consultation events are poorly advertised on the council website. (LB)

Local board respondents offered specific comments in relation to their engagement with community groups. One respondent expressed uncertainty as to how they might support local community groups, the second respondent's comments related to how much time this kind of engagement can require and the need for additional support to do this well.

What is the role of the liaison to a community organisation? As an elected member it is not clear how we should support … community groups. This can be very time consuming and possibly something that council officers should be playing a stronger role in. The level of governance for many of our community groups is at a low level of human resources, finance and management expertise. More training is required to support our community groups who are ultimately managing council assets for strong community outcomes. The level of support they receive is not adequate. This can fall to the elected members to assist. This can often cause conflicts of interest and a misunderstanding of the role of the elected member as a liaison to a community group. This is an area where we are exposed to moving into management and not focusing on governance. This is a risk area. (LB)

I would prefer more time spent with me talking about the various community groups that I interact with, and suggesting ways of improving the ways in which I interact with them and ways in which I could possibly help them, but this is very time consuming work and our office staff simply do not have this time available. (LB)

Some local board respondents perceived a need for additional support staff to assist with engaging with members of the public in their offices. One respondent specified that an officer who was intimately familiar with council processes would be particularly helpful:

When meeting constituents Local Board Services should have on-going staff available to provide quality advice to local board members who may not understand intricate navigation of council process. Or may not be up to speed with changes, amendments to policies etc. (LB)

Governing body members, in contrast, feel as if there is no designated role for them in the consultation and engagement space and that their activity in this area is self-initiated and unsupported.

> *As a councillor I feel marginally involved and sometimes despite a friendly relationship with my local board, there appears to be no place or meaningful way for councillors to be engaged. My community involvement is self-initiated.*

> *No policy for councillors to engage as local councillors. Recently had a public meeting in [ ] which was very much wanted by community. No leadership shown by LB - so [   ] and I stepped up to fill vacuum. We had to pay for own catering and equipment (cups, etc.). [We were] given event support - putting out chairs and sound by LB services events team, but reluctantly. Democracy services were not happy as they said we were promoting ourselves. So it's OK for LB to do events but not councillors?? Need policy + small budget.*

The feedback received in relation to community engagement from governing body respondents suggested that they lacked support in engaging with the public:

> *Get support out in community. It's a myth that constituent work is only for LBs. (GB)*

> *Develop councillors' Community Engagement Plan. (GB)*

As one of the respondents indicated, one aspect of increasing governing body community engagement is to increase the level of awareness amongst the public of their role:

> *… more publicity about ward councillors to the ward, their responsibilities, what they can assist you with. (GB)*

9.0 Support from Council Departments

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall support they had received from elected-member facing departments since September 2014.

In most cases the survey asked about the departmental structure that was in place for the majority of the survey period (September 2014 to February 2016). Some departments included in the survey have now been reorganised and their names or functions have changed. For example, the Housing Project Office is included in the survey, though its functions are now part of the Development Programme Office.

Local board and governing body members were asked about the same departments, with the exception of the Chief Economist Unit and the CCO Governance and External Partnerships team, which were asked only of governing body members.

9.1 Overall results

Highest satisfaction levels were recorded for Libraries and Information (74%), Finance (65%), Financial Planning and Strategy (63%) and Parks, Sport and Recreation (62%). The greatest dissatisfaction was reported with the Housing Project Office (HPO; 35% dissatisfied), Plans and Places (33% dissatisfied) and Communication and Engagement (29% dissatisfied).

Figure 33. Support from council departments
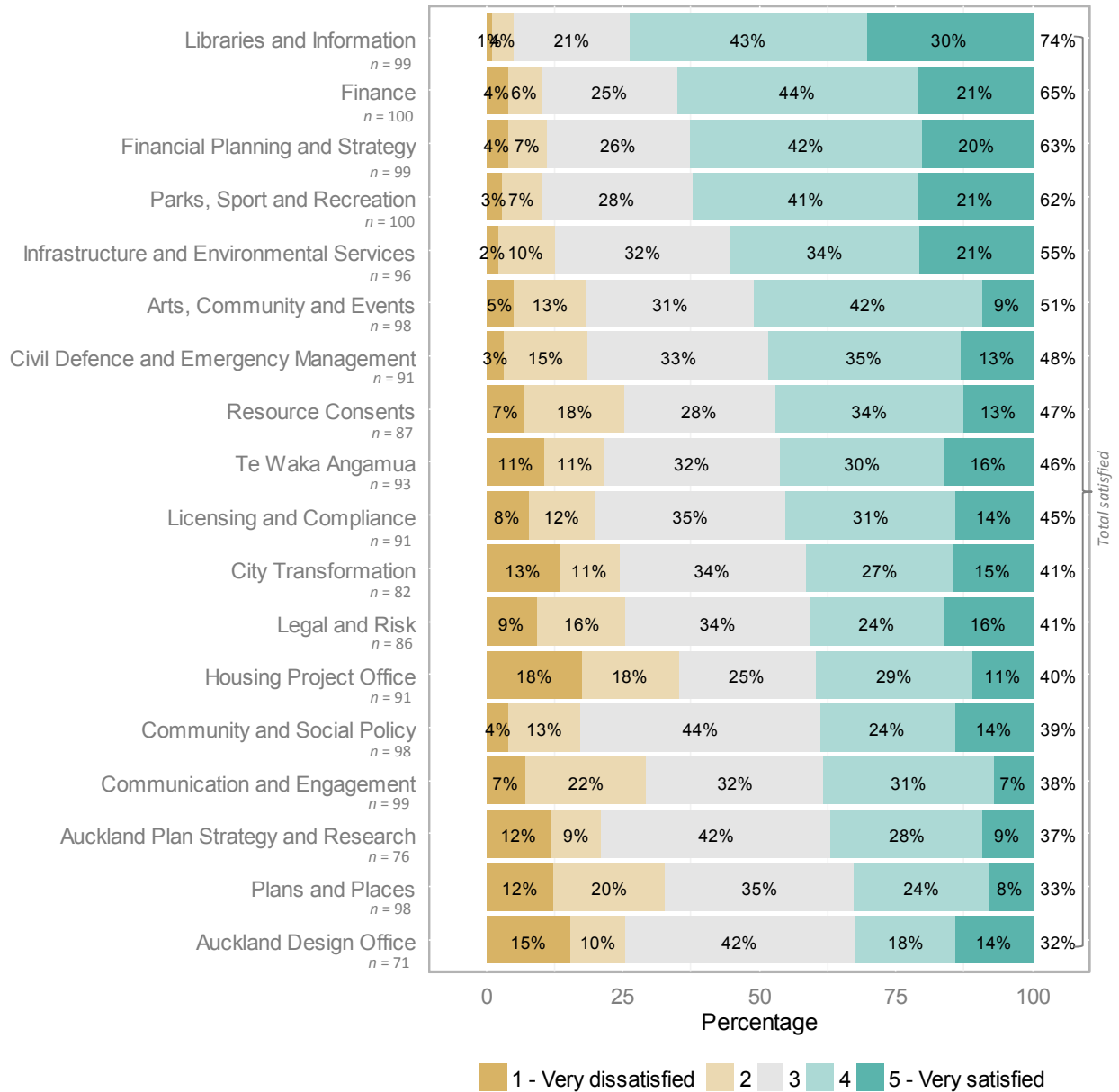
Note: Governing body members were also asked about the CCO Governance & External Partnerships team and Chief Economist Unit. The results for these teams can be seen in Figure 36.

9.2 Changes since 2014 survey

This section reports on changes over time. Not all of the departments included in Section 9.1 have directly comparable departments in the 2014 survey. For example, the functions currently included in the Plans and Places department were split between Regional and Local Planning and Environmental Strategy and Policy in 2014. In these cases, the results provided in individual department reports will include more detailed discussion of how their current functions have been rated in previous surveys to enable them to assess their progress over time.

The departments that are now part of the Community Services Directorate (ACE; Libraries and Information; and Parks, Sports and Recreation) are compared with their predecessor departments in the table below.

Figure 34 shows the departments that experienced an increase in satisfaction since 2014. Satisfaction increased the most for Financial Planning and Strategy (12% point increase), Te Waka Angamua (7% point increase) and the Housing Project Office (7% point increase), although the latter also had an 11-point increase in dissatisfaction.

Figure 34. Departments with increased satisfaction from 2014
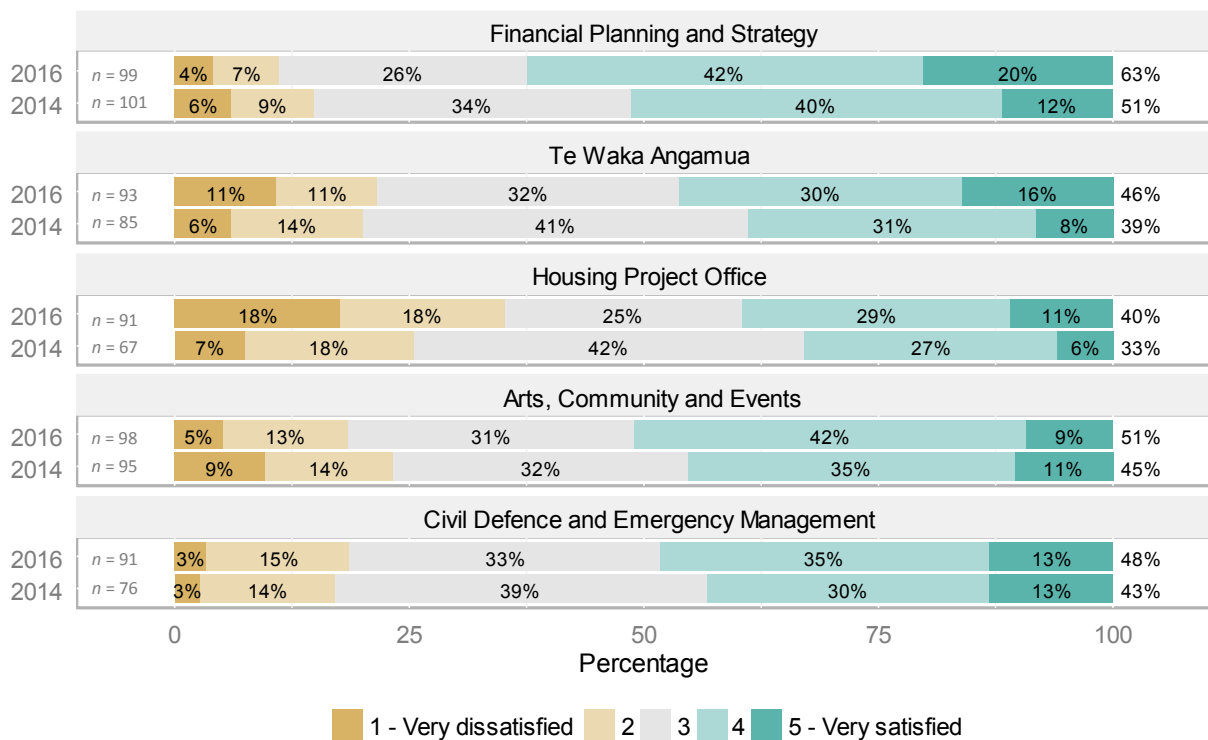
Figure 35 shows the departments that experienced a decrease in satisfaction since 2014. The largest decreases were seen for Parks, Sport and Recreation (12% point decrease), Licencing and Compliance (12% point decrease) and Legal and Risk (8% point decrease).

Figure 35. Departments with decreased satisfaction from 2014

Parks, Sport and Recreation

		1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very satisfied	
2016	n = 100	3%	7%	28%	41%	21%	62%
2014	n = 101	2%	7%	17%	41%	34%	74%

Licensing and Compliance

| 2016 | n = 91 | 8% | 12% | 35% | 31% | 14% | 45% |
| 2014 | n = 96 | 2% | 9% | 31% | 46% | 11% | 57% |

Legal and Risk

| 2016 | n = 86 | 9% | 16% | 34% | 24% | 16% | 41% |
| 2014 | n = 73 | 5% | 14% | 32% | 37% | 12% | 49% |

Infrastructure and Environmental Services

| 2016 | n = 96 | 2% | 10% | 32% | 34% | 21% | 55% |
| 2014 | n = 93 | 4% | 3% | 31% | 42% | 19% | 61% |

Auckland Plan Strategy and Research

| 2016 | n = 76 | 12% | 9% | 42% | 28% | 9% | 37% |
| 2014 | n = 86 | 8% | 8% | 43% | 30% | 10% | 41% |

Libraries and Information

| 2016 | n = 99 | 1% | 4% | 21% | 43% | 30% | 74% |
| 2014 | n = 84 | 2% | 2% | 18% | 45% | 32% | 77% |

Resource Consents

| 2016 | n = 87 | 7% | 18% | 28% | 34% | 13% | 47% |
| 2014 | n = 88 | 6% | 14% | 31% | 35% | 15% | 50% |

9.3 Differences by elected member type

With the exception of the Communication and Engagement department, governing body members were notably more satisfied, and less dissatisfied, than local board members with the support received from council departments. Governing body members were most satisfied with Libraries and Information (100%), Chief Economist Unit (93%) and Parks, Sport and Recreation (87%) and most dissatisfied with Communication and Engagement (33% dissatisfied), the HPO (27% dissatisfied) and Plans and Places (20% dissatisfied).

