

An aerial photograph of a vast vineyard with rows of grapevines stretching towards the horizon. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, indicating a sunset or sunrise. The vineyard is in the foreground, and the horizon is in the distance.

Marlborough District Council

2025-26

Resident Survey

| SIL Research

August 2026

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CONTENTS

4.

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

10.

METHODOLOGY

19.

SATISFACTION AT
A GLANCE

26.

CONTACT WITH
THE COUNCIL

27.

COMMUNICATION

29.

DEMOCRATIC
PROCESS

30.

CULTURE AND
HERITAGE

32.

HOUSING FOR
SENIORS

34.

COMMUNITY
SAFETY

36.

COMMUNITY
SUPPORT

39.

LIBRARY SERVICE

41.

EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

43.

COMMUNITY
FACILITIES

48.

ROADS AND
FOOTPATHS

52.

FLOOD
PROTECTION

54.

SEWERAGE

56.

STORM WATER

58.

DRINKING WATER

60.

WASTE
MANAGEMENT

64.

ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY AND
MONITORING

67.

CONSENTS AND
COMPLIANCE

71.

BIOSECURITY

74.

ANIMAL CONTROL

77.

HARBOURS

79.

REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

83.

TOURISM

85.

ADDITIONAL
SUGGESTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to continue assessing residents' needs and satisfaction with Marlborough District Council's (MDC) services, and to provide insights into service prioritisation.

For the 2025-26 year, the data was collected quarterly: from November 2025 (retrospectively covering the August-October quarter) to July 2026 (covering the May-July quarter). A total n=600 responses were collected for the final analysis in the 2025-26 year.

The survey findings should be considered in the context of notable circumstances both within the District and nationally when assessing satisfaction levels and Council's ability to meet community needs. The 2025-26 year featured political change, significant infrastructure and service decisions, environmental pressures, and ongoing community engagement, all of which may have influenced residents' perceptions of Marlborough District Council. The October 2025 Local Government Elections provided an important backdrop, with the mayor re-elected and a mix of returning and new councillors elected across the district. Residents also voted to remove the Māori Ward introduced in 2020, taking effect for the 2028 elections. During the year, Council progressed major decisions and investment relating to roading, water services, flood protection, the Waitohi Picton ferry redevelopment and community facilities, alongside consultation on Council plans, services and local government reform. Severe weather, flooding and infrastructure disruption, together with rising charges and a 6.81% average rates increase, may have heightened concerns about affordability, resilience and service delivery. Conversely, visible investment in community facilities, environmental protection, town-centre improvements and resilience initiatives may have supported more positive perceptions of Council responsiveness and longer-term planning.

In this context, the main findings in 2025-26 are summarised below.

Key headlines:

- Overall satisfaction remains positive - but still below the stronger levels achieved historically.
- Satisfaction is broadly consistent across Marlborough - although younger residents tend to be less positive across services.
- Libraries, emergency management, community facilities and waste services remain key areas of strength.
- Core infrastructure - particularly roads, drinking water, stormwater, flood protection - represents the clearest priority for improvement.



- Environmental, regulatory and community support services also under-perform in several areas - and are important drivers of dissatisfaction.
- Democratic engagement and communication remain important to overall perceptions - with opportunities to improve consultation, responsiveness and engagement.
- Council should prioritise visible improvements to essential services, responsiveness and value for money - while maintaining high-performing services and tracking progress in key problem areas.

Main findings in 2025-26:

- **Overall satisfaction remains positive, but below the levels achieved a decade ago.** Around two-thirds of residents (68%) are satisfied with MDC's overall performance in 2025-26, with an average rating of 6.3 out of 10. The result is broadly consistent with the high-60% plateau recorded over the past four years and remains above the 2022 low, indicating no significant recent trend. Notably, the overall MDC result is substantially above the national benchmark satisfaction figures (48% satisfaction, 5.5 average) in 2026. However, satisfaction remains below the high-70% levels recorded in Marlborough from 2016 to 2018, suggesting that Council has yet to recover the stronger levels of community sentiment evident over the longer term.
- **Overall perceptions are now more consistent across the district, although younger residents remain less positive.** Overall satisfaction is identical among Blenheim residents and those living elsewhere in Marlborough (68%), in contrast to the geographic differences evident over the previous three years. There are relatively few demographic differences overall, although residents aged 65+ consistently provide higher average performance ratings than younger residents aged 18-39. At individual service level, younger residents are also less satisfied across a range of areas, including democratic processes, community support, drinking water, sewerage, stormwater, biosecurity, animal control, tourism and culture and heritage. This points to a broader challenge in meeting the expectations and priorities of younger residents rather than dissatisfaction being confined to a single service.
- **Several established strengths continue to support positive perceptions of Council.** Overall, 28 out of 49 (57%) Council services rated by Marlborough District residents achieved satisfaction levels of 60% or above, with 9 services (18%) achieving 80% satisfaction or higher – reinforcing the positive sentiment residents generally feel across most service areas measured in 2026 and recent years. The top five performing services remained fairly consistent, with only minor changes in rankings: public library services (90%, 8.3 average score; also 1st in 2025), cemeteries (86%, 7.5 average; 2nd in 2025), sports grounds (83% satisfaction, 7.3 average; 4th in 2025), kerbside rubbish and recycling collection (83%, 7.6



average; 6th in 2025), and Civil Defence/emergency management (82%, 7.4 average; 7th in 2025). In addition, community facilities and waste management also perform strongly, with high satisfaction (at or above 80%) for facilities such as swimming pools, parks & reserves, walkways/tracks, and public toilets; as well as recycling facilities and the Reuse Shop. These services together represent important areas of organisational strength that Council should maintain while applying lessons from their delivery, visibility and customer experience to weaker service areas.

- **Roads, water and flood-related infrastructure are prominent service delivery pinch points.** In contrast to the high performing service areas, the lowest-ranking services in 2025-26 (all below 50% satisfaction, but also subject to lower resident usage or awareness) included: RMA monitoring compliance (39%, 5.1 average), economic development (41%, 5.1 average), bus services (41%, 5.2 average), and Resource Management Act resource consents (41%, 5.1 average). In addition, roads and footpaths recorded the lowest service-group satisfaction result in 2026 at 45% (down from 53% in 2025), reaching a new historical low, with concerns focused on potholes, deteriorating road surfaces and the perceived quality and durability of repairs. Drinking water satisfaction continued to fall particularly sharply from 81% in 2024 and 67% in 2025 to 50% in 2026 – the largest drop in satisfaction this year - significantly below 2024 levels and the lowest result recorded to date for this service; with Blenheim residents especially dissatisfied and feedback focusing heavily on chlorination, taste and smell. Satisfaction with stormwater drainage also declined (from 65% in 2025 to 59% in 2026), while flood protection has fallen back (to 55% in 2026) after the recovery seen in 2024 (65%) and 2025 (62%). Collectively, these results reinforce a resident expectation that Council prioritise the reliability, maintenance and quality of essential infrastructure.
- **Core infrastructure provides the greatest opportunity to improve overall Council sentiment.** Reaffirming the above results, key driver analysis indicates that residents draw on a wide range of experiences when assessing Council, with 13 service areas having a significant influence on overall performance perceptions. Of particular importance are stormwater, flood protection, drinking water, roads and transportation, alongside the democratic process. These areas combine relatively strong influence with comparatively low performance, meaning improvements are likely to have greater potential to lift overall satisfaction than further gains in services that are already performing strongly. Drinking water records the largest gap between perceived importance and performance and should therefore be treated as a particularly high priority.



- **Environmental, regulatory and community support services also show scope for improvement.** Satisfaction with environmental policy has eased to 50%, while consents and compliance has fallen to 49%, with particularly low ratings for RMA monitoring and RMA resource consents. Community support has reached its lowest group score to date at 52%, with the bus service remaining a notable weakness at 41%. Regional development also remains comparatively weak, particularly car parking, while satisfaction with tourism support has gradually declined to its lowest recorded level. These results suggest that improvement priorities should extend beyond physical infrastructure to the accessibility, responsiveness and perceived effectiveness of regulatory and community-facing functions.
- **The services that most discriminate between satisfied and dissatisfied residents identify important recovery priorities.** Residents dissatisfied with Council overall give substantially lower ratings across almost every service, but the largest divides are evident for RMA monitoring, RMA resource consents, Building Act consents, environmental management and related policy areas. Roads and footpaths, flood protection, drinking water, community support and car parking also show sizeable gaps. Taken together, this highlights the service areas that particularly frustrate or dominate the thinking of those with negative sentiment towards Council overall. By contrast, even many dissatisfied residents remain positive about libraries, emergency management and some community facilities. This pattern suggests that overall dissatisfaction is, at least for some residents, not simply a general negative response to Council, but is strongly associated with particular experiences of core infrastructure, regulatory processes, environmental management and responsiveness.
- **Democratic engagement remains an influential area where better performance could strengthen trust.** Satisfaction with democratic processes is moderate at 51%, with opportunities to provide feedback the lowest-rated component at 46%. The issue is particularly pronounced among residents aged 18-39, only one-third of whom are satisfied with democratic processes and just 29% with opportunities to have their say. Because democratic processes are also among the stronger drivers of overall Council satisfaction, improving how residents are consulted, demonstrating how feedback has influenced decisions, and making participation easier and more relevant could contribute to broader improvements in Council sentiment.
- **Council communication performs reasonably well, but there is a strong link between communication and overall satisfaction.** Around 63% of residents recall Council news or advertising, while 72% of those aware are satisfied with the communication received. Newspapers remain important, while Facebook, Antenno and the Marlborough App provide increasingly important digital channels. Communication awareness and satisfaction are substantially lower among



residents dissatisfied with Council overall, with only 51% recalling communications and 24% satisfied with them; compared with 76% awareness and 87% satisfaction among residents satisfied overall. Younger residents also have lower communication awareness and satisfaction and rely much more heavily on social media. Council should therefore continue a multi-channel approach, while placing greater emphasis on timely, accessible communication that explains decisions, reports progress and visibly closes the loop on resident concerns.

- **Improvement should focus on visible delivery of core services, responsiveness and value for money.** Resident comments reinforce the quantitative findings, with transport infrastructure, rates and Council spending, flooding and river management, drinking-water treatment, parks maintenance and communication among the most frequently raised concerns. A practical improvement programme should therefore prioritise road maintenance and repair quality, drinking-water experience, stormwater and flood resilience, alongside clearer service standards and more transparent communication about priorities, expenditure, timelines and completed work. Residents appear to be seeking a Council that is visibly focused on essential services, responsive when problems are reported, cost-conscious in its decisions and able to demonstrate tangible progress.
- **Council should protect its high-performing services while concentrating improvement effort where it can most influence overall perceptions.** The results do not indicate widespread dissatisfaction with Council services, and Marlborough continues to be well served in many areas. The greatest opportunity lies in directing investment and management attention towards services that combine high importance, strong influence on overall satisfaction and relatively weak current performance, while maintaining established strengths such as libraries, emergency management, community facilities and waste services. Tracking these priority areas quarterly, alongside the experiences of younger residents and residents currently dissatisfied with Council overall, will provide an early indication of whether service improvements are translating into stronger community confidence.



Overall, the 2025-26 results present a mixed but broadly stable picture of resident sentiment towards Marlborough District Council.

Around two-thirds of residents remain satisfied overall, and several highly visible services, including libraries, emergency management, community facilities and waste services, continue to perform strongly. However, satisfaction remains below historic highs, with roads and footpaths, drinking water, stormwater and flood protection emerging as key priorities because they combine relatively weak performance with a strong influence on overall satisfaction. Negative community response to drinking water treatment was particularly noteworthy in 2026. Regulatory and environmental services, democratic engagement and community support also contribute to the divide between residents who are satisfied and dissatisfied overall. While perceptions are currently relatively consistent across the district, younger residents remain less positive across several service and engagement measures. Strengthening Council reputation will therefore depend on improving priority services while ensuring residents can see progress, feel listened to, and perceive Council as responsive and delivering value for money, as indicated by the following recommendations:

- **Prioritise visible improvements to essential infrastructure.** Focus investment and service improvement on roads and footpaths, drinking water, stormwater and flood protection, supported by clear service standards and visible evidence of maintenance, repair quality and progress.
- **Improve the customer experience in services that drive dissatisfaction.** Review lower-performing regulatory, environmental and community-facing services, particularly RMA and consent processes, environmental management and community support, to improve timeliness, accessibility, consistency and responsiveness.
- **Strengthen engagement and close the feedback loop.** Make it easier for residents to have their say and clearly demonstrate how feedback has influenced decisions. Particular attention should be given to younger residents, who are less satisfied with democratic processes and several Council services.
- **Communicate delivery, priorities and value more proactively.** Maintain a multi-channel approach while providing clearer updates on what Council is doing, why decisions are made, how rates are being used and what outcomes have been achieved.

In conclusion, Council enters the year ahead with a solid foundation of well-regarded services and a clear set of priorities for improvement. By concentrating on the services that matter most to residents, maintaining existing strengths and communicating progress effectively, Council has a practical opportunity to strengthen community confidence. Quarterly tracking will remain valuable for identifying emerging issues early, monitoring whether improvement initiatives are gaining traction, and guiding timely adjustments to service delivery.

METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Every year, Marlborough District Council (MDC) commissions a Resident Survey as part of its community consultation. This survey has been conducted by SIL Research, an independent market research company, since 2014.

The purpose of this research is to assess residents' needs and satisfaction with MDC's services, and provide insights into service prioritisation.



QUESTIONNAIRE AND PROJECT SPECIFICS

In 2021, the previously used questionnaires and data collection methods were revised in consultation with MDC. Based on this review, a consistent methodology has since been employed for the research to maximise robust data collection and optimise comparability of results year-on-year.

For the 2025-26 survey year, data was collected from November (retrospectively covering the Aug-Oct quarter) to July (covering the May-Jul quarter) to align with MDC's annual reporting period of 1 July to 30 June. For convenience, this report refers to the 2025-26 survey year as '2026'.

With the established change to quarterly fieldwork cycles, the service recall window for respondents was also adjusted from 2021. Previously, respondents had been asked to indicate which services/facilities they had used or visited in '*the last 12 months*'. From 2021 Q1, respondents were instead asked about the services/facilities they used/visited in '*the last 3 months*'. While representing a shift from the previous method, this narrower recall window is expected to improve accuracy (easier to recall behaviour over the previous 3 months than a longer 12-month period) and sensitivity to seasonal variations across quarterly cycles.

To ensure maximum comparability with the 2024-25 year, the survey questionnaire was kept consistent in 2025-26. Just one change was made to analysis and reporting in 2025-26 (this did not involve a change to the questionnaire itself):

- "Economic development" was removed from the Regional development service group. Given this change, the "Regional development" group average is now calculated on the current two attributes (including "Car parking" and "Irrigation of the Southern Valleys") rather than the previous three attributes. As a result, historical comparisons for this service group average are still provided but are anecdotal and may be indicative only.

Refer to the 2024-25 Annual Report for a full list of changes made to the questionnaire at that time (and carried through to the 2025-26 questionnaire).

The questionnaire was tested prior to full scale data collection to ensure the survey was fit for purpose.

DATA COLLECTION

Every quarter, SIL’s multi-layered sampling technique ensured a proportional spread of respondents from Marlborough District, by age and gender distribution.

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

- (1) Social media (available via SIL Research social media platforms, such as Facebook). The invitation post was randomly promoted to District residents;
- (2) Telephone survey. Respondents were randomly selected from the publicly available telephone directories within the District;
- (3) Postal survey. Survey forms were sent to randomly selected Marlborough District households.

Each quarter, a total of n=150 surveys were used in the final analysis; providing n=600 overall for the 2026 year.

DATA ANALYSIS

Surveys were conducted generally proportional to the population in each of Marlborough District’s sub-regional geographical areas.

Table 1 Responses by ward

	Number of responses	Population %
Havelock	22 (4%)	4%
Awatere	30 (5%)	3%
Western Wairau	16 (3%)	4%
Renwick	37 (6%)	5%
Marlborough Sounds	48 (8%)	5%
Picton	117 (20%)	10%
Blenheim vicinity	57 (10%)	12%
Blenheim	273 (46%)	57%

Responses were also statistically weighted to reflect the gender and age group proportions in the District as determined by the Statistics New Zealand 2023 Census.

SIL Research ensured quality control during the fieldwork period. In addition, a quality control check was performed using follow-up calls across randomly selected respondents (10% of those who agreed to the follow up) to verify the key responses.

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

The main resident segments analysed in this report were: area (including Blenheim vs. non-Blenheim residents aggregated), age, gender, home ownership and tenure. During the analysis stage of this report, Chi-square tests were used when comparing group results in tables, and ANOVA tests were used when comparing statement averages across groups. The threshold for reporting any statistically significant differences was a p-value of 0.05 (corresponding to a confidence level of 95%). Where differences were outside this threshold (less than 95%), no comments were made; where differences were within this threshold, comments have been made within the context of their practical relevance to MDC.

Overall results are reported with a margin of error at a 95% confidence level. The margin of error varies based on the number of responses for each service area and depends on general awareness/knowledge about this service. Higher proportions of ‘Don’t know’/‘Don’t receive this service’ responses reduce the effective sample sizes and result in a larger margin of error.

Table 2 Margins of error

Responses n=	Reported percentages	
	50%	80% or 20%
600	±4	±3
400	±5	±4
300	±6	±5
200	±7	±6
100	±10	±8

The maximum likely error margin occurs when a reported percentage is close to 50%.

NOTES ON REPORTING

Where applicable, the 2026 results were compared to previous years' data. This comparative data is indicative only; methods by which the data was collected may differ across years.

Overall 'satisfaction' percentages presented in this report are aggregated 6-10 responses on a 1-10 scale (where 1 = the service performs "not at all well" and 10 = the service performs "extremely well"). Satisfaction percentages will differ from mean scores (average ratings). Satisfaction percentages represent positive (6-10) ratings only, whereas mean scores provide an average of all ratings provided across the whole 1-10 scale.

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

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

SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE

Table 3 Responses by age

	Frequency	Percent
18-39	73	12%
40-64	226	38%
65+	301	50%
Total	600	100%

Table 4 Responses by gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	272	45%
Female	328	55%
Total	600	100%

Table 5 Responses by tenure (aggregated)

	Frequency	Percent
Under 10 years	129	22%
More than 10 years	402	67%
No answer	69	12%
Total	600	100%

Table 6 Responses by home ownership

	Frequency	Percent
Owned	508	85%
Rent / Private Trust / Other	79	13%
No answer	13	2%
Total	600	100%

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

BENCHMARKING

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

The National survey data is collected throughout the year so that annual results can be presented without seasonal bias. The benchmarking results in this report are based on n=400 responses collected during 2026. The data is collected using a 1-10 scale; satisfaction percentages are aggregated 6-10 ratings to match those calculated for MDC survey data.

Benchmarking results are reported at the 95% confidence level with maximum margins of error of +/- 4-5%.

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

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

When interpreting the results, it is important to note that factors such as the timing of unusual or one-off events often affect residents' ratings, particularly if these events occur close to the survey fieldwork period.

In summary, the 2025-26 year was characterised by a combination of political change, significant infrastructure and service decisions, environmental pressures, and ongoing community engagement, all of which may have influenced residents' perceptions of Marlborough District Council. The October 2025 Local Government Elections were a particularly important backdrop to the Residents Survey, with the mayor re-elected and a mix of returning and new councillors elected across the district. Residents also voted to remove the Māori Ward introduced in 2020, with this change taking effect for the 2028 and 2031 elections. The election campaign is likely to have heightened attention to Council performance, priorities and representation. Across the year, Council progressed major investment and governance decisions relating to roading, water services, flood protection, the Waitohi Picton ferry redevelopment and community facilities, while consulting residents on transport, fees, the Long Term Plan and potential local government reform. At the same time, repeated severe weather events, flooding and infrastructure disruption, environmental concerns, rising regulatory and waste charges, and the 6.81 per cent average rates increase

may have placed pressure on perceptions of affordability, service delivery and Council responsiveness. These factors were balanced by visible community initiatives and investments, including events, town-centre revitalisation, environmental protection, improved facilities and resilience measures. Overall, survey results should therefore be interpreted in the context of a year in which residents experienced both tangible Council investment and community benefits, and heightened debate about costs, infrastructure resilience, representation and the future direction of local government.

Key Q1 factors (August - October 2025):

1. In August 2025, Council announced an extension of their successful partnership with The South Island Masters Games for a further two events, ensuring the games will return to Marlborough in 2027 and 2029.
2. In September 2025, Marlborough's Tech and Innovation Hub, Te Au Pūngao, announced it was exceeding its occupancy target, with key targets met for its first five months of operation.
3. In September 2025, public submissions closed for the Marlborough Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) 2024-2034. The Plan provides a roadmap for Council's public transport services now and in the future, including the Total Mobility Scheme which provides a subsidy for travel-impaired residents.
4. In September 2025, Marlborough Dog Control Officers announced they had received more than 2,500 complaints in the 2024/25 year, mostly relating to barking, roaming or lost and found dogs. This was up 200 from the previous year. The Council's Environment and Planning committee noted concern about dog attacks, particularly incidents involving stock.
5. In September and October 2025, voting for the 2025 Local Government Elections was conducted, with voting closing on Saturday 11 October. Marlborough voter turnout rates (44%) were on par with the 2022 election, which at the time was the region's lowest turnout in 25 years; but compared favourably to the national average turnout rate (39%). As a result, the re-elected mayor and new council representatives were sworn

in late October 2025. Marlborough residents also voted to remove the Māori Ward introduced in 2020, which will take effect for the subsequent 2028 and 2031 elections. The electoral campaign and voting period likely brought local issues and concerns to the forefront of residents' minds as they considered the forthcoming Council term and candidates up for election. Public concerns may become more salient at the end of a local electoral cycle – with recent progress (or otherwise) measured against local expectations over the last few years, and highlighted in candidates' election campaigns.

6. In October 2025, chlorination of the Blenheim water supply began, with preparations underway since May 2025. Chlorination is required to ensure the supply complies with the Water Services Act 2021 and national Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules. The Water Services Authority Taumata Arowai requires a residual disinfectant - typically chlorine - to be added to reticulated water supplies in New Zealand. Water supplies in Renwick, Picton, Havelock, Wairau Valley, Seddon and rural Awatere are already chlorinated.

Key Q2 factors (November 2025 - January 2026):

7. In November 2025, a fire at the Resource Recovery Centre in Blenheim temporarily closed the Transfer Station in Wither Road, including the green waste facility. The Resource Recovery Centre, significantly damaged in the fire, was expected to be closed for some time.
8. In November 2025, Council announced that Port Marlborough Pavilion in Picton will transition back to Council governance. The move will ensure the facility continues to run efficiently and sustainably into the future as a well-established community facility. As part of the transition, Council will establish a Pavilion Community Engagement Forum to maintain regular communication with user groups and continue the spirit of partnership.
9. In November 2025, Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Manager partnered with the Marlborough Chamber of Commerce, Council's Play Advocate and other interested parties to deliver Space Create, a new

concept which aims to revitalise the region's two main CBDs within the existing arts strategy budget. Council called on Marlborough's creative community and property owners to work together to support a new project to reinvigorate the Blenheim and Picton town centres.

10. In December 2025, Council's Environment and Planning Committee announced significant changes to marine biodiversity in the Marlborough Sounds. Since 2011, an ecologically significant marine programme has identified more than 200 ecologically significant marine sites, with 16 visited in 2025 by a consultant ecologist finding native species disappearing and sometimes being replaced and outcompeted by other species. A collaborative approach with iwi, government and other groups was recommended to raise awareness and play a key role in advocating for the Sounds.
11. In December 2025, Council unveiled its 2025 lake monitoring update report card, with three of the five regional lakes not meeting the water quality standards set by the Marlborough Environment Plan.
12. In late December 2025, Marlborough District transitioned from a record-breaking dry, hot start - highlighting 2025 as Blenheim's hottest year - to severe, wind-driven storms. MetService issued Orange Wind Warnings for the Sounds, with gusts of 120 km/h causing power outages, alongside Yellow Rain Watches for the ranges, prompting cancellations of public New Year's Eve events in Picton and warnings for travellers.
13. Following on from the December weather events, in January 2026 Marlborough experienced its wettest January in 30 years, recording more than double the average monthly rainfall by 28 January. Heavy localised downpours triggered surface flooding on rural roads, particularly around the Wairau Plain, and several MetService Heavy Rain Watches were issued throughout the month. Persistent low-pressure systems and La Niña conditions resulted in only 212.2 sunshine hours - one of the lowest totals on record - causing the region to lose its "sunshine crown" to Taranaki.
14. In January 2026, Council announced Marlborough's new Welcoming Plan, a practical roadmap to help the region become more inclusive, resilient

and connected. Developed through broad community consultation and guided by the national Welcoming Communities Standard, the plan outlines actions to enhance social cohesion, support economic development and celebrate cultural diversity across the region. The Plan provides a framework for local government, iwi, community organisations, businesses and residents to work together to create a welcoming environment.

15. In January 2026, Marlborough saw the rollout of a new smart lighting pilot across the province. Led by Marlborough Roads, the initiative marks a major step toward modernising the province's streetlight network by improving safety, reducing emissions and delivering better service for communities.
16. In late January 2026, an increase in disorderly behaviour prompted Blenheim Police to ask Council to review its Alcohol Control Areas (ACAs), with extended ACAs requested in the Blenheim and Picton CBDs and a new one created in Renwick. A public consultation would follow.

Key Q3 factors (February - April 2026):

17. In February 2026, the second round of Council's 2025/2026 Commercial Events Fund opened, established to help create economic benefits for Marlborough by attracting new events and building on existing ones with a budget of \$130,000 available for allocation in 2025-26.
18. In February 2026, the latest Blenheim Town Centre Health Check found that consumers spent 7.5 per cent less – \$21.5 million – last year than in the preceding 12 months. Blenheim town centre accounts for nearly a third of Marlborough's spend tally. CBD receipts totalled \$275.3 million from December 2024 to November 2025. However, the vacancy rate dropped from 8 per cent in 2024 to 5 per cent in 2025.
19. In March 2026, eight new Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) were identified and added to Marlborough's growing list of such sites. The new sites total 325 hectares of habitat and include limestone bluffs and scree habitat in south Marlborough. The Marlborough Significant Natural Areas Project

was established in 2000 and involves Council collecting information about natural areas on private land and working in partnership with landowners to protect them.

20. In April 2026, Council launched Waitohi Picton Matters, a new quarterly newsletter dedicated to keeping the community informed about key projects and developments shaping the future of Waitohi Picton. A major focus of the newsletter is the Cook Strait Ferry Replacement Programme and what it means for Picton. The new publication reflects both Council's commitment to the town and the importance of Picton's role in New Zealand's transport network, and will be distributed through existing community channels including the Picton Library and Service Centre.
21. In April 2026, consultation opened on proposed changes to consent fees for 2026/2027, related to Building Control, Environmental Health and Resource Consent Monitoring services. From 1 July 2026, a 3.1 per cent increase in the Consumer Price Index will be applied to Building Control and Resource Consent fees. The Council is also proposing an 8 per cent rise in Environmental Health Fees. These proposed changes reflect recent legislative amendments and are designed to ensure that those generating compliance costs contribute directly, rather than relying on the general ratepayer.
22. In April 2026, Blenheim's new Nature Exploration Space was opened on the Taylor River, with the surrounding environment offering an extension of the dedicated space for running, climbing and exploring. The space began with a consultation process with young tamariki in Blenheim and incorporates a number of ideas enabling them to be curious and creative, while challenging them physically. Created using only natural resources, it is expected the space will evolve over time, with resources being added as they become available.
23. In April 2026, Council joined forces with the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA), Police and ACC as part of the national Better Together campaign. The campaign urges drivers to take a simple but powerful step: drive within the speed limit – it's a limit, not a target. In Marlborough there

will be a strong focus on state highways.

Key Q4 factors (May - July 2026):

24. In early May 2026, Council announced it is strengthening the region's flood resilience, thanks to continued support from the Government's Kānoa Regional Infrastructure Fund Tranche 2. The three-year programme, part of a \$96.8 million nationwide investment announced last year, targets nine priority hydrometric monitoring sites identified in the 2025 Environmental Monitoring Flood Network Risk and Resilience Review. Council secured \$162,000 in government funding for infrastructure upgrades, which is being matched with funding from Council budgets, under a 60:40 government-to-council funding split.
25. In early May 2026, Council's Environment and Planning Committee endorsed the proposed RMA Compliance Strategy 2026 and the updated RMA Enforcement Policy 2026. This marked a significant step in strengthening Council's approach to compliance, monitoring and enforcement under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The updated Enforcement Policy details how decisions are made, including investigation principles, decision-making frameworks, and proportional responses, and explicitly references the latest Solicitor-General's Prosecution Guidelines (2025).
26. In May 2026, Marlborough experienced two large rain events driven by northerly storms that brought heavy downpours, surface flooding, and road closures to parts of the upper South Island. Between 8th-9th May, MetService placed the region under Orange heavy rain and strong wind warnings as storms moved across the South Island. State Highway 6 was shut from Rai Valley to Havelock, cutting off the direct route between Blenheim and Nelson. Emergency services rescued six people trapped in vehicles by rising floodwaters on State Highway 6 near Canvastown.
27. A second notable rain system occurred toward the end of May, pushing the Wairau River to a peak flow of 3,000 cubic metres per second.
28. In May 2026, Council started the process of recruiting directors for the

inaugural board of Marlborough Waters Limited - the new dedicated water services organisation that will take over responsibility for the district's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services on 1 July 2027, under the Government's Local Water Done Well legislation. The new water organisation will be called Marlborough Waters Limited and is 100% owned by Marlborough District Council. Marlborough Waters will officially begin running water services on 1 July 2027, overseeing a \$410 million infrastructure investment programme serving approximately 82 per cent of Marlborough's homes and businesses.

29. In mid-May 2026, Council set its annual plan budget for 2026/27, resulting in an average rates increase of 6.81%. The figure is provisional until the adoption of the budget by Council on 25 June. Roading and footpaths were the biggest item of Council capital expenditure with \$60 million allocated for improvements and renewals, including \$27 million to continue the repairs and rebuilding of the storm damaged Sounds roading network. A further \$27 million was allocated for water services' investment, \$23 million for flood protection, including a major stop bank rebuild at Spring Creek - and \$18 million for property and community facilities.
30. In May 2026, Council announced that the way in which roads in Marlborough are managed and maintained will change from 1 July. The new roading maintenance model is designed to deliver greater oversight and control, cost efficiencies and better responsiveness to unplanned events on the network. It also introduces three new dedicated Marlborough Sounds Roading Maintenance Contracts.
31. In late May 2026, Councillors voted unanimously to proceed with loaning Port Marlborough \$110 million to finance the Waitohi Ferry Redevelopment Project.
32. In late May 2026, Council announced it would increase solid waste fees and charges from 1 July 2026. The annual review ensures fees reflect the true cost of providing waste services, with increases driven by higher operating costs, Government levies and emissions pricing.

33. In early June 2026, a severe weather system hit Marlborough over the King's Birthday weekend, bringing heavy rain watches, rising river levels, and local road closures from Monday, 1 June to Tuesday, 2 June 2026. MetService placed Marlborough under an Orange Heavy Rain Watch during this period.
34. In June 2026, Te Kahu o Waipuna, Marlborough Library and Art Gallery, welcomed its millionth visitor. The milestone visit took place prior to the three-year anniversary of the building opening on 30 June 2023. It reflects its rapid establishment as one of Marlborough's most loved community spaces.
35. In mid-June 2026, public engagement started for Council's next Long Term Plan 2027-2037, with the launch of a community priorities survey. While formal consultation will take place in 2027, Council sought early feedback to inform the plan.
36. In late June 2026, Council finalised an average rates increase of 6.81 per cent for the 2026-2027 financial year. Core expenditure is focused on providing infrastructure, primarily roading, flood protection, waste management, water supply and community facilities in the Annual Plan for 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 adopted at the full council meeting. The original rates increase proposed in the Long Term Plan 2024-34 was forecast at 8.8 per cent. Council's capital budget was reduced from \$132 million, presented at the May budget meeting, to \$127 million which reflects changes in scheduling made to the budget relating to stormwater, community facilities and parks and reserves. Roading and footpaths are the biggest item of Council capital expenditure with \$60 million allocated for improvements and renewals, including \$27 million to continue the repairs and rebuilding of the storm damaged Sounds roading network. A further \$27 million is allocated for water services' investment, \$23 million for flood protection, including a major stop bank rebuild at Spring Creek, and \$18 million for property and community facilities.
37. In late June 2026, Councillors announced they were open to discussions with neighbouring councils as part of the Government's Simplifying Local

Government reform programme. The Government's voluntary 'Head Start' initiative, announced on 5 May, provides councils with an opportunity to explore locally-led options for future local government structures. Outline proposals must be submitted to the Government by 9 August, with successful proposals progressing to a more detailed design phase. Kaikōura District Councillors passed resolutions to formally authorise their CEO to progress discussions with neighbouring Councils including Hurunui, Waimakariri and Marlborough District Council regarding potential options for a Head Start proposal.

