



Auckland Council candidate survey

A summary of 2016 results¹



In 2016, Auckland Council provided a range of resources to encourage and support election candidates, including a pre-election 'stand for council' campaign, a range of informational resources in multiple formats, and a website for candidates to upload additional information about themselves.

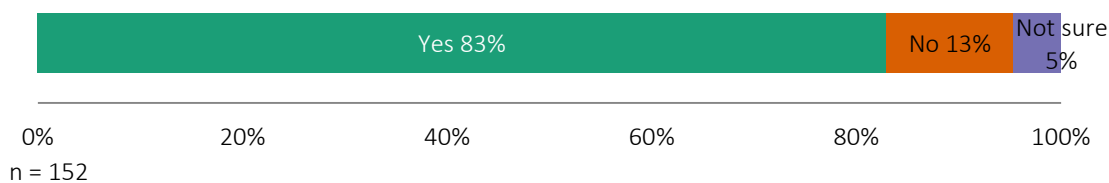
Following the 2016 elections, a survey of candidates was conducted to understand their awareness of the 'Love your Auckland – Stand for council' campaign; their experiences of the nomination process; their awareness and usage of the resources available to them, including the 'Show your love' website; and to identify areas for future service improvement.

A total of 38 per cent of candidates (164 out of 427) provided a response to at least one survey question.

'Love your Auckland – Stand for council' campaign

Overall awareness of the 'Love your Auckland' campaign was high, but lower for candidates who were running for the first time and/or who came from non-Pākehā backgrounds (notably Samoan, Chinese, Māori, Cook Island Māori and 'Other').

Most candidates were **aware** of the 'Love your Auckland - Stand for council' campaign



Most candidates reported that the campaign had either a neutral or positive impact on their decision to stand for election. Comments on the campaign were split, with some candidates liking the approach and others feeling it was unhelpful and/or a poor use of money.

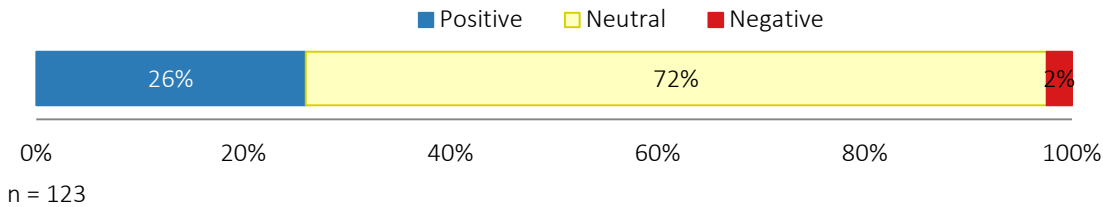
¹ This document is a summary of a report produced by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU). To view this document visit knowledgeauckland.org.nz and search for "Auckland Council elections candidate experience survey 2016".

I really liked the approach. It didn't make me want to stand but it did reinforce my decision and made the process seem accessible.

It seemed to be a relatively high profile campaign that completely missed the audience it was trying to target, particularly under 35s.