Local board members were most satisfied with Libraries and Information (70%), Finance (63%) and Financial Planning and Strategy (60%), and most dissatisfied with the HPO (37% dissatisfied), Plans and Places (35% dissatisfied) and Legal and Risk (30% dissatisfied).

When comparing changes since 2014, two instances are notable where governing body and local board members diverge in the change in satisfaction. Firstly, for Licencing and Compliance, local board members had a 15 percentage point decrease in satisfaction, whereas governing body members had an 11 point increase. Similarly, for Libraries and Information, local board members

had a 7 percentage point decrease in satisfaction, while governing body members had a 20 point increase.

Figure 36. Support from council departments, by elected member type (1 of 2)
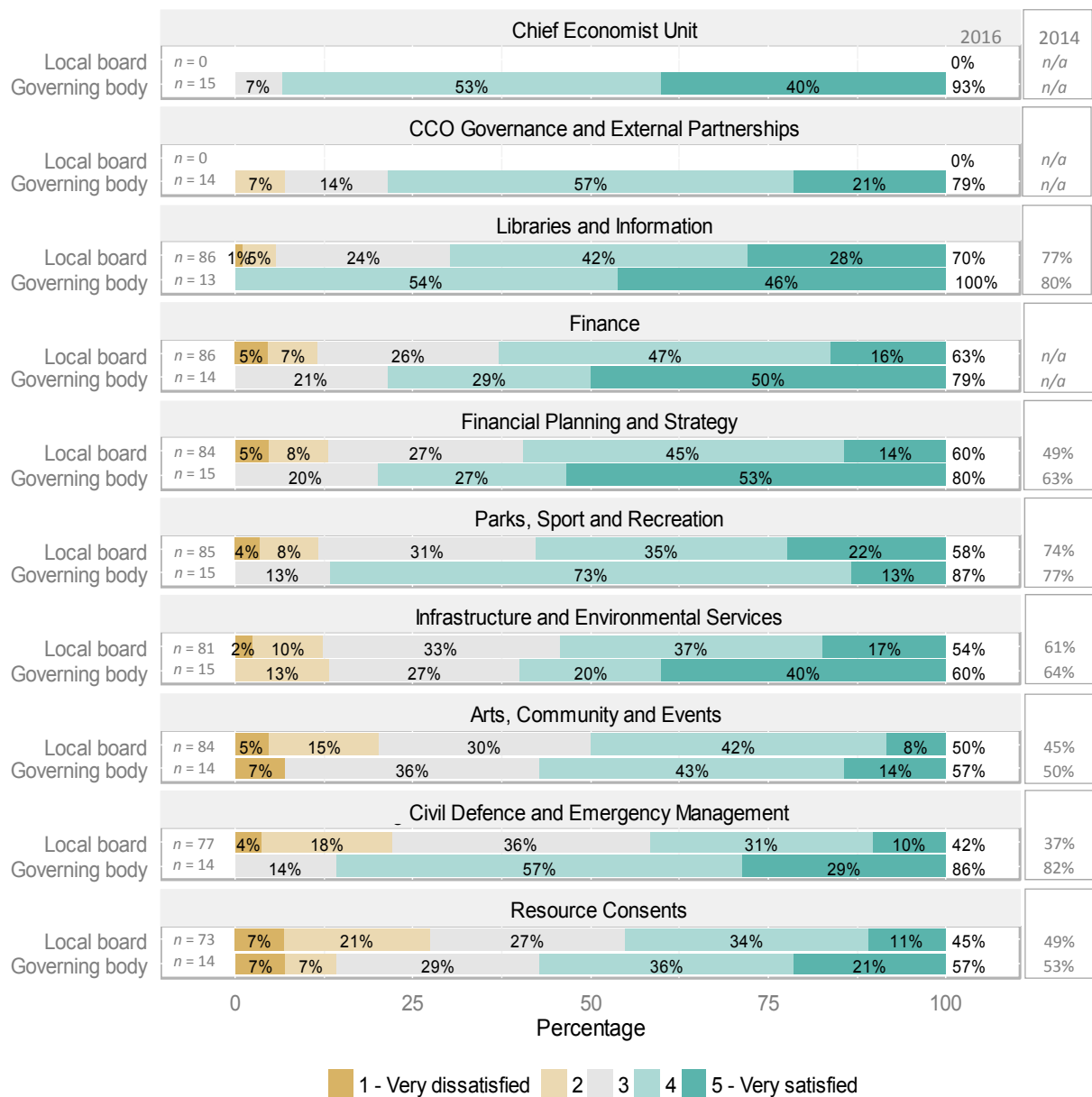
Note: Only governing body members were asked about the CCO Governance & External Partnerships team and Chief Economist Unit.

Figure 37. Support from council departments, by elected member type (2 of 2)
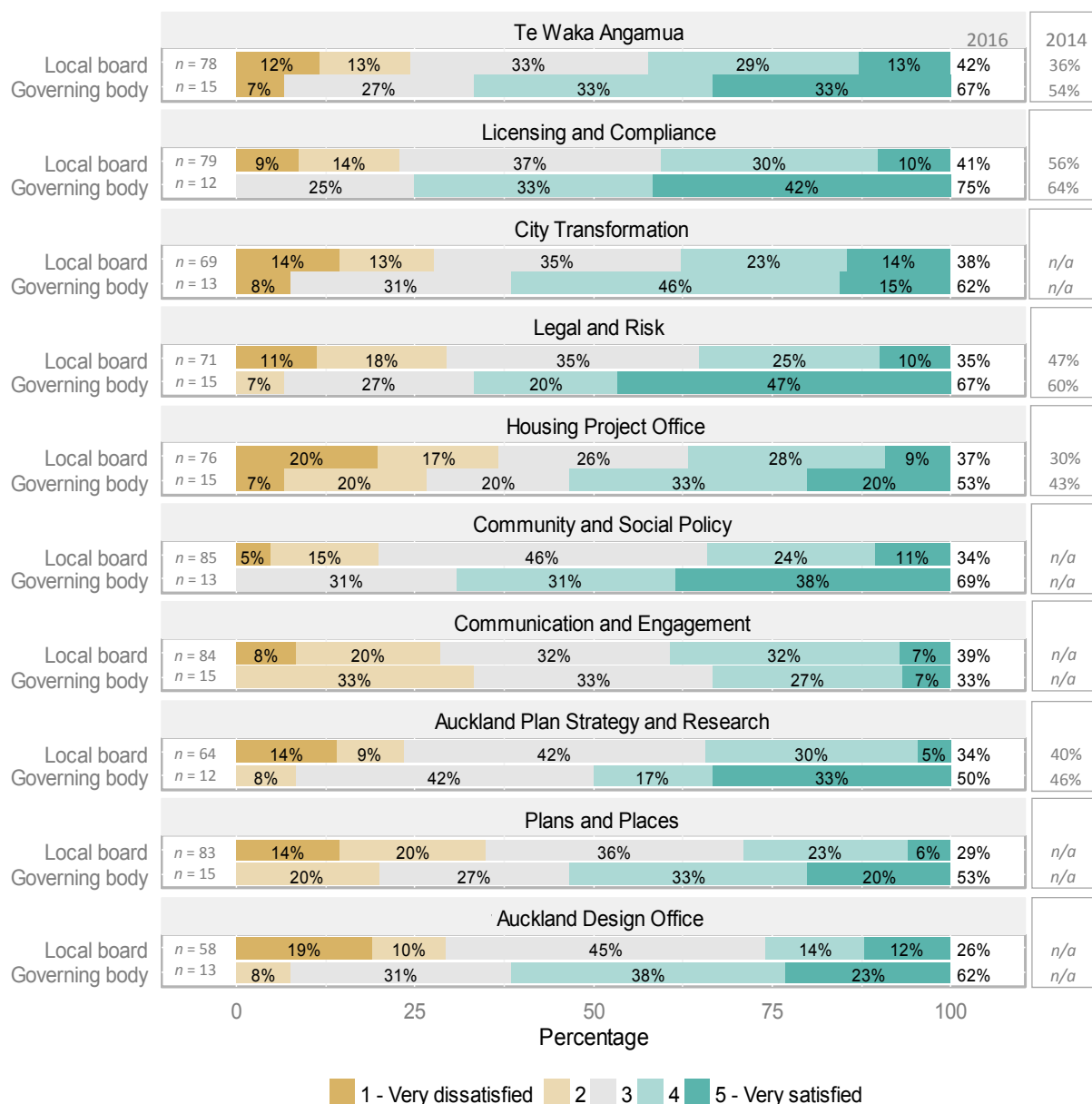
9.4 Written feedback

Respondents were offered the opportunity to provide comments or suggestions about the support they had received from specific council departments since September 2014, both in terms of advice and with respect to the delivery of projects. While some respondents offered general comments, others provided feedback on specific departments. The latter generally focused on Parks, Sport and Recreation (PSR) and Arts, Community and Events (ACE). A series of separate reports will provide further detailed feedback on all the departments concerned.

In general, positive feedback singled out staff or departments that were viewed as very helpful and effective. Some respondents noted with appreciation the departments that provided their boards with specialist support:

> *Where we have a local advisor that we have frequent interactions with the support is better e.g. parks advisor. (LB)*

The negative feedback related to issues that can be broadly organised into the following areas: (i) the need for better communication with elected members about the restructuring of departments; (ii) issues relating to the adequacy of departmental staffing and in some cases, high rates of staff turnover, leading to a lack of consistent support; (iii) the low responsiveness and/or lack of timely follow-up and action; (iv) dissatisfaction with the degree of communication and consultation with local boards on department-related matters. This issue is sometimes associated with what is perceived as a lack of understanding of the place of local boards in the governance structure and finally, (v) dissatisfaction with the quality of advice received.

Finally, a small number of respondents offered general feedback relating to other areas.

> *Council not walking the talk (e.g. lack of commitment by departments to FairTrade, Zero Waste and Smoke Free policies and reducing our carbon footprint) (LB).*

> *With any department I don't see community engagement consultation done … keeping in mind our diverse communities. A letter is not enough. (LB)*

> *Very limited support given to 'ordinary' board members. Greater emphasis is on the chairs and Chairs' Forum. Unless a member is a portfolio holder, the member gets very little recognition or support. (LB)*

10.0   Engagement from Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs)

Local board members were asked about their satisfaction with engagement from CCOs. Governing body members were not asked about this as their relationship with CCOs is focused on statement of intent-based accountability rather than local representation and decision-making.

The ways in which CCOs are required to engage with local boards is set out in the Governance Manual for Substantive CCOs. In general, CCOs are expected to proactively build relationships with local boards based on transparent communication of their activities. CCOs also need to keep up to date with local board priorities and objectives in local board plans and to ensure these are considered through their annual statement of intent planning processes.

The survey questions focused on the particular ways in which CCOs are expected to engage with local boards based on these principles. Respondents were asked to assess the way all CCOs included in the survey:

- report to local boards (e.g. on upcoming projects)
- consult with local boards about projects in their local board area.

Other questions cover the ways in which particular CCOs engage with local boards. For example, Auckland Transport, Watercare and ATEED also consult with local boards on their annual work programmes prior to these being approved.[8]

Almost all local board members had engaged with Auckland Transport (93%), and close to three quarters with Watercare, ATEED, and Pānuku Development Auckland, respectively.[9] Fewer (59%) local board members reported having engaged with RFA, and only two respondents had not worked with any CCO. These results are not surprising, as local boards have generally experienced higher levels of engagement from those CCOs that work in areas most relevant to local boards.

Table 4. Percentage of local board members who have engaged with CCOs

	N	%
Auckland Transport (AT)	82	93
Watercare Services	61	69
Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED)	67	76
Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA)	52	59
Pānuku Development Auckland	66	75
None	2	2

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[8] Auckland Council Investments Limited does not usually engage with local boards and the survey did not include questions about this CCO.
[9] Respondents were asked about their engagement with Pānuku Development Auckland since its inception (1 September 2015), however it is possible that some responses may reflect previous interactions with staff in their Waterfront Auckland and/or Auckland Council Property Limited roles.

10.1 Auckland Transport (AT)

10.1.1 Overall results

In addition to the engagement areas noted above, respondents were asked about their satisfaction with their AT relationship managers, who act as a single point of contact for local boards on all transport issues.

A clear distinction was observed between local board members' satisfaction with their AT relationship manager (78%) and their satisfaction with the range of ways AT engages with local boards (reporting to local board – 55%, early annual engagement – 51%, and consultation with local board – 40%). Almost a third (31%) were dissatisfied with AT's consultation with their local board.