38. In late June 2026, Councillors approved a series of regulatory fee increases for the 2026/2027 year, after public consultation. The Environment and Planning Committee had earlier adopted the proposed fee changes. The updated fees cover services under the Food Act, Resource Management Act, Gambling Act and Health Act, including registrations, renewals, compliance work and travel charges. Some charges - such as certain levies, disbursements and actual-cost items - remain unchanged.
39. In July 2026, Council announced improvements to Waitohi Picton's roading network are taking shape with KiwiRail and NZTA projects set to begin in 2027. KiwiRail will begin work on the Dublin Street overbridge early next year, which is designed to remove rail operations from the road network, creating a safe separation between people, vehicles and trains. It will span the Auckland and Market streets' intersection on Dublin Street. The road will be closed at the level crossing from early 2027 through to completion; it's estimated the bridge will take between 18 and 24 months to complete.
40. From 6 to 9 July 2026, a severe storm system triggered a rare MetService Heavy Rain Red Warning for southern Marlborough, marking the first time the region was subjected to this extreme alert category. The event unleashed massive rainfall and high winds across the district, resulting in widespread surface flooding, slips, fallen trees, and rapidly rising river levels. The severe deluge heavily damaged local infrastructure, notably washing out roads and severely damaging the Tyntesfield Bridge, which

isolated roughly 40 residents in the Waihopai Valley. In response, Marlborough Emergency Management activated an incident team to monitor the deteriorating conditions, restrict transit on hazardous roads like State Highway 1, and swiftly transition to a recovery phase by 8 July to restore essential 4WD access to the cut-off rural communities.

41. In July 2026, Council asked residents and ratepayers to take part in a second survey as councillors consider whether to work with Kaikōura District Council on a proposal to create a unitary council covering both districts. The survey followed Kaikōura District Council's decision on 15 July to pursue a joint proposal with Marlborough under the Government's Head Start initiative, part of its Simplifying Local Government reforms. Marlborough councillors must now decide whether to participate in the development of an amalgamation proposal, for consideration by the

Government. Because Marlborough is already a unitary council it is not required to participate in the Head Start process, so Councillors need to decide whether or not to develop a joint amalgamation proposal with Kaikōura.

42. In July 2026, Council announced that the cost of riding Marlborough buses would go up slightly. It now costs 10 cents more for both adults and children to use the buses in Blenheim, 30 cents more for adults using the Picton bus and 10 cents more for children. The fare increases are required by NZTA and came into effect on 1 July.

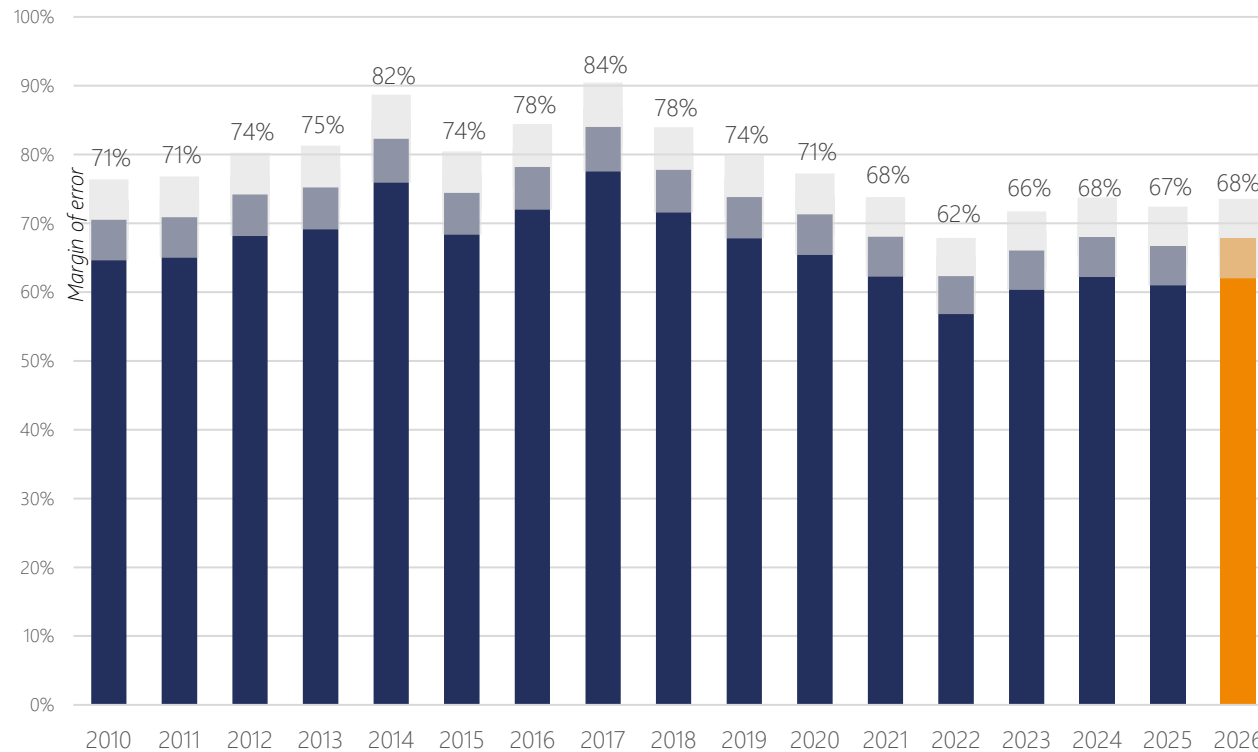
SATISFACTION AT A GLANCE

 Public libraries	 Cemeteries	 Sports grounds	 Civil Defence	 Swimming pools	 Parks & reserves	 Paths & tracks	 Public toilets
MDC 2026: 90% / 8.3	MDC 2026: 86% / 7.5	MDC 2026: 83% / 7.3	MDC 2026: 82% / 7.4	MDC 2026: 82% / 7.2	MDC 2026: 81% / 7.2	MDC 2026: 80% / 7.0	MDC 2026: 80% / 7.1
MDC 2025: 90% / 8.3	MDC 2025: 89% / 7.7	MDC 2025: 87% / 7.5	MDC 2025: 83% / 7.4	MDC 2025: 86% / 7.7	MDC 2025: 87% / 7.7	MDC 2025: 83% / 7.3	MDC 2025: 83% / 7.2
NZB 2026: 76% / 7.6	NZB 2026: 68% / 6.8	NZB 2026: 82% / 7.6	NZB 2026: 67% / 6.6	NZB 2026: 63% / 6.4	NZB 2026: 72% / 7.1	NZB 2026: 51% / 5.6	NZB 2026: 58% / 5.8
 Waste management*	 Sewerage	 Harbours	 Animal control*	 Community halls	 Communication (if aware of comms)#	 Community safety	 Sale & Supply of Alcohol Act
MDC 2026: 79% / 7.3	MDC 2026: 78% / 7.0	MDC 2026: 73% / 6.8	MDC 2026: 72% / 6.8	MDC 2026: 72% / 6.8	MDC 2026: 72% / 6.9	MDC 2026: 70% / 6.5	MDC 2026: 67% / 6.3
MDC 2025: 78% / 7.4	MDC 2025: 76% / 7.2	MDC 2025: 72% / 6.6	MDC 2025: 71% / 6.8	MDC 2025: 77% / 6.7	MDC 2025: 80% / 7.0	MDC 2025: 74% / 6.7	MDC 2025: 77% / 6.7
NZB 2026: 64% / 6.6	NZB 2026: 66% / 6.7	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 42% / 5.2	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 58% / 6.0	NZB 2026: n/a
 Health & Food Act	 Tourism	 Irrigation of the Southern Valleys	 Biosecurity*	 Culture & heritage	 Stormwater	 Flood protection	 Footpaths
MDC 2026: 63% / 6.4	MDC 2026: 63% / 6.0	MDC 2026: 63% / 6.3	MDC 2026: 61% / 5.9	MDC 2026: 59% / 6.1	MDC 2026: 59% / 5.8	MDC 2026: 55% / 5.7	MDC 2026: 54% / 5.6
MDC 2025: 75% / 6.7	MDC 2025: 63% / 6.1	MDC 2025: 60% / 6.2	MDC 2025: 65% / 6.2	MDC 2025: 62% / 6.3	MDC 2025: 65% / 6.2	MDC 2025: 62% / 6.1	MDC 2025: 58% / 5.8
NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 63% / 6.4^	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 56% / 5.7	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 53% / 5.3
 Community support*	 Car parking	 Housing for seniors	 Democratic process*	 Drinking water	 Environmental policy & monitoring*	 Resource consent management*	 Roads*
MDC 2026: 52% / 5.9	MDC 2026: 52% / 5.5	MDC 2026: 51% / 5.7	MDC 2026: 51% / 5.9	MDC 2026: 50% / 5.3	MDC 2026: 50% / 5.6	MDC 2026: 49% / 5.7	MDC 2026: 45% / 5.4
MDC 2025: 57% / 6.0	MDC 2025: 55% / 5.6	MDC 2025: 63% / 6.3	MDC 2025: 58% / 6.1	MDC 2025: 67% / 6.7	MDC 2025: 57% / 6.0	MDC 2025: 57% / 6.0	MDC 2025: 53% / 5.8
NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 50% / 5.6	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 58% / 6.2	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 30% / 4.3**	NZB 2026: 45% / 4.9
 Building Act	 Economic development	 Overall satisfaction	 Very good performance (≥80%)  Good performance (60%-79%)				
MDC 2026: 42% / 5.4	MDC 2026: 41% / 5.1	MDC 2026: 68% / 6.3	 Services for improvement (50%-59%)  Great improvement potential (≤49%)				
MDC 2025: 53% / 5.8	MDC 2025: 51% / 5.6	MDC 2025: 67% / 6.3	*Service group aggregated average ratings #based on those aware of Council news/info/adverts (last 3 months) NZB = New Zealand benchmark ** NZB measured 'consents management' satisfaction ^ NZB measured 'enabling and promoting events'				
NZB 2026: 30% / 4.3**	NZB 2026: n/a	NZB 2026: 48% / 5.5					

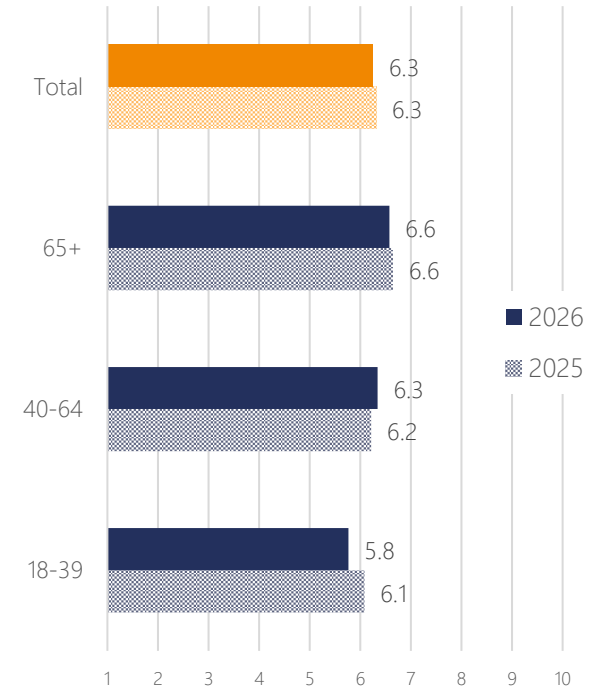
MAIN FINDINGS



Overall performance of Marlborough District Council in the last 12 months



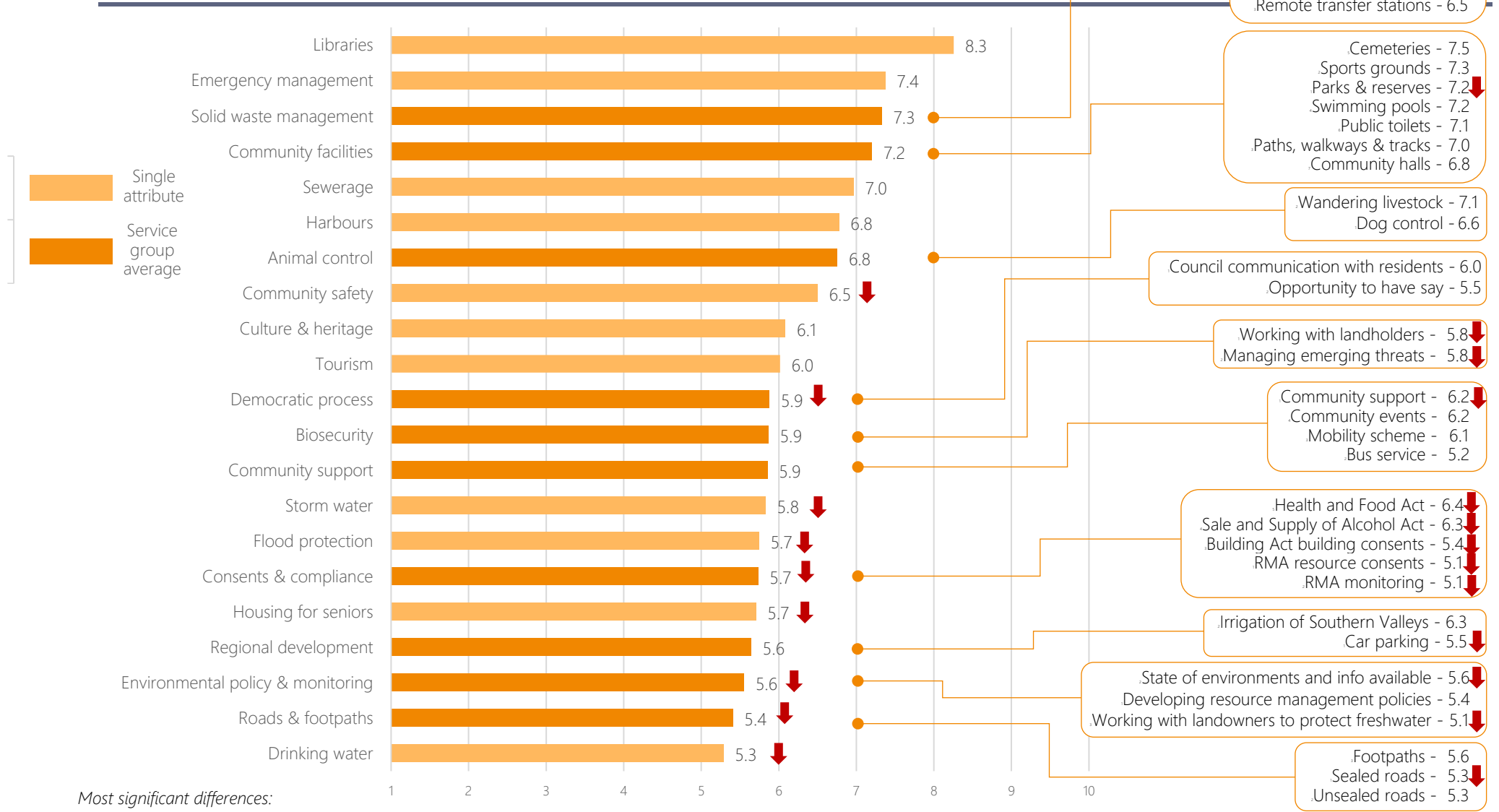
Average satisfaction score by age



- In 2026, 2-in-3 respondents (68%) were satisfied with MDC's overall performance (6.3 on average).
- Despite notable variations, there has been no significant trend over time. The current 2026 result remained at the high-60s plateau seen over the last four years, and remained above the low in 2022 (62%). However, this represents a lower level of satisfaction over the longer term 10-year period (from the high-70s level seen from 2016 to 2018).
- In 2026, overall satisfaction was similar between residents in Blenheim (68%, 6.2 average) and those in other areas combined (also 68%, 6.4 average); in contrast to the differences seen in 2025 (6.6 vs 5.9 average), 2024 (6.6 vs. 6.0) and 2023 (6.5 vs. 5.7). Satisfaction was lowest in Havelock (53%, 6.2 average, albeit low sample).
- Average overall performance satisfaction scores remained higher among older respondents (aged 65+) (6.6 average) than for younger adults (18-39) (5.8 average); though this was not reflected in the proportions satisfied overall (70% vs 66% satisfied). No other segment differences were noted.

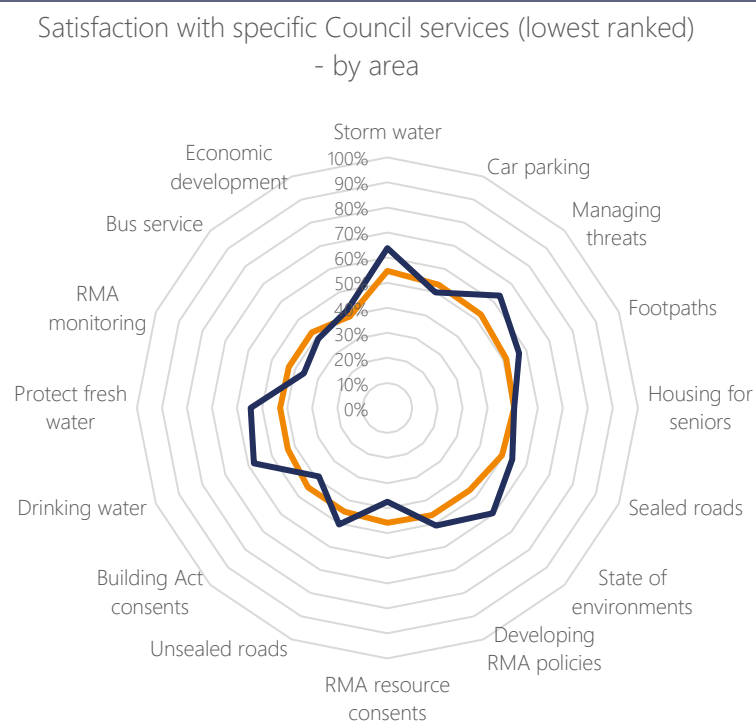
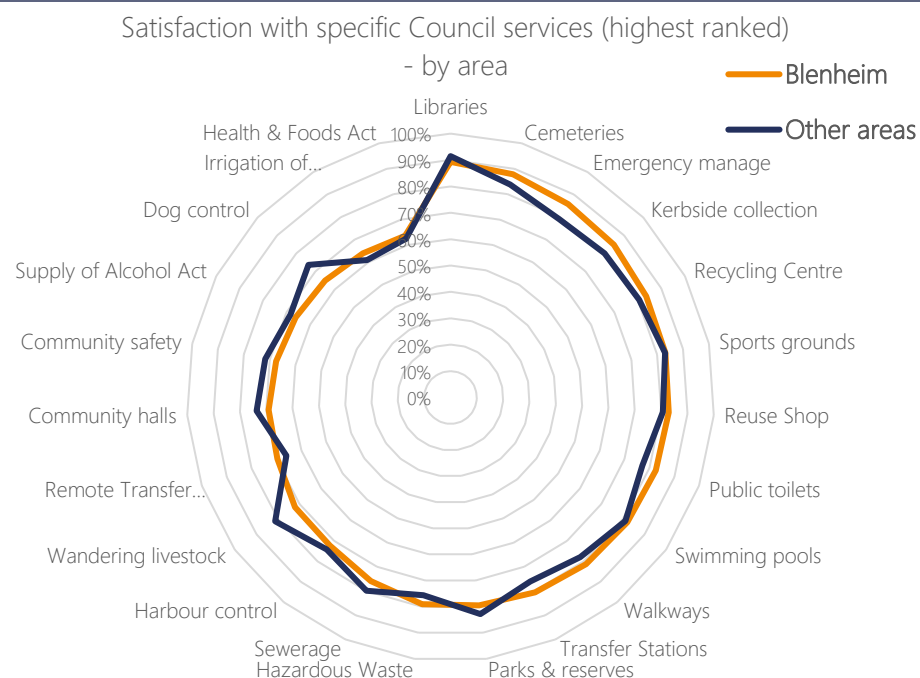
OVERALL RATINGS OF SERVICES

Average satisfaction scores



OVERALL RATINGS OF SERVICES – BY AREA

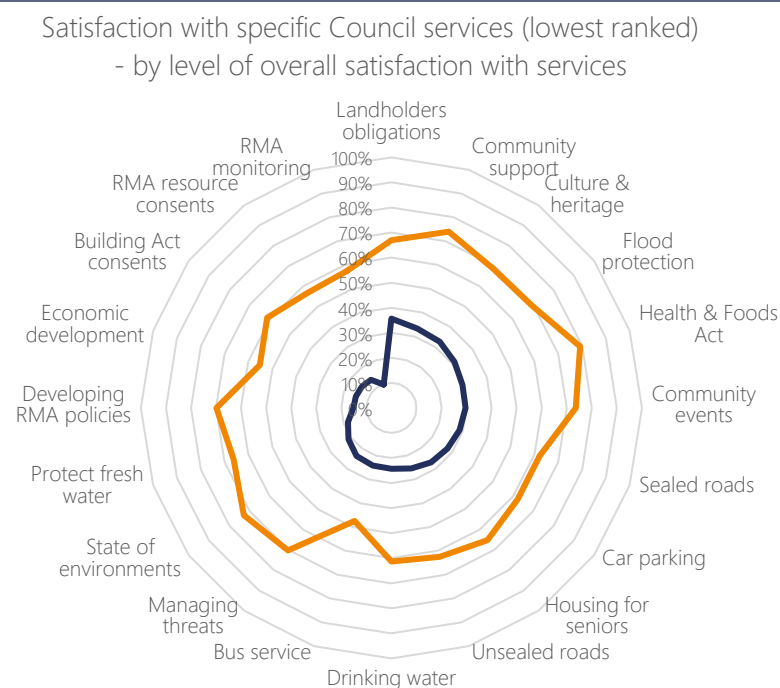
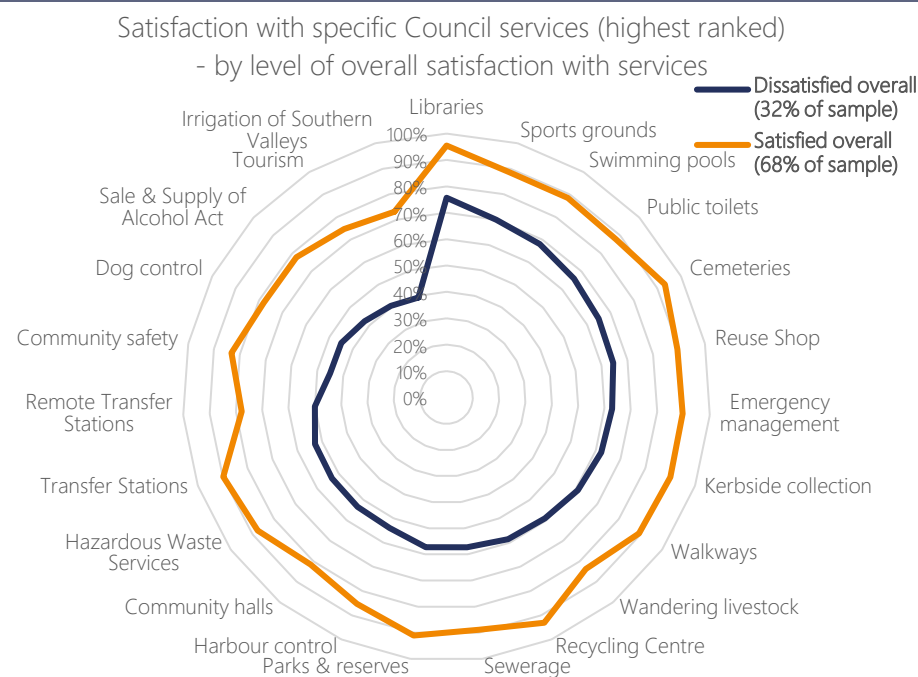
Service performance in the last 12 months – comparing residents from Blenheim and other areas (combined)



- Overall, specific service satisfaction patterns in 2026 are broadly similar between Blenheim residents and those living in other areas of Marlborough, with relatively small differences across most Council services.
- The largest gaps among the higher-rated services appear for wandering livestock and dog control, where satisfaction is higher among residents from other areas outside Blenheim.
- Among the lower-rated services, differences are somewhat more pronounced. Residents from other areas outside Blenheim report higher satisfaction with stormwater, managing threats, sealed roads, state of environments, protecting fresh water and drinking water. Blenheim residents are somewhat more positive about RMA resource consents.
- Overall, results suggest that location has a greater relationship with satisfaction for selected services than across Council services generally, particularly for services whose delivery or relevance may differ between urban Blenheim and other parts of Marlborough.

OVERALL RATINGS OF SERVICES – BY OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVELS

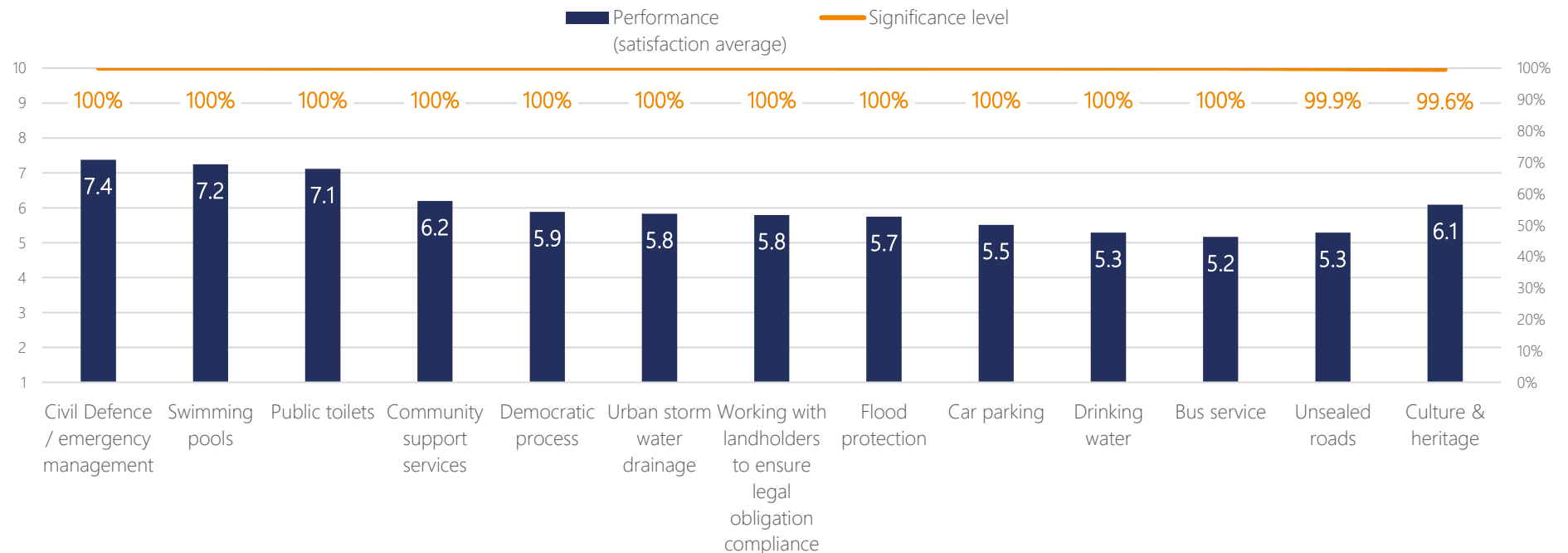
Service performance in the last 12 months – comparing residents Satisfied overall versus Dissatisfied overall with Council performance



- Satisfaction with individual Council services is consistently lower among residents who are dissatisfied with Council performance overall (representing 32% of respondents in 2025-26), with sizeable gaps evident across almost all measures.
- The gap is particularly pronounced for several lower-rated services, with Overall Dissatisfied residents reporting very low satisfaction with RMA monitoring, RMA resource consents, Building Act consents, economic development, developing RMA policies, protecting fresh water, state of environments, and managing threats .
- Other notable pinch points for the Overall Dissatisfied segment include multiple infrastructure-related areas (especially drinking water, roads, flood protection, etc.) where satisfaction remains low and trails the Overall Satisfied group substantially.
- The Overall Dissatisfied segment does have more positive perceptions (more than 60% satisfaction) for generally well-regarded services. However, clear gaps remain even for those high rated services like libraries, sports grounds, swimming pools, public toilets, cemeteries and Reuse Shop - indicating that overall perceptions of Council performance are associated with views across a broad range of services.

PRIORITY ASSESSMENT

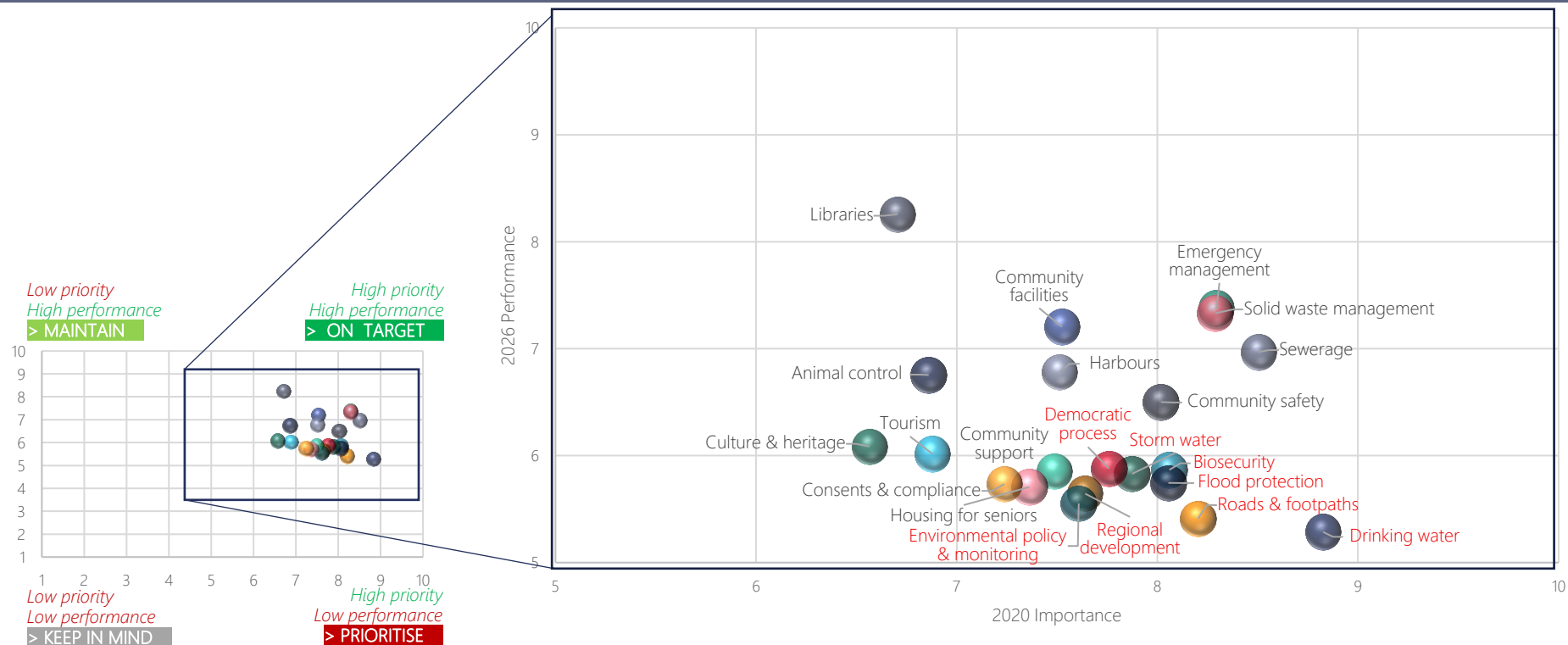
The chart below presents the results of key driver analysis to determine which services most influence residents' rating of MDC's overall performance. Only significant deliverables are shown, ranked in order of the level of statistical significance and performance.



- A large number of service areas in 2026 influenced overall satisfaction to some degree, again reflecting the diverse range of factors that residents take into account when assessing their interactions and satisfaction with the Council. In 2026, 13 essential areas had the strongest and measurably significant influence.
- Assessed against residents' corresponding performance scores, several influential services also performed relatively positively – civil defence, swimming facilities and public toilets. However, multiple other service areas scored lower (below 6.0 average) and therefore represented the greatest potential for improvement.
- The **democratic process** consistently ranks as a highly influential factor with room for growth, particularly in the way Council engages with residents and encourages feedback.
- In addition, a range of infrastructure-related functions – especially **stormwater, flood protection, drinking water, roads and transportation** - provide opportunities to positively influence resident sentiment in 2026; all exhibiting a strong influence on overall performance perceptions despite lower satisfaction ratings.