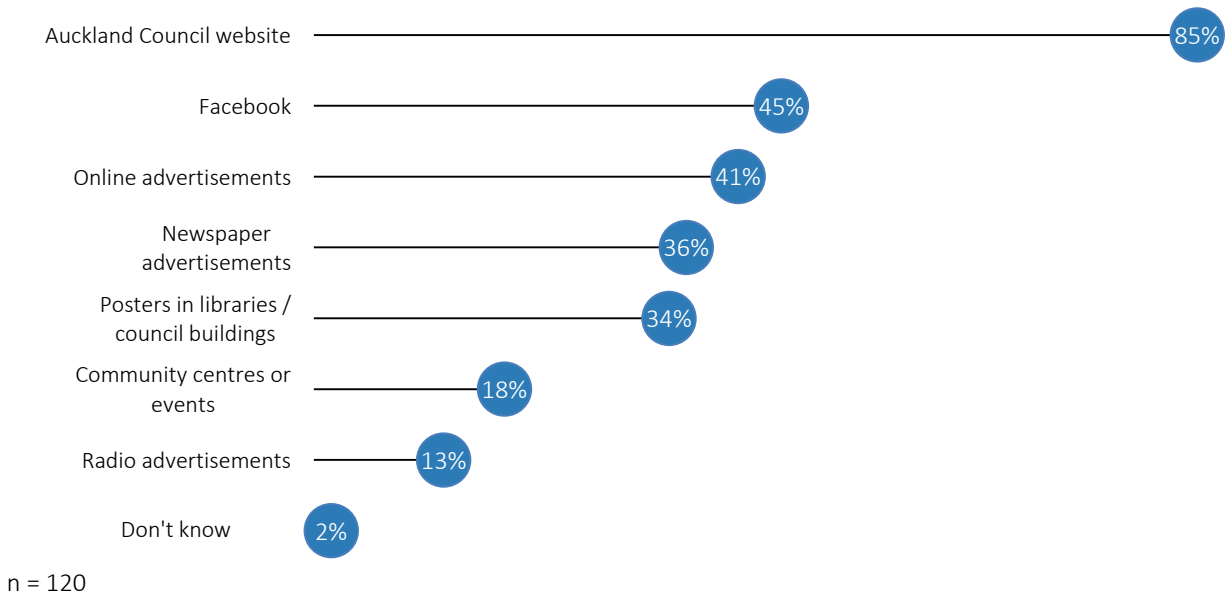
I don't think this campaign helps. The money would be better put into providing more detailed information about candidates.

Candidates were neutral or positive about the impact of the 'Love your Auckland' campaign on their decision to stand



Candidates engaged with 'Love your Auckland' through a number of channels, notably the council website, Facebook, online and newspaper advertisements, and posters in libraries and council buildings.

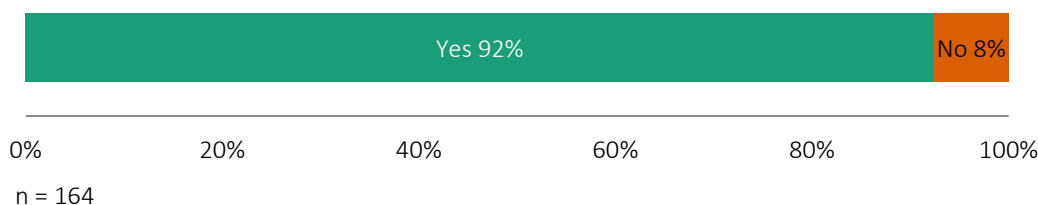
Many candidates heard about 'Love your Auckland' via the council website, Facebook, advertisements and posters



Nomination process

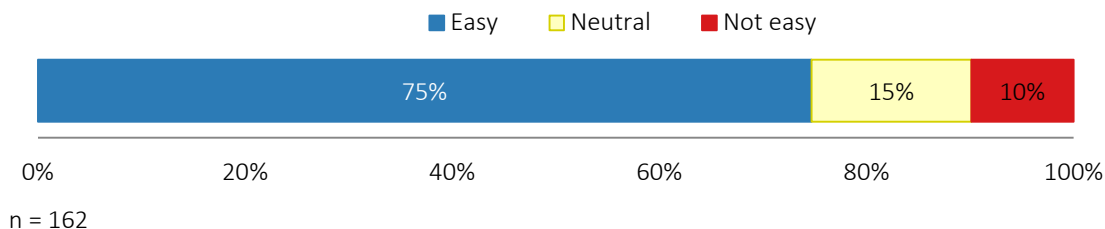
Nine in ten candidates were able to access all the nomination information they needed.

The majority of candidates were able to access all of the information they needed



Most candidates also said it was easy to find the information they needed, although one in ten candidates reported some difficulty. The majority (84%) of candidates who were able to find information said it was accurate.