Figure 38. Engagement from Auckland Transport
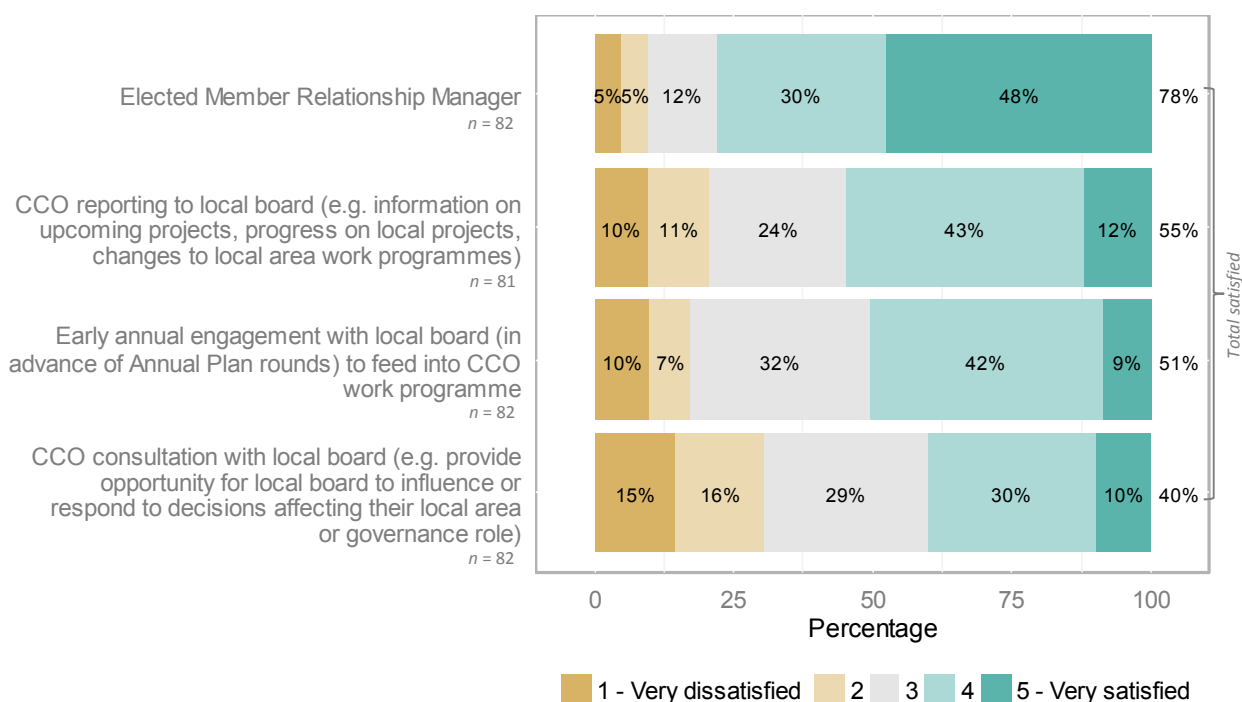
10.1.1 Changes since 2014 survey

Although levels of satisfaction with AT engagement appeared similar to 2014 levels, there was an increase in satisfaction with early annual engagement (from 41% to 51%) and commensurate decrease in dissatisfaction (from 31% to 17% dissatisfied).

Figure 39. Engagement from Auckland Transport, by year

		Elected Member Relationship Manager					
2016	n = 82	5%	5%	12%	30%	48%	78%
2014	n = 88	5%	6%	15%	28%	47%	75%

Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme

| 2016 | n = 81 | 10% | 7% | 32% | 42% | 9% | 51% |
| 2014 | n = 85 | 6% | 25% | 28% | 29% | 12% | 41% |

CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)

| 2016 | n = 82 | 10% | 11% | 24% | 43% | 12% | 55% |
| 2014 | n = 87 | 6% | 10% | 29% | 37% | 18% | 55% |

CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)

| 2016 | n = 82 | 15% | 16% | 29% | 30% | 10% | 40% |
| 2014 | n = 85 | 9% | 19% | 28% | 33% | 11% | 44% |

1 - Very dissatisfied 2 3 4 5 - Very satisfied

10.1.2 Written feedback

Local board members were asked to provide comments or suggestions about the engagement they had received from the CCOs since September 2014. In line with the results presented in Figure 38, the feedback on elected member relationship managers was largely positive while the comments on engagement, reporting and consultation were generally more negative.

Auckland Transport (AT) [has] great dedicated officers … others should emulate this.

Auckland Transport very positive and relationship manager plays a pivotal role.

[We have an] excellent local board relationship manager who is very responsive and prompt in replies to queries. She is in regular communication and has consultation documents available early. Communication from higher level managers is more challenging and often the board is unaware of issues happening in the board area until after it happens or is started.

As this last participant indicates, however, a number of elected members were less satisfied with the support provided beyond their relationship manager. This sentiment is summed up well in the following quotes.

AT is … good at small, local stuff, but have lost faith in the higher levels of AT.

AT [has been] excellent except for a brief period when our liaison was on leave and her cover did not pick up the work properly e.g. turning up to a board meeting on a controversial topic without any information or even notes to respond to foreseeable queries, not keeping the board in the loop with a local transport consultation by a developer which the board would have been very interested in.

While [AT] officer engagement has been excellent the board itself in their governance role is invisible and difficult to engage with.

Negative comments focused on Auckland Transport's lack of recognition of local board priorities; and the lateness or absence of consultation about local issues.

AT continues to struggle and perform inconsistently. By their own admission they do not prioritise local board minor projects.

I think there is still a fundamental reluctance from AT to recognise LB priorities and to understand the governance structure.

I think the biggest issues come down to the need for culture change at the CCOs (in particular AT) so they recognise LB priorities and understand and respect the governance structure.

AT have in the past made a change to a significant project, then informed local board after the fact.

As regards … buses and ferries, I seem to be hitting my head against a brick wall as there is little consultation.

AT, [at] a 'local roads' level, we never seem to know what's occurring even as locals ask us.

AT do not always give us the full picture and sometimes the rep has seemed to feel that batting board members away was the role. AT are trying to be more collaborative and making some progress but only some.

10.2 Watercare Services Limited

10.2.1 Overall results

Satisfaction with Watercare's reporting to the local board and early annual engagement with the local board was relatively high (62% and 52%, respectively). As with AT, however, satisfaction with consultation was lower (43%).

Figure 40. Engagement from Watercare
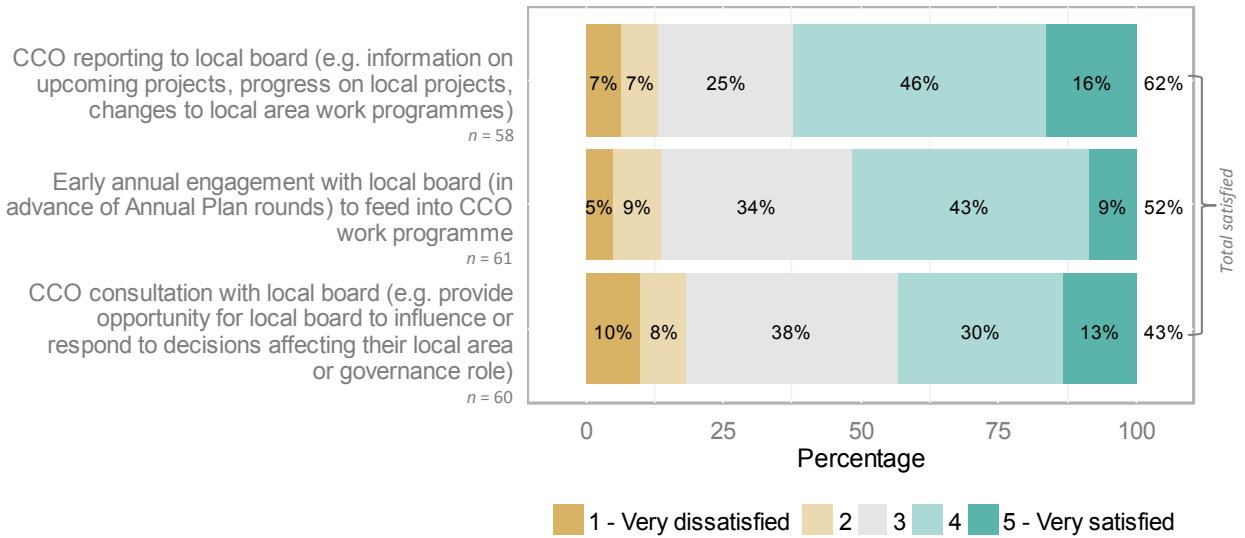
10.2.1 Changes since 2014 survey

The trend between 2014 and 2016 for all three Watercare items was positive, with increases in satisfaction ranging from 3 to 15 percentage points.

Figure 41. Engagement from Watercare, by year
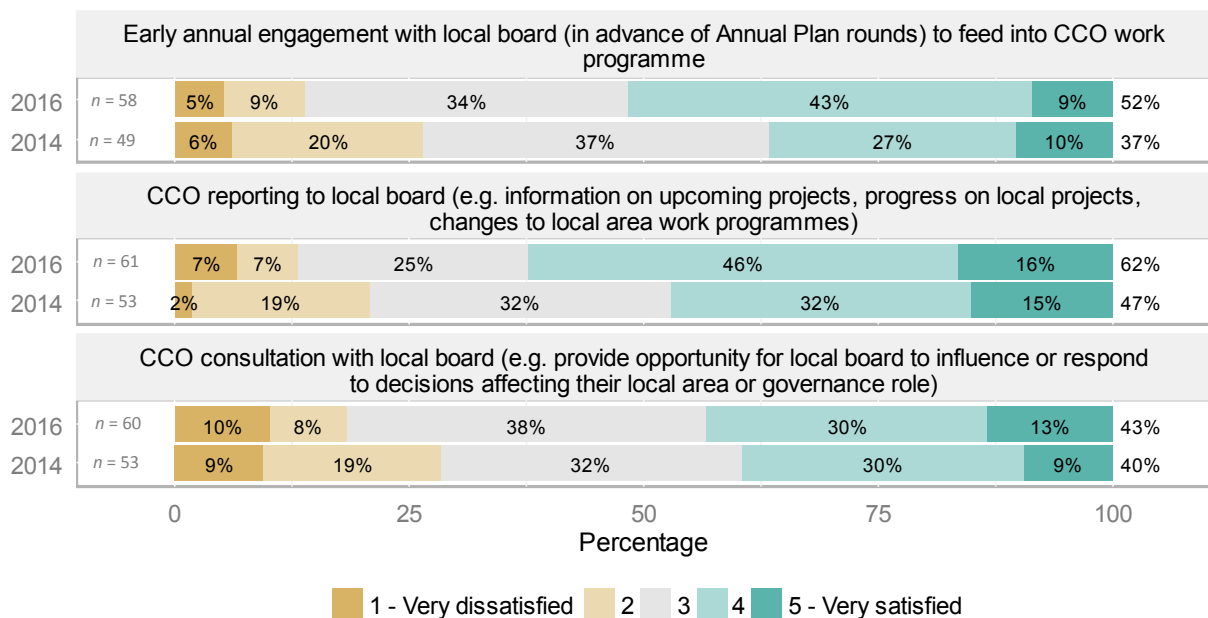
10.2.2 Written feedback

Only six elected members made comments about Watercare. Similar to the feedback received about AT, this tended to focus positively on the performance of officers, as indicated in the quotes that follow.

> *Our local contact is very good.*

> *More than probably any local board we have frequent engagement with Watercare. Our liaison officer is superb. We would like a relationship with the board[10] – also as with two wastewater plants in our area it would be valuable.*

10.3 Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED)

10.3.1 Overall results

Local economic development functions shifted from council to ATEED in August 2015. For the 2016/17 financial year, ATEED will develop economic development work programmes with local boards, which will be delivered using the boards' discretionary funding. ATEED had begun to engage with local boards on local economic development projects at the time of the 2016 survey, but had not yet begun to deliver on annual work programmes for local boards.

In response to the 2014 survey results, ATEED implemented a number of measures to improve its engagement with local boards, in particular piloting engagement and activity plans in six local board areas and hiring dedicated staff to support this local board engagement.

While ATEED's 2016 results showed substantial improvements over the previous survey, satisfaction with ATEEDs reporting (33%), early annual engagement (30%), and consultation (30%) was still relatively low. Compared to AT and Watercare, dissatisfaction was high, ranging between 27% and 37%.

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[10] This is likely a reference to the WSL board.