PERCEPTUAL MAPPING

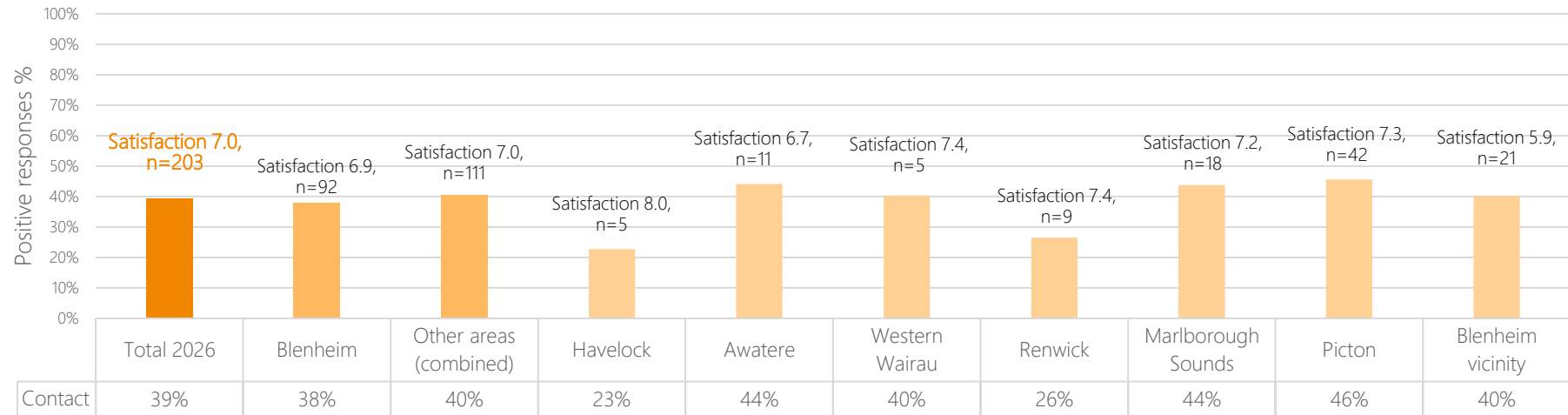
In 2020, residents were asked to rate the priority of the services they receive. Assuming typical consistency in perceived service importance, these ratings were compared to perceived service performance in 2026. To present performance and prioritisation data in a meaningful and visual format, the below perceptual map illustrates the interplay of these two datasets in relation to each other.



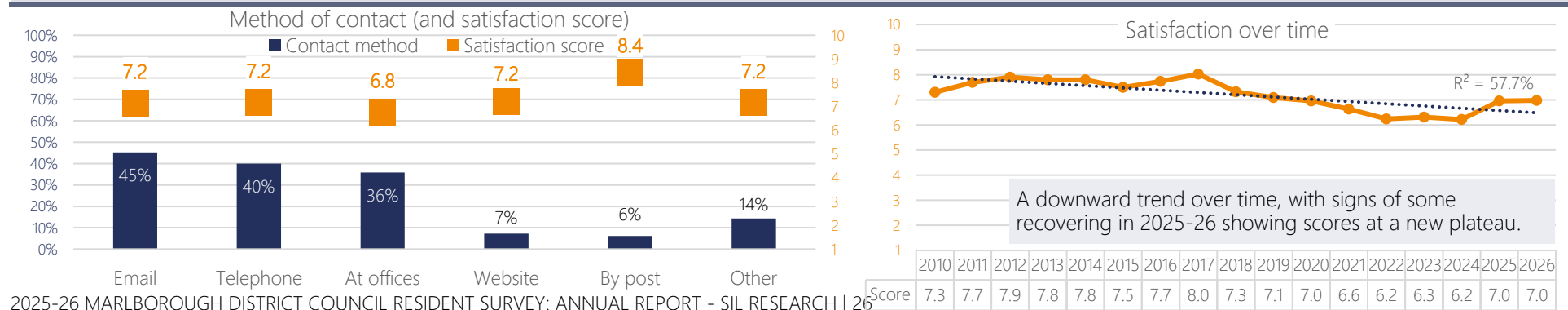
- Overall, every service category was considered of high importance (above 6 out of 10) with moderate-to-high performance ratings (all above 5 out of 10); typical patterns of variation between services were again noted.
- Satisfaction with **Library services** consistently remains the stand-out service, again exceeding the perceived importance attributed to this service in 2020.
- In 2026, the largest negative gap between performance and importance was measured for **Drinking water**. Taken together, **Drinking water**, **Roads/footpaths**, **Regional development**, **Democratic process** and several **environmental factors** represented the greatest opportunities for improvement.

CONTACT WITH THE COUNCIL

Direct contact with the Council

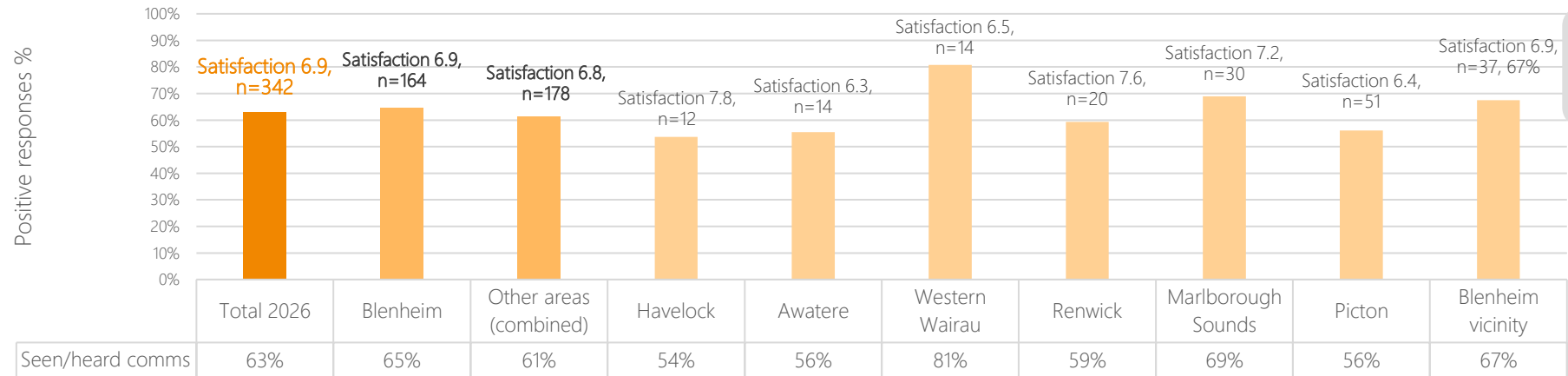


- 2-in-5 respondents (39%) indicated contacting the Council in 2026 – similar to rates of contact incidence in 2025 (45%) and 2024 (35%).
- Email remained the most mentioned contact method in 2026 (45%, no change from 47% in 2025), with 'telephone' still the second-most prevalent channel (40%, and 42% in 2025). Personal contact at offices was similarly high (36%, 43% in 2025).
- 7-in-10 residents (70%) in 2026 were satisfied with their direct contact with the Council (7.0 on average) – maintaining the improved 2025 scores.
- Satisfaction continued to vary based on contact method, but most scored positively (above 7.0 average). Both email and telephone contact (7.2) saw increased satisfaction since 2025 (6.6 and 6.4, respectively).
- In 2026, both prevalence of and satisfaction with contact was similar for residents in Blenheim (38% contact, 6.9 average satisfaction) and other areas (40%, 7.0). Picton residents again had the highest contact prevalence (46%), and moderate satisfaction with this (7.3 average).



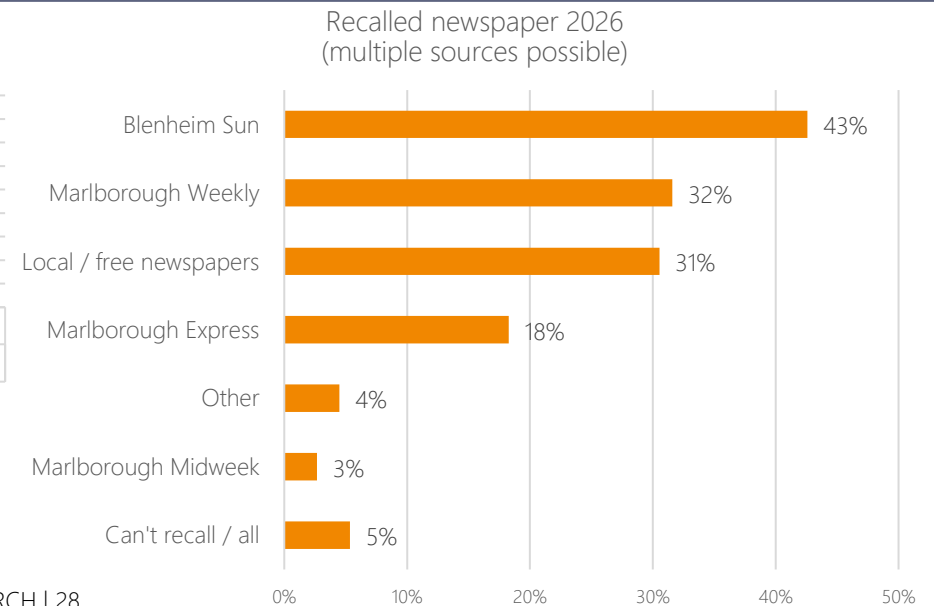
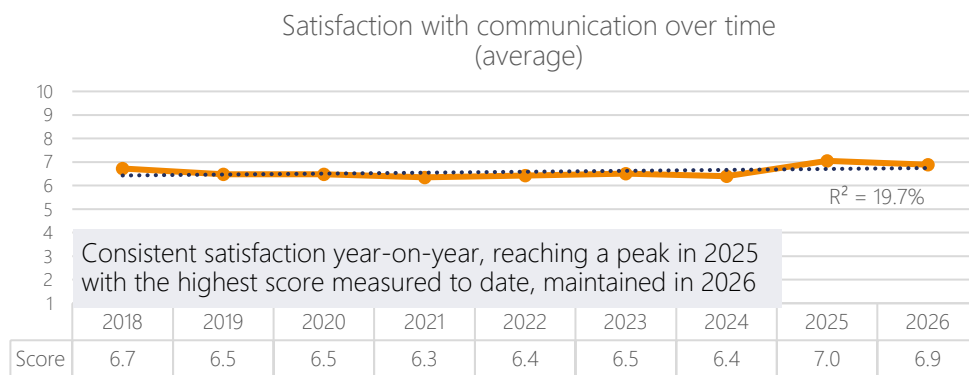
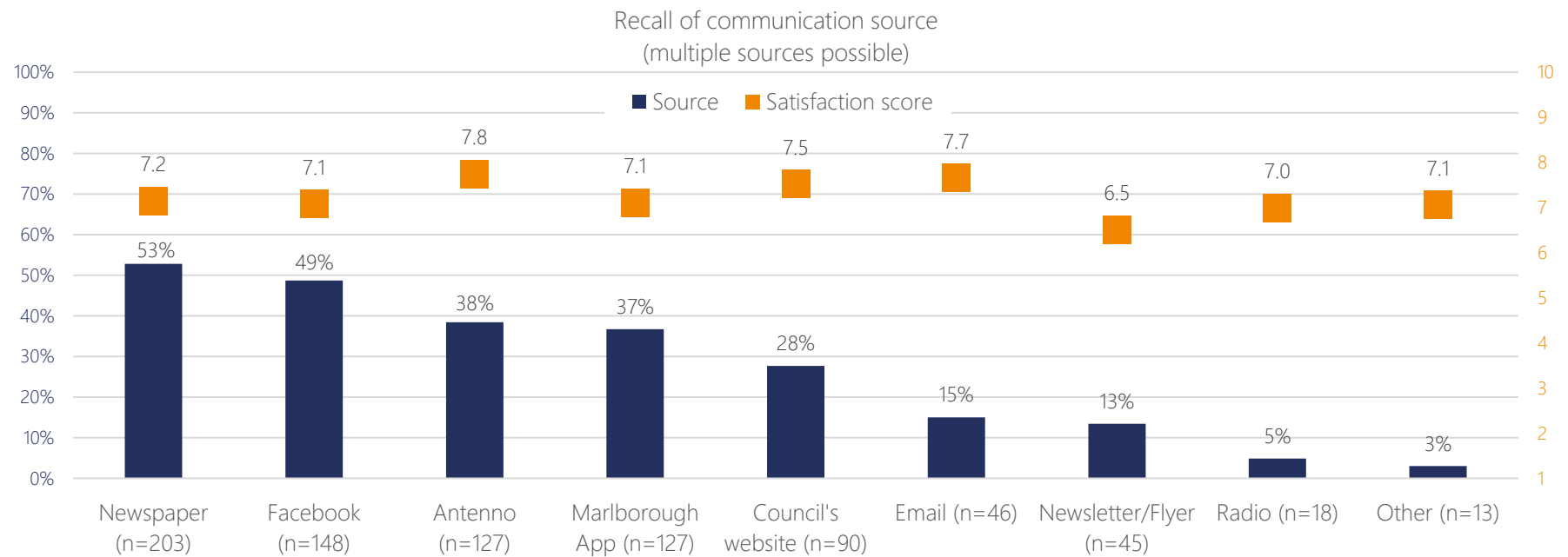
COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

How well does the Council communicate with residents?



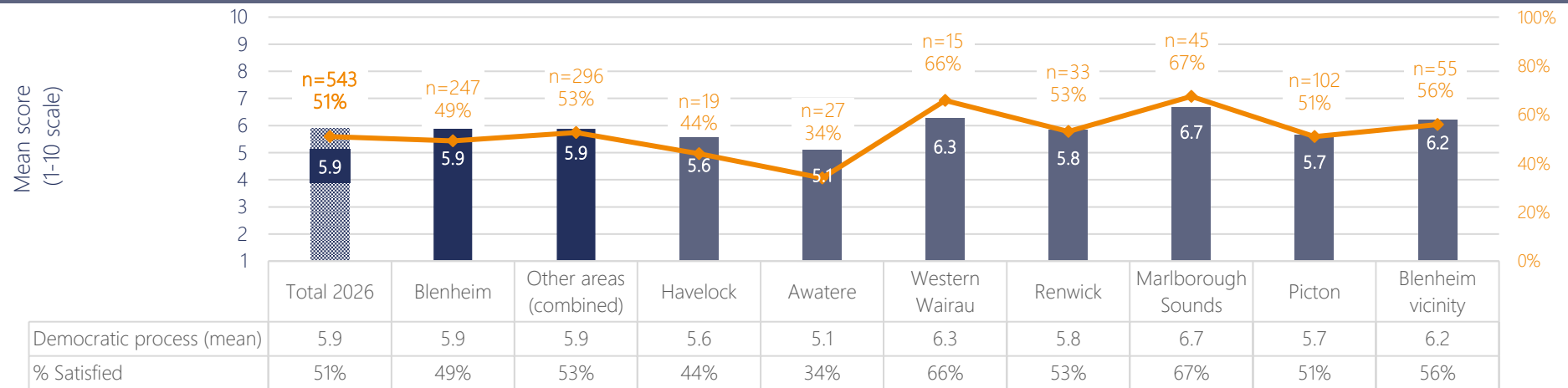
Note: Satisfaction scores based on those aware of communications

- In 2026, 3-in-5 respondents (63%) recalled seeing or hearing news or advertisements from the Council (61% in 2025 and 2024).
- The typical pattern of communications sources was again noted, with 'Newspapers' remaining most prevalent (53%, 59% in 2025). The 'Blenheim Sun' (43%) was most frequently noted by residents recalling a newspaper.
- Social media, especially Facebook (49%), remained a commonly accessed source for residents (47% in 2025, 44% in 2024). Antenno (38%, also 38% in 2025, up from 21% in 2024) and Marlborough App (37%, 27% in 2025, 24% in 2024) continued to show growth compared to previous years.
- 7-in-10 (72%) of those aware of Council comms in 2026 were satisfied with this communication – slightly down from 2025 (80%) but similar to 68% in 2024; the average rating (6.9 out of 10) consistent with the 2025 high (7.0).
- In this context, most comms channels rated highly (above 7.0 average), with Antenno (7.8, 7.7 in 2025) again among the highest rated.
- Satisfaction with Council communication was similarly positive across the district in 2026, with no difference between residents in Blenheim (65% aware, 6.9 average satisfaction) and other areas (61% aware, 6.8 satisfaction).
- Awareness of communications was again higher with age: half of residents aged 18-39 (52%, also 52% in 2025) recalling Council comms, compared to 2-in-3 (69%) of residents aged 65+. Satisfaction was slightly lower for 18-39s (63% vs 74% 65+). Typical channel patterns remained: social media (76% Facebook) more prevalent for 18-39s, traditional media (69% newspaper) preferred by older adults (aged 65+) over Facebook (30%). Antenno (48%) and the Marlborough App (44%) were more preferred by 40-64s.
- Residents satisfied with Council's overall performance remained more aware of communications (76% in 2026), and more satisfied with this (87%, 7.6 average) - compared to those dissatisfied with Council overall (51% aware and 24% satisfied (4.7 average)).

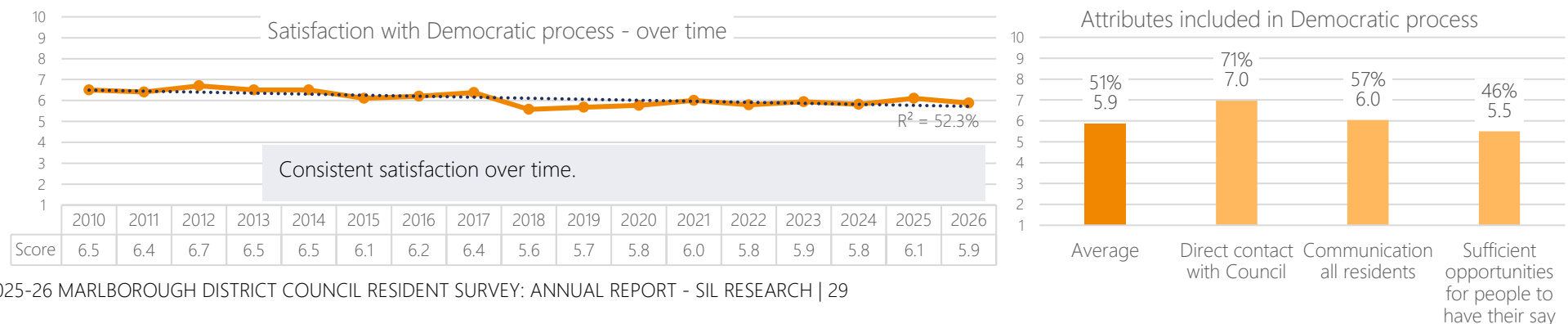


DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

A combined average democracy score, representing how well the Council performs in terms of democratic processes, incorporated the following questions: overall communication with residents (all residents), interaction and engagement with the Council (e.g. direct contact), and sufficient opportunities for people to have their say.



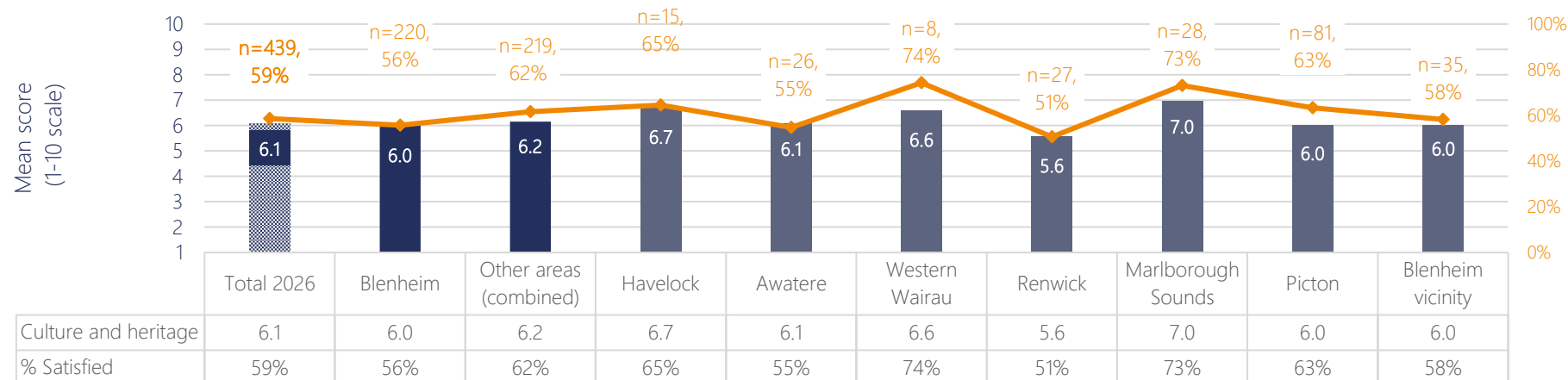
- In 2026, overall satisfaction with MDC's democratic processes (5.9) was generally consistent with recent years. Positive sentiment (satisfied ratings) also remained fairly consistent (51%) compared to 2025 (58%), 2024 (57%) and previous years.
- Across contributing attributes, satisfaction with direct Council contact remained highest (71%); opportunities for feedback again lowest scoring (46%).
- Overall satisfaction with the democratic process was similar in Blenheim (49%) and other areas (53%); with limited variation across the district.
- Satisfaction with democratic processes notably varied across age cohorts, residents aged 18-39 the least satisfied (33%, 50% in 2025), compared to residents 65+ (62%, 64% in 2025). Opportunities to have their say remained particularly low scoring for younger residents (29% satisfied), though direct contact scored higher (69%).



CULTURE AND HERITAGE

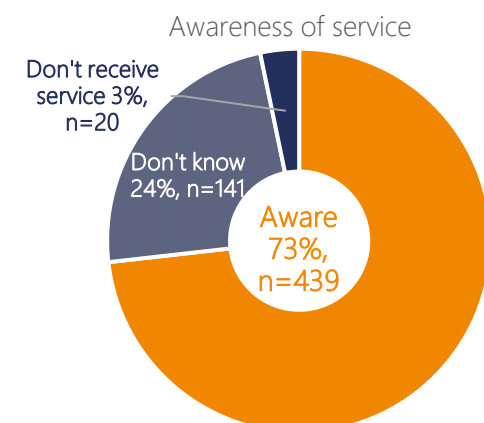
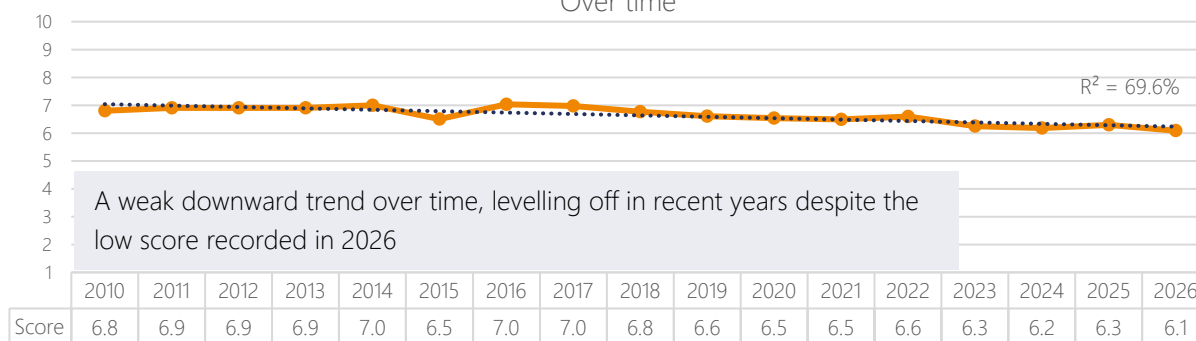


How well does the Council perform in supporting culture and heritage?



- 3-in-4 (73%) of all respondents in 2026 were aware of local culture and heritage support; about 1-in-4 (27%) stated 'Don't know' or 'Don't receive'.
- Overall, 3-in-5 respondents (59%) who provided a rating were satisfied with culture and heritage support in the region (6.1 on average).
- 2025 results were similar to 2025 (62% satisfied), with results generally consistent over recent years despite a weak downward trend.
- Satisfaction was not significantly different for residents in Blenheim than in other areas overall, although higher in Marlborough Sounds (73%) than Renwick (51%).
- Satisfaction with culture and heritage was significantly higher (almost twice as high) for older residents (68% aged 40+) than younger residents (35% aged 18-39).

Satisfaction with culture and heritage
Over time



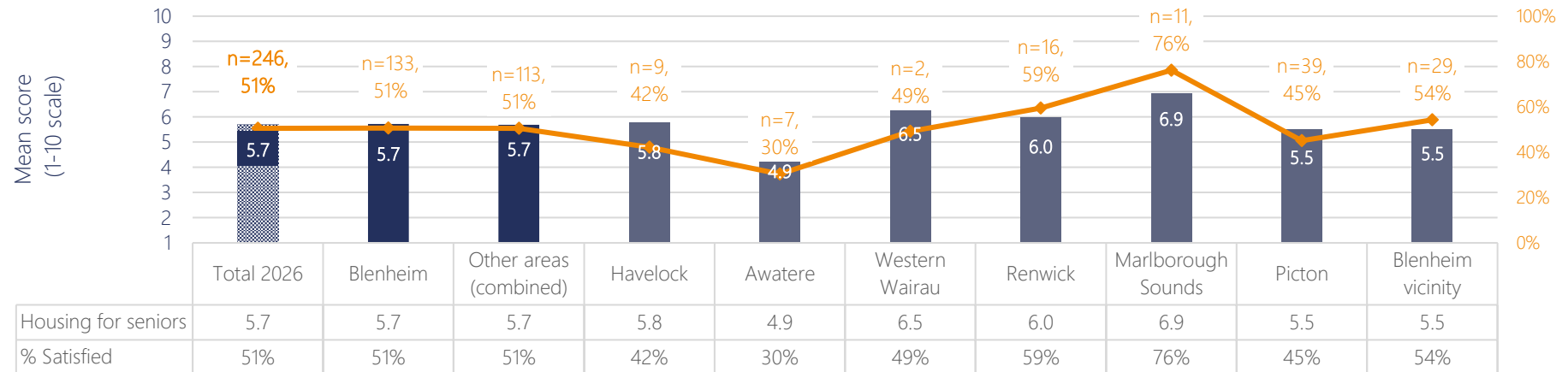
Culture and heritage unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
CULTURE AND HERITAGE	General satisfaction with culture & heritage provision	14	Dissatisfaction with Marlborough Museum/Brayshaw Park management	9
	Museums, galleries & heritage facilities valued	10	Insufficient support/funding/development of heritage & cultural assets	7
	Cultural diversity & inclusiveness	8	Perceived imbalance in cultural representation	7
	Māori culture & iwi engagement	7	Oppose perceived over-emphasis on Māori/minority representation	6
	Council funding/support for culture & heritage	7	Insufficient Māori representation or partnership	2
	Good range of cultural events/activities	6	Poor quality/condition of heritage facilities & historic assets	4
	Recent investment/improvement in cultural facilities	4	Excessive spending/ poor value for money	4
	Good promotion/visibility of cultural activity	4	Limited cultural information/promotion/visitor experiences	3
	Qualified satisfaction/opportunities for greater visibility	4	Insufficient activities for children/young people	1

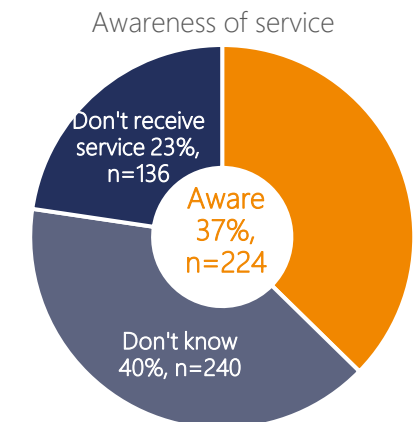
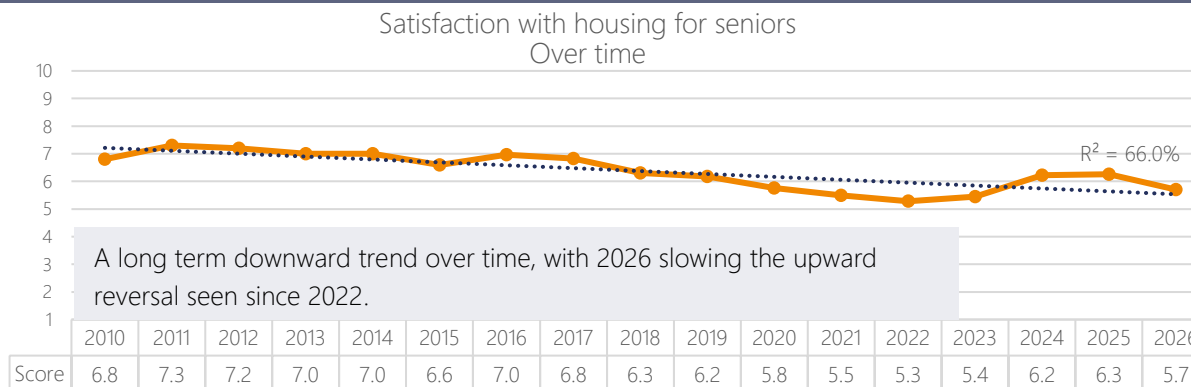
HOUSING FOR SENIORS



How well does the Council perform in providing housing for seniors?



- Awareness of housing for seniors remained low (37%) in 2026; 6-in-10 respondents (63%) could not rate this service - the lowest level of service awareness across the survey.
- Despite variance over time (due to lower sample sizes), satisfaction with Council housing was generally consistent in 2026 (51%, 5.7 average) – down from the recent peak in 2025, but remaining above the lower scores from 2021-23. However, a gradual fall is apparent over the longer term trend.
- Similar satisfaction scores were measured between Blenheim and other areas overall in 2026; small sub-samples of aware residents limiting comparisons across local areas.
- Satisfaction with senior housing provision was slightly higher for younger residents aged 18-39 (56%, 6.2 average) this year compared to those aged 40-64 (42%, 5.3 average); though low sub-sample sizes limited significant differences.



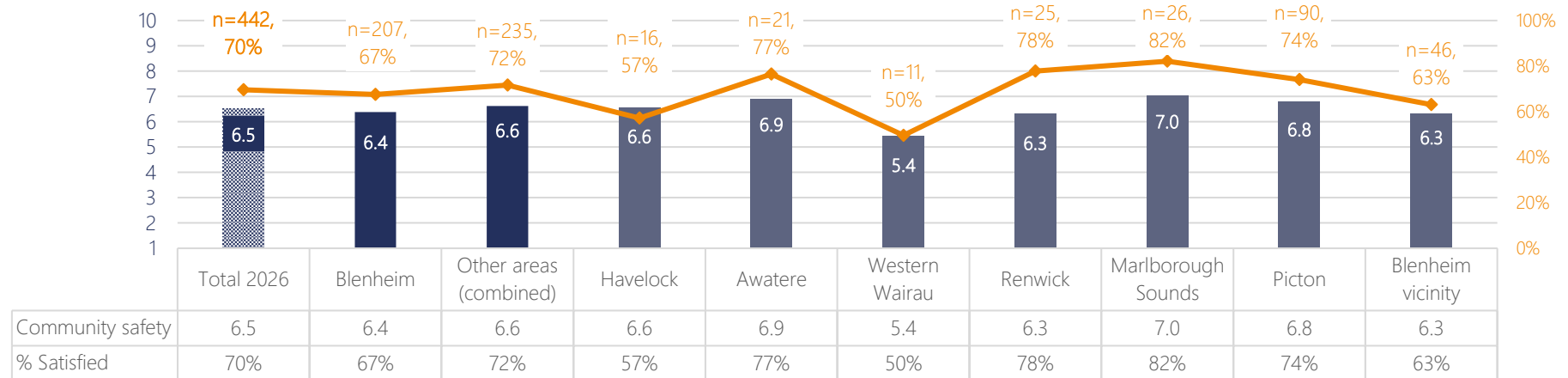
Housing for seniors unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
HOUSING FOR SENIORS	General satisfaction with senior housing	12	Insufficient housing supply and limited availability	11
	Adequate availability and provision of housing	7	Long waiting times and difficulty obtaining housing	3
	Positive personal, family or observed experiences	5	Affordability and rent increases	5
	New housing and recent improvements	4	Need for smaller, accessible and suitable housing	4
	Well-maintained and well- managed accommodation	3	Poor housing condition and inadequate maintenance	3
	Qualified satisfaction and future capacity concerns	2	Vacant units and slow replacement or redevelopment	2
			Geographic gaps in provision	2
			Council priorities, governance and service model concerns	6
			Concern about hardship among older residents	4

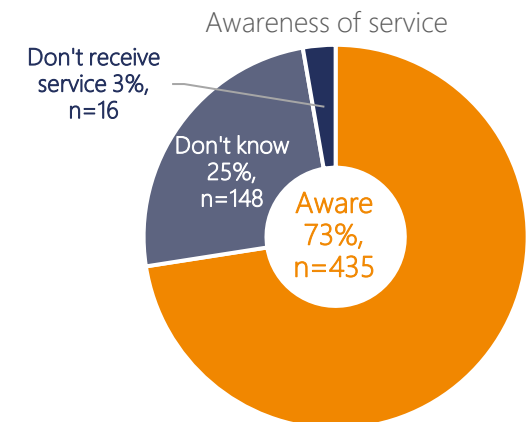
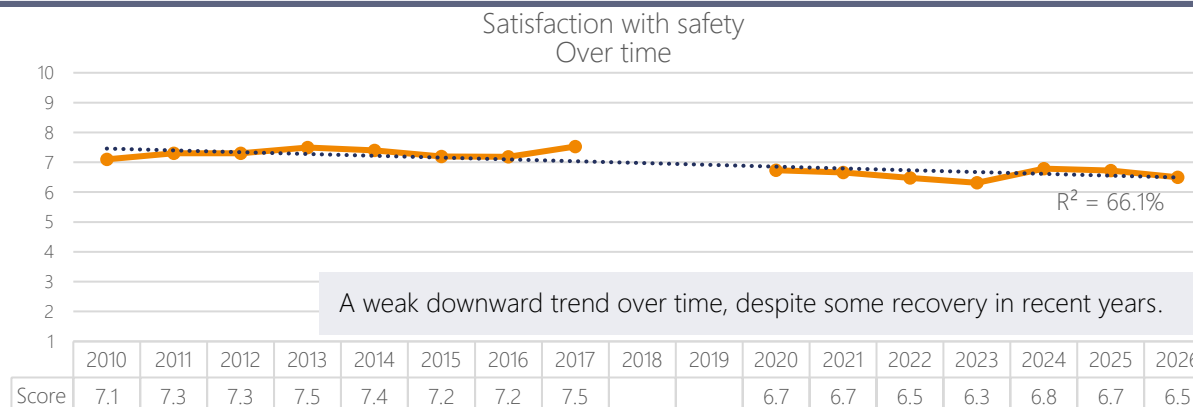
COMMUNITY SAFETY



How well does the Council perform in supporting community safety?



