

Evaluating the Waiheke Governance Pilot: Three Years On

Jesse Allpress and Laura Roberts

February 2021

Technical Report 2021/13



Research and
Evaluation Unit

RIMU

**Auckland
Council**
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau





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Executive summary

In late 2017, a three-year Auckland Council pilot programme was established to trial greater devolvement of decision-making to the Waiheke Local Board. The pilot arose from Auckland Council's 2016 Governance Framework Review, which reflected on the implementation of Auckland's local governance model and considered whether it was working optimally. One of the key findings of the review was that local boards did not feel sufficiently empowered to fulfil their role as had been envisioned in the governance reforms. Following this, a pilot with the Waiheke Local Board was proposed as an option to test ways of increasing local empowerment.

To track changes and impacts over time, researchers from Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) evaluated the pilot over the three-year period. This document reflects the third and final evaluation output.

This report summarises the impacts of the pilot, from research undertaken with Waiheke Local Board members and Auckland Council and council-controlled organisation (CCO) staff, as well as surveys among the Waiheke community.

Intent of the pilot

The overall intent of the pilot was to empower the Waiheke Local Board and increase their influence over local issues of importance. The pilot's initial focus was on extending formal delegations of decision-making from the Governing Body to the local board and on resourcing staff to resolve several long-standing issues, but this focus evolved and expanded over the three years. As this report discusses, the ability of the Waiheke Local Board to have influence over local issues was increased in a range of ways.

Summary of findings

The pilot resulted in increased local board influence through multiple mechanisms, as outlined in Section 3 and summarised below. These include:

- the pilot context, which encouraged staff to try new ways of doing things that they otherwise may have been reluctant to do
- the improvement of working relationships between board members and staff from one of hostility and distrust to collegiality. The following factors contributed to this improvement:
 - a number of face-to-face meetings between the board and senior staff across the council group at the start of the pilot to establish an understanding of the issues
 - documentation and communication back to all parties, of board member frustrations and negative staff experiences in relation to working with the board
 - a commitment from all parties to work together more productively
 - in the case of Auckland Transport (AT), the development of a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) outlining principles to guide the relationship

- a change in board composition and the local board chair that aligned with a more collegial way of working with council staff.
- the appointment of a dedicated Waiheke and Gulf Islands Programme Manager, whose role was to facilitate progress on long-standing issues on the island
- delegation of decision-making in relation to Matiatia planning and the Waiheke local area plan, as well as greater influence over local issues such as the use of the old Harbourmaster building and the island's waste management contract procurement process
- changes across the organisation designed to give local boards more influence over the prioritisation of budgets and to increase coordination across multiple local board-facing departments.

The strongest driver of change was the processes and initiatives put in place to improve working relationships. While improved relationships are less tangible than changes to delegations and departmental processes (and might be viewed by some as less important), evidence from the pilot shows they are fundamental to improving local board influence.

While the pilot was largely successful, it was not without challenges, and areas for improvement remain. These include several unresolved issues and uncompleted projects, challenges associated with addressing issues such as visitor impacts that fall outside of current funding mechanisms, possibly untapped opportunities to delegate further decisions to the board, and the lack of engagement of some departments.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for next steps are proposed. They relate to three areas: reporting the results of the evaluation; next steps regarding the Waiheke Local Board pilot; and rolling aspects of the pilot out across all local board areas. These are discussed in turn below.

Reporting

It is recommended that:

- the findings of this evaluation be presented to a public Waiheke Local Board meeting
- the Joint Governance Working Party is used by Auckland Council staff as the primary decision-making body to advance pilot evaluation recommendations where they apply across all local boards.

Waiheke Local Board pilot

It is recommended to formally extend the pilot through until the end of June 2022 (the end of the 2021/22 financial year), with a specific aim to:

- see through uncompleted projects, particularly the Matiatia Plan
- investigate a small number of additional pilot-related opportunities regarding Governing Body relationships and departments that have not participated to date. The specifics of these additional focus areas should be formally agreed with the Waiheke Local Board
- work with the Waiheke Local Board to agree areas where it is seeking further delegations and/or increased governance responsibilities and as appropriate, formalise these by seeking approvals from the Governing Body

- further support the effectiveness of the AT Waiheke Operations Manager within AT, ideally led by the AT Executive Lead Team
- request that AT allocate specific budget to the AT Waiheke Operations Manager to ensure the intent of the role is met
- further raise awareness of the pilot's successes with Governing Body members and Auckland Council's Executive Lead Team.

Roll out of the pilot lessons across all local board areas (including Waiheke)

The lessons from the pilot are relevant and applicable to other local board areas. While Waiheke was selected in part because of its geographic isolation, and although its specific issues may not be shared by other local boards, the mechanisms by which change occurred (a process for improved relationships, allocation of staff resource to progress issues etc.) are unrelated to geography. As such, lessons from the pilot can and should be applied to other local boards.

Several organisation-wide changes are already underway that are in line with the pilot principles, such as a council group-wide shift to departmental structures focused on local board clusters employing local board-focused area managers; the Governance Framework Review 'equity of service levels and funding' work programme; and the CCO review recommendations¹, particularly regarding local board empowerment.