Finding information on the nomination process was **easy** for the majority of candidates



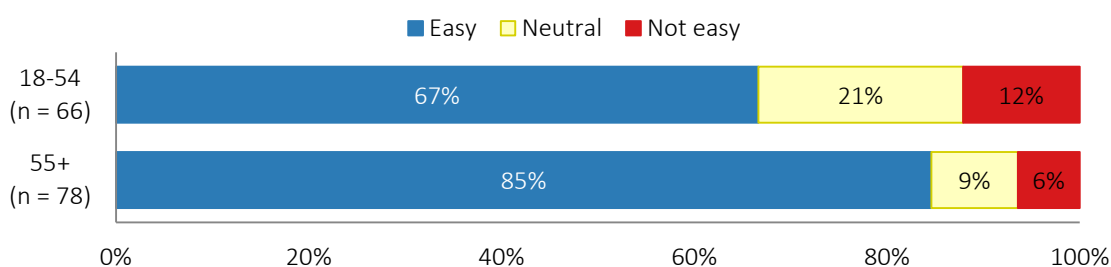
Information was more difficult to find for candidates who were younger and/or from non-Pākehā backgrounds (notably Māori, Samoan and 'Other' ethnicities).

Participants made a number of suggestions for improvement, many focusing on making information on the nomination process clearer and easier to find.

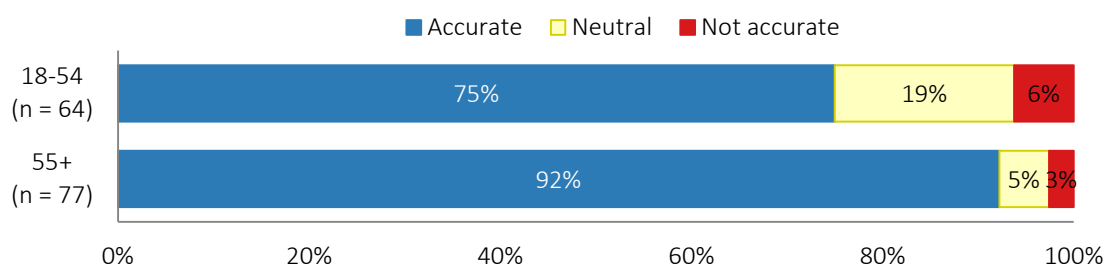
[It] should be clear[er] who can nominate. I had a person that nominated me but was not yet registered. This came at a very late hour and put me under pressure to get another nominator. *When going to the council website, I found it difficult initially to find election / candidate information.*

As illustrated in the figures below, younger candidates (aged 18-54) said that information was both more difficult to find, and less accurate, than older candidates.

Older candidates found information **easier** to find than younger candidates



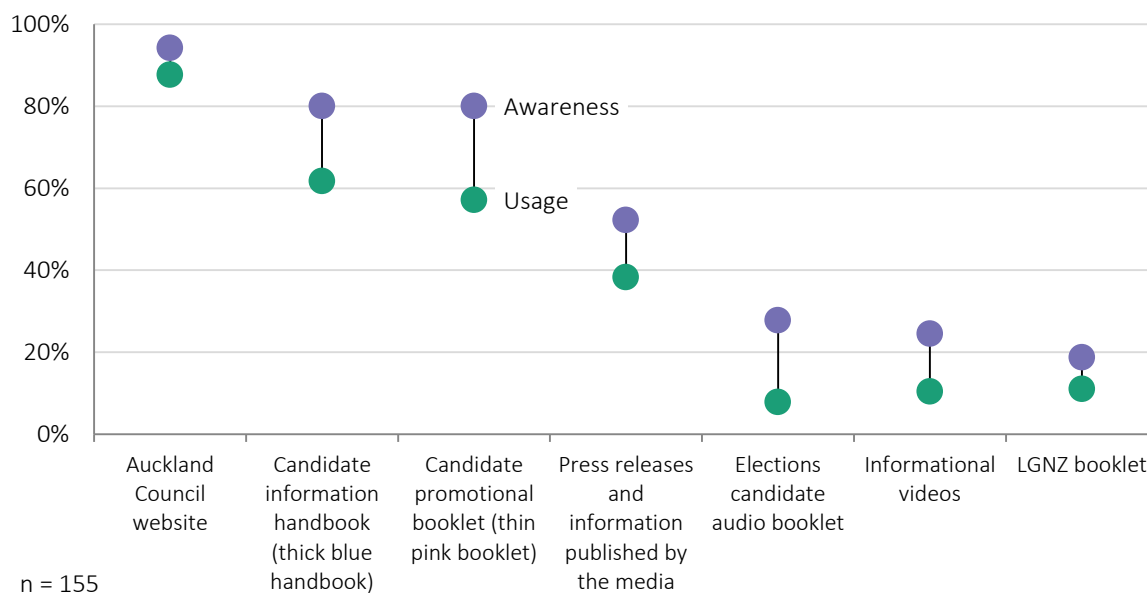
Older candidates felt the information they obtained was more **accurate** than younger candidates



Quality of resources

There was a high level of both awareness and usage of the Auckland Council website by candidates, highlighting its role as a central information hub. Awareness of the candidate information handbook and candidate promotional booklet was also high, although usage was lower. Awareness and usage of remaining resources was lower.