- In 2026, 7-in-10 respondents (73%) were able to provide a rating in relation to community safety.
- In addition, 7-in-10 (70%) of these respondents were satisfied with Council support of community safety (6.5 on average) – similar to 2025 and recent years, despite demonstrating a slight decline over time.
- This year perceptions of community safety were similar in both Blenheim (67%, 6.4 average) and other areas overall (72%, 6.6 average).
- However, this represented a drop in satisfaction for Blenheim residents since 2025 (80%, 7.2 average), with a slight rise in other areas since 2025 (67%, 6.2 average).
- In 2026, residents aged 65+ (76%, 6.8 average) again had more positive safety perceptions than those aged 18-64 year olds (67%, 6.4 average).
- Perceptions of safety were also more positive for females than males (76% vs 63%), and newer residents (81% under 10 years vs 68% 10+ years).

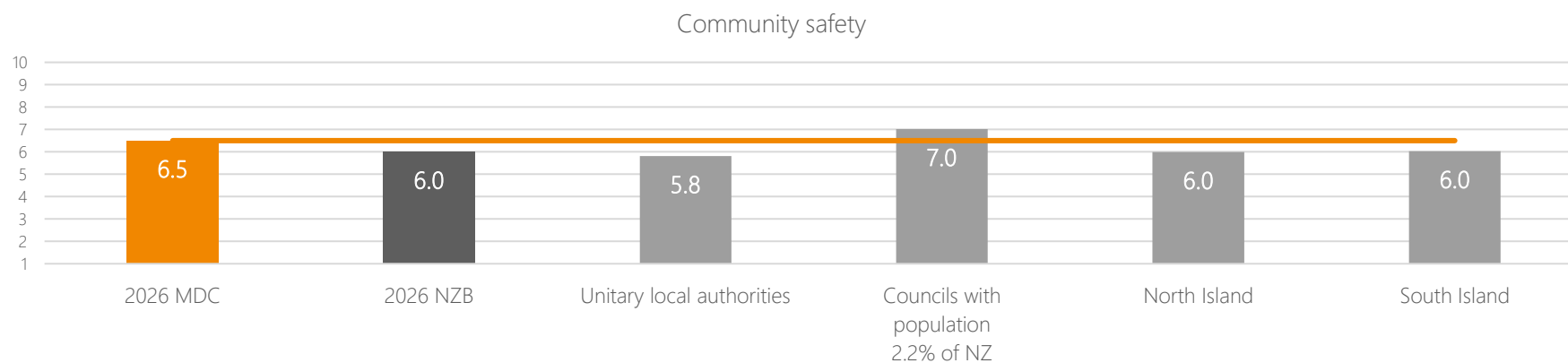


Community safety unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
COMMUNITY SAFETY	General feeling of safety in the community	16	Insufficient police, patrols and visible enforcement	6
	General satisfaction with community safety	15	Declining perceptions of personal and community safety	5
	Visible policing, monitoring and community patrols	6	Unsafe pedestrian, cycling and road environments	5
	Good lighting and safe public environments	5	Anti-social behaviour and intimidation in public spaces	4
	Council takes community safety seriously	5	Insufficient support for homelessness and vulnerable people	2
	Strong community cohesion and mutual support	3	Poor complaint handling and unclear Council response	2
	Safety around works, hazards and emergency information	2	Reliance on residents for security	2
	Qualified satisfaction with some residual safety concerns	4	Concerns about policing effectiveness and response capacity	3

Community safety – MDC vs. New Zealand average

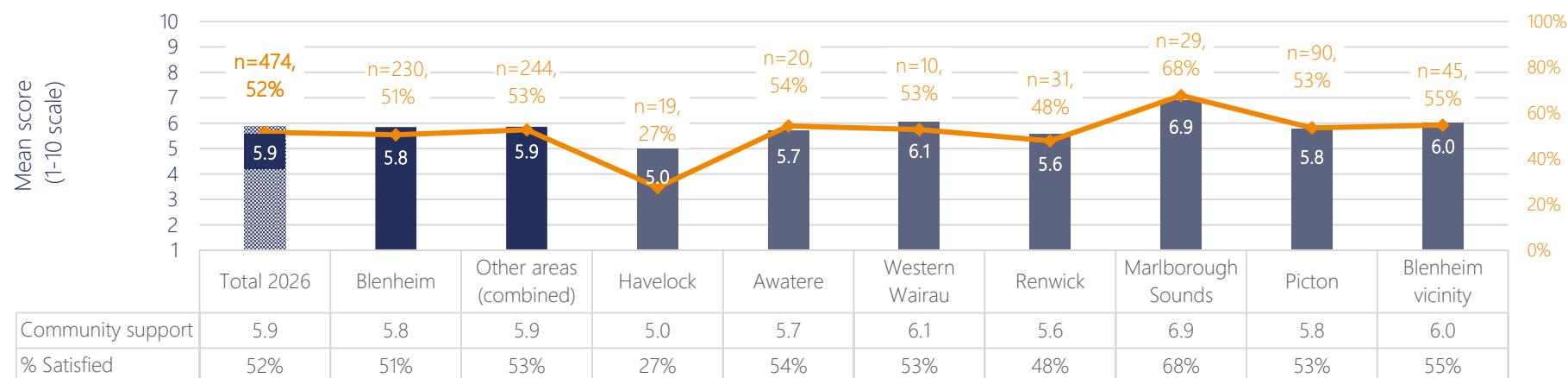
Community safety in the MDC region scored above the national benchmark, and above other South Island councils.



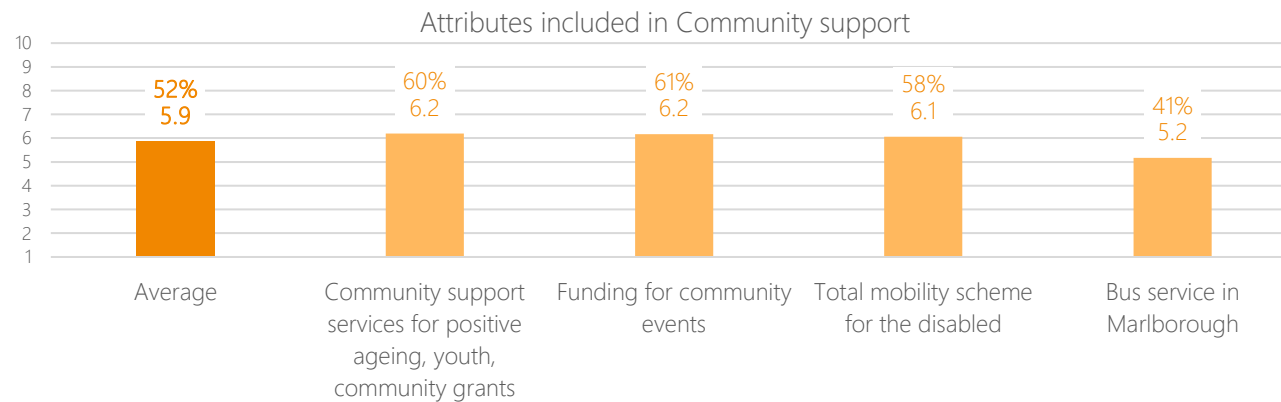
COMMUNITY SUPPORT



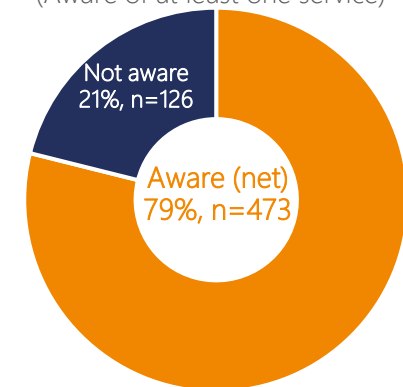
How well does the Council perform in providing community support services, Marlborough bus service, total mobility scheme, and funding for community events?



- 8-in-10 residents in 2026 were able to rate at least one community support attribute (79%, n=473); however, no more than 3-in-5 residents could rate any specific service and only 1-in-3 could rate total mobility (33%) and under half (49%) the bus service - these services relate to specific segments of the community only. About 1-in-5 (18%) rated all four services.
- Overall, satisfaction across all community support remained moderate (52%, 5.9 average). This was generally consistent with 2025 (57%, 6.0 average). However, 2026 saw the lowest group score to date (and the first time the average has dropped below 6.0), reinforcing previous signs of a gradual decline over time.
- Satisfaction across specific community support attributes was similarly moderate (around 60%); highest for community support services for positive ageing/youth/community grants (60%, 6.2 average). However, satisfaction with the bus service remained notably lower (41%, 5.2 average) and down slightly from 2025 (46%, 5.2 average).
- In 2026, satisfaction across community support services overall was similar in Blenheim (51%, 5.8 average) and other areas generally (53%, 5.9 average). Compared to 2025, this was a drop for Blenheim (68%, 6.6 average) but a slight rise for other areas (46%, 5.5 average). Similar patterns were seen across attributes, with Blenheim residents showing less satisfaction this year for the bus service (43%, 5.9% 2025) and mobility scheme (62%, 73% 2025).
- Age differences remained apparent for community support overall, with satisfaction lower for younger residents 18-39 (40%, 5.3 average) than those aged 65+ (62%, 6.4 average). The greatest age differences were apparent for event funding (40% vs 69%) and community support services (46% vs 71%), reflecting varying generational expectations.
- Residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall were notably less satisfied with community support (25%, 4.7 average) compared to those satisfied with Council performance overall (64%, 6.4 average); with a similar trend measured across all four attributes.



Net awareness of service group
(Aware of at least one service)



Note: Following discontinuation by the Council in 2023, the Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme was removed from the survey in 2024-25. Comparisons with group averages before 2024-25 are therefore indicative only.

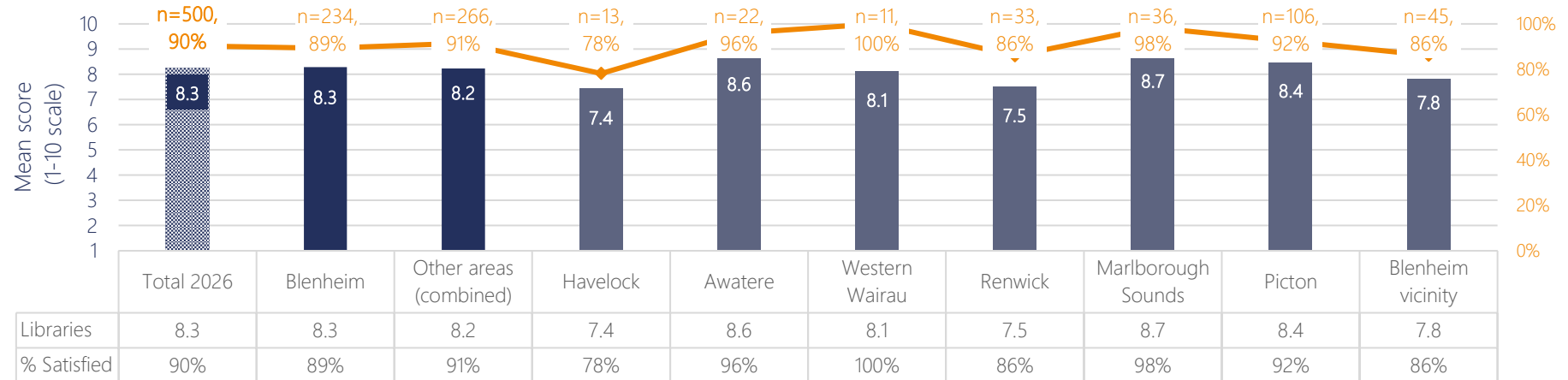
Community support unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
COMMUNITY SUPPORT	General satisfaction with Council community support	11	Low awareness and poor visibility of services	2
	Community grants and financial support	7	Difficulty accessing information	2
	Support for older people and positive ageing	5	Eligibility barriers and perceived gaps in support	1
	Support for community programmes/events/organisations	6	Lack of follow-up or continuity of support	1
	Helpful and accessible Council staff	4	General or unspecified dissatisfaction	1
	Community engagement and communication	3		
	Awareness and availability of services	5		
	Qualified satisfaction/opportunities to improve awareness	2		
BUS SERVICE	General satisfaction with bus service	18	No service or very limited service availability	21
	Important option for older people/residents without vehicles	7	Insufficient frequency and inconvenient timetables	16
	Good coverage and accessibility	6	Limited route coverage and poor connections	17
	Reliable, regular and punctual operation	5	Lack of services to outlying communities	15
	Affordable or free service	3	Not suitable for commuting/education/everyday travel	10
	Service is valued but underused	5	Inappropriate bus size or service model	5
	Positive feedback from users and community observation	5	Poor accessibility for older residents/mobility needs	5
	School and community transport value	2	Poor airport, tourism and regional transport connections	4
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	2	Low awareness and unclear service information	3
			General dissatisfaction with service quality	6
TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME	General satisfaction with the scheme	8	Service unavailable or perceived to be absent	2
	Improved independence and community participation	4	Difficulty accessing assistance or unclear referral pathways	1
	Accessible and available service	3	Limited awareness or visibility of the scheme	2
	Positive personal or family experience	3		
	Positive taxi and mobility- card service	2		
	Proactive and supportive service delivery	2		
FUNDING COMMUNITY EVENTS	General satisfaction with Council support for events	15	Perceived waste/excessive use of ratepayer funding	5
	Visible financial support and funding availability	13	Funding priorities/allocation perceived as inappropriate	4
	Enjoyable, well-organised and high-quality events	7	Insufficient range, scale or frequency of events	4
	Community participation and accessible events	4	Funding not equitable/representative of wider community	4
	Wide range and regularity of events	5	Insufficient Council support or sponsorship for events	3
	Economic and visitor benefits	2	Desire for larger destination events/better event infrastructure	1
	Balanced and worthwhile use of Council funding	3		
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	3		

LIBRARY SERVICE

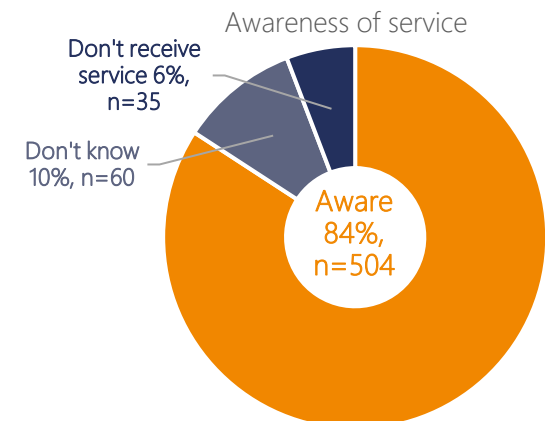
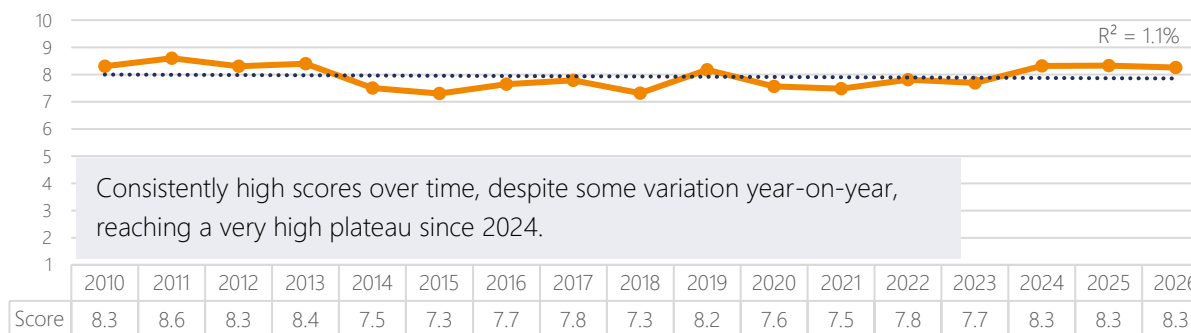


How well does the Council perform in providing public library services in Marlborough?



- Awareness of Marlborough public library services remains high in 2026 (84%), consistent with recent years (88% 2025, 89% 2024).
- Satisfaction with this service has also remained very high (90%), retained its position as the most satisfactory service area across the survey in 2026 – sustaining the 12-year peak achieved in 2025 (90%, 8.3 average).
- Satisfaction with library services was also similarly high across the district, and across age cohorts and other demographic segments.
- Even the majority of those dissatisfied with Council performance overall were nevertheless satisfied with library services (76%), although satisfaction was almost universal (95%) for residents satisfied with Council performance overall.

Satisfaction with library over time

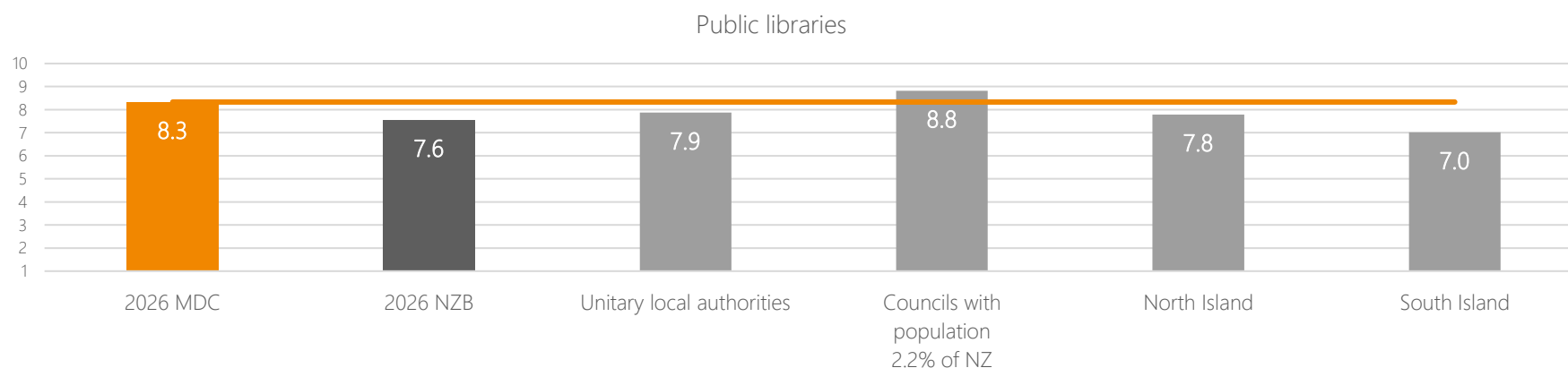


Library service unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
PUBLIC LIBRARIES	General satisfaction with library services	151	Concerns about Māori naming/ English-language visibility	4
	Helpful, friendly and knowledgeable staff	52	Loss or lack of library services in smaller communities	2
	Modern, attractive and high-quality facilities	23	Accessibility and user- friendliness concerns	2
	Broad range of books, resources and services	15	Cost and value-for-money concerns	3
	Valuable community hub/wider community services	27	Perceived over-emphasis on cultural signalling	2
	Accessible, welcoming and comfortable environment	12	Parking and affordability barriers for older users	1
	Well used and valued by the community	7	Child safety and layout concerns	1
	Positive provision in both Blenheim and Picton	18		
	Qualified satisfaction/suggestions for improvement	18		

Public library – MDC vs. New Zealand average

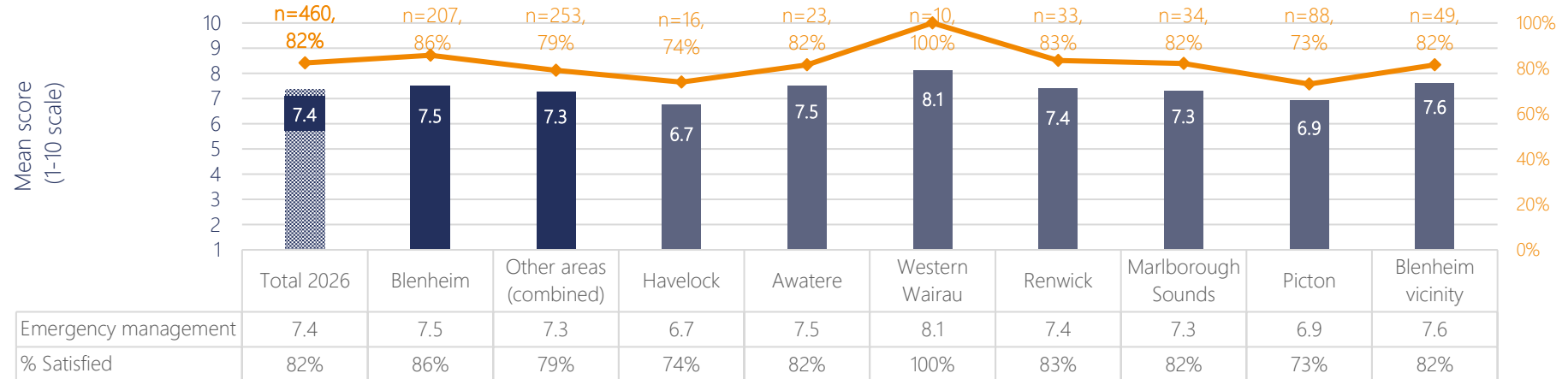
Very high satisfaction with public library services in the MDC region remains notably above the NZ and South Island benchmarks.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

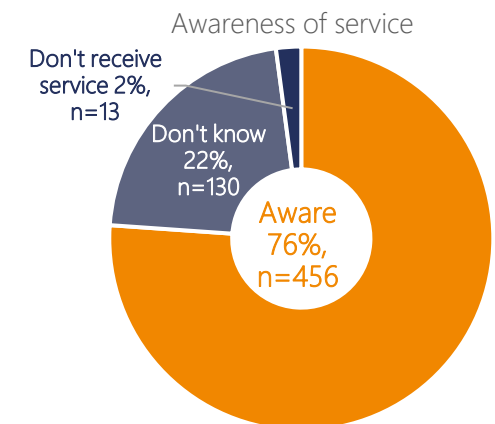
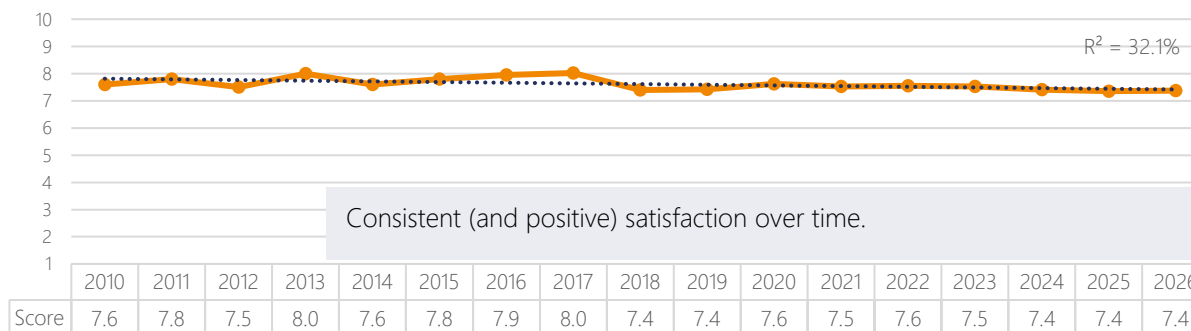


How well does the Council perform in providing Civil Defence emergency management?



- Overall in 2026, 4-in-5 respondents (82%, 7.4 on average) were satisfied with Council's provision of Civil Defence emergency management; 1-in-4 respondents could not provide a rating.
- Satisfaction levels for emergency management have exhibited great consistency over time with no significant differences recorded. In 2026, this was the second-most satisfactory service overall (after library services).
- Satisfaction with emergency management was generally similar across the district in 2026, particularly for Blenheim (86%, 7.5 average) and other areas overall (79%, 7.3 average).
- However, younger residents (18-39) tended to be less satisfied (though still rating the service highly overall (76%, 7.0 average). The majority of those dissatisfied with services overall were also satisfied with emergency management (63%, 6.4 average).

Satisfaction with Civil Defence over time

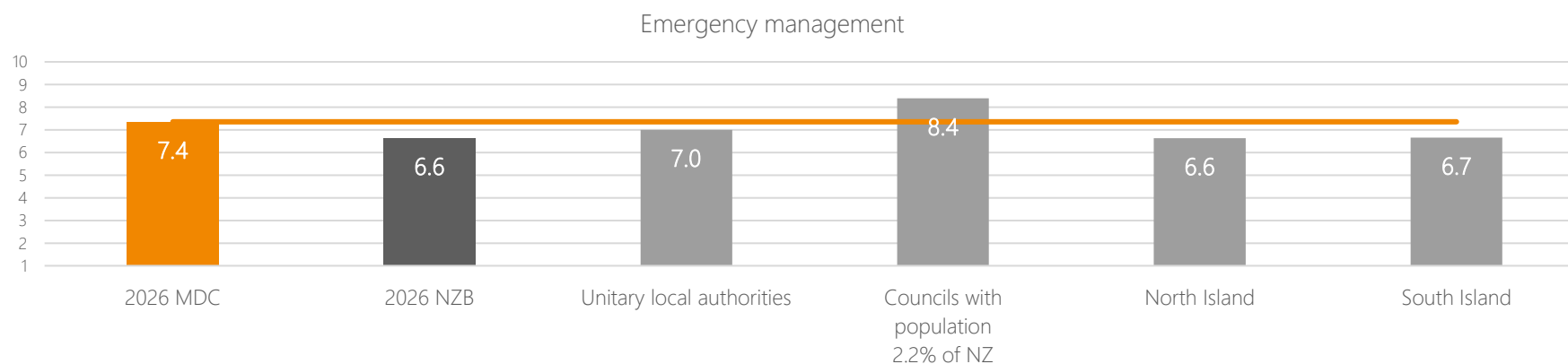


Emergency management unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	General satisfaction with Civil Defence/emergency management	47	Insufficient or unclear emergency information and warnings	1
	Prompt and effective emergency response	22	Lack of visible local preparedness or arrangements	1
	Clear, timely communication and warnings	17	Too much responsibility placed on small communities	1
	Well prepared, organised and proactive	16	Need for stronger central coordination and support	2
	Capable, professional and knowledgeable team	15		
	Strong community and volunteer involvement	9		
	Community education, engagement and resilience building	7		
	Good resourcing and emergency infrastructure	5		
	Provides confidence and reassurance during emergencies	5		
	Strong performance during flooding and severe weather	12		
	Qualified satisfaction and opportunities for improvement	4		

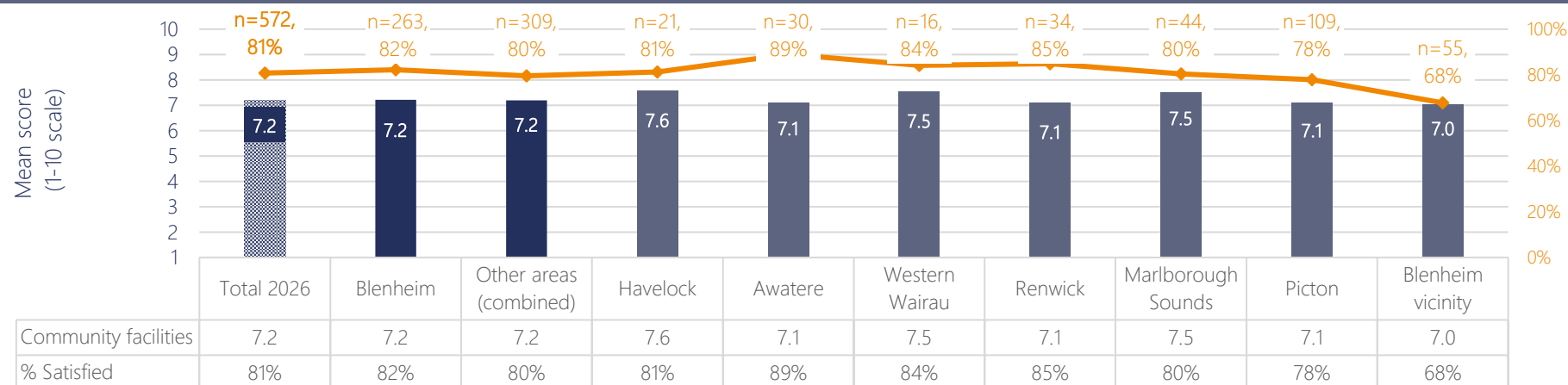
Emergency management – MDC vs. New Zealand average

Emergency management in the MDC region continues to rate favourably against the NZ benchmarks.



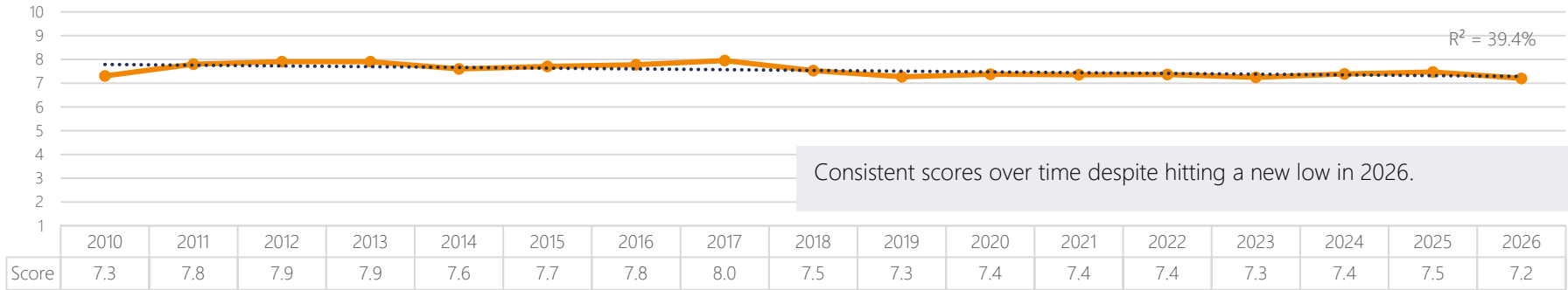
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

How well does the Council perform in providing parks and reserves, sports grounds, tracks for walking and biking, swimming pools, public toilets, cemeteries and community halls?