Figure 42. Engagement from ATEED
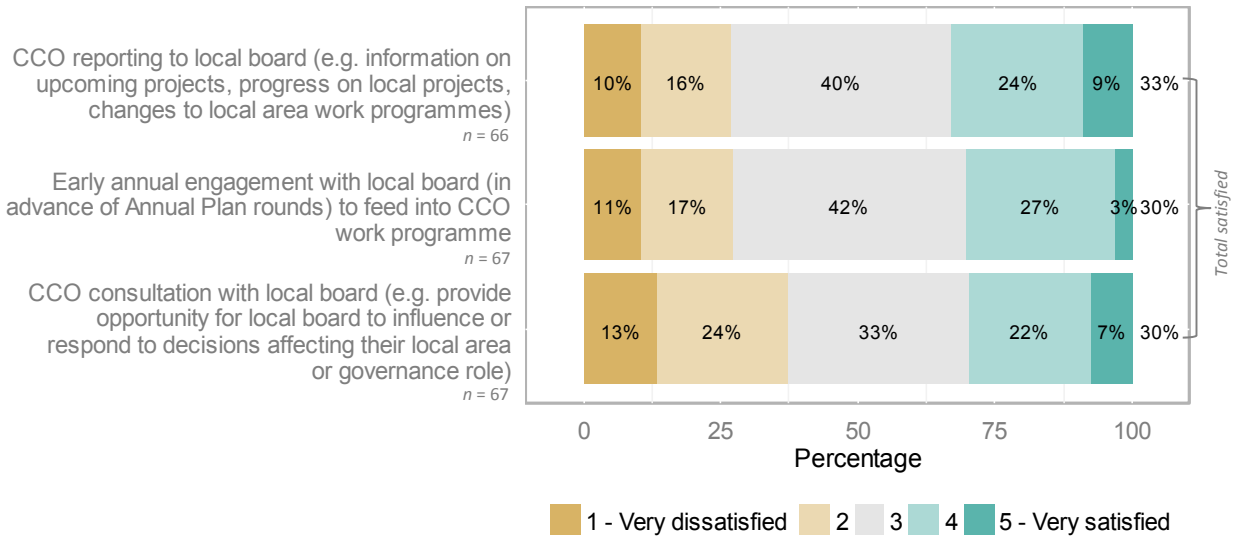
10.3.1 Changes since 2014 survey

The trend for all three ATEED items was positive, with increases in satisfaction ranging from 8 to 12 percentage points.

Figure 43. Engagement from ATEED, by year
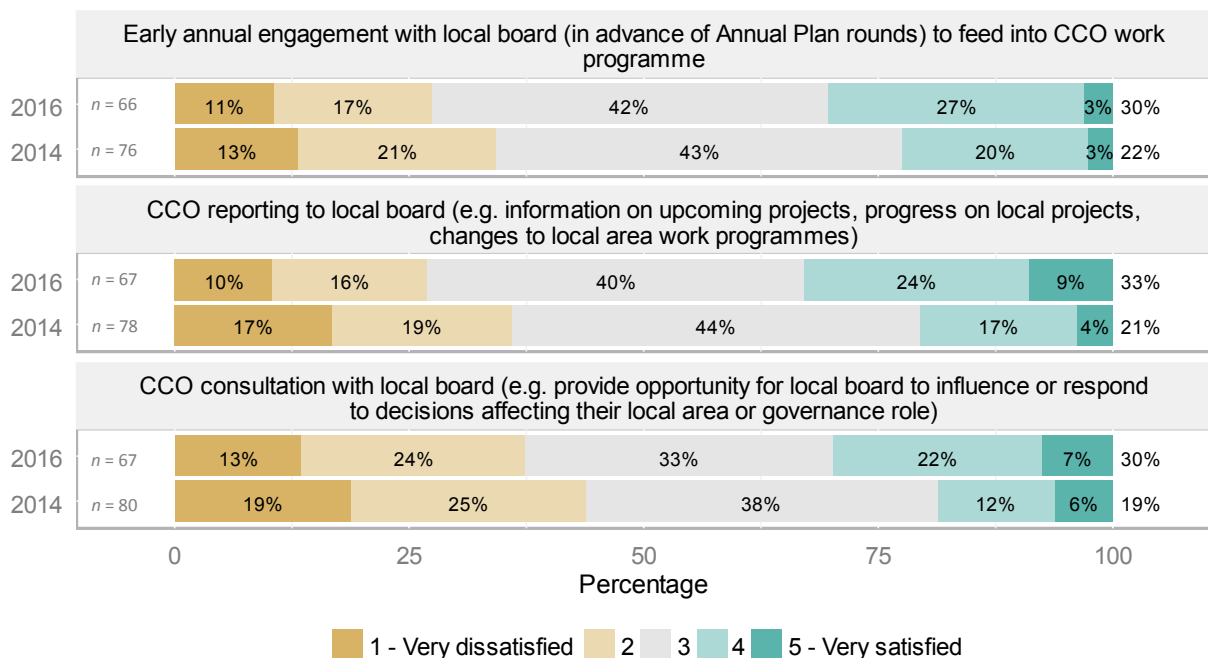
10.3.2 Written feedback

The majority of comments on ATEED identified the significant improvement that has taken place since the last survey was undertaken in 2014, findings that are reflected in the results presented in Figure 43. Some elected members focused solely on this progress while others identified specific areas that still need to get better.

ATEED [is] the star performer in the last year. [   ] and his board certainly took on board our comments and low scoring in this survey last year.

Greatly improved! The organisation no longer spurns the local, and has advised to great effect on local business awards.

Huge improvement from certain parts of ATEED across the term. From being completely ignored, we now have good relationships with some economic development (ED) and tourism staff and managers. We still get left off invitation lists for some business events, such as local YES awards, but I believe that was a hiccough.

ATEED don't appear very often and are getting better, but we still seem like a nuisance to them, and are not I think treated as full partners but as stakeholders to be managed as minimally as possible.

Mixed feelings here. Things have improved since 2014 and assistance has been given to enable us to offer mentoring for some of our small businesses. We are offered participation in the wider Auckland promotions but don't rely on them solely to promote ourselves.

Negative comments identified a number of areas of dissatisfaction, including problems with delivery and a lack of consistently good service and responsiveness. The quotes below are indicative.

ATEED goes in fits and starts, they have a big meeting and then we hear nothing. Recent engagement planning is better, but their history of delivery is not good.

ATEED contacts come and go at regular intervals, they introduce themselves to the board and then we see nothing of them with the exception of [Business and Enterprise].

ATEED seems to keep us out of the loop most of the time. They send 'links' in newsletters. It has been a real sustained mission to get them to engage with the LBs they recently 'took over' on local economic development. While that has improved markedly in a short time, there is a long way to go. They request our LB information (which we willingly give in the spirit of co-operation), but consider their information "commercially sensitive". They act like a private business and hide behind a corporate veil. If we are to work together successfully they must see themselves as part of the council family.

_____

10.4 Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA)

10.4.1 Overall results

Local board members' satisfaction with RFA reporting and consultation was largely neutral (with 53% and 50% neutral responses, respectively). The remainder of respondents were roughly evenly split between satisfied and dissatisfied responses.

Figure 44. Engagement from RFA
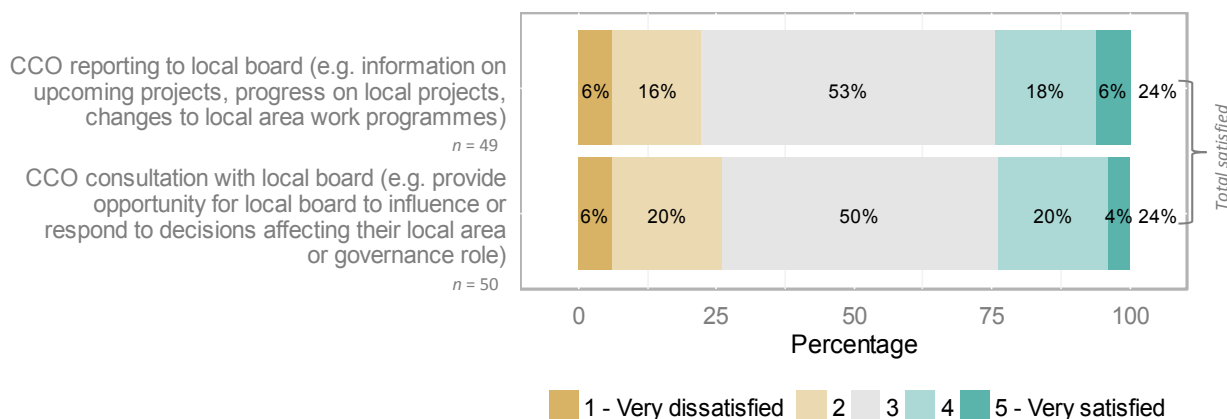
10.4.1 Changes since 2014 survey

Few differences were seen for RFA between 2014 and 2016, with the exception of a marginal increase in dissatisfaction with reporting to local board (22% dissatisfied, up from 13% in 2014).

Figure 45. Engagement from RFA, by year
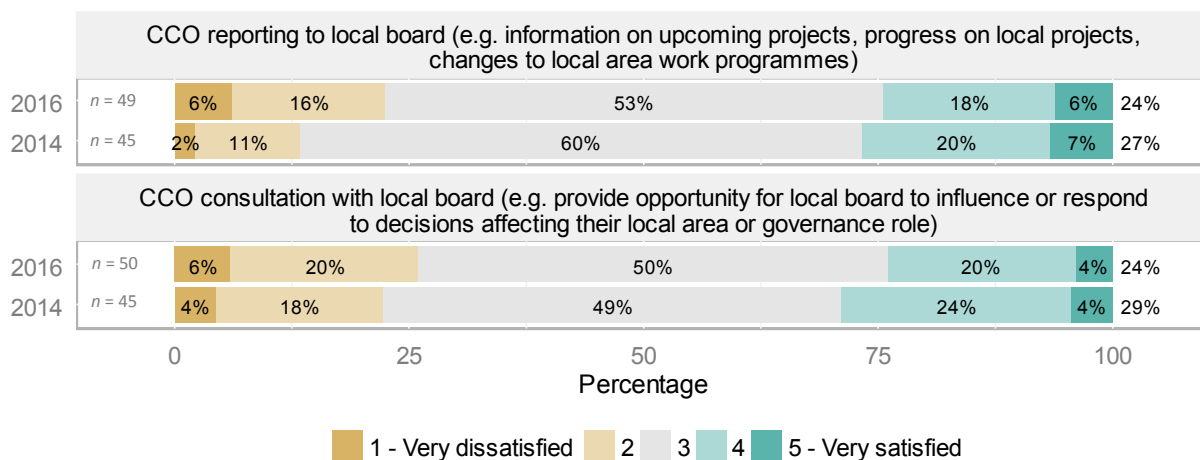
10.4.2 Written feedback

Very few elected members provided feedback on RFA; most of those who did comment focused on specific initiatives, in particular the Stadium Strategy.

Regional Facilities, obviously with this survey in mind, has invited us to the [   ] that is adjacent to our LB area. The whole discredited Sports Stadium Strategy has been a huge waste of space and time and they have spent far too long flogging a dead horse. Perhaps for new LB members (and older ones who aren't aware of the breadth of RFA), a tour … offered to new members would be a good idea. The plans of Regional Facilities to 'steal and sell' our public spaces at Aotea is reprehensible and one for which they have absolutely no public mandate.

The Stadium Strategy has not been well received by the community which brings into question their consultation and engagement process.

10.5 Pānuku Development Auckland

10.5.1 Overall results

In September 2015, Waterfront Auckland and Auckland Council Property Limited amalgamated into Pānuku Development Auckland. Although Pānuku's legacy CCOs were in existence for most of this survey period, the amalgamation was widely publicised and consulted on as part of the Long-term Plan process, so survey respondents were in a good position to assess the initial performance of the new CCO.

Just over half of respondents were satisfied with the reporting (53%) and consultation (50%) from Pānuku Development Auckland. A substantial minority of respondents were dissatisfied with these two aspects (35% and 27%, respectively), many of whom reported being 'very dissatisfied'.

Figure 46. Engagement from Pānuku Development Auckland
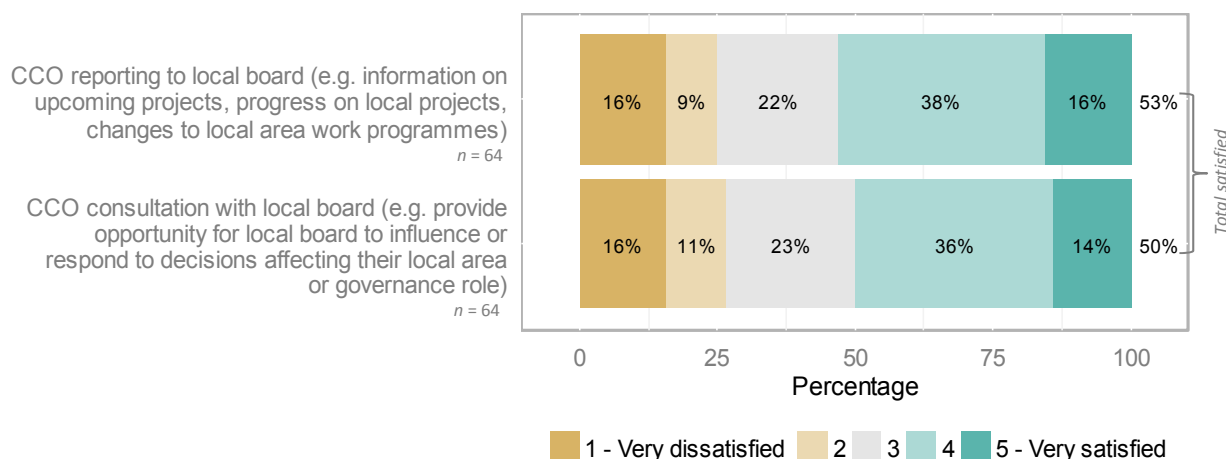
10.5.2 Written feedback

Despite the relative newness of Pānuku Development Auckland, respondents provided a range of feedback, both positive and negative. Positive comments identified good engagement and communication, as well as a thorough understanding of the shared governance structure.