Awareness and usage of candidate resources



A number of candidates wrote positive comments about the resources provided to them during the 2016 election campaign.

The 'Show your love' website was much better than 2013, could use similar format for preliminary information too.

They were very helpful. Thank you.

I liked the warning to candidates about checking signs after the storms. I had noticed a few (others) were down.

Several candidates described a lack of awareness about what was available and said that finding information, on the website and through other media, was very difficult

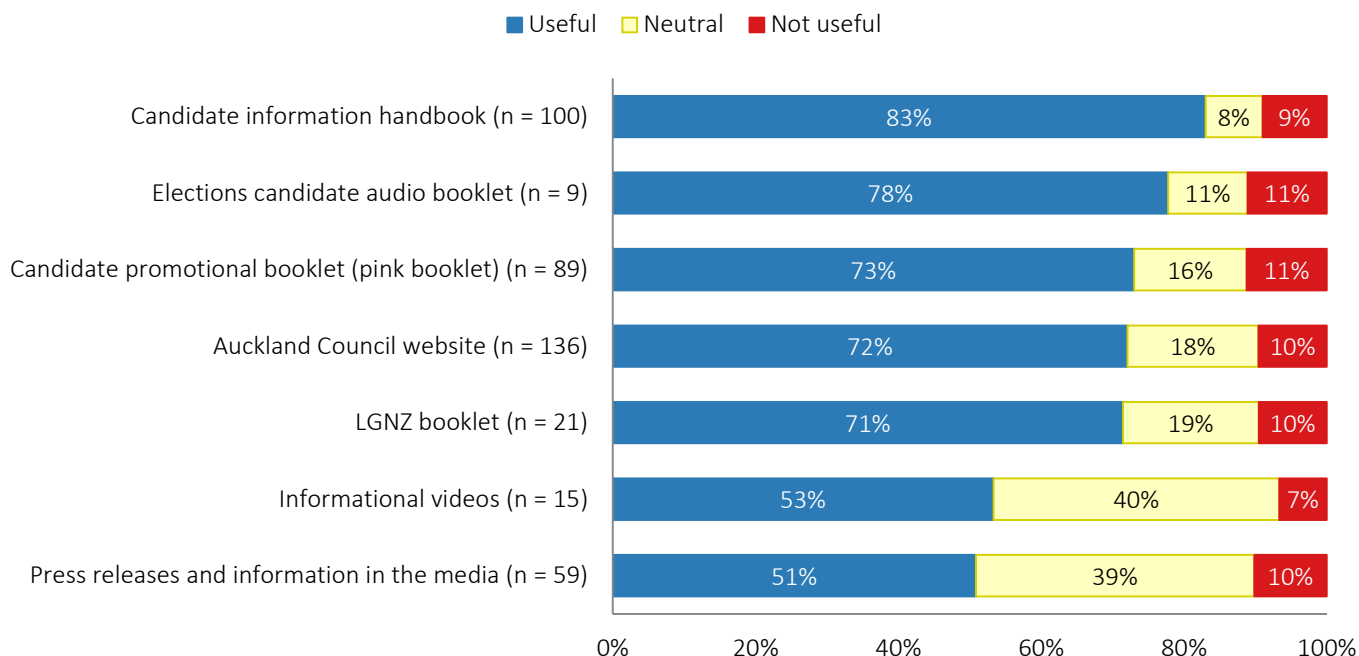
I was only made aware of the candidate handbook when I took the nomination form in, by then I had already searched for information myself and made calls to Electoral Services. I never discovered any information videos and never saw any promotion for candidates. There were no information evenings either. Generally I thought it was far more difficult to find information for candidates than it was in 2013.