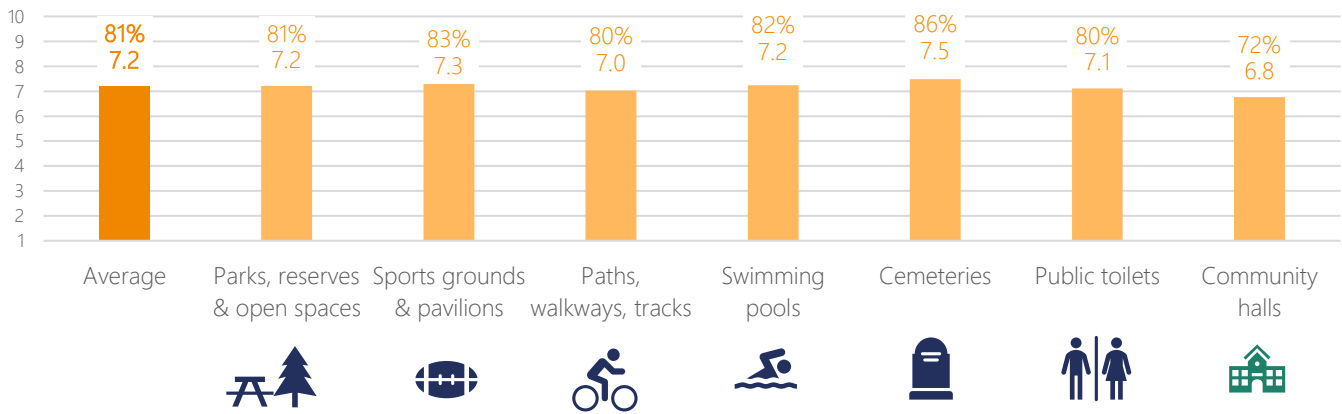


- Almost all residents in 2026 could rate at least one of seven community facility attributes (94%). However, awareness varied from across specific facilities, from community halls (48%) and cemeteries (57%) to more universally known public toilets (86%), paths/walkways (87%) and parks/reserves (89%). Around 1-in-4 (27%) rated all seven attributes in 2026
- Overall satisfaction across all community facilities (81%, 7.2 average) was high, and consistent compared to 2025 (84%, 7.5 average) and the last nine years. However, the current result represented the lowest score recorded to date, despite remaining very positive historically. As in 2025, reflecting overall positivity, all but one facility achieved satisfaction levels of 80% or higher, with cemeteries (86%), sports grounds (83%), swimming pools (82%) and parks & reserves (81%) remaining among the most satisfactory attributes across the survey in 2026.
- Community halls (72%) were again the only community facility to score slightly lower, but still highly satisfactory overall.
- In 2026, satisfaction with community facilities was similar overall for residents in Blenheim (82%, 7.2 average) and other areas generally (80%, 7.2 average), as well as more local areas across the district. Havelock residents noted lower satisfaction for swimming pools (47%) and paths/walkways (64%). Blenheim vicinity residents were less satisfied with halls (48%) and toilets (56%).
- Nevertheless, satisfaction with community facilities tended to be higher for older adults 65+ (84%, 7.5 average), but still very positive for younger adults 18-39 (80%, 6.9 average).
- Even residents generally dissatisfied with Council performance overall had positive sentiment for community facilities overall (55%, 6.1 average), though lower compared to those satisfied with Council performance overall (93%, 7.7 average). In 2026, overall dissatisfied residents were most satisfied with sports grounds (70%), swimming pools (68%), toilets (66%), and cemeteries (65%); but less so with community halls (53% vs 82% of those satisfied overall) and parks & reserves (57% vs 91%, the largest gap between these segments).

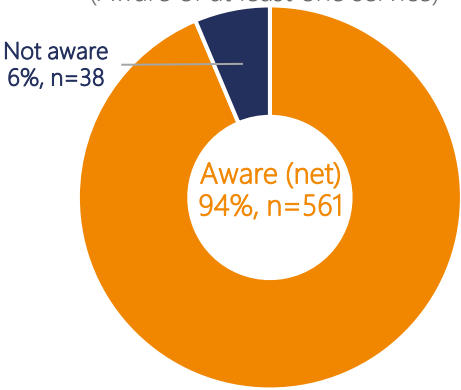
Satisfaction with community facilities over time



Attributes included in Community facilities



Net awareness of service group
(Aware of at least one service)



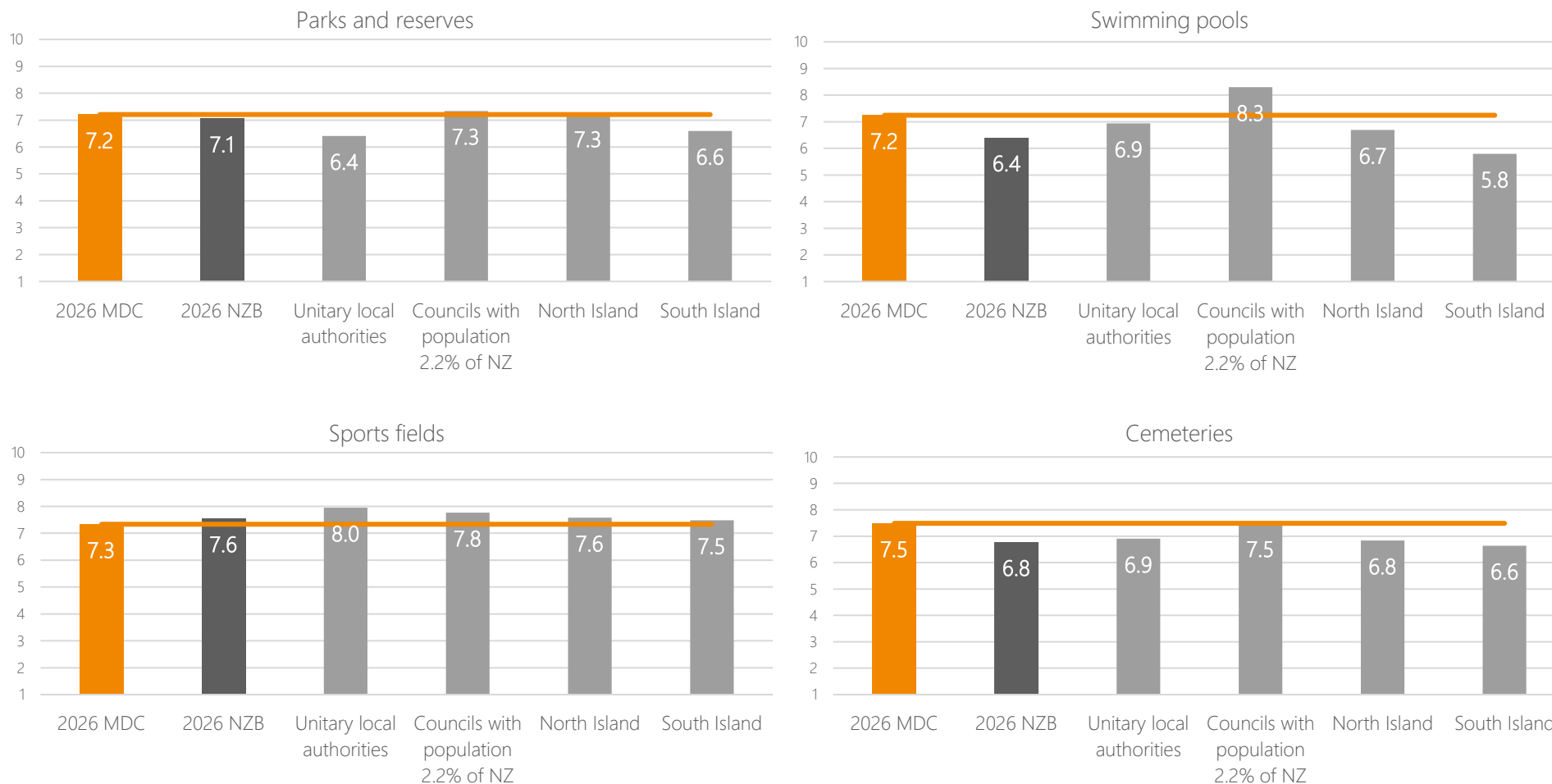
Community facilities unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
PARKS, RESERVES AND OPEN SPACES	Well maintained/tidy/attractive spaces	75	Poor grounds maintenance, long grass and weeds	9
	General satisfaction	67	Decline in maintenance standards /contractor performance	4
	Good range and availability	16	Insufficient public toilets, bins and supporting facilities	3
	Valuable recreational/community assets	17	Tree maintenance, planting and landscape management	4
	Cleanliness and low levels of rubbish	12	Uneven or incomplete maintenance across reserves	3
	Accessible, usable and safe spaces	11	Concerns about maintenance arrangements	1
	Praise for grounds/gardening staff	8	Access restrictions viewed as excessive	1
	Positive views of specific parks/locations	20	Cleanliness and damaged facilities	1
	Improvements needed	12	Location-specific concerns	7
	Need for additional amenities	3		
SPORTS GROUNDS	General satisfaction	46	Perceived inequity or favouritism between sports	3
	Well maintained/tidy/good quality	40	Insufficient, delayed or incomplete facilities	3
	Good range/availability of facilities	10	Poor management and administration	2
	Recent investment/upgrades/new assets	10	Questionable investment priorities and duplication	3
	Positive views of specific facilities	20	Poor facility design or functionality	1
	Well used/valuable community assets	9	Location-specific facility concerns	6
	Praise for grounds staff/management	5		
	Safe/functional/fit-for-purpose facilities	6		
	Opportunities for improvement	9		
PATHS, WALKWAYS, CYCLE TRACKS	Well maintained and in good condition	39	Poor maintenance and condition of paths/tracks	9
	General satisfaction	34	Safety hazards and poor path surfaces	7
	Good range, network and availability	21	Insufficient development/connectivity of network	6
	Valuable recreational/community assets	16	Conflict between cyclists, pedestrians and dogs	5
	Positive cycling infrastructure/new trails	12	Accessibility and mobility barriers	3
	Positive views of specific tracks/locations	22	Pedestrian crossing and road interface safety	2
	Accessible, safe and usable routes	11	Funding priorities and value for money	1
	Recent improvements/ expansion	9	Insufficient signage and user education	1
	Maintenance or accessibility issues	17	Unclear/location-only comment	1
	Conflict/dog fouling/activities separation	7		
	Further connections/extensions needed	8		

SWIMMING POOLS	High-quality /overall positive assessment	47	Lack of facilities outside Blenheim, particularly Picton	6
	Well managed, maintained and clean	19	Insufficient pool capacity / overcrowding	2
	Well used/caters for broad range users	14	Facility condition, cleanliness and amenity	2
	Valued community asset / amenity	13	Safety concerns, particularly slippery flooring	2
	Accessibility/affordability/opening hours	5	Equity and cost of access	1
	Desire for greater Picton provision	3	Operating rules and competing uses	1
	Suggestions for future investment	7		
	Personal use or positive word of mouth	6		
CEMETERIES	Well maintained, tidy and cared for	58	Poor or inconsistent grounds maintenance	4
	General satisfaction	22	High cost of cemetery plots	1
	Attractive/peaceful/respectful environment	10	Concerns about plot security and administration	1
	Positive experiences specific cemeteries	10	Perceived poor value for money	1
	Cleanliness and litter-free grounds	7	Location-specific maintenance concerns	1
	Good management and grounds staff	4		
	Useful access, parking and information	3		
	Qualified satisfaction/minor improvements	2		
PUBLIC TOILETS	Clean, hygienic and tidy facilities	61	Poor cleanliness and hygiene	7
	Well maintained and regularly serviced	31	Insufficient number, location or availability of toilets	5
	Good availability and number of toilets	25	Poor value for money and excessive spending	4
	New and upgraded facilities	28	Slow repairs, closures and facilities not operational	3
	Good location and accessibility	13	Poor maintenance or contractor performance	3
	High-quality/modern/well-designed	15	Accessibility gaps for disabled users	1
	Positive views of specific locations	22	Inappropriate investment priorities	3
	Positive cleaning staff and servicing	5	User misuse contributing to poor condition	1
	Improvement over time	8	Basic or inadequate facility standard	2
	Qualified satisfaction/improvements	10		
COMMUNITY HALLS	General satisfaction with community halls	17	Insufficient number or lack of community halls	4
	Well maintained, clean and tidy facilities	13	Poor condition, disrepair and inadequate maintenance	4
	Good availability and appropriate provision	6	Slow or ineffective Council management	2
	Valuable community hubs/well-used	5	Need for modernisation or redevelopment	2
	Positive Council support for committees	4	Perceived poor prioritisation of community facilities	2
	Recent improvements/upgraded facilities	4	Underuse of halls and missed opportunities	1
	Positive views of specific halls	7		
	Fit for purpose despite modest quality	2		

Community facilities – MDC vs. New Zealand average

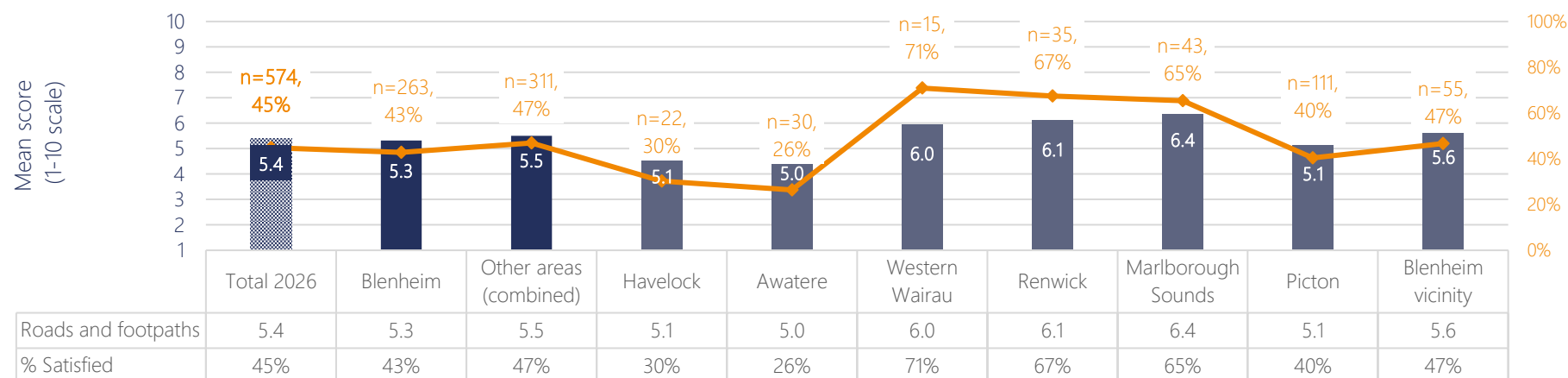
Satisfaction with parks & reserves and sports fields in the MDC region is on par with the NZ benchmark. Swimming pools and cemeteries in the MDC region continue to rate above the NZ benchmark.



ROADS AND FOOTPATHS

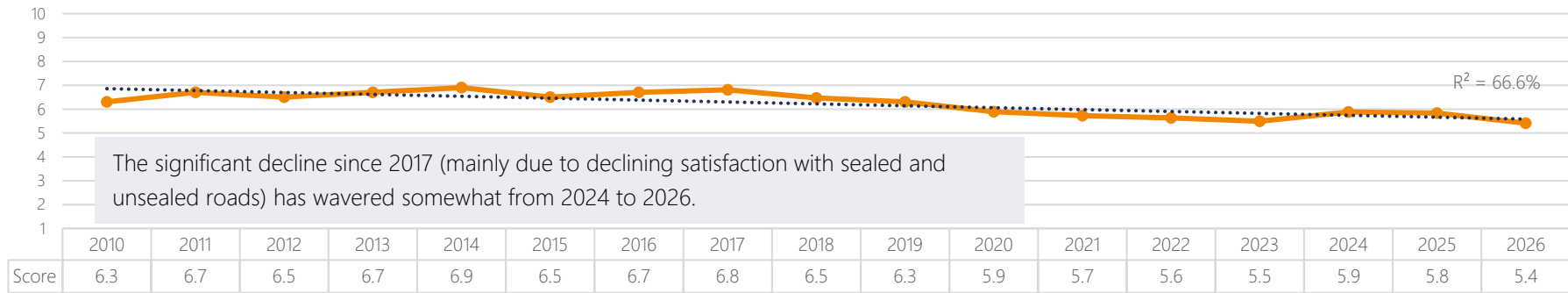


How well does the Council perform in providing sealed and unsealed roads, footpaths and street lighting?

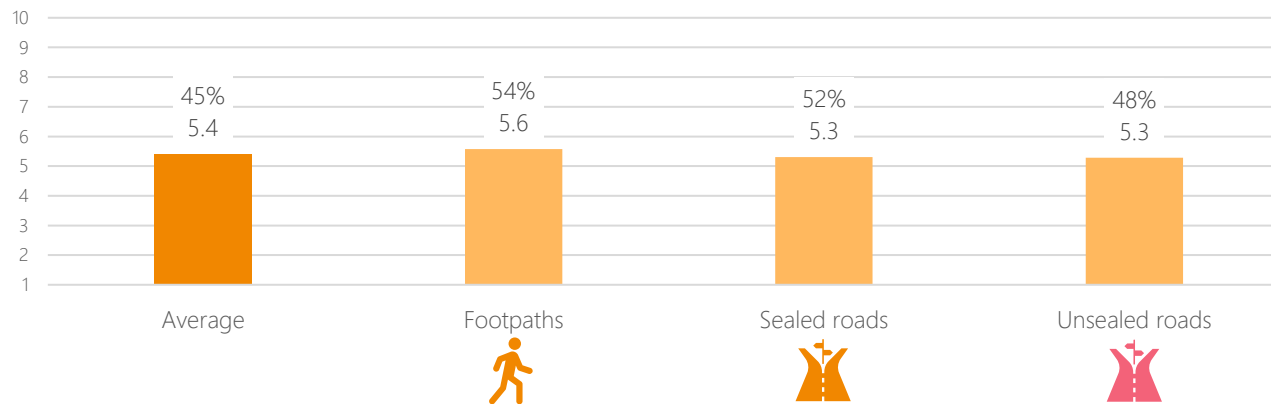


- The overall roads and footpaths group score (45%, 5.4 average) was collectively the lowest average rating in 2026 – and a new historic low for this measure after falling from 2025 (53%, 5.8). Low satisfaction with both sealed (52%, 5.3) and unsealed (48%, 5.3) contributed to the overall low score, with both remaining among the lowest of all measured attributes in 2026.
- All three contributing services had a defining impact on the average roads and footpaths score in 2026; with footpaths (5.6) also achieving low satisfaction overall.
- Satisfaction collectively and for roads and footpaths individually was similar for residents in both Blenheim and other areas combined in 2026, despite some variations across local areas (limited by small sub-sample sizes).
- There were few differences across resident segments. However, satisfaction overall, and for sealed roads in particular, remained lower for longer term residents (10+ years) (42%, 5.3 average) compared to newer residents (53%, 5.8 average).
- Residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall had especially low satisfaction with roads and footpaths overall (24%, 4.4 average) compared to those satisfied with Council performance overall (57%, 6.0 average).
- Negative feedback for roads was overwhelmingly driven by poor road condition, particularly potholes, uneven surfaces and deteriorating seals; together with quality of repairs, with many describing patching as temporary, poorly executed and requiring repeated rework. Dissatisfaction with unsealed roads is primarily driven by concerns about potholes, corrugations and rough surfaces that make travel uncomfortable and often unsafe.

Satisfaction with roads and footpaths over time

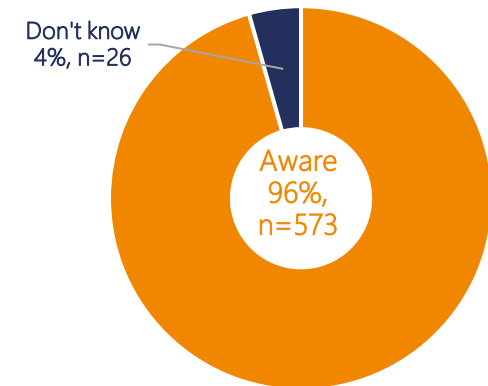


Attributes included in Roads and footpaths



Note: 'Street lighting' removed from the survey in 2024-25.

Net awareness of service group
(Aware of at least one service)

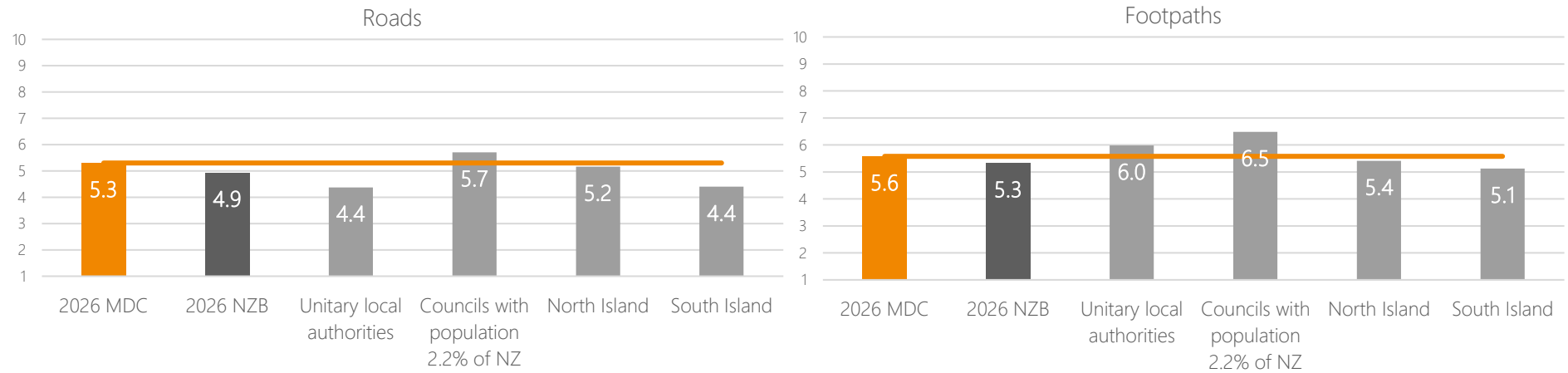


Roads and footpaths unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
SEALED ROADS	Generally satisfied with road condition and maintenance	20	Potholes, rough road surfaces and deteriorating seals	38
	Positive views of maintenance and repair responsiveness	5	Poor quality repairs and patching	27
	Road surface quality issues (roughness, potholes, resealing needed)	5	Slow maintenance and delayed repairs	10
	Road design and safety improvements	2	Poor contractor performance and inefficient work practices	10
	External factors affecting road condition	2	Roadworks causing disruption or repeated inconvenience	5
	Concerns about chipseal/loose chip	1	Heavy vehicles damaging roads	5
			Road design, width and safety concerns	5
			Poor value for money / dissatisfaction with spending priorities	4
			Location-specific complaints	18
UNSEALED ROADS	Generally satisfied with the condition of unsealed roads	5	Poor road condition (potholes, corrugations, rough surfaces)	21
	Positive views of maintenance and contractors	3	Insufficient grading and routine maintenance	12
	Recognition of maintenance challenges	3	Slow repairs and long- term neglect	8
	Recognition of funding and low-use constraints	2	Poor quality repairs and inadequate materials	6
	Some variability in road condition	1	Road safety concerns	7
			Vegetation, drainage and flood damage	3
			Location-specific complaints	14
FOOTPATHS	Generally satisfied with footpath quality and condition	22	Uneven, cracked and poorly maintained footpaths (trip hazards)	31
	Well maintained and in good repair	8	Tree root damage lifting footpaths	6
	Clean, neat and accessible	4	Lack of footpaths / missing connections	10
	Recognition of ongoing improvements	2	Accessibility and mobility issues	10
	Generally positive but with some areas needing improvement	4	Poor maintenance and delayed repairs	11
	Positive location-specific comments	5	Slippery surfaces	4
			Safety concerns and pedestrian hazards	11
			Location-specific complaints	18
			Drainage, vegetation and cleanliness issues	8

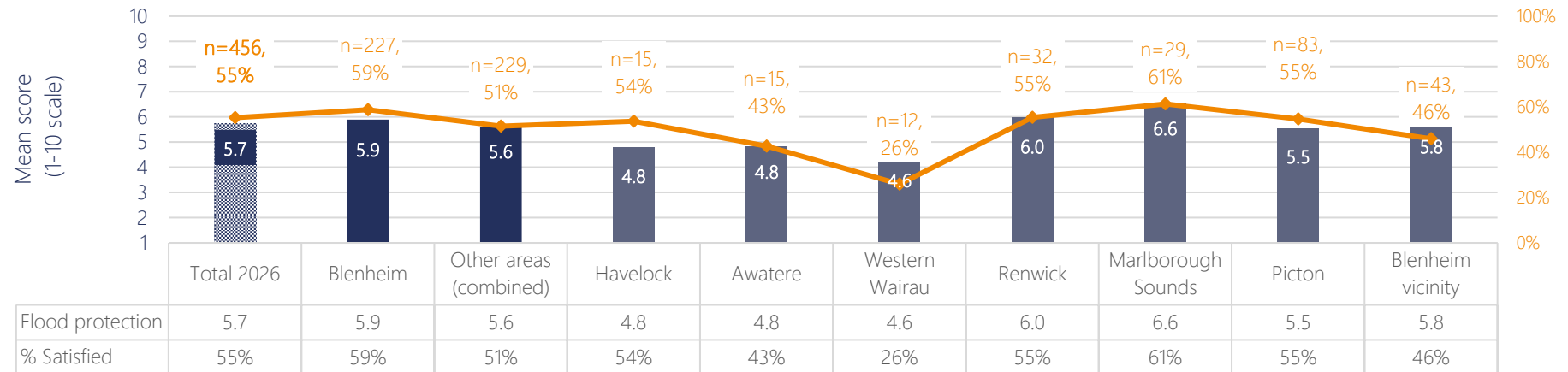
Roads and footpaths – MDC vs. New Zealand average

Despite low-to-moderate satisfaction locally, MDC's roads and footpaths scores are slightly above the national average, and rate even more positively compared to other South Island councils.



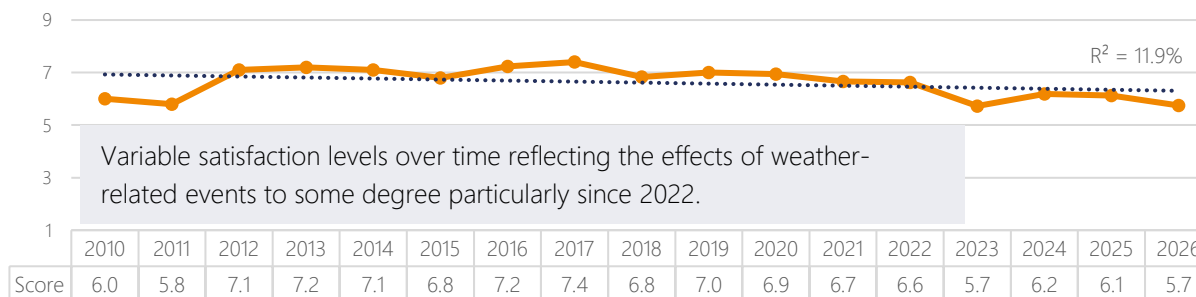
FLOOD PROTECTION

How well does the Council perform in providing flood protection and control?

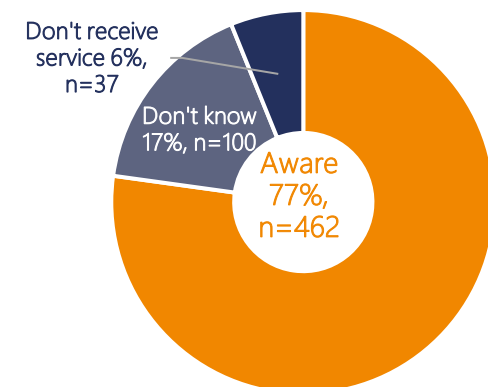


- In 2026, 3-in-4 residents (77%) were able to rate flood protection. Following some recovery in satisfaction in 2024 (6.2 average) and 2025 (6.1), satisfaction with flood protection again dipped in 2026 (5.7 average), back to levels last seen in 2023 (5.7 average) after the major weather events of 2021-2023.
- Satisfaction in 2026 was slightly higher in Blenheim (59%, 5.9 average) than other areas combined (51%, 5.6 average); though this represented a decrease since 2025 for Blenheim residents in particular (from 73%, 6.6 average).
- Younger residents aged 18-39 (41%, 5.1 average) were distinctly less satisfied with flood protection than those aged 65+ (67%, 6.3 average); a decrease since 2025 for younger respondents (55%, 5.9 average).
- Residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall also remained notably less satisfied with this service area (31%, 4.4 average) compared to those satisfied with Council performance overall (69%, 6.6 average; albeit falling from 2025's 79%, 7.0 average).

Satisfaction with flood protection over time



Awareness of service



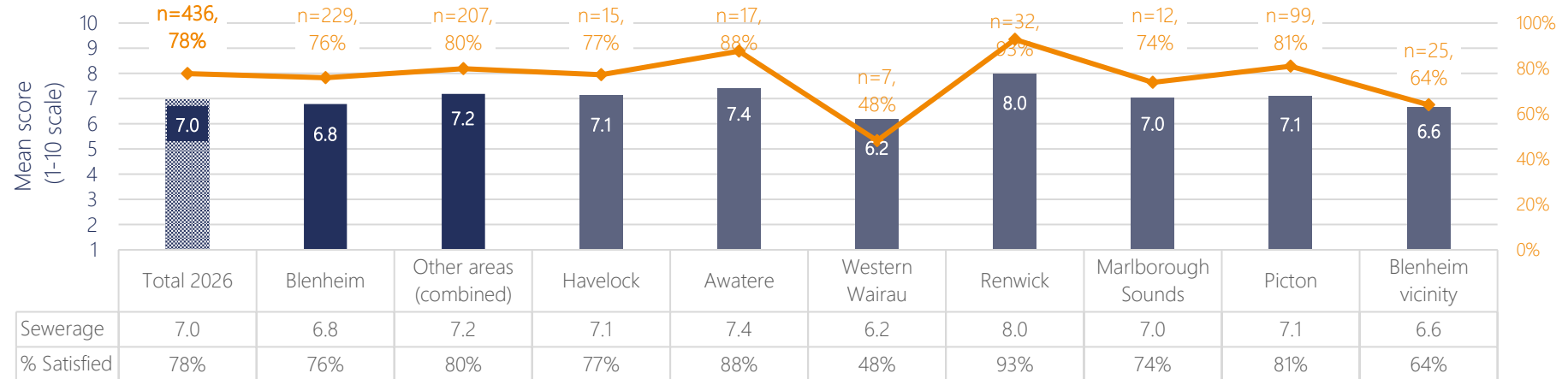
Flood protection unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
FLOOD PROTECTION	Proactive planning, investment and improvement work	17	Inadequate maintenance of waterways, drains and riverbeds	16
	Effective flood protection and reduced flood impacts	11	Recurring flooding and inadequate drainage capacity	15
	Positive stopbank, river and drainage management	17	Lack of action, slow progress and delayed recovery	14
	Effective monitoring, warnings and operational response	5	Inadequate, ineffective or poorly designed protection infrastructure	10
	General satisfaction with Council performance	6	Blocked waterways, vegetation, sediment and debris	9
	Qualified satisfaction and recognition of remaining challenges	9	Insufficient protection or support for particular communities	7
			Poor Council responsiveness, accountability and communication	6
			Climate resilience, property and insurance concerns	2
			Location-specific flood protection concerns	24

SEWERAGE

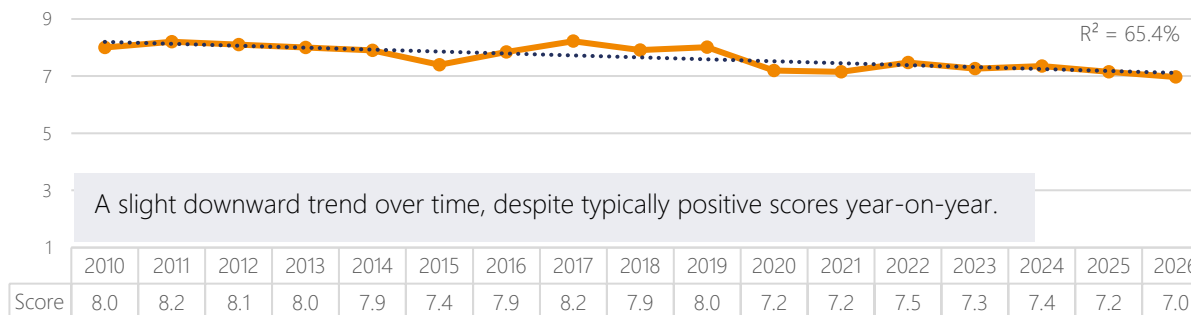


How well does the Council perform in providing sewerage?

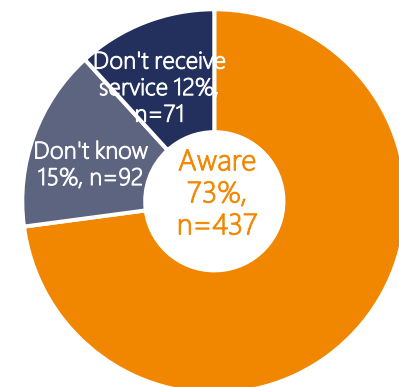


- 3-in-4 residents (73%) were aware of sewerage services in their area in 2026; though 1-in-8 (12%) indicated not receiving this service.
- Satisfaction with sewerage services in 2026 was positive (78%, 7.0 average) and similar to 2025, but nevertheless reached its lowest historical level to date, indicating a gradual decrease since 2010.
- While not statistically different, average satisfaction levels were slightly lower in Blenheim compared to other areas overall (6.8 vs 7.2), although the proportion satisfied was similar (76% vs 80%).
- Younger residents aged 18-39 remained significantly less satisfied with this service overall (66%, 6.0 average).
- The majority of residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall were however satisfied with sewerage services (57%, 5.6 average) although much less so than those satisfied with Council performance overall (89%, 7.6 average).