Pānuku has started strongly with engagement.

Pānuku … understand[s] thoroughly the role of the local boards in the co-governance structure and give excellent support to the boards. Though Pānuku is very new, the understanding appears to have been quickly grasped.

Of all CCOs have had most contact with Pānuku Development Auckland. During set-up and setting of Pānuku priorities had good discussion and presentations at set Pānuku venue - targeted communication and meetings worked well. Pānuku now needs to do follow-up and visits to update wider LB elected members.

Pānuku has been very responsive and engaged with good and regular communication.

Negative comments also focused on the areas of engagement and communication.

Pānuku borders on useless when it comes to meaningful communication. A local board relationship manager would go a long way to improve the situation.

An example of something not working was Pānuku advertising a resource consent without informing the LB. The issue was and is very important to our area. If I hadn't spotted it in a list of consents it would have happened. Pānuku did accept they were wrong but that is not good enough.

Transition to Pānuku and thereafter has been difficult. We are a priority area and a lot of conversations have been had with the chair. But I have found it difficult as a local board member to get a grip on what the priority means, what they are bring[ing] to the table, etc. We have had several high-ish level meetings but the team on the spatial priority side has been different each time and they clearly have not had the minutes of the last meeting, leading to repetition. Also first meetings saying what projects are the local board putting on the table, without any context, is not a useful way to proceed in my view. We've also had properties sold out from under us. Loops have not been closed when Auckland Council Properties Limited (ACPL) has consulted on something but we never hear formally again. I must say, the wider brief about what constitutes the value of community spaces/buildings is helpful.

10.6 General comments about CCOs

In addition to the feedback provided on specific CCOs, local board members also made a range of comments about CCOs more generally. The most common themes were: (i) a lack of recognition of local boards and their priorities; (ii) a lack of accountability to local boards; and (iii) the importance of good relationships.

I think the biggest issues come down to the need for culture change at the CCOs … so they recognise local board priorities and understand and respect the governance structure.

Too often decisions are made without reference to the local board preferences or without advising the local board.

CCOs do their own thing it appears, and local boards have little or no influence on how, when or where they do business. Owned by the ratepayer, but certainly not accountable to them.

CCOs should be more visible and accessible.

We have no influence on CCO work programmes - those are driven by governing body priorities. There has been an improvement in communication about what is/will be happening but we have no direction setting role in reality.

As we are [a small board], however well-funded and serviced we will never register highly on the radar, graphs, and needs assessment lists. It is only through constant advocacy, and officer support gained through ongoing relationships that we can get things achieved.

While our relationship with CCOs has grown, selected projects have been delivered with some satisfying results, however relationships can continue to be improved.

11.0   Time Demands of Role and Where it is Spent

Respondents were asked to reflect on how they spend their time fulfilling their role and the appropriateness of where the balance of their time is spent (e.g. meetings, time with constituents), as well as whether Auckland Council could do anything differently to assist them to achieve their objectives. Some of the feedback received on this question related to topics covered in other areas of the survey and therefore has been addressed in those sections. This included issues raised in relation to the time demands associated with engaging with the information and advice received from council (see section 4.4), the desire to reduce the time spent commuting through better planning and use of technology (see section 5.1.3), the allocation of support staff (see section 7.1), issues relating to community engagement and constituent work (see section 8.0), and comments about the shared governance structure (see section 12.0).

Some elected members were satisfied with this area overall, as these respondents explain.

> *I am generally very happy with the way our board operates and runs. The staff are all very available and willing to follow up on any issues. Our time is generally well spent and meetings/forums well planned and informed. (LB)*

> *Everything is ka pai. Thank you. (GB)*

Some expressed frustration about how they spent their time:

> *Talk less, do more. (LB)*

> *Start on time. Finish on time. Make every minute count. (LB)*

The following comments express the need for more timely action on the part of Auckland Council. One respondent pointed to the size of the organisation as the reason it takes so long to get things done:

> *More timely action on projects. (LB)*

> *This is my [ ]th year in local government. It is the worst I have experienced. The place is too big and cumbersome - so much effort goes into achiev[ing] things that take so long to do so. (LB)*

A number of respondents offered feedback about the time demands of their role as elected members. Those in part-time local board roles noted that their duties often exceeded part-time hours; they expressed concern at their ability to meet the demands of their role and juggle their paid employment and family life.

I am fortunate that I can commit to being a board member full time. It would be impossible to do my role and work part time … This is not recognised by the organisation. (LB)

The current meeting program which I acknowledge is influenced by LB members is extremely challenging and stressful for those working fulltime. For anyone not in a senior management position (with flexibility and corporate support) it would not be possible to be an <u>effective</u> LB member and keep informed. (LB)

One suggestion was for Auckland Council to make the time demands of the role more clear and explicit to potential candidates:

That's why I think it's important to be up front pre and post-election about the demands and expectations that the role requires, after all, the decisions you make have a wider and broader impact than just yourself. (LB)

Better inter-departmental communication and a stronger collaborative approach was also highlighted as an area for improvement that might contribute to reducing workloads.

Better inter-departmental communication would be great and then a collaborative approach with governmental departments would hugely decrease tensions and doubling up on workloads. (LB)

A number of elected members raised issues about the way their boards were run, including the shortcomings of the chairing or planning of meetings. The following comment relates to improving Local Boards Chairs Forum meetings:

Regional chairs of [the] Local Boards Chairs Forum – the agenda is too packed every month. Either cut the agenda with only five or six items maximum or extend to four hours, the rolling chair is not given enough time or many of the topics because the agenda is too loaded. There are some topics that require more time for questions. (LB)

Both a local board and a governing body respondent also suggested that meetings be scheduled mid-week and that Mondays and Fridays be avoided.

Several governing body members felt that the governing body committee structure was inefficient and could be improved. The following quote captures this idea:

…the fault is in the clunky system of committees that we have. Far too many and at cross purpose[s]. Re-evaluate for the next council please. (GB)

Attendance at events including sports events and citizenship ceremonies were also mentioned as areas that require improvement.

The attendance at citizenship ceremonies is terrible. Some members never attend, while others often go. This important responsibility [should] be shared by all elected members. It is too easy for members to never attend.(LB)

Several elected members expressed a need for more time as well as additional staff and other support for engaging with members of the public. This desire was often articulated as a request for less time in meetings and more time with constituents. In addition, a request was made to ensure that council staff are hired in permanent positions rather than on contracts, to ensure continuity and institutional memory:

The new imperative to get contractors to replace council staff is debilitating as there is no continuity or corporate memory. (LB)

12.0　Appropriateness of Level of Decision-Making and Feedback on Shared Governance Framework

Respondents were asked to comment in an open-ended question on the appropriateness of the level of decisions that are coming to them at their meetings. Although the majority of the responses to this question were by elected members who were generally satisfied, many expressed some discontent in this area. The feedback relating to this issue included some comments about inconsistencies across departments, as well as about how the volume, quality and timeliness of advice and information is sometimes an impediment to effective engagement in decision-making. These issues have been dealt with in the sections on quality of advice (0) and the support from council departments (9.4) and therefore will not be addressed further here.

The rest of this section will focus on two key areas of feedback in relation to decision-making. The first is the desire expressed by some local board and governing body members for further delegation of decision making. The second section addresses the feedback received from local board members specifically in relation to concerns about the effectiveness of the shared governance framework. This latter issue was also raised in the responses to the question relating to the time demands of the role of elected members which was reported on in the previous section. To avoid repetition, matters pertaining to the shared governance structure from both questions, and elsewhere in the survey, have been reported on below.

12.1 Further delegation required

A small number of local board and governing body members expressed the view that further delegation of decision-making would be preferable. The following comments were made by local board members:

> *Far too operational. Have recently been asked by community empowerment unit to approve a spend of $1000 after the board signed off the work plan. This is operational and needs to change. (LB)*

> *Some small decisions (i.e. small grants) could be better delegated to committee level. (LB)*

Similarly, some governing body respondents expressed the following view:

> *Many agenda items should be operational for smaller committee agenda hence - big decisions should come to parent committees once. A lot of duplication. (GB)*

> *Sometimes I consider that items are not issues that need to go before a committee of council - some are issues that CCOs should deal with. (GB)*

Investigate delegating further to
- Local Boards
- CCOs
- CEO
to allow the governing body to focus more on strategic/high level matters (GB)

12.2 Feedback on the shared governance framework

The bulk of the dissatisfaction about the level of decision-making was voiced by local board members whose feedback concerned perceived pitfalls in the shared governance framework. The dissatisfaction was generally due to the perception that their board did not have an adequate level of influence on either wider decision-making at Auckland Council or on specific initiatives within their local areas.

For one respondent, this lack of influence related to the fact that they were only one amongst a total of 21 boards that were providing feedback on a particular issue:

> *We don't influence enough that is important and spend too much time commenting on regional decisions that then don't get implemented as we would like because we are just one of 21. (LB)*

Several others expressed concern about the extent to which their views were taken into account in the decision-making process:

> *More decision making on issues we have a responsibility for and not just seeking our view ... and then discarding it. (LB)*

> *... I don't feel we have a significant impact on decision making at all unless our views happen to coincide with management's views. The machine is too big, too disaggregated and too remote to be as responsive to the local issues we are here to focus on. (LB)*

> *More often than not reports are simply for noting or rubber stamping. The law is clear - local boards deal with local matters and mechanisms should be in place to ensure this. (LB)*

> *I feel that lip service is often given to local boards. (LB)*

> *Give the staff some intense education on what is really involved in consultation. It is not presenting a final plan for the local board to 'like' or 'dislike' and call that consultation. (LB)*

The following feedback suggests that the respondent perceives that the '*council organisation*' assigns more importance to regional priorities than to those identified at the local level. The

respondent suggests that this makes it difficult to 'deliver value' from the investment made in local consultation and empowerment activities:

> *After more [th]an five years, the local board system is not working well. Of course there are times we deliver valuable local projects, but the real local community empowerment we are suppose[d] to bring is often confounded by the council organisation. Regional priorities are now the principal focus. What's the point in all the local board plan consultation and all the meeting time if we don't deliver enough value? (LB)*

According to some respondents, the delegation of authority between local boards and departments and the governing body lacks clarity, or is misinterpreted, contributing to the lack of influence at the local board level.

> *Still see a disconnect between departments and local boards' interpretation of delegated authority. Departments making decisions over budgets and outcomes prior to/or instead of getting LB direction. Some presenters having a preconception of a preferred outcome contrary to the LB's position. (LB)*

> *Most of the decisions we get are I believe at the correct level, however there are a number going to GB and committees of GB that should be devolved to boards. The allocation table is often not followed, which is not so much of a problem when GB and board are in agreement, but is a big problem where they are not. (LB)*

> *Yes - for the leadership of the bureaucracy to ensure that <u>all</u> staff understand that local boards (and their members) are members of the Auckland Council, have a statutory role, are on a par with members of the governing body. It would help if local board members have the appellation of 'Local Board Councillors'. (LB)*

> *It's a skilful act to manage what we have been elected to do as local governors. The relationship between governing body and local boards must continue to be harnessed, and strengthened with robust debate and consultation with our communities. Even if there [are] differences at the highest level. The Auckland Council is still a new organisation and officers must not be gatekeepers or a separate tier of decision making, when governing body members or local board members do not agree, and due process has not been followed. (LB)*

The disjuncture between the information being discussed at local board and governing body level is an issue for this local board member. Their suggestion is to increase the number of joint meetings involving both bodies:

> *There have been improvements in involving of local boards, but the governing body often appears to be making decisions on differing sets of information to those provided to local*

> *board members. This could be overcome by more joint meetings of governing body and local board members. (LB)*

Similarly, bringing local board and governing body members together was also mentioned by this respondent.

> *Why can't local boards have a conference once every two years or something? Showcasing projects, sharing learnings, guest speakers, etc. and the councillors are the guests maybe?* (LB)

Finally, the following local board members made specific reference to local board involvement in decisions around funding and budget allocations:

> *Where do certain pockets of funds lie and who is responsible [for] deciding the spend? (LB)*

> *I think that local boards should be given more autonomy and greater budgets. (LB)*

13.0 Areas of Future Focus

This survey has generated useful insights on elected members' satisfaction with the support they have received from Auckland Council staff since 2014. In the previous survey, overall satisfaction levels for Democracy Services and Local Board Services was already strong, and this year's results are similar. The findings also demonstrate that we can celebrate improvements shown over the previous survey's results in administrative and elected member development support. Levels of satisfaction increased for: Financial Planning and Strategy; Te Waka Angamua; Arts, Community and Events; Civil Defence and Emergency Management; and the Housing Project Office, although the latter also had an increase in dissatisfaction. In addition, there were notable increases in satisfaction for Auckland Tourism Events and Economic Development (ATEED) and Watercare Services Limited.

Despite these encouraging findings, however, the survey results also suggest that there is a lot more work to do. This is reflected in the decline in overall satisfaction rates and in the diminished proportion of respondents who believe that progress is being made towards operating as a unified organisation. Also showing a decline since the previous survey are the ratings for overall satisfaction in the quality of advice and the support received for consultation and engagement. There has been a decline too in satisfaction with the overall support received from one CCO and just over half the departments included in this year's survey. The results suggest that in a number of areas, local board members are less satisfied than their governing body peers with the support they are receiving. Finally, even where overall ratings have improved since the previous survey, they remain relatively low and there is still room for improvement.