More specific information about the Act/s governing the local body. More information about responsibilities of candidates.

[I'd like to see] one site to find information and some decent search engine work so that it can be found online. I did like the hard copies Auckland produced though.

Candidates who used a resource were asked to rate the usefulness of it. The candidate information handbook was rated as most useful. The candidate audio booklet, pink promotional booklet, council website and LGNZ booklet were rated as helpful by the majority of candidates who used them.

Information booklets and council website rated as more **useful** than informational videos and media information

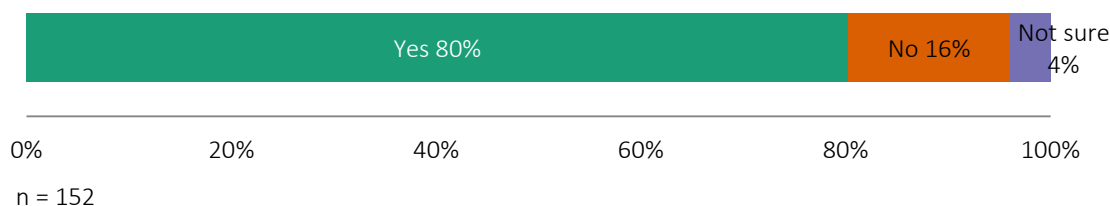


'Show your love' candidate information website

Auckland Council developed the 'Show your love' website as a way to engage voters. The primary aim of the website was to help voters find information on candidates.

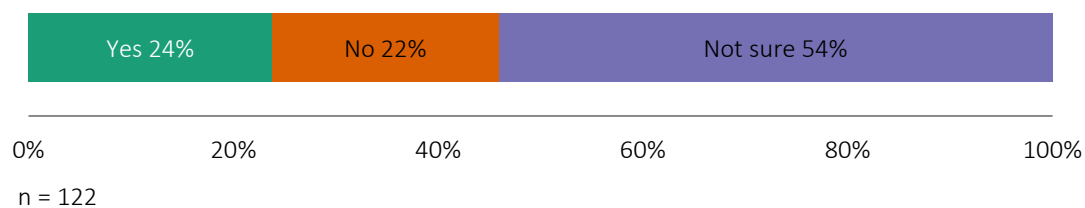
Most of the candidates who responded to the survey contributed information to the website. Those who did not contribute to the webpage were more likely to be older, and Māori, and less likely to be Chinese, Indian and Samoan.

Most candidates **contributed** to the 'Show your love' candidate information page



Approximately half of all candidates who reported contributing were unsure whether it had a positive impact on their campaign, with roughly even numbers of the remainder feeling the website did and didn't benefit their campaign, respectively.

Candidates who used 'Show your love' were mostly unsure whether it benefited their campaign



Survey respondents provided a number of suggestions for how to improve the 'Show your love' website. Many of the comments related to the functionality of the website, difficulties filling in the forms, the general design, and the need for more real-time information.

Just that it was a bit clunky to use, I had varied feedback from other people who used it to look me up.

I found the form very difficult to fill in. I had trouble moving between the pages and wasn't sure how to submit it.

I was quite impressed with the quality of the website, especially about its user-friendly interface and visibility of the contents. It was easy to use and I'm pretty sure it drew [the] interest of many residents into the election. Thank you for putting your effort into building such [a] website.

Providing information about how many people visited my profile and whether they used the links would be useful.

Areas for improvement

The main areas for improvement include:

- Make nomination processes clearer and easier
- Increase awareness of the 'Stand for council' message, particularly among non-Pākehā and first-time candidates
- Build on communication channel successes, targeting different candidate groups
- Ensure all candidates are aware of and have access to every resource available to them
- Improve the functionality and impact of the 'Show your love' website
- Ensure customer-facing staff are adequately informed
- Ensure all communications are clear
- Review the communication of the election responsibilities of Auckland Council and other parties
- Broaden the provision of assisted voting support.

For more detail, read the full report: Allpress, J. A. and Meares, C. (2017). Auckland Council elections candidate experience survey 2016. Auckland Council technical report, TR2017/004.

Find out more: visit knowledgeauckland.govt.nz
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