Satisfaction with sewerage over time



Awareness of service

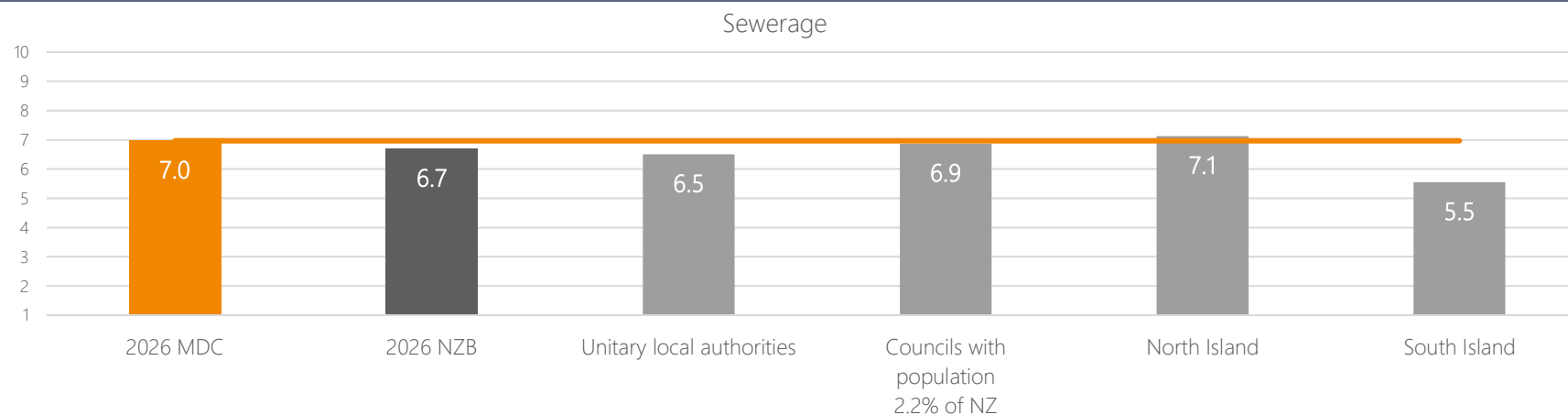


Sewerage unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
SEWERAGE SERVICES	No problems or issues experienced	39	Insufficient capacity during heavy rain and flooding	6
	Reliable and effective operation	27	Sewage discharges and environmental contamination	3
	General satisfaction with the service	23	Delayed permanent works and reliance on temporary solutions	1
	Positive views of upgrades or newer infrastructure	3	Lack of access to the sewerage service	1
	Responsive or well- managed service	3	Odour concerns	1
	Positive experiences in specific locations	6	Public toilet reliability and availability	1
	Qualified satisfaction or residual concerns	6	Qualified or limited dissatisfaction	1

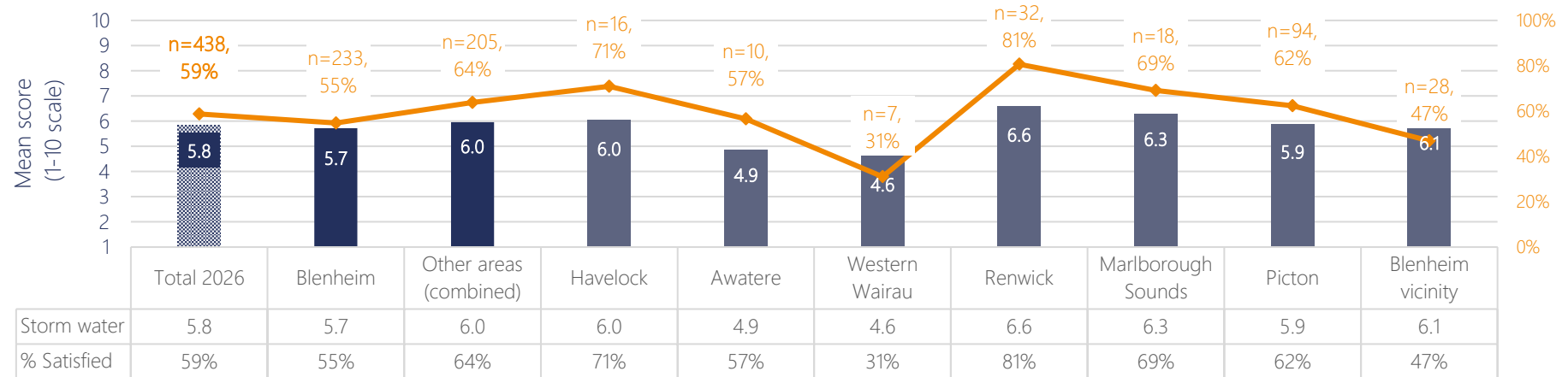
Sewerage – MDC vs. New Zealand average

Satisfaction with sewerage services in the MDC region is just ahead of the NZ benchmark, and more notably above other South Island councils.



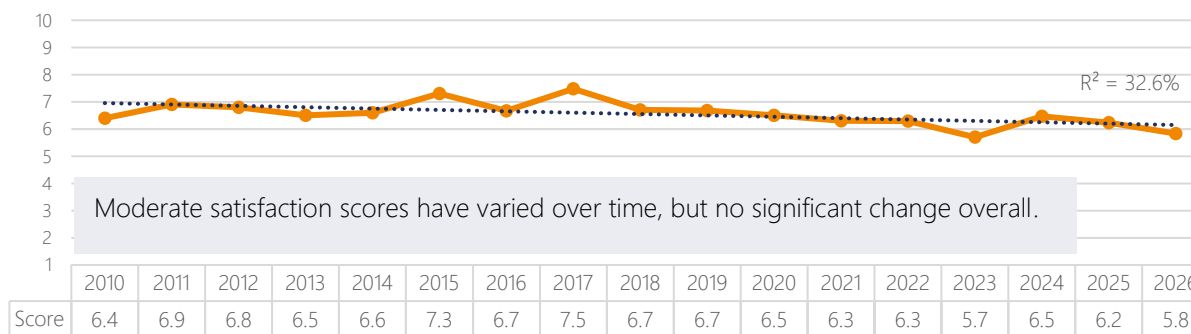
URBAN STORMWATER DRAINAGE

How well does the Council perform in providing urban stormwater drainage?

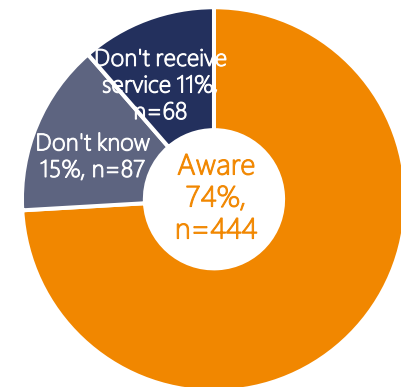


- As for sewerage, similar levels of awareness (74%) and lack of service (11%) were reported for urban stormwater drainage in 2026.
- Satisfaction with stormwater drainage in 2026 (59%, 5.8 average) continued to fall from the 2024 peak (70%, 6.5 average); although still above the 2023 dip (5.7) following those severe weather effects.
- Satisfaction in 2026 was slightly (not significantly) lower in Blenheim (55%, 5.7 average) than in other areas overall (64%, 6.0 average); this represented a decrease since 2025 for Blenheim residents (71%, 6.6 average).
- Younger residents aged 18-39 remained less satisfied with stormwater services (51%, 5.2 average) compared to those aged 65+ (65%, 5.6 average).

Satisfaction with storm water drainage over time



Awareness of service

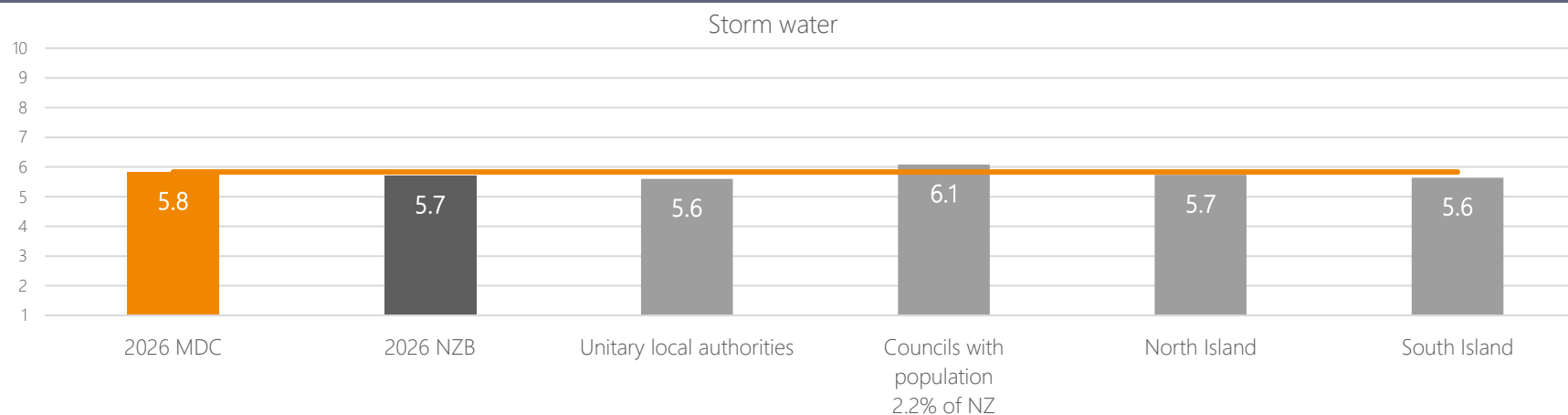


Stormwater drainage system unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
STORMWATER	Effective drainage with few or no problems	25	Recurring street, property and surface flooding	17
	General satisfaction with the service	16	Blocked, clogged or poorly maintained drains	10
	Positive maintenance, cleaning and proactive management	9	Insufficient drainage capacity or infrastructure	8
	Positive infrastructure investment and improvement	6	Delayed action and unresolved reported problems	6
	Performs adequately during heavy rain	5	Water quality, sewage and contamination concerns	5
	Qualified satisfaction or residual concerns	8	Waterway, stream and river maintenance issues	4
	Positive experiences in specific locations	7	Road, slip and erosion damage caused by stormwater	3
			Location-specific drainage problems	13

Stormwater – MDC vs. New Zealand average

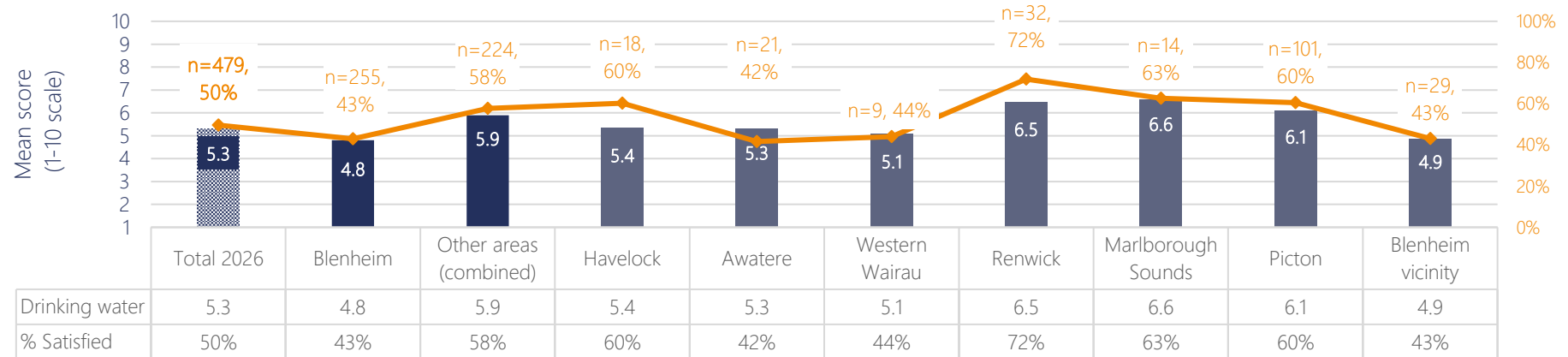
Satisfaction with stormwater drainage is on par with the national and South Island councils averages.



DRINKING WATER

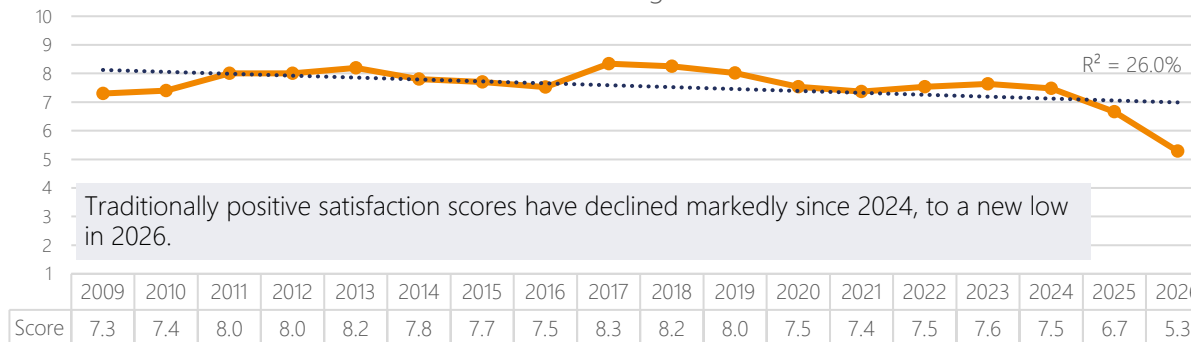


How well does the Council perform in providing drinking water?

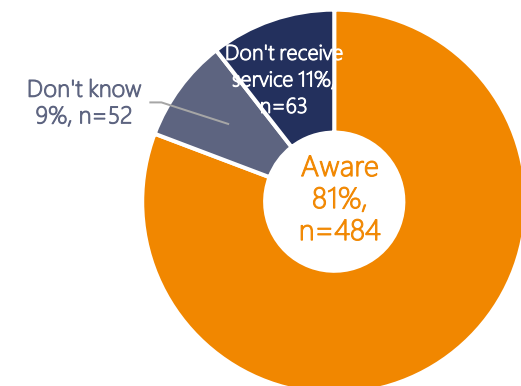


- More so than other water-related services, satisfaction with drinking water dropped even further in 2026 – with just half (50%) of residents satisfied (5.3 on average) – the largest drop in the survey for the second consecutive year. The current result was significantly below 2024 levels (81%, 7.5 on average) – and a new low score for this service to date. Satisfaction dropped to 43% in Q2, but was no higher than 55% (in Q3) this year.
- Increasingly negative sentiment for water supply was reflected in community feedback, overwhelmingly associated with chlorination, perceived deterioration in taste and smell – considered undrinkable by some.
- Dissatisfaction stemmed mainly from Blenheim residents (43%, 4.8 on average), with satisfaction significantly lower than in other areas overall (58%, 5.9 on average). This reversed the difference in 2025 (78% Blenheim vs 53% other areas), with a large decline in Blenheim since 2024 (92%).
- Satisfaction was even lower for those aged 18-39 (39%, 5.8 average); longer-term residents (10+ years) (47%, 5.1 average); and those dissatisfied with Council performance overall (24%, 3.6 average); but also relatively low for those satisfied overall (61%, 6.1 average).

Satisfaction with drinking water over time



Awareness of service

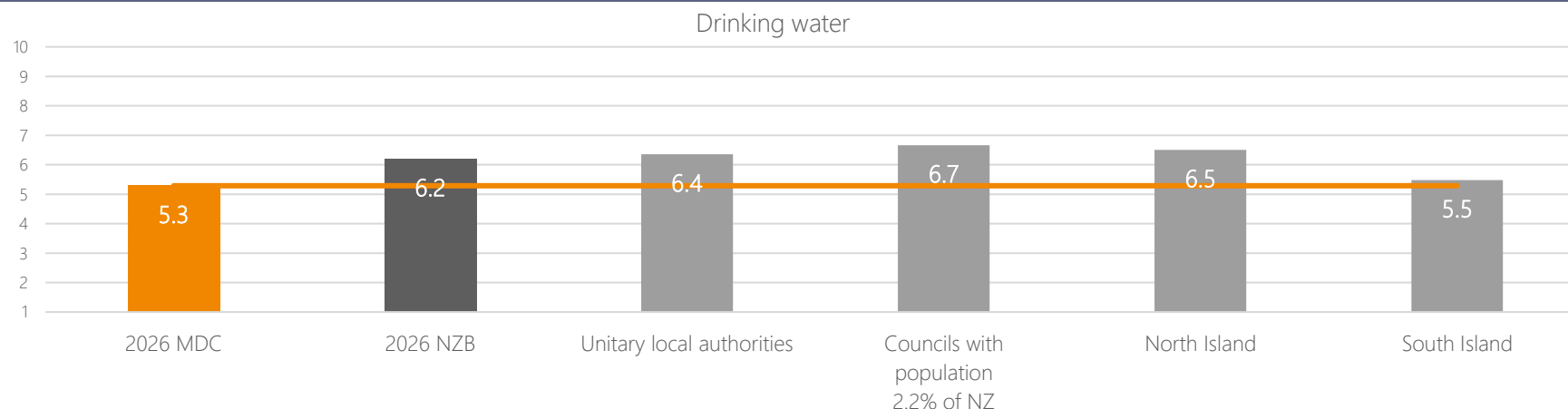


Drinking water unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
DRINKING WATER	General satisfaction with drinking water and service	29	Opposition to chlorination or chemical treatment	85
	Good taste and perceived water quality	18	Unpleasant taste, smell or reduced drinkability	39
	Safe and clean drinking water	12	Perceived health and wellbeing effects	21
	Reliable supply with no problems experienced	13	Insufficient consultation and lack of community influence	17
	Positive views of upgrades and Council management	10	Need for filters, bottled water or alternative supplies	14
	Qualified satisfaction regarding chlorination or fluoridation	17	Concerns about fluoride or multiple additives	7
	Adequate availability and abundance	6	Inconsistent, dirty or cloudy water quality	6
	Positive experiences in specific communities or rural supplies	9	Financial, household and property impacts	8
			Dissatisfaction with Council or government decision-making	13
			Other supply or infrastructure concerns	4

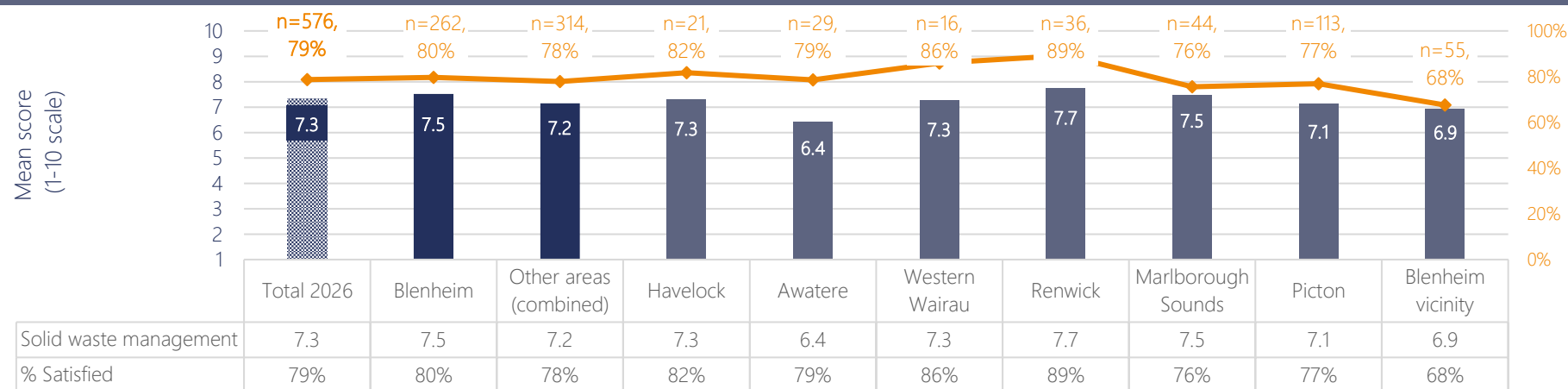
Drinking water – MDC vs. New Zealand average

Satisfaction with drinking water supply in the MDC region has fallen below the national average, but on par with South Island councils.

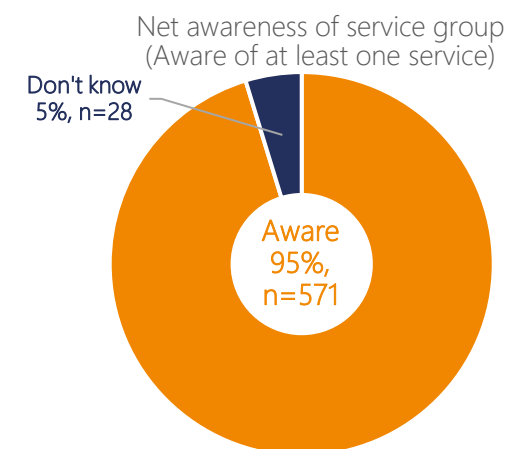
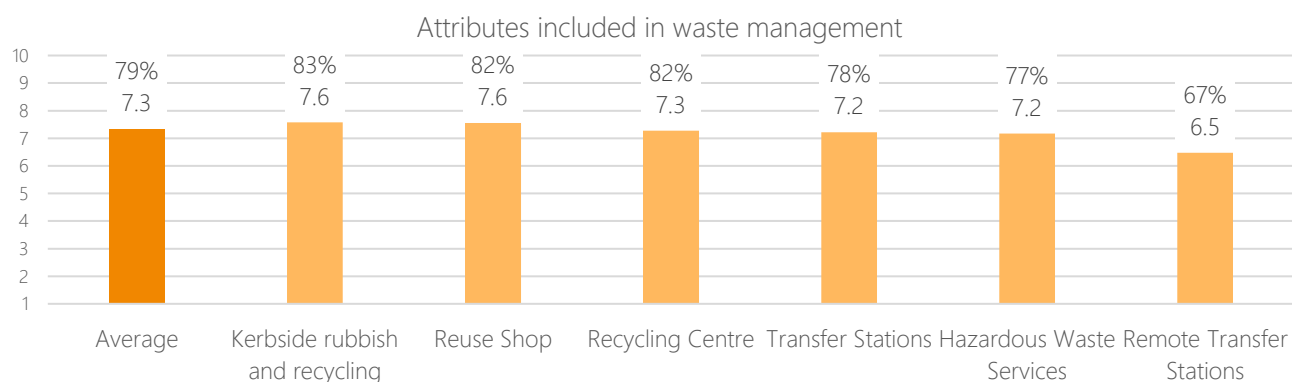
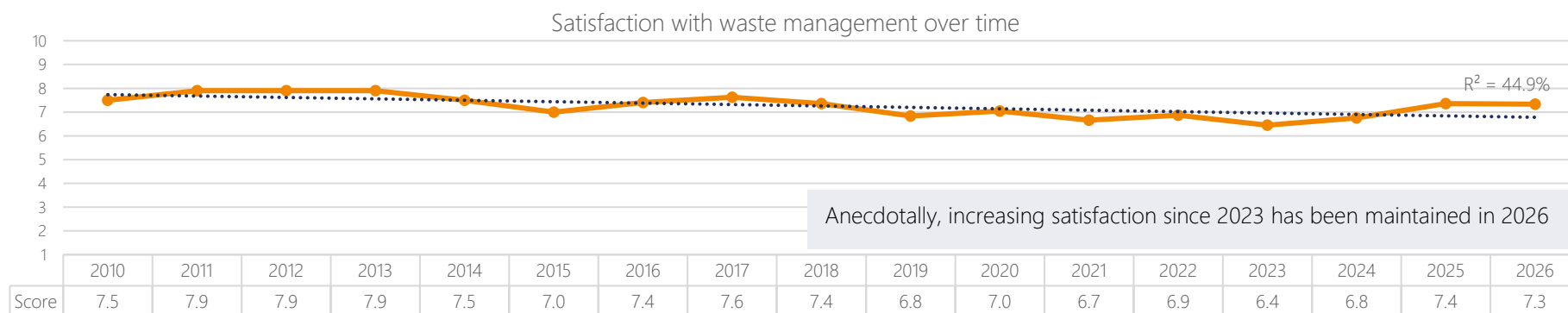


WASTE MANAGEMENT

How well does the Council perform in providing kerbside rubbish, Waste Transfer Stations and Resource Recovery Centre, Reuse Shop and green waste composting?

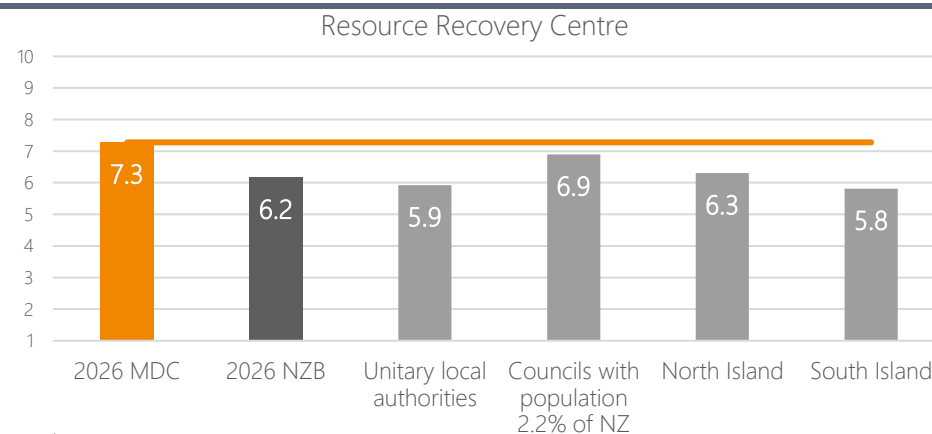
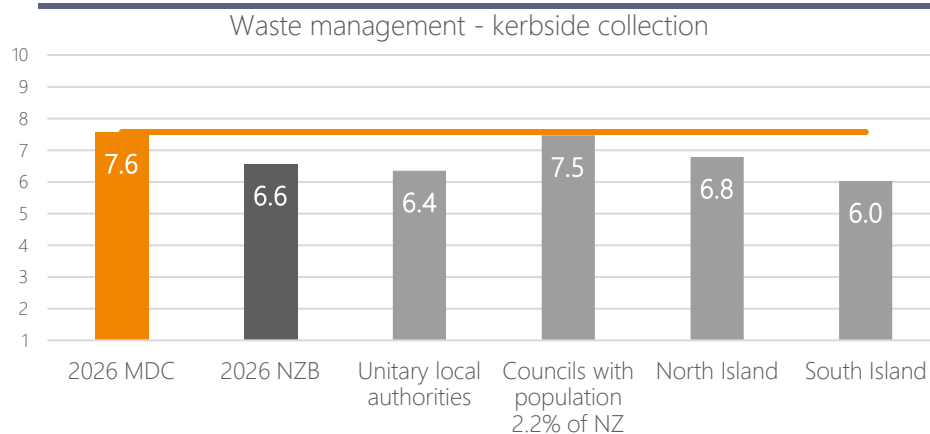


- Waste management remained one of the top five highest performing service areas in 2026; 8-in-10 residents were satisfied overall (79%, 7.3 on average), very similar to 2025 (historical service group comparisons to earlier years are anecdotal only, due to survey changes in 2025).
- All six attributes performed positively, with all but one achieving above 75% satisfaction (and 7.0 average or higher). Kerbside rubbish and recycling recorded the second-highest average score (7.6) across the survey in 2026 (with 83% satisfied). The recycling centre and Reuse Shop were also consistent high performers (both 82% satisfaction). Remote transfer stations remained the lowest rated overall in this service group (67%, 6.5 average), similar to 2025 – but subject to lower usage and familiarity (just 43% able to rate these facilities).
- Overall satisfaction with waste management was higher in Blenheim than other areas (7.5 vs 7.2 average), though a similar proportion were satisfied (80% vs 78%). Nevertheless, scores were typically high across the district.
- Specific service scores were also high overall and across the district. Kerbside collection remained the highest rated generally (83%, 7.6 average), though less so in Awatere (47%). Awatere and Blenheim vicinity residents also rated remote transfer stations lower (58% & 40% respectively) than other areas.
- Older residents (aged 65+) remained most satisfied with waste management overall (84%, 7.7 average), especially compared to 18-39s (75%, 6.9 average). Younger residents were least satisfied with kerbside collections (70%), remote transfer stations (70%) and hazardous waste (71%) – but more positive about recycling centre services (82%).



Waste management – MDC vs. New Zealand average

Very positive local satisfaction with waste management services is markedly above NZ benchmarks.



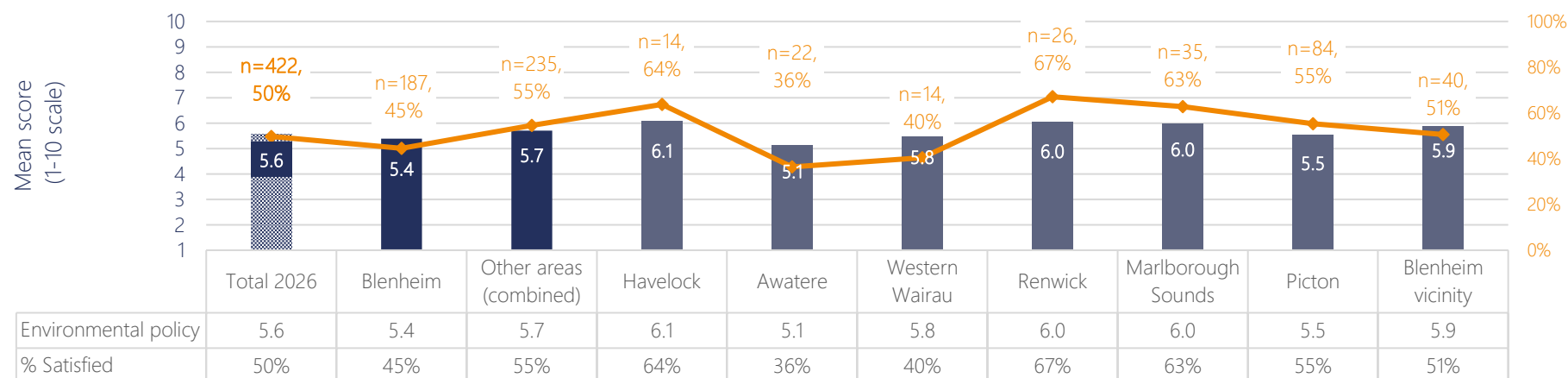
Waste management unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
KERBSIDE RUBBISH	General satisfaction with the service	105	Infrequent general rubbish collection	3
	Reliable, regular and timely collections	48	Unreliable, inconsistent or incomplete collection	3
	Positive views of the wheelie-bin system	47	No service or gaps in collection coverage	3
	Efficient, convenient and easy to use	37	Bin size and limited household flexibility	2
	Positive contractor and staff performance	18	Accessibility and difficulty moving bins	2
	Cleaner and tidier streets after collection	15	Dissatisfaction with the wheelie-bin system and service design	2
	Positive collection frequency and alternating system	13	Items rejected or left beside bins	1
	Improved service availability in additional communities	8	Lack of green-waste collection	1
	Useful communication and collection reminders	7	Insufficient community consultation	1
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	21	Cost and value-for-money concerns	1
TRANSFER STATIONS	General satisfaction with the service and facilities	64	High charges and poor value for money	8
	Well-run, efficient and organised operation	38	Poor facility design and difficult disposal process	3
	Friendly, helpful and professional staff	26	Picton transfer station concerns	4
	Easy, convenient and accessible to use	27	Temporary arrangements and delayed restoration	1
	Clean, tidy and well- maintained facilities	17	Lack of access to a transfer station	1
	Good facilities, layout and range of services	12	Concerns about management, fairness and accountability	1
	Reasonable or cost- effective charges	6	Risk of illegal dumping due to cost	1
	Good opening hours and local availability	8		
	Positive recycling and waste-diversion practices	3		
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	13		
REMOTE TRANSFER STATIONS	Positive experiences at specific transfer stations	13		
	General satisfaction with the service or facilities	16	High costs and uncertainty about charges	4
	Convenient locations and improved rural access	11	Removal of facilities and reduced local access	4
	Clean, tidy, safe and well- designed facilities	9	Overfilled facilities and unreliable availability	3
	Easy and useful to access and use	7	Poor information and lack of service visibility	2
	Effective, reliable and well-run operation	7	Inappropriate or illegal disposal linked to cost or access	2
	Positive environmental and community benefits	4	Misuse and disrespectful behaviour by users	1
	Helpful and friendly staff	2	Location-specific concerns	5
	Qualified satisfaction and operational concerns	5	High costs and uncertainty about charges	4
	Positive experiences at specific facilities	7		

HAZARDOUS WASTE SERVICES	General satisfaction with the service or facility	37	High or perceived disposal costs	3
	Helpful, friendly and knowledgeable staff	26	Low awareness and poor visibility of the service	2
	Easy, convenient and accessible to use	21	Risk of inappropriate disposal	1
	Well-run, efficient and professional operation	18	Confusion about service availability or charging	2
	Safe and environmentally responsible disposal	14		
	Availability and range of accepted materials	13		
	Clean and tidy facilities	2		
	Affordable or free service	3		
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	5		
RECYCLING CENTRE	General satisfaction with the service or facility	54	Fire-related closure and delayed restoration of services	6
	Easy, convenient and accessible to use	31	Poor accessibility, layout and site condition	3
	Well-run, efficient and organised operation	27	Doubts about recycling outcomes and effectiveness	3
	Clean, tidy and well- maintained facilities	11	High or inconsistent charges	2
	Helpful and capable staff	12	Limited or unavailable service	3
	Environmental benefits and reduced landfill waste	14	Fire prevention and safety concerns	1
	Useful range of recycling and disposal options	10	Rejection of reusable or recyclable items	2
	Valuable community facility or resource	9	Risk of illegal dumping due to high costs	1
	Good opening hours and availability	4		
	Positive response and service continuity following the fire	5		
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	13		
REUSE SHOP	General satisfaction with the shop and service	58	Closure, removal or lack of a local Reuse Shop	6
	Waste reduction, reuse and environmental benefits	27	Limited or reduced service capacity	2
	Affordable goods and good bargains	18	Refusal of usable donations and poor stock management	1
	Helpful and friendly staff	17	High prices and poor value for money	1
	Valuable community and social resource	16	Poor communication about service changes	1
	Convenient for donating, shopping and browsing	15	Location-specific concerns	3
	Well-run, tidy and organised facility	17		
	Useful range of second- hand goods and materials	11		
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	7		

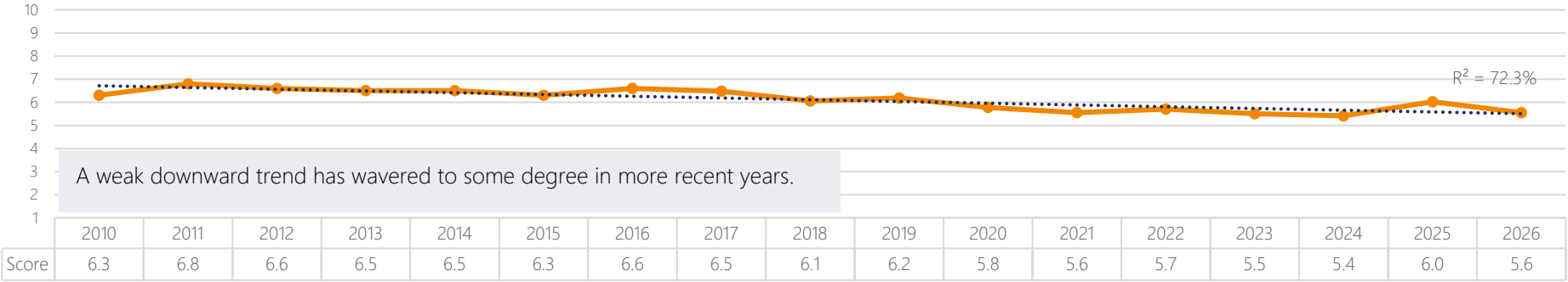
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND MONITORING

How well does the Council perform in developing policies under the Resource Management Act and environmental monitoring and information provision?