The survey results shed light on areas for future focus in order to address the concerns of elected members moving forward. The need for further improvements in the **quality of advice** provided to elected members remains critical. Ensuring the delivery of timely, evidence-based advice that clearly outlines different options and potential impacts for elected decision-makers is fundamental to a thriving local democracy. A related issue is the need to address the negative impact on elected members of serial restructuring and staff turnover. The lack of continuity in staffing has caused delays and disruptions in work flows and also led to a loss of institutional memory that elected members – who are in temporary roles themselves – rely on.

This year's results indicate that elected members are seeking **further progress towards Auckland Council operating seamlessly as a unified organisation** and that this is an important determinant of overall satisfaction levels. We suggest that a number of issues are likely contributing to this. The first is the frustration elected members feel about the upheavals caused by constant organisational transformation and the better communication and support they have requested in order to navigate these on-going changes. The second contributing factor is local board members' concern about the shared governance model. Their feedback suggests that the role and function of local boards is not properly understood across council. Some also expressed the view that they were not delegated sufficient autonomy over decision-making and/or budgetary matters relevant to their local areas, nor were they given enough information appropriately tailored

to their locality. Governing body members, while not expressing the same degree of discontent, did comment on the need to further delegate decision-making to local boards and other bodies within council to enable them to focus on strategic matters. This suggests that more work needs to be done to ensure that the delegation of levels of decision-making between the local boards and the governing body fit well with one-another and are not in competition. More generally, elected members' comments point to a need for more collaboration and communication across the organisation to improve its responsiveness to elected members. A number of suggestions were also made about improving the way in which elected members work with one another. These referred to the need to improve working relationships between chairs and their local boards, board members with one another and also ward councillors with local board members.

In addition, there is a perception amongst some elected members that both the council organisation and the shared governance structure need to be more responsive to their needs. Again, this appears to be more of a local board concern; "the local", it appears, is getting lost in the wider council organisation and in the current governance framework. This was demonstrated in local board members' feedback on the ways in which various parts of council engage with them. While relevant across council departments, the key driver analysis brought to light the significance of the need for **enhanced engagement on the part of CCOs with local boards**, particularly Auckland Transport and Pānuku Development Auckland. There is a sense that CCOs inadequately recognise local board priorities and that they need to consult more meaningfully with them. In light of these areas of concern, council's on-going emphasis on making its size work for efficient and effective outcomes and in a manner that is responsive to local level concerns continues to be relevant and important moving forward.

Appendix A   Survey results split by first vs multiple terms

The following section presents the survey results, split by whether the elected member is in their first term or not. No commentary is provided.

Overall Satisfaction

Figure 47. Overall satisfaction, by number of terms

How satisfied are you with the advice and support provided by council employees overall to you within your current role with Auckland Council?

	First term	Multiple terms
1 - Very dissatisfied		1%
2	4%	11%
3	39%	38%
4	36%	38%
5 - Very satisfied	21%	11%
	57%	49%
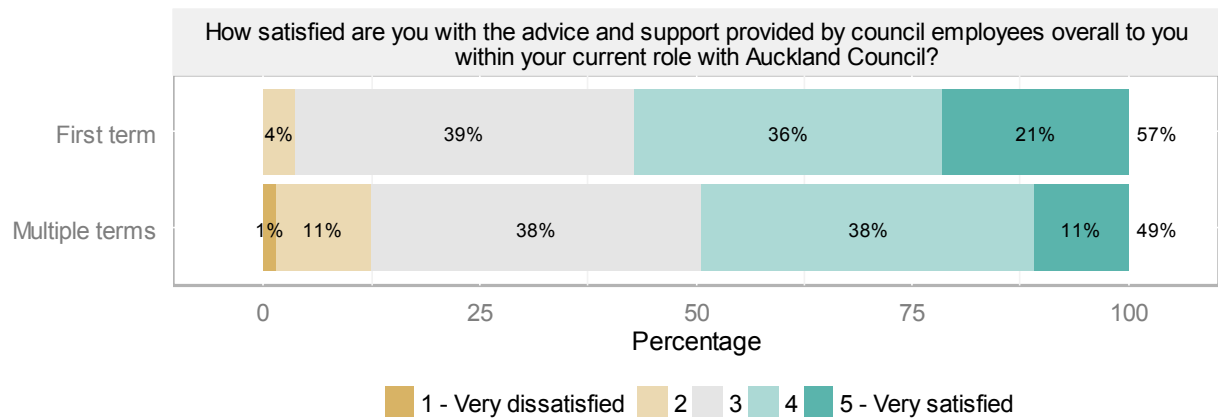
Progress toward one organisation

Figure 48. Perceived progress toward one unified organisation, by number of terms

Auckland Council family (including the governing body, local boards and CCOs) is progressing towards performing as one unified organisation

	First term	Multiple terms
1 - Strongly disagree	14%	12%
2	14%	27%
3	41%	40%
4	31%	14%
5 - Strongly agree		7%
	31%	21%
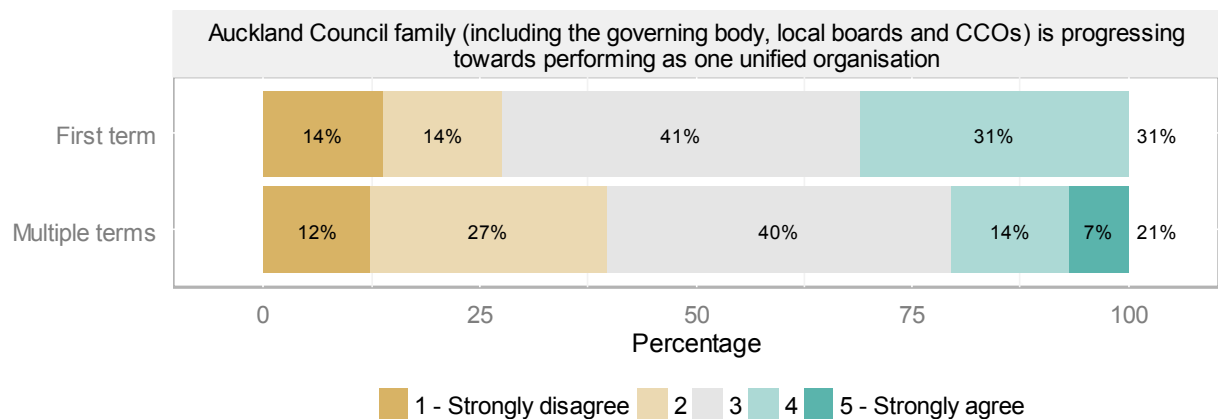
Quality Advice

Types of advice

Figure 49. Satisfaction with different forms of advice, by number of terms

The timeliness of advice and information provided by council employees

	1	2	3	4	5	
First term	7%	34%	21%	31%	7%	38%
Multiple terms	5%	24%	41%	23%	7%	30%

The quality of advice provided for and at workshops

	1	2	3	4	5	
First term		10%	24%	52%	14%	66%
Multiple terms	3%	12%	32%	39%	14%	53%

The quality of advice communicated in person at council meetings

	1	2	3	4	5	
First term		10%	45%	34%	10%	45%
Multiple terms	3%	15%	26%	45%	12%	57%

The overall quality of advice provided in agenda reports

	1	2	3	4	5	
First term		10%	38%	41%	10%	52%
Multiple terms	3%	12%	28%	43%	14%	57%

Legend: 1 - Very dissatisfied   2   3   4   5 - Very satisfied

Change over time

Figure 50. Perceived change in the quality of advice, by number of terms

Thinking about the advice you have received in your role to date, has the quality improved, remained the same, or worsened over time?

	Worsened	Remained the same	Improved	
First term	3%	52%	45%	45%
Multiple terms	18%	40%	42%	42%

Legend: Worsened   Remained the same   Improved
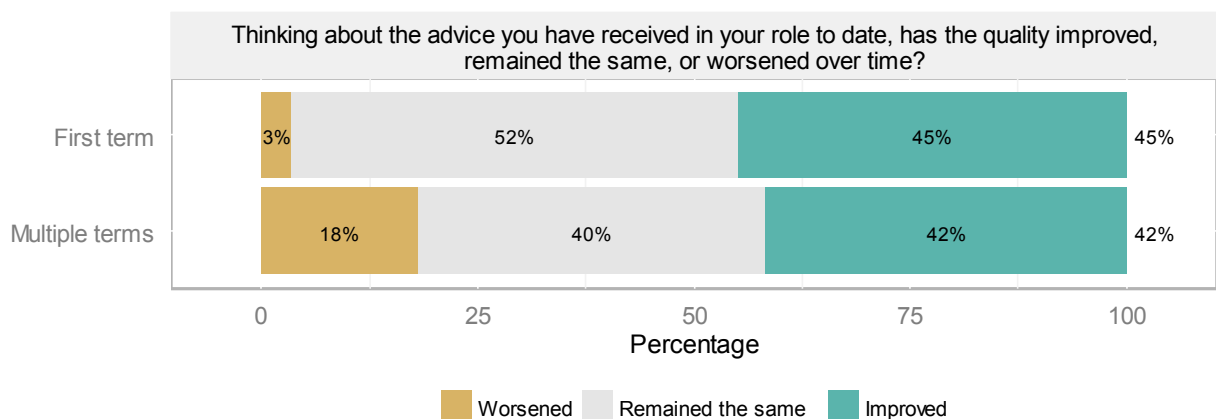
Aspects of agenda reports

Figure 51. Satisfaction with different aspects of agenda reports, by number of terms
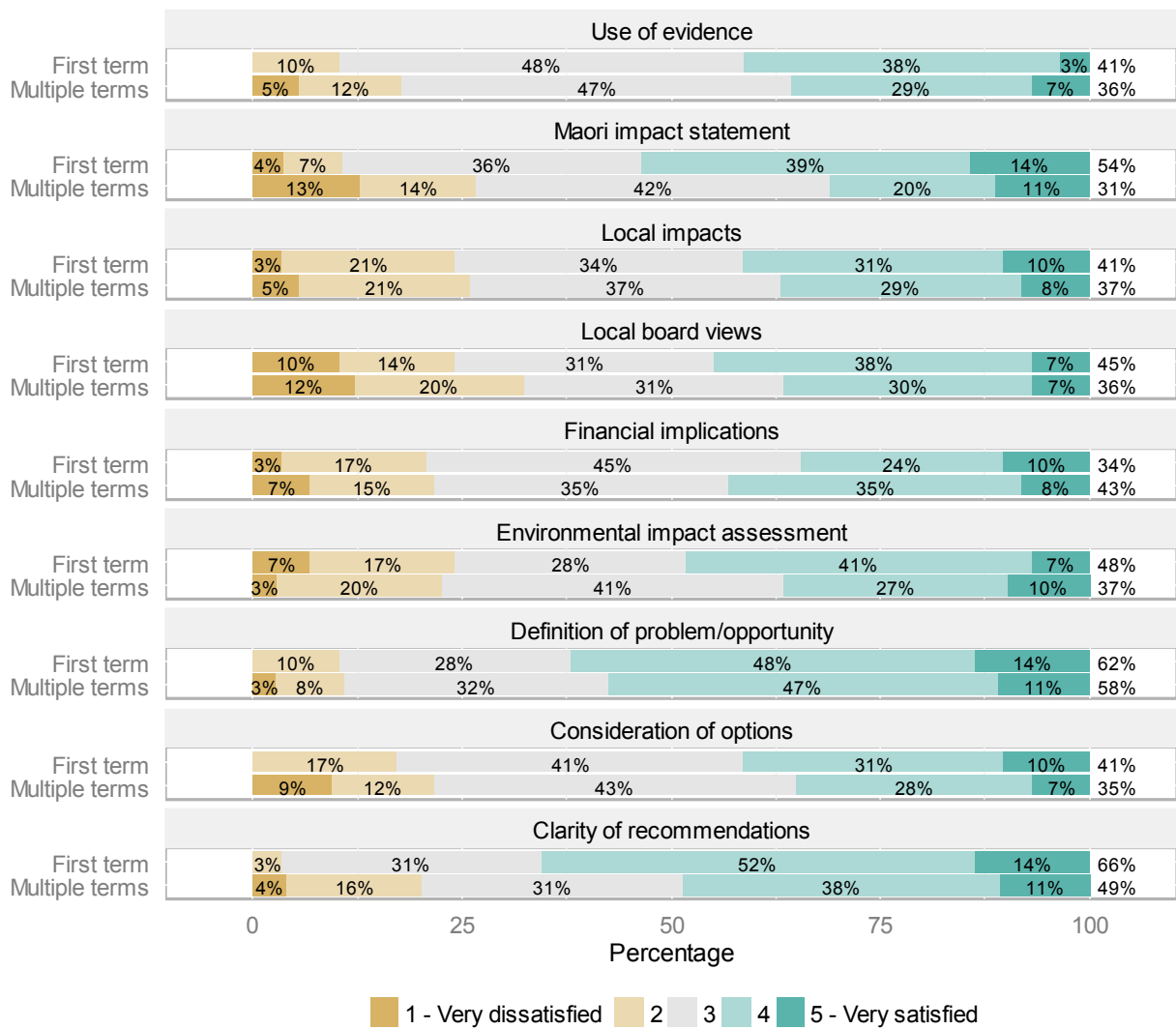
Administrative and Development Support

Figure 52. Administrative and professional development support, by number of terms

The processes for fulfilling requirements to make declarations (e.g. declarations of interest, electoral donations)

	1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very satisfied	
First term	4%	11%	25%	39%	21%	61%
Multiple terms	3%	14%	21%	35%	27%	62%

Technology equipment and support

First term	11%	7%	29%	36%	18%	54%
Multiple terms	11%	13%	23%	38%	15%	54%

Support provided in relation to remuneration and expense management

First term	12%	12%	19%	31%	27%	58%
Multiple terms	7%	8%	31%	27%	27%	54%

Ongoing learning activities and professional development (e.g. training, conferences, procedure and policy)

First term	8%	12%	23%	46%	12%	58%
Multiple terms	3%	23%	32%	25%	18%	42%

Percentage

■ 1 - Very dissatisfied ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 - Very satisfied

Democracy and Advisory Support

A first vs multiple term split is not included for Democracy Services for privacy reasons, due to low sample size.