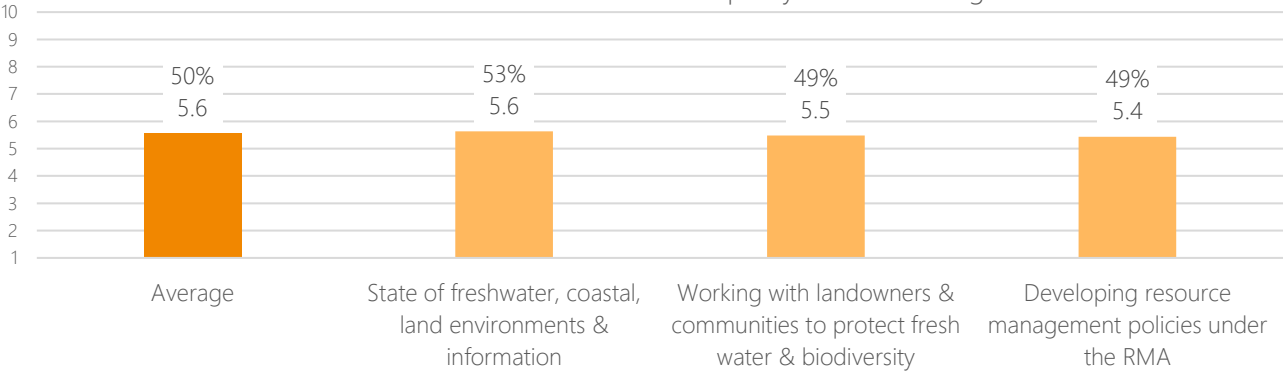


- Awareness of environmental policies and monitoring services was moderate (73%) in 2026, slightly higher than 2025 (67%).
- Despite higher awareness, overall satisfaction with environmental policy was slightly lower in 2026 (50%, 5.6 on average) than the recent peak in 2025 (57%, 6.0 on average) – although generally on track with the historical trend over the last seven years (historical service group comparisons are anecdotal only due to changes in 2025).
- In 2026, similar satisfaction levels were measured across the three environmental attributes – highest for the ‘state of freshwater, coastal and land environments and information available’ attribute (53%, 5.6 average) though this was down slightly from 2025 (64%, 6.2 average). Around half (48%) of aware residents were satisfied with the other two attributes in 2026.
- Overall satisfaction was lower for residents in Blenheim (45%, 5.4 average) than other areas generally (55%, 5.7 on average). This represented a drop in satisfaction for Blenheim since 2025 (65%, 6.4 on average).
- The greatest difference between Blenheim and other areas overall was for the state of freshwater, coastal and land environments and information (46% vs 59% satisfied), though Blenheim scored lower on all attributes to some degree.
- Residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall were notably less satisfied with this service group (19%, 4.2 average) than those satisfied with Council performance overall (68%, 6.4 average); with satisfaction falling further for the dissatisfied segment since 2025 (24%, 4.5 average).

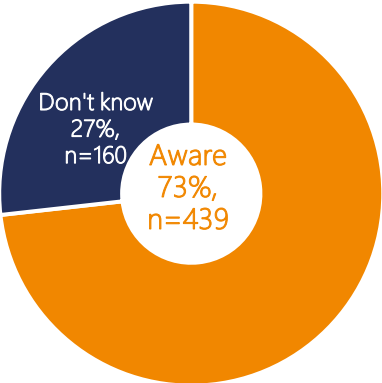
Satisfaction with environmental policy and monitoring over time



Attributes included in environmental policy and monitoring



Net awareness of service group (Aware of at least one service)



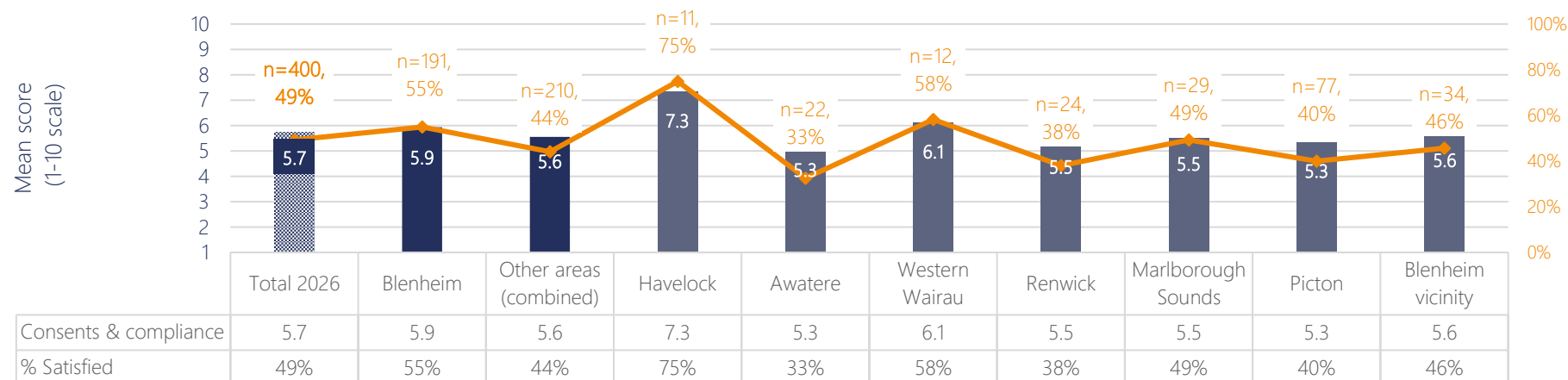
Environmental policy and monitoring unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
DEVELOPING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES UNDER THE RMA	General confidence in Council's policy development	5	Excessive regulation, red tape and delays	5
	Balanced and effective policies	2	High costs and financial barriers	3
	Knowledgeable and expert staff	1	Perceived favouritism and inequitable decision- making	2
	Environmental protection is important	2	Inadequate environmental protection and enforcement	3
	Opportunities for public participation	1	Poor planning and unintended effects of development	3
	Recognition of Council effort and policy importance	2	Insufficient consultation and community engagement	3
	Qualified satisfaction and scope for improvement	2	Insufficient iwi involvement	1
			Poor information access outside Blenheim	1
			General or unspecified dissatisfaction	1
STATE OF FRESHWATER, COASTAL AND LAND ENVIRONMENTS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE	General satisfaction and confidence	11	Pollution and contamination of waterways	6
	Environments well maintained/protected	7	Poor condition and neglect of rivers and waterways	5
	Information available and easy to access	7	Agricultural, forestry and commercial impacts	6
	Positive freshwater/coastal/water-quality conditions	7	Weak regulation, implementation and accountability	5
	Recognition of environmental value/ importance	2	Insufficient environmental information, testing and transparency	2
	Qualified satisfaction/room to improve	4	Insufficient iwi involvement and consultation	2
			Biodiversity loss and invasive species	1
			Coastal development and coastal environmental impacts	3
			General or unspecified dissatisfaction	1

CONSENTS AND COMPLIANCE

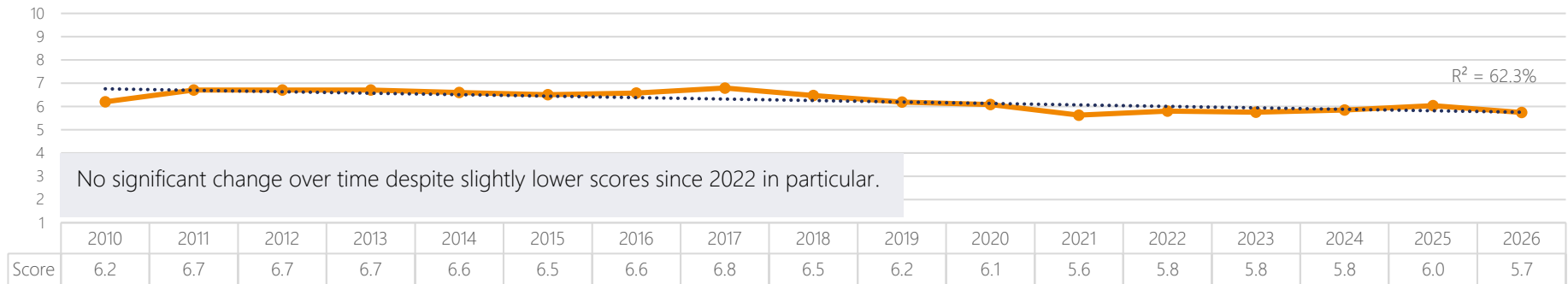


How well does the Council perform in working under RMA resource consents and monitoring, Building Act, Sale & Supply of Alcohol Act and Health & Food Act?

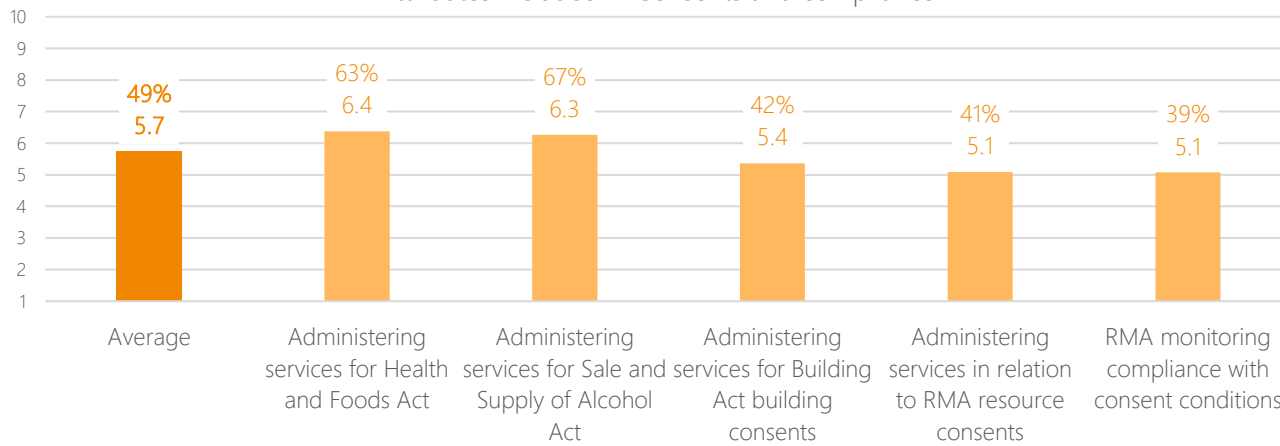


- 2-in-3 residents (67%) in 2026 could rate at least one attribute in relation to consent and compliance (similar to 2025). However, awareness across the range of consents remained limited, with around 2-in-5 (38%-45%) able to rate any specific Act. Just 1-in-5 (20%) could rate all five attributes.
- Half of aware residents were satisfied with consents and compliance overall in 2026 (49%, 5.7 average), slightly down from 2025 (57%, 6.0 average) but more so since 2024 (63%, 5.8 on average) despite little change historically.
- Satisfaction across attributes again varied greatly: highest for services related to Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act (67%, 6.3 average) and Health and Food Act (63%, 6.4 on average); however, even these services saw lower satisfaction than in 2025 (77% and 75%, respectively).
- Satisfaction was lowest for RMA monitoring compliance with consent conditions (39%, 46% in 2025) and services in relation to RMA resource consents (41%, 49% in 2025).
- In 2026, overall satisfaction with consents and compliance was higher in Blenheim (55%, 5.9 average) than in other areas generally (44%, 5.6 average); though lower in Blenheim than in 2025 (67%, 6.5 average).
- However satisfaction rates for specific attributes were similar across the district.
- Younger residents 18-39 were less satisfied with services related to RMA resource consents (27% vs 53% age 65+).
- Residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall were markedly less satisfied with this service group collectively (18%, 4.4 average) compared to those satisfied with Council performance overall (65%, 6.4 average); with especially low satisfaction among overall dissatisfied residents for RMA monitoring compliance with consent conditions (10%, 18% in 2025), services in relation to RMA resource consents (14%, 16% in 2025) and Building Act building consents (15%).

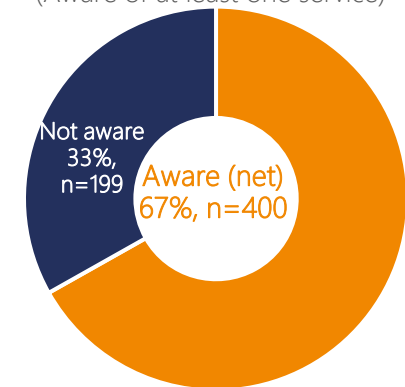
Satisfaction with Consents and compliance over time



Attributes included in Consents and compliance



Net awareness of service group
(Aware of at least one service)



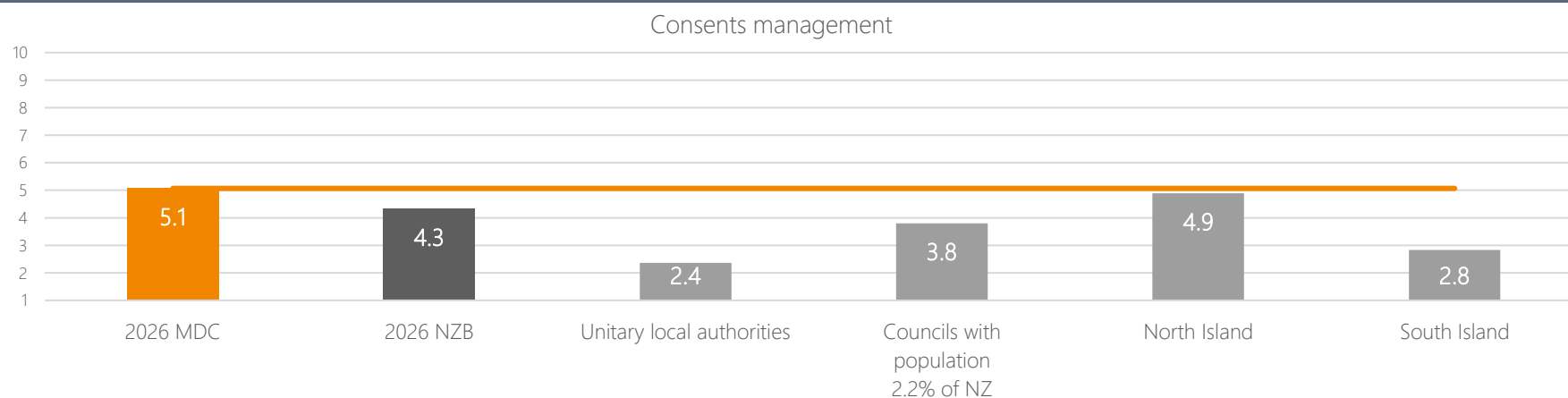
Consents and compliance unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
RMA - RESOURCE CONSENTS	Effective and well- managed service	5	High consent fees and financial burden	15
	Smooth and straightforward consent process	2	Excessive bureaucracy, complexity and red tape	8
	Thorough administration	1	Slow processing and lengthy delays	7
	Proactive service delivery	1	Poor value and limited service or outcomes	5
	No problems experienced or apparent	1	Overly restrictive or insufficiently pragmatic decisions	5
	Recognition of regulatory requirements and complexity	2	Poor administration, communication and coordination	4
	Qualified satisfaction and scope for improvement	1	Perceived inequity for smaller or less-resourced applicants	3
			Inconsistent enforcement and governance concerns	3
			General dissatisfaction with Resource Management Act administration	1
RMA MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH CONSENT CONDITIONS	Effective and well-managed compliance monitoring	5	High fees and financial burden	8
	Timely and responsive monitoring	2	Excessive bureaucracy, complexity and red tape	7
	Fair and helpful process	2	Inconsistent, selective or inadequate enforcement	7
	Effective enforcement of consent conditions	1	Perceived Council double standards or non-compliance	3
	Environmental protection	1	Poor value, limited assistance and weak problem-solving	4
	Positive but qualified assessment	2	Slow processing and prolonged resolution	4
	Effective and well-managed compliance monitoring	5	Unnecessary reapplication or recurring consent requirements	1
	Timely and responsive monitoring	2	Enforcement response viewed as ineffective	3
	Fair and helpful process	2	Perceived inequity and barriers for ordinary residents	3
BUILDING ACT	General satisfaction	12	High fees and excessive consent costs	12
	Helpful, knowledgeable and professional staff	8	Slow processing and lengthy delays	8
	Timely and efficient processing	5	Excessive bureaucracy, red tape and complexity	7
	Clear communication/ease of dealing	4	Inconsistent/poor quality inspection/decision-making	6
	Compliance-focused and quality oversight	4	Poor communication and lack of clarity	3
	Positive direct experience with building	5	Overly rigid or impractical application of rules	4
	Positive reputation among industry users	2	Perceived revenue focus or poor value for money	6
	Qualified satisfaction regarding costs or other development charges	2	Negative impacts on development, investment and housing supply	5
	Scope for further improvement	1	Concerns about staff capability and management	4

SALE & SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL ACT	General satisfaction with licensing/admin	16	Too many alcohol outlets and excessive availability	5
	Effective regulation and responsible control	10	Alcohol-related harm and drinking culture	4
	Few problems with licensed premises or alcohol sales	5	Need for stronger restrictions and controls	5
	Straightforward, fair and efficient administration	4	Insufficient monitoring and enforcement of licensed premises	2
	Appropriate control over outlet numbers and operating hours	4	Costs and overly restrictive regulation	2
	Availability and convenience of alcohol purchasing	4	Lack of awareness or visibility of Council activity	1
	Visible compliance and age-checking	2	Location or venue-specific concerns	3
	Good information and communication	1		
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	4		
HEALTH AND FOOD ACT	General satisfaction with the service	8	Food hygiene and cleanliness concerns	2
	Friendly, helpful and knowledgeable staff	5	Inadequate monitoring/enforcement of standards	2
	Effective monitoring and compliance oversight	7	Concerns for certification of mobile/temp. operators	1
	Good standards of cleanliness/food premises	5	General dissatisfaction with service performance	1
	Responsive and proactive service	3		
	Protecting public health and the community	2		
	Qualified satisfaction/scope for improvement	1		

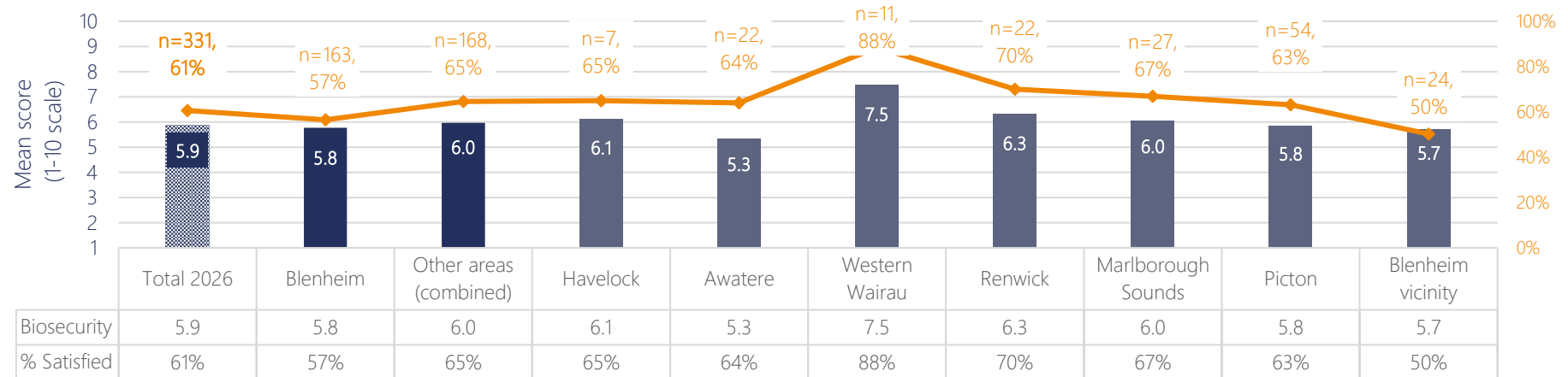
Consents and compliance – MDC vs. New Zealand average

On average, satisfaction with consents and compliance in the MDC region is above the NZ benchmark, particularly compared to South Island councils overall.



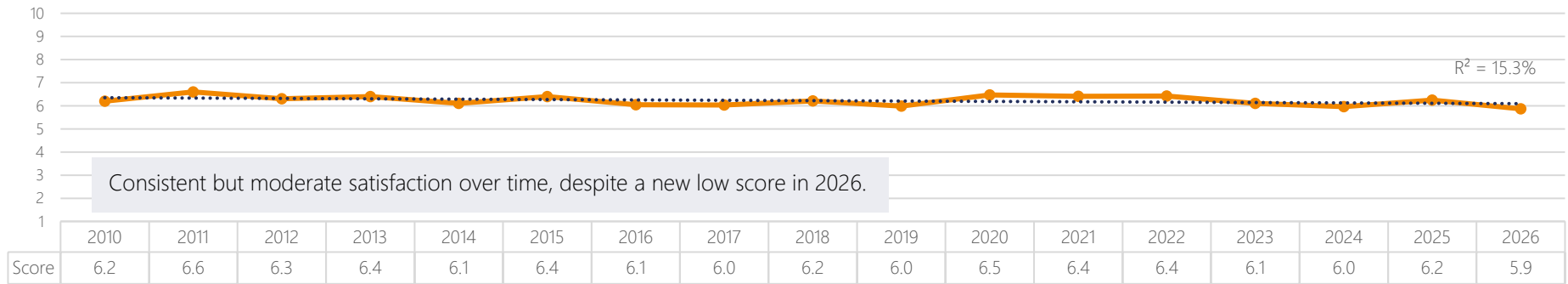
BIOSECURITY

How well does the Council perform in working with landholders in relation to pest management and managing emerging threats, current threats or high impact species?

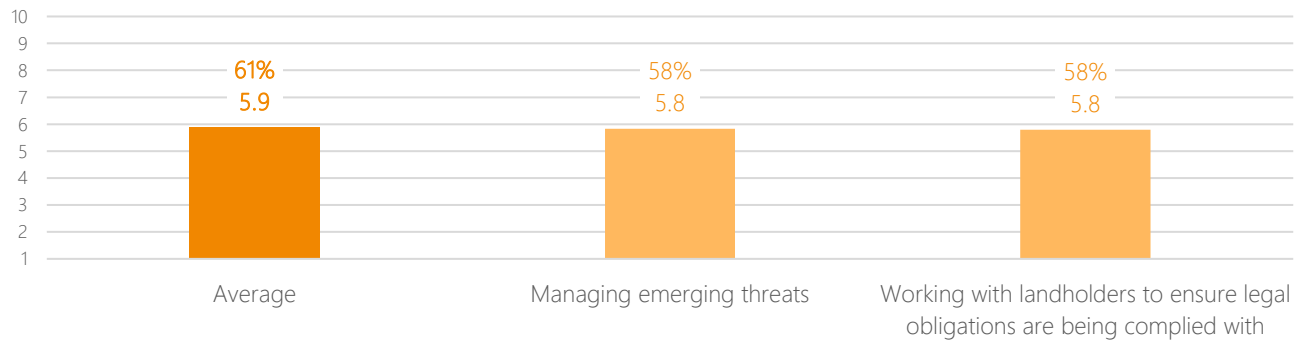


- Just over half (55%) of respondents in 2026 felt informed enough to rate biosecurity services (up from 49% in 2025 and 46% in 2024). However, just 2-in-5 (40%) could rate management of emerging threats specifically.
- Satisfaction with the district's biosecurity management in 2026 (61%, 5.9 average) was similar to 2025 (65%, 6.2 average) and the general historical trend; however, the 2026 average satisfaction score was the lowest to date.
- Satisfaction was similarly moderate for both managing emerging threats (58%, 5.8 average) and working with landholders to ensure legal obligations are being complied with (58%, 5.8 average).
- In 2026, there were no significant differences across the district for any of these measures.
- However, younger residents 18-39 were less satisfied with this service group overall (49%, 5.4 average) than those aged 40-64 (64%, 6.0 average) or 65+ (68%, 6.2 average).

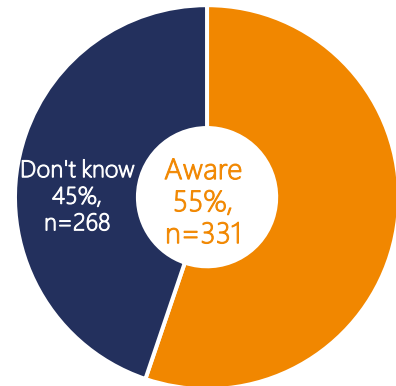
Satisfaction with biosecurity over time



Attributes included in Biosecurity



Net awareness of service group
(Aware of at least one service)



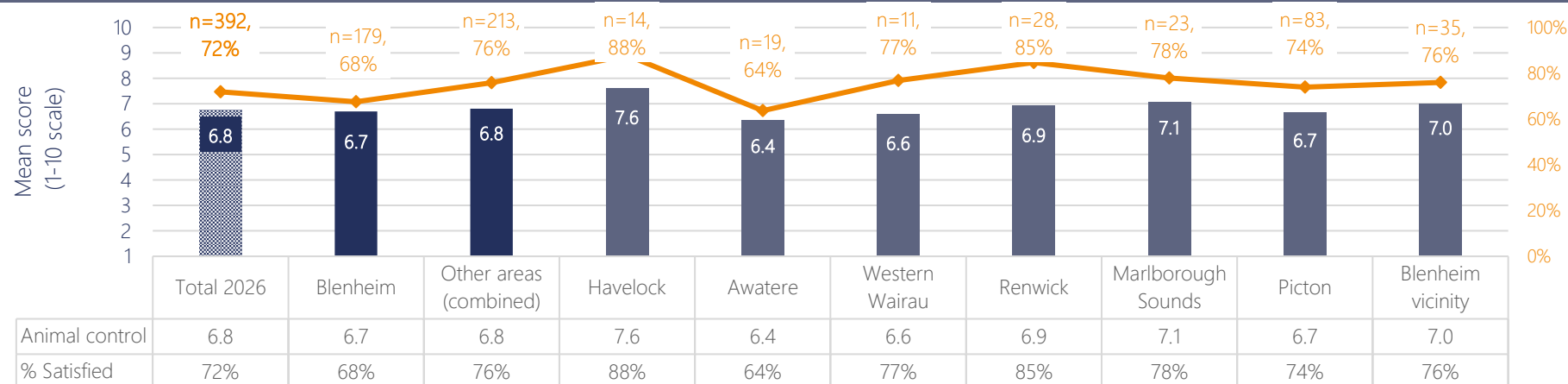
Biosecurity unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
WORKING WITH LANDHOLDERS	General satisfaction with pest plant compliance work	5	Pest plants continuing to spread or persist	5
	Constructive collaboration with landholders	3	Insufficient Council action, follow-up or enforcement	4
	Pragmatic but appropriate enforcement	2	Landholder non- compliance and poor responsibility	3
	Confidence that legislative obligations are being applied	2	Cost burden on affected landholders	2
	Perceived effectiveness of pest plant control	2	Inadequate vegetation and pest control maintenance	1
	Awareness of Nassella tussock control activity	1	Overly directive or poorly engaged approach	2
	Qualified satisfaction and need for continued enforcement	1	Associated fire risk	1
MANAGING THREATS	Proactive management of biosecurity threats	4	Insufficient action or ineffective control	7
	Prompt and effective response to incursions	2	Pest plants spreading or becoming established	6
	Effective prevention and containment	2	Old man's beard and weed control concerns	3
	Good communication and engagement with the rural sector	1	Chilean needle grass control and spread risk	1
	Monitoring of marine and freshwater environments	2	Marine biosecurity risks from vessels and shipping	2
	Effective use of available resources	1	Poor management of Council-controlled land and roadsides	1
			Need for stronger practical control measures	2

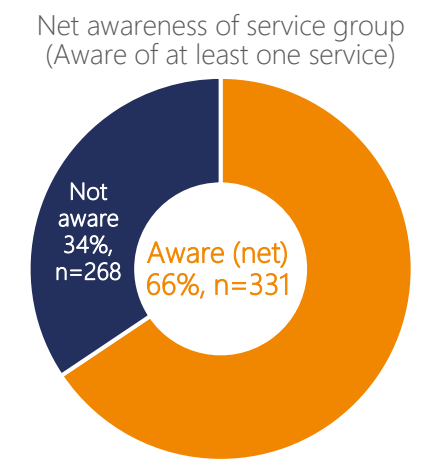
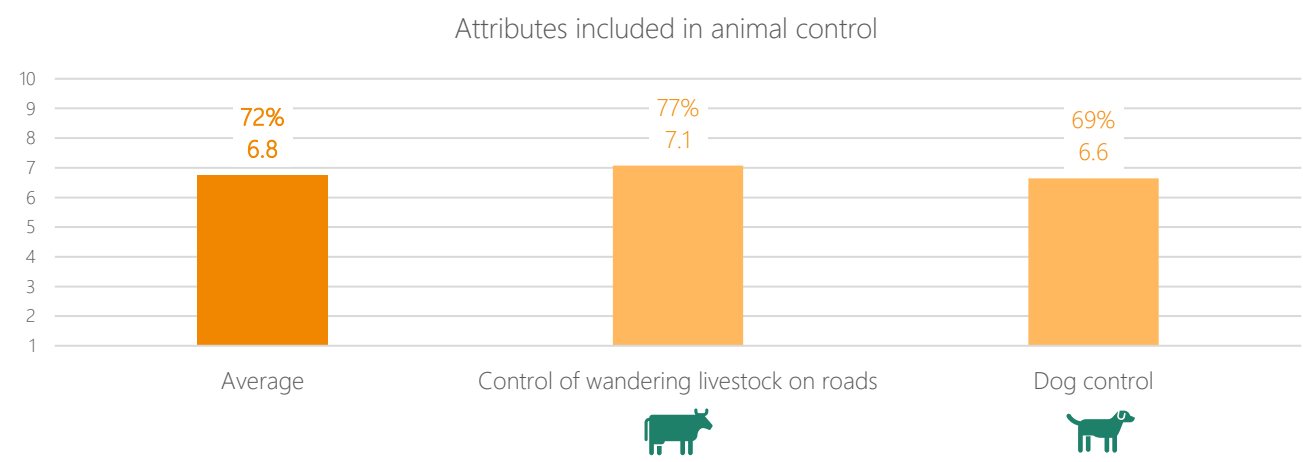
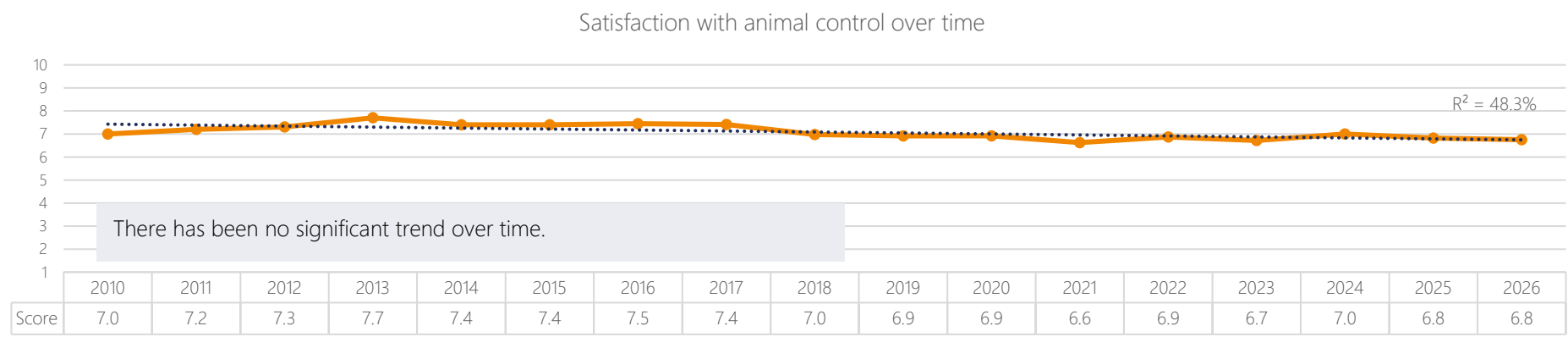
ANIMAL CONTROL



How well does the Council perform in providing dog control and control of wandering livestock?



- Altogether, 2-in-3 residents (66%) in 2026 were aware of animal control services to some degree; more were able to rate dog control (60%) than control of wandering livestock (44%).
- Overall satisfaction with animal control remained relatively high and stable over time, with 7-in-10 (72%) satisfied in 2026 (6.8 average), consistent with recent years.
- However, for those aware of these services in 2026, satisfaction remained typically higher for wandering livestock control (77%, 7.1 average) than for dog control (69%, 6.6 average); despite consistency for both measures over time.
- Overall satisfaction with animal control was similar across the district, with no significant differences between residents in Blenheim and other areas combined.
- However, younger residents 18-39 were typically less satisfied with animal control overall (62%, 6.4 average) than those aged 40-64 (77%, 6.9 average) or 65+ (75%, 7.0 average).
- Just half of residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall were satisfied with animal control overall (51%, 5.8 average) compared to 4-in-5 of those satisfied with Council performance overall (81%, 7.1 average).

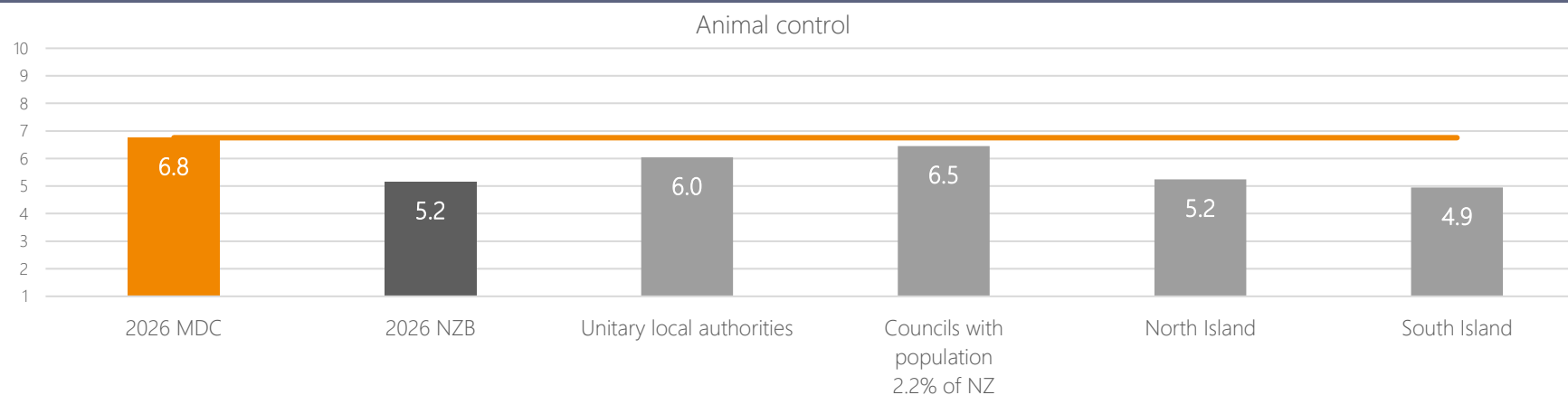


Animal control unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
DOG CONTROL	General satisfaction with Dog Control services	28	Dogs off-leash, roaming or uncontrolled	7
	Few roaming or stray dogs and effective control	19	Insufficient monitoring and enforcement	5
	Prompt and responsive service	15	Slow or ineffective response to complaints	4
	Helpful, friendly and professional staff	12	Safety concerns and aggressive dogs	4
	Effective complaint follow-up and enforcement	8	Barking and nuisance dogs	3
	Constructive approach with dog owners and animal welfare	5	Registration costs and perceived unfairness to responsible owners	3
	Easy registration and positive administration	5	Enforcement perceived as overly punitive or heavy-handed	2
	Dog exercise areas and community education	2	Dog fouling in public areas	1
	Qualified satisfaction and suggestions for improvement	4	Location-specific Dog Control concerns	7
			General dissatisfaction with Dog Control performance	2
WONDERING LIFESTOCK	Very few or no wandering livestock observed	29	Wandering livestock and roadside animal hazards	3
	General satisfaction with livestock control	13	Poor or inadequate Animal Control response	1
	Prompt and responsive Animal Control service	4	Reliance on members of the public to manage incidents	1
	Improved control compared with the past	3	Animal welfare concerns	3
	Roads generally remain stock-free	7		
	Few or no problems experienced	6		

Animal control – MDC vs. New Zealand average

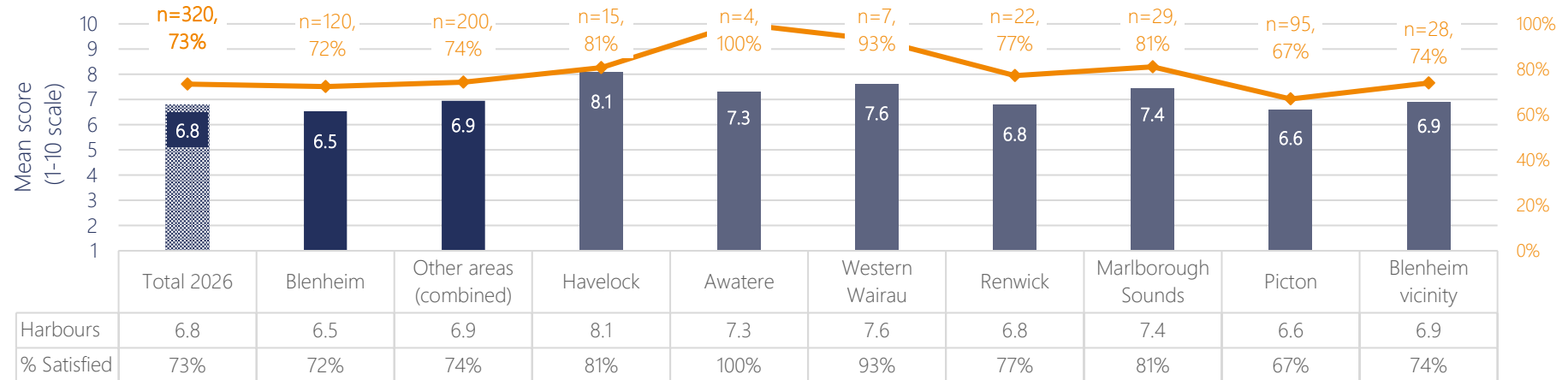
Animal control in the MDC region rates positively compared to the NZ and South Island benchmarks.



HARBOURS

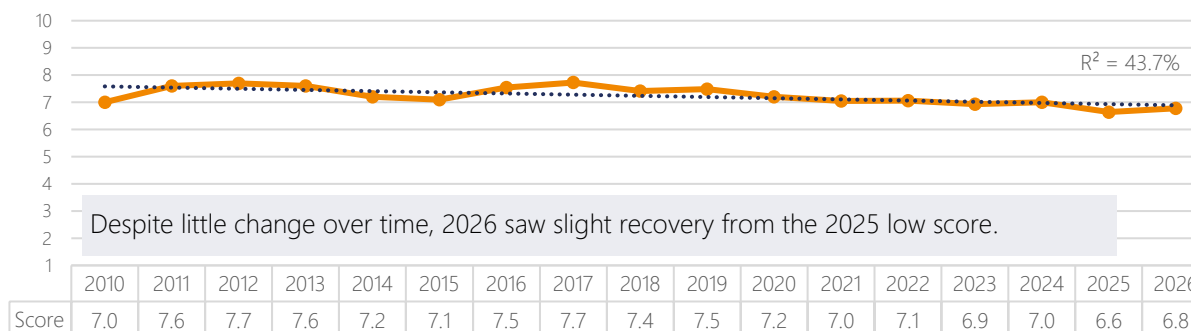


How well does the Council perform in providing harbour control?

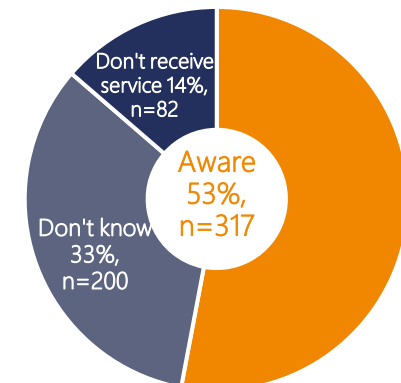


- Just half (53%) of residents were adequately aware to rate harbour related services in 2026, with the remaining 47% providing 'Don't know' or 'Not applicable' responses.
- However, 7-in-10 residents (73%) who rated this service area were satisfied (6.8 on average). This was a slight upward rebound from the historical low results recorded for harbour control in 2025 – despite little change over time.
- Satisfaction with harbour control did not differ significantly across the district in 2026, with small resident segment subsamples limiting comparisons.
- However, satisfaction did increase with age to some extent, being lowest for 18-39s (60%, 5.8 average).

Satisfaction with harbours over time



Awareness of service



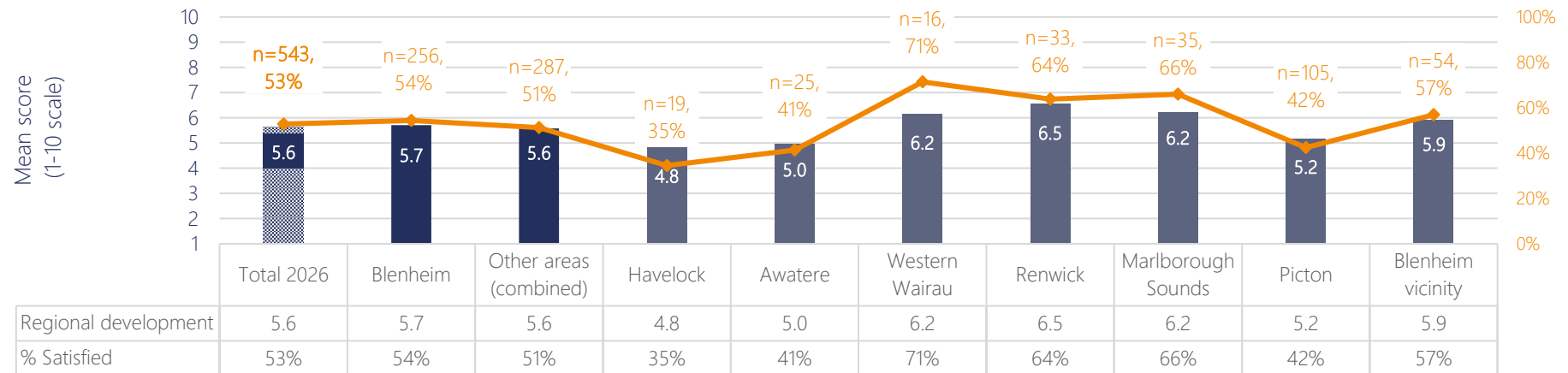
Harbour control unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
HARBOURS	General satisfaction with Harbour Control	34	Poor enforcement and perceived lack of action	3
	Well-run, efficient and organised service	22	Poor management of Picton port and harbour activities	3
	Helpful, approachable and professional Harbour staff	11	Perceived commercial focus over community needs	3
	Good communication and responsiveness	8	High fees and perceived poor value	2
	Strong safety and effective control	9	Governance and accountability concerns	3
	Visible Harbour Master presence and enforcement	7	Insufficient infrastructure for local maritime users	1
	Well-maintained harbours, marinas and facilities	9	General dissatisfaction with Harbour Control	1
	Good access and value to maritime communities	6		
	Positive experiences in Picton, Waikawa and Havelock	14		
	Qualified satisfaction and suggested improvements	6		

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



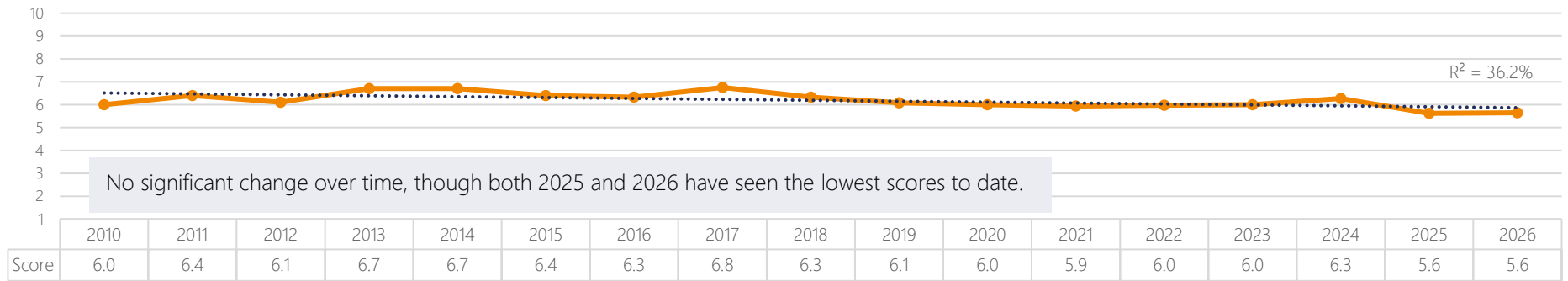
How well does the Council perform in providing car parking and irrigation of the Southern Valleys?*



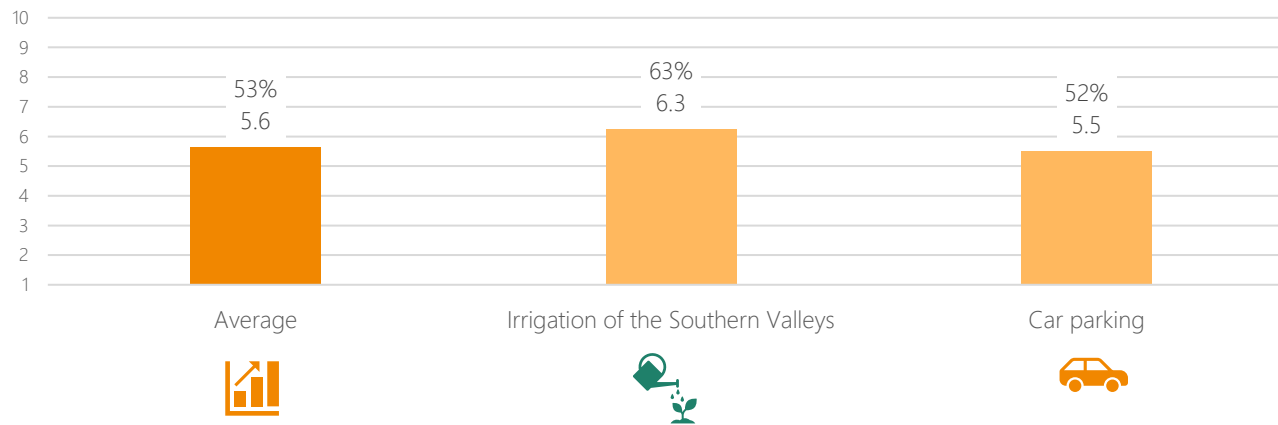
- In 2026, almost all residents (90%) could rate at least one of two regional development attributes. However, awareness across the two attributes varied considerably, with 90% aware of car parking, but just 25% aware of Southern Valleys irrigation. Consequently, just 1-in-4 (24%) could rate both attributes. (Note: 'economic development' was removed from this service group in 2026).
- Among those aware of these services, about half (53%) of respondents in 2026 were satisfied with regional development (5.6 on average). This was consistent with 2025 but remained notably below 2024 levels (61%, 6.3 average) – the second consecutive year this has hit the lowest average score to date.
- Satisfaction varied slightly between attributes, higher for irrigation of the Southern Valleys (63%, 6.3 average) than for car parking (52%, 5.5 average).
- There were no significant differences across the district for any of these measures in 2026.
- Car parking was a particular sticking point for residents dissatisfied with Council performance overall, with just 1-in-4 (28%, 4.4 average) satisfied with this service, compared to 3-in-5 of those satisfied with Council performance overall (62%, 6.3 average).

*Note: 'Economic development' removed from the Regional development service group in 2026.

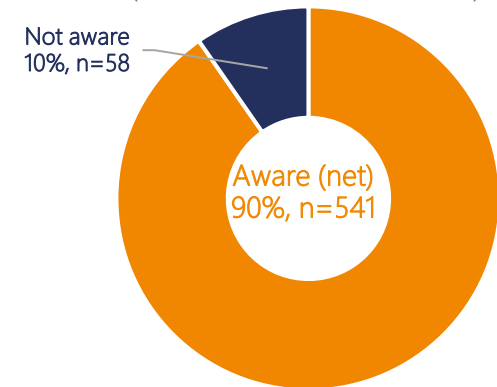
Satisfaction with regional development over time



Attributes included in regional development



Net awareness of service group
(Aware of at least one service)

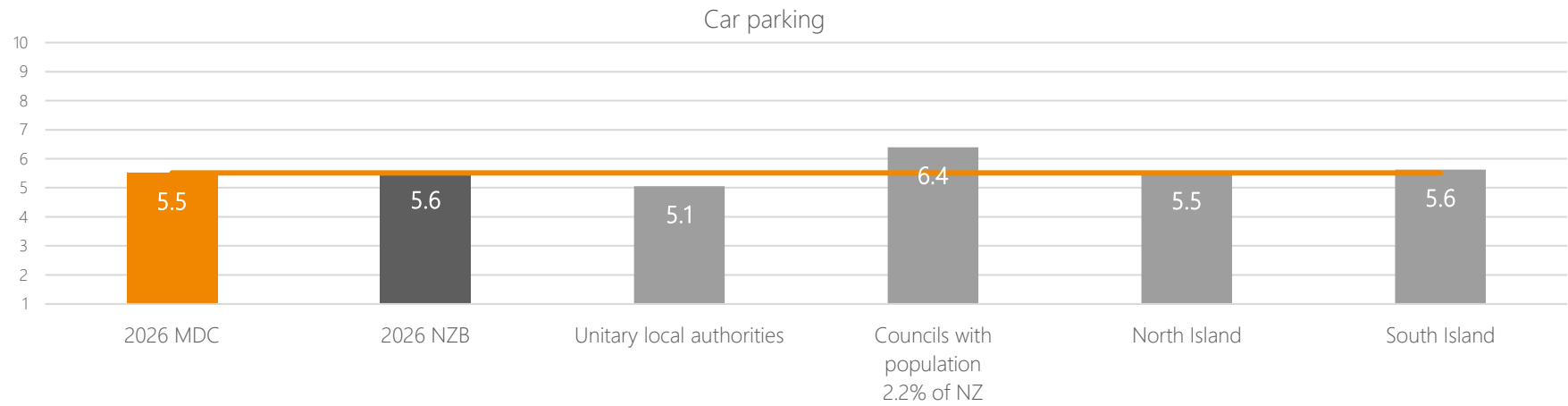


Regional development unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
CAR PARKING	General satisfaction with car parking	42	High fines and overzealous enforcement	29
	Plenty of parking and ease of finding a space	17	Parking charges and desire for more free parking	25
	Positive views of the first hour free	16	Parking discourages CBD use and affects local businesses	18
	Affordable pricing and convenient payment	9	Insufficient parking availability	15
	Convenient access to shops, services and the CBD	8	Complicated, unreliable or unclear payment systems	12
	Well-maintained parking facilities	3	Inadequate long-term and worker parking	8
	Qualified satisfaction and minor usability issues	6	Poor accessibility for disabled and older users	5
			Poor parking design, location and safety	8
			Poor communication, responsiveness and dispute handling	8
			Location-specific parking gaps	15
IRRIGATION OF THE SOUTHERN VALLEYS	Reliable and effective operation	6	Perceived inequity and preferential support for vineyards	4
	General satisfaction with the scheme	5	Excessive water extraction and environmental impacts	2
	Positive direct user experience	1	Metering, compliance and alleged misuse	1
	Economic and land- development benefits	1	Opposition to Council involvement in a private commercial activity	2
	Positive reputation and community feedback	1	Need for further investment	1
			Water quality and river amenity concerns	1

Car parking – MDC vs. New Zealand average

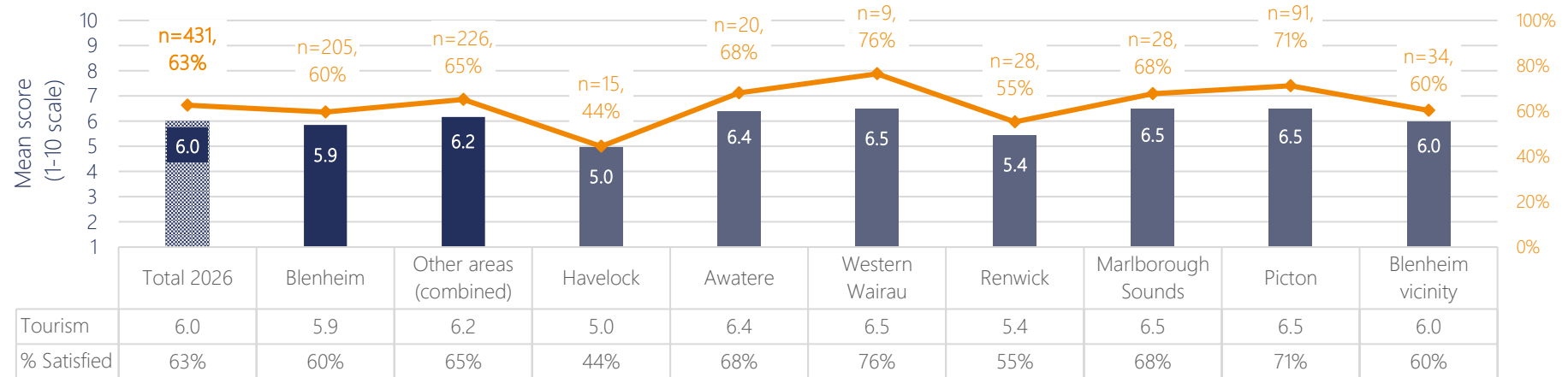
Satisfaction with car parking in the MDC region is on par with NZ benchmarks in 2026.



TOURISM

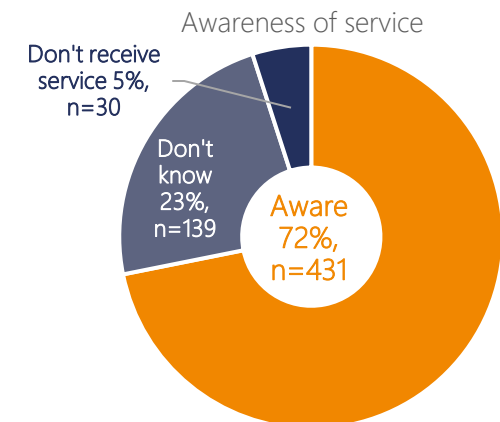
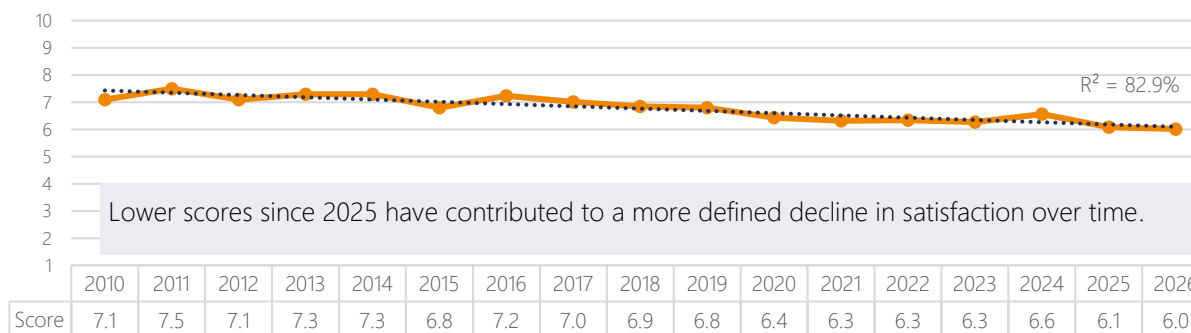


How well does the Council perform in supporting tourism?



- 7-in-10 residents (72%) felt they could rate Council's performance in supporting tourism in 2026. Of these residents, 2-in-3 (63%) were satisfied with this support (6.0 average), similar to 2025 results. However, this now becomes the lowest result for tourism satisfaction measured to date – and represents a gradual but significant decrease in satisfaction over time.
- There were no significant differences with tourism support across the region in 2026.
- However, satisfaction remained significantly lower for younger residents 18-39 (56%, 5.6 average) than for older residents 65+ (71%, 6.6 average).
- Of those dissatisfied with Council performance overall, less than half were satisfied with tourism support (41%, 4.9 average), significantly less than those satisfied overall (75%, 6.7 average).

Satisfaction with tourism over time

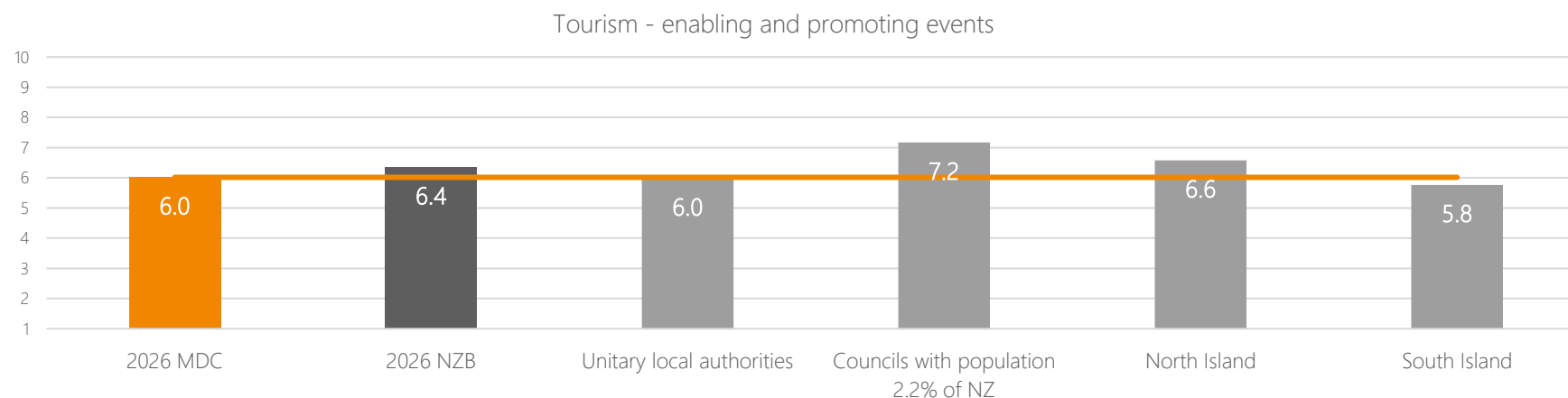


Tourism unprompted comments (coded categories)

	POSITIVE	COUNT	NEGATIVE	COUNT
TOURISM	General satisfaction	19	Insufficient attractions/reasons for visitors to stay	11
	Effective promotion/DM support	9	Poor tourism promotion, information and visibility	8
	Good range attractions/activities/events	8	Poor Council/DM performance/ management	8
	Visitors are well catered for	6	Tourism offer too focused on wine/cruise tourism	7
	Council support for tourism/businesses	6	Poor visitor infrastructure and town amenity	7
	Positive tourism activity in Picton	3	Insufficient development in Picton/Sounds	5
	Tourism contributes to regional economy	4	Poor value for rates/shouldn't be publicly funded	5
	Good visitor information/interpretation	3	Need broader events/experience development	5
	Good balance between tourism/resident needs	1	Restrictive or poorly balanced visitor policies	3
			Insufficient engagement with businesses	2
			Environmental quality affecting the visitor experience	2
			Limited Māori and cultural tourism	1

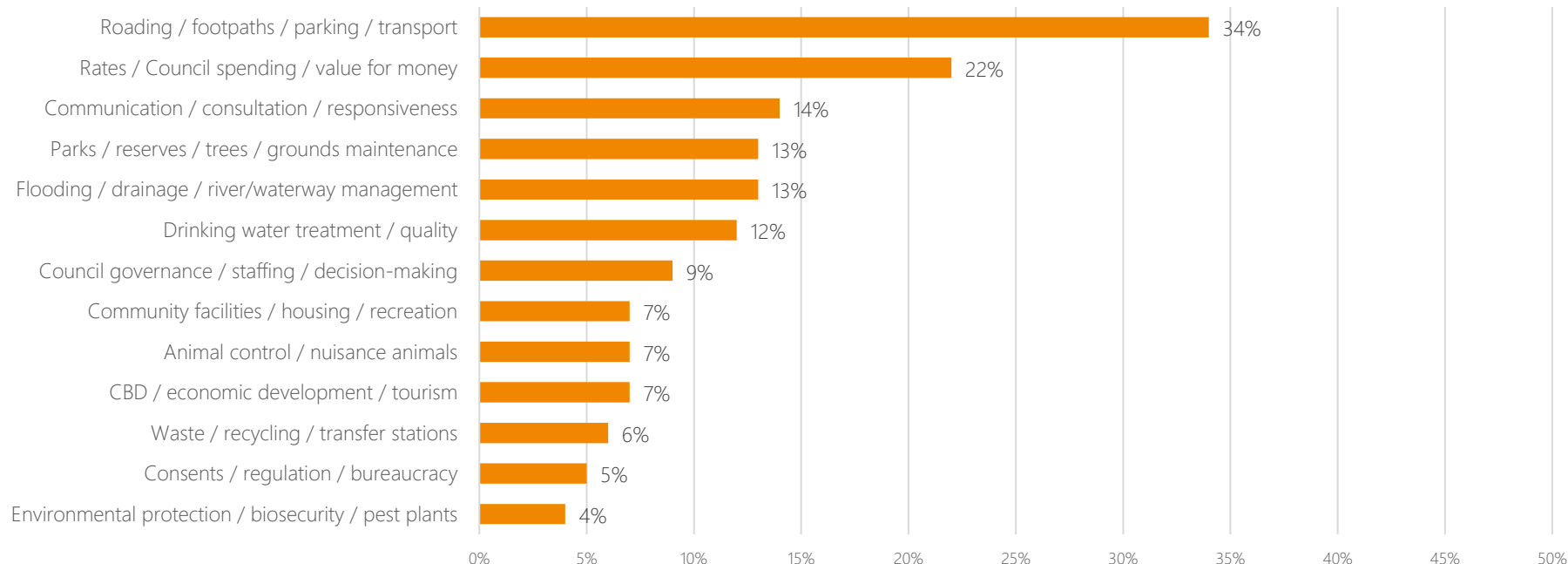
Tourism – MDC vs. New Zealand average

Satisfaction with tourism in the MDC region is close to the NZ benchmark (anecdotally).



ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Is there a particular issue you want the Council to know about? Open-ended comments sorted into categories.
Totals may exceed 100% owing to multiple responses for each respondent.



- The dominant issue raised in resident feedback was transport infrastructure, with 1-in-3 comments noting roads, footpaths, parking, cycling or pedestrian safety. The next strongest concern was rates and Council spending, reflecting pressure on household affordability and ongoing desire for Council to prioritise core services over discretionary projects. Communication, flooding and river management, parks maintenance and drinking-water treatment also featured prominently. Taken together, feedback indicates that residents want a Council focused on core infrastructure, cost-conscious, responsive to reported problems and visibly maintaining essential local services, with clearer communication about decisions and actions.
- Additional comments on Council services reinforced concerns about core infrastructure and affordability: roads, footpaths, parking and transport again most frequently mentioned, followed by rates, fees and value for money, and maintenance of parks and public spaces. Water quality, flooding and river management were also prominent, particularly chlorination and Taylor River maintenance. Beyond these operational issues, residents called for stronger economic and CBD development, better communication and responsiveness from Council, more opportunities for young people, and fairer service provision across smaller and rural communities. However, dissatisfaction with particular services also sits alongside an overall view that Marlborough is generally well served.