Local Board Dedicated Support

Figure 53. Local board dedicated support, by number of terms

The overall support you have received from Local Board Services

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
First term		4%	9%	48%	39%	87%
Multiple terms	2% 3%	8%	34%	54%		88%

Strategic and policy advice

| First term | | | 22% | 48% | 30% | 78% |
| Multiple terms | 8% | 6% | 43% | 43% | | 86% |

Local Board Financial Advisory team support

| First term | | 13% | 30% | 17% | 39% | 57% |
| Multiple terms | 3% 8% | 18% | 40% | 31% | | 71% |

Local Board Communications team support

| First term | 9% | 17% | 22% | 35% | 17% | 52% |
| Multiple terms | 8% | 16% | 23% | 31% | 22% | 53% |

Democracy advice and meeting support

| First term | 4% | 13% | 52% | 30% | | 83% |
| Multiple terms | 2% 3% | 11% | 35% | 49% | | 85% |

Community engagement advice and support (e.g. local board plan engagement)

| First term | | 30% | 43% | 26% | | 70% |
| Multiple terms | 6% 6% | 11% | 34% | 43% | | 77% |

Administrative support (e.g. calendar and correspondence management)

| First term | 9% | 17% | 35% | 39% | | 74% |
| Multiple terms | 5% 5% | 11% | 37% | 43% | | 80% |

Percentage

Legend: 1 - Very dissatisfied 2 3 4 5 - Very satisfied

Consultation and Engagement

Figure 54. Community engagement support, by number of terms
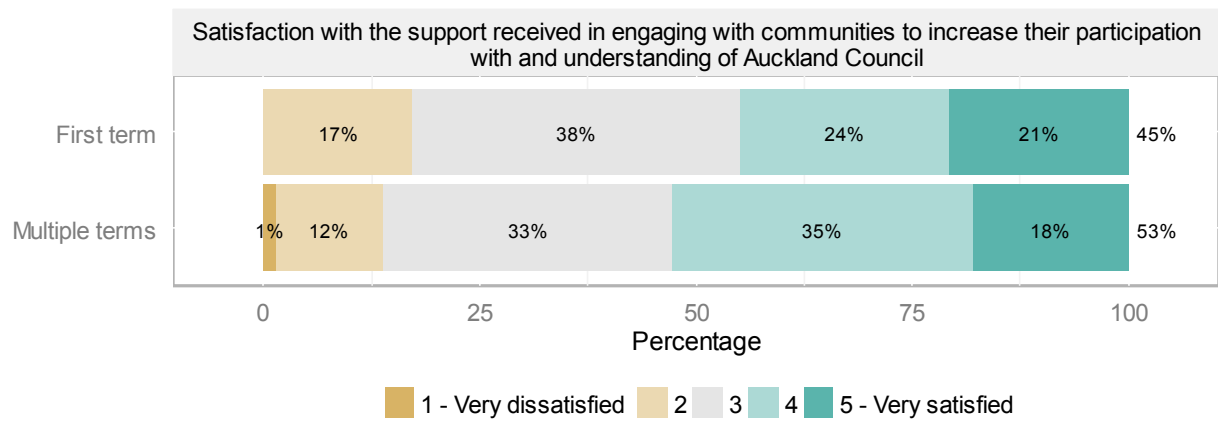
Support from Council Departments

Figure 55. Support from council departments, by number of terms
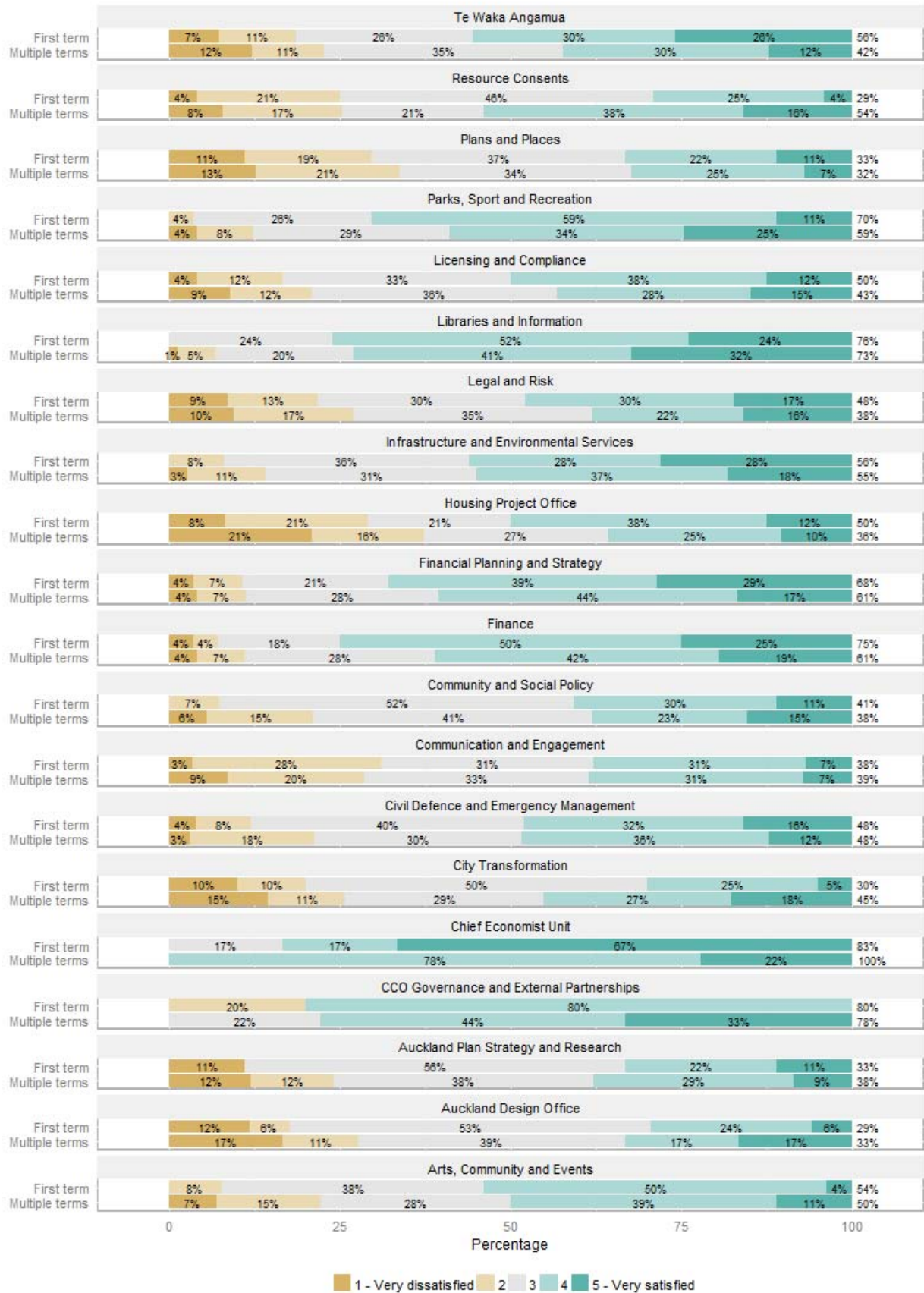
Engagement with Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs)

Auckland Transport

Figure 56. Engagement with Auckland Transport, by number of terms
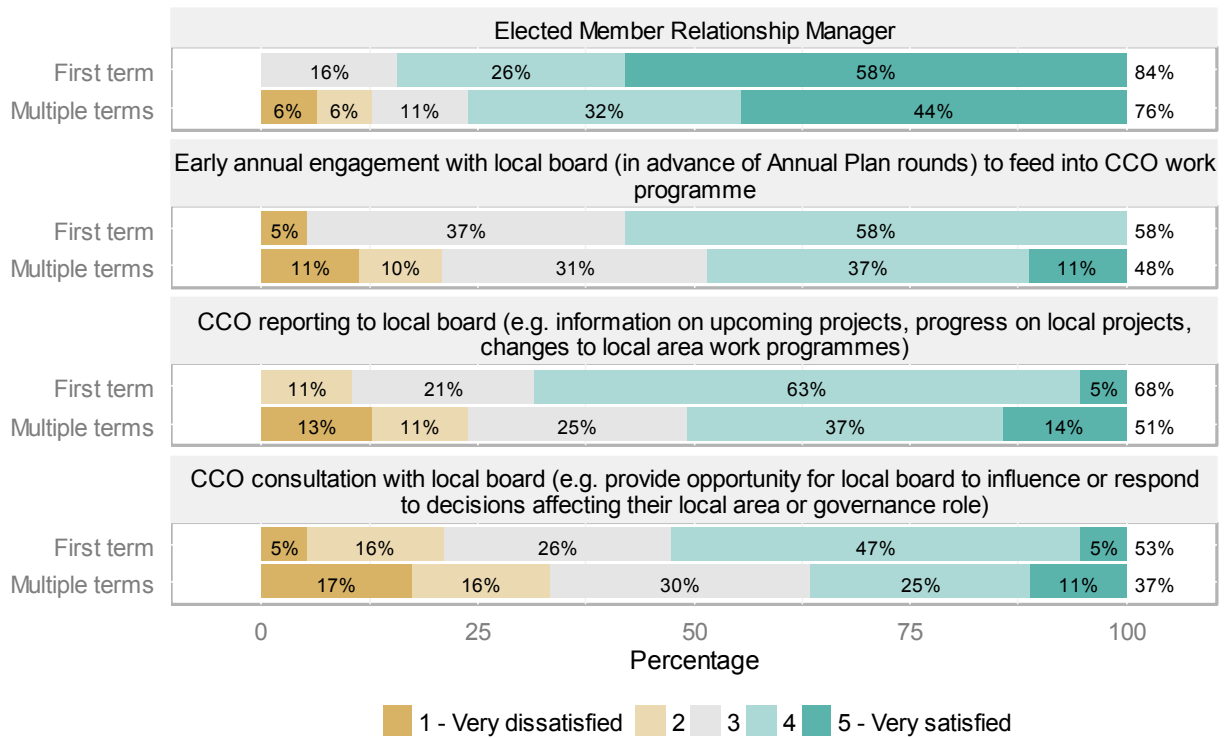
Watercare Services

Figure 57. Engagement with Watercare Services, by number of terms
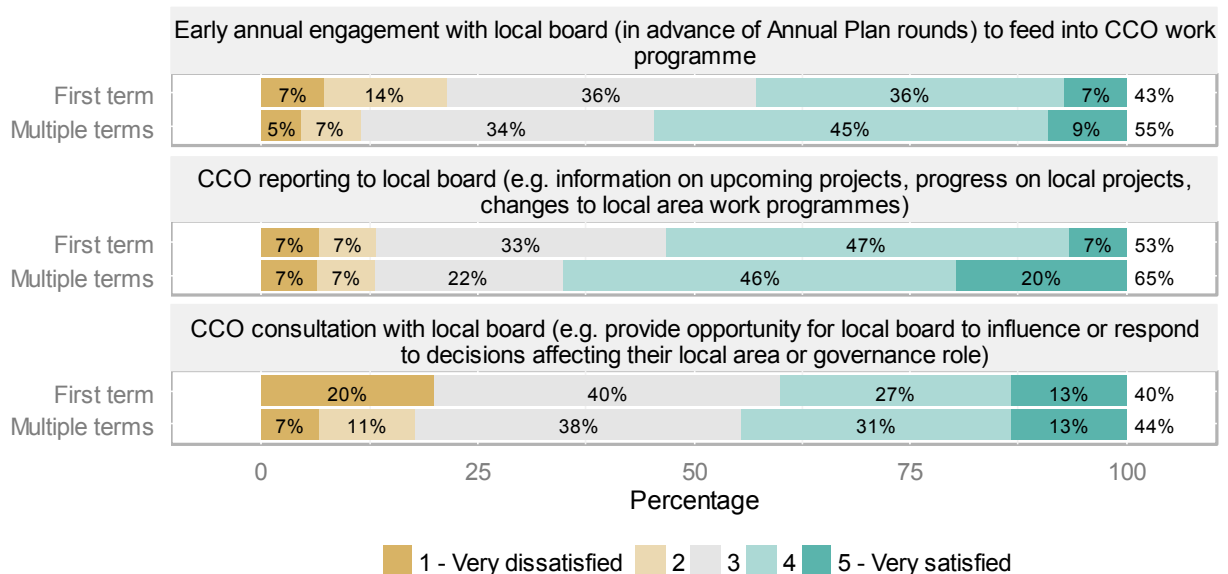
Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED)

Figure 58. Engagement with ATEED, by number of terms

Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme

	1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very satisfied	
First term	21%	14%	43%	21%		21%
Multiple terms	8%	17%	42%	29%	4%	33%

CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)

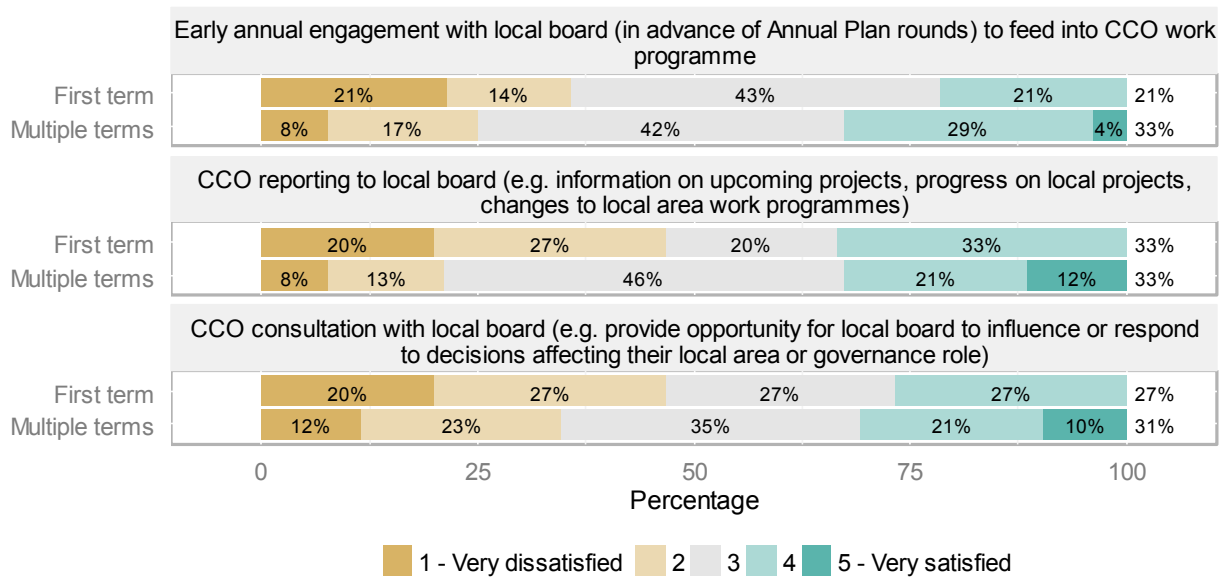|						
First term	20%	27%	20%	33%		33%
Multiple terms	8%	13%	46%	21%	12%	33%

CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)

First term	20%	27%	27%	27%		27%
Multiple terms	12%	23%	35%	21%	10%	31%

Percentage

Legend: 1 - Very dissatisfied, 2, 3, 4, 5 - Very satisfied

Regional Facilities Auckland

Figure 59. Engagement with RFA, by number of terms

CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)

	1 - Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very satisfied	
First term	10%	30%	60%			0%
Multiple terms	5%	13%	51%	23%	8%	31%

CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)

First term	9%	27%	55%	9%		9%
Multiple terms	5%	18%	49%	23%	5%	28%

Percentage

Legend: 1 - Very dissatisfied, 2, 3, 4, 5 - Very satisfied

Pānuku Development Auckland

Figure 60. Engagement with Pānuku Development Auckland, by number of terms
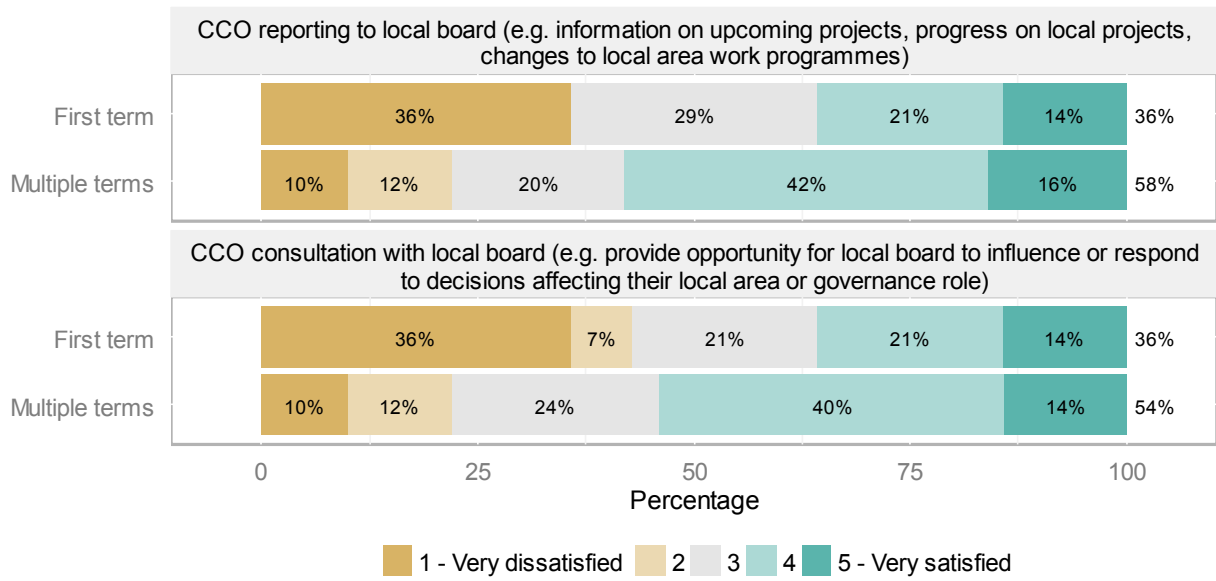
Appendix B   Data analysis methods

The following section outlines the methods used in the analysis of the data.

Quantitative analysis

All quantitative analyses were conducted in R statistical analysis software.

Summary statistics

Summary statistics (*N*s and percentages) were calculated for each question. In order to ensure percentages were calculated from those who provided a meaningful / interpretable response, 'Don't know' and 'Not applicable' responses were excluded from bases used to calculate percentages. The base sizes for each survey question can be seen on the relevant figure.

Key driver analysis

A key driver analysis was conducted by calculating bivariate correlations between overall satisfaction and a range of survey questions. The correlation coefficients were then plotted against the mean level of satisfaction (or agreement, in the case of progress toward one unified organisation) with each survey question. This plot identifies which areas of council work are more likely to play an important role in influencing overall satisfaction, as well as whether the organisation is doing well or poorly in those areas.

Qualitative analysis

Two of the report authors and a member from the Elected Members Survey Project Team (all council employees) were involved in coding the qualitative data obtained through the open-ended questions in the survey. The latter was included to ensure that references to specific events, projects and AC acronyms were properly understood.

All of the written responses to each question were read over by this team and a list of key themes was identified. This initial list of themes was organised into a coding frame tailored to each question. The coding frames were reviewed by the entire research team in order to ensure consistency across questions and an appropriate level of detail. This also offered an initial opportunity to triangulate the findings of the quantitative data with the comments received through the qualitative data.

The data was then coded using data frames developed using QSR NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software. The software assisted the researchers to identify recurring issues and concerns and also to understand the diversity of perspectives emerging on any particular issue.

The report authors then further analysed the data in order to report on the coded themes. All feedback was considered thoroughly through this process. In addition, focussed attention was given to information that explained the quantitative results and/or offered suggestions for improvement. All proper names and other identifying information were removed from the comments reported on in this report.

Appendix C List of questions compared over time

The following table lists the survey questions that appear is both 2014 and 2016. Cells are highlighted where the questions differ slightly between years

Table 5. Comparison of questions that appear in both surveys.

2016 survey question wording	2014 survey question wording
Overall satisfaction	
How satisfied are you with **the advice and support provided by council employees overall** to you within your current role with Auckland Council?	How satisfied you are with **the advice and support provided by council employees overall** to you within your current role with Auckland Council?
Progress toward one unified organisation	
To what extent do you agree that the Auckland Council family (including the governing body, local boards and CCOs) is progressing towards performing as one unified organisation?	Since you were elected, do you agree that the Auckland Council family (including the governing body, local boards and CCOs) is progressing towards performing more as one unified organisation?
Quality advice	
The overall quality of advice provided in agenda reports	The overall quality of advice provided in agenda reports
The timeliness of advice and information provided by council employees	The timeliness of advice and information provided by Council
Thinking about the advice you have received in your role to date, has the quality improved, remained the same, or worsened over time?	Thinking about the policy advice you have received in your role to date, would you say the quality of the policy advice provided to you has improved, remained the same, or worsened over time?
Administrative and development support	
Support provided in relation to remuneration and expense management	Remuneration, expense management and travel support
Technology equipment and support	Technology equipment and support
The processes for fulfilling requirements to make declarations (e.g. declarations of interest, electoral donations)	The processes for fulfilling requirements to make declarations (e.g. declarations of interest, electoral donations)
Ongoing learning activities and professional development (e.g. training, conferences, procedure and policy)	Support in ongoing learning activities and Professional Development (e.g. webinars, conferences, procedure and policy updates, training, etc.)
Democracy and advisory support	
Democracy advice and meeting support	Democracy advice and meeting support
Administrative and advisory support from your Councillor Support Advisor	Administrative and advisory support (e.g. calendar and correspondence management, personal support)
The overall support you have received from Democracy Services	The overall support you've received from Democracy Services
Local board dedicated support	
Strategic and policy advice	Strategic and policy advice
Democracy advice and meeting support	Democracy advice and meeting support
Administrative support (e.g. calendar and correspondence management)	Administrative support (e.g. calendar and correspondence management)
Community engagement advice and support (e.g. local board plan engagement)	Community engagement advice and support (e.g. local board plan engagement)
The overall support you have received from Local Board Services	The overall support you've received from Local Board Services
Local Board Communications team support	Local Board Communications team support
Local Board Financial Advisory team support	Local Board Financial Advisory team support
Consultation and engagement	
Please rate your satisfaction with the support you have received since September 2014 in **engaging with communities** to increase their participation with and understanding of Auckland Council.	How would you rate your satisfaction with the support you have received in engaging with communities to increase their participation with and understanding of Auckland Council?
Support from council departments	
Parks, Sport and Recreation (e.g. management and delivery of parks, sport and recreation facilities and services)	Parks, Sport and Recreation
Arts, Community and Events (e.g. community development, arts, local events and community facilities)	Community Development, Arts and Culture (including events and community facilities)
Libraries and Information (e.g. library and information	Libraries

services)	
Infrastructure and Environmental Services (e.g. stormwater, solid waste, environmental services)	Infrastructure and Environmental Services (e.g. stormwater, solid waste, environmental services)
Housing Project Office (e.g. implementing the Auckland Housing Accord, i.e. Special Housing Areas)	Housing Office
Resource Consents (e.g. resource consenting services)	Resource Consents
Licensing and Compliance (e.g. liquor licensing, environmental health, bylaw compliance and implementation)	Licensing and Compliance (e.g. liquor licensing, environmental health, bylaw compliance and implementation)
Auckland Plan Strategy and Research (e.g. Auckland Plan implementation and review, submissions to central government, research and evaluation)	Auckland Strategy and Research (e.g. Auckland Plan, submissions to central government, community and cultural strategy – Community Development Strategy)
Te Waka Angamua (e.g. advice on Māori-related issues, tikanga support and mana whenua issue resolution)	Te Waka Angamua / Maori Strategy and Relations
Financial Planning and Strategy (e.g. funding policies, Long-term Plan, Annual Plan)	Finance (e.g. funding policy, Long-Term Plan)
Legal and Risk (e.g. in-house legal advice)	Legal Services
Civil Defence and Emergency Management (e.g. civil defence, rural fire, hazards and crisis management)	Civil Defence
Engagement with Auckland Transport	
Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme	Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme
CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)	CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)
CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)	CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)
Elected Member Relationship Manager	Elected Member Liaison Manager
Engagement with Watercare Services	
Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme	Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme
CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)	CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)
CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)	CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)
Engagement With ATEED	
Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme	Early annual engagement with local board (in advance of Annual Plan rounds) to feed into CCO work programme
CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)	CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)
CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)	CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)
Engagement with RFA	
CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)	CCO reporting to local board (e.g. information on upcoming projects, progress on local projects, changes to local area work programmes)
CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)	CCO consultation with local board (e.g. provide opportunity for local board to influence or respond to decisions affecting their local area or governance role)

Appendix D   Key driver analysis: detailed findings

Figure 61. Key drivers of overall satisfaction: detailed results