Considering the Waiheke Pilot, it is recommended that the following actions are taken, with a focus on all local boards:

- the Waiheke Programme Manager, with support from Auckland Council's Executive Lead Team, to work with departmental managers and staff to incorporate successful components of the pilot into business-as-usual departmental practice for all local boards
- the establishment of a cohort of new local board-focused area managers across the council group. They will be responsible for developing and embedding aspects of the Waiheke Programme Manager's current functions that have been successful on Waiheke. Notably, this group should be set up to be able to resolve issues that might have previously 'fallen through the cracks' as a result of no one department having primary responsibility for their resolution
- set up an enduring organisation-wide process for local boards to more easily request delegated decision-making from the Governing Body on an ad hoc basis without the need for the high levels of staff advocacy that was provided by the Waiheke Programme Manager during the pilot.

The pilot also demonstrates the value of a higher degree of organisational intervention for a specific local board when circumstances require. Most local boards have specific project or initiatives they are seeking to achieve that do not always 'fit' well with council policies, guidelines, practises or processes. These can continue to create tensions that might be resolved if attention is brought to them. We suggest that specific and targeted intervention may be beneficial in the following circumstances:

- where local board members feel frustrated in their desire to influence local matters
- where relationships between elected members and staff are dysfunctional

¹ <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/council-controlled-organisations/Pages/review-of-council-controlled-organisations.aspx>

- where staff are finding that they are regularly treated poorly by elected members, and/or
- where there are specific local issues that have not or cannot easily be addressed by existing council policies or practises.

All options should be considered in light of the reasons for selecting a specific local board for intervention, including implementing processes for improving relationships, encouraging increased staff flexibility regarding standard departmental processes, assigning staff time to resolving issues, and seeking formal delegations from the Governing Body.

Of all the mechanisms for increasing local board influence, the pilot has shown that improving relationships is the most fundamental and important. Unless productive relationships exist, positive outcomes are unlikely, even if, for example, significant delegations are made to a local board.

Based on observations of the pilot, the following steps are recommended when looking to improve relationships between local board members and council staff:

- assign a facilitator who has an existing strong relationship with the respective local board, who has the board members' respect and with a high level of organisational influence to bring all parties together
- involve senior managers from within the council group who have the power to bring about necessary changes to staff processes and behaviour
- agree and document principles of respectful working relationships, ideally via a formal MoU,² which sets out the expectations and obligations of each party and provides mechanisms for ensuring positive working relationships are maintained
- agree on a course of action to improve local board influence. This might include the allocation of staff to manage specific projects, trialling new departmental processes, obtaining formal delegations, and changing how elected members receive and interact with staff
- provide an independent advice service to elected members on ways to more effectively influence, considering behavioural science relating to interpersonal influence, the legal constraints of their elected member roles, and the organisational context in which they are working
- specific considerations for staff include:
 - ensuring there is adequate staff resourcing to successfully address the areas of frustrations within the local board. A fundamental component of improving relationships must be reducing frictions that have contributed to poor relationships
 - maintaining regular updates to board members on activities and progress, even if no progress is made. Some of the positive impact of the Programme Manager, for instance, is attributable to their regular updating of board members, even when little progress had been made.
 - being open to altering standard ways of working.
- where relevant, the process above should highlight for elected members the organisation's resourcing constraints, staff experience of working with the board, and the benefits – as demonstrated by the Waiheke Pilot – of working more constructively

² More detail on the importance of a written commitment in the form of an MoU and the important components of such an agreement can be seen in Section 5.1.

with staff. The pilot also demonstrated that there is no substitute for adequate “face time” between staff and local board members.

Conclusion

The context in which the Waiheke Governance Pilot has sought to improve local governance is complex, characterised by two separate but interacting levels of governance (comprised of 170 elected members with differing political priorities), a large region with multiple competing challenges, and a large supporting organisation with multiple departments and a complex CCO structure.

The pilot found that it is possible to effect real improvements, despite this complexity. While formal accountability mechanisms in the form of allocations and delegations are important – and there is further work to be done in this area – an important finding of the pilot is the importance of establishing good working relationships for productive governance, as well as resourcing to respond to long-standing issues.

While not providing a specific template, the lessons from the pilot offer a number of approaches to be applied to other local board areas as needed.

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1.0 Introduction

The 2010 Auckland governance reforms brought about significant change for local government in Auckland. The resulting governance model for Auckland created a shared system of local government, with regional decision-making over regulatory and planning matters allocated to the Governing Body, and decision-making over local matters, activities and services being allocated to 21 local boards.

In 2016, Auckland Council commissioned an external review of its governance framework.³ Many of the review's recommendations related to further empowering local boards to fulfil their role as local place shapers and representatives of the interests of their communities.

As a result of this Governance Framework Review, a Waiheke Local Board pilot project ('the pilot') was established, with the aim of increasing local leadership by trialling greater devolvement of decision-making to the local board, and resolving a number of long-standing issues on the island. The pilot formally commenced in late 2017 and was scheduled to run for three years. It is largely governed by the local board, with additional oversight and sponsorship provided by the Auckland Council Governance Director.

The pilot has been evaluated by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), to track impacts over the three-year period, to document what is working well, and to identify opportunities for improvement and potential application to other local boards.

This report reflects the final of three evaluation stages. It presents a summary of the pilot's achievements, and recommendations now that the pilot has completed its initially proposed three years.

The findings are based on the following sources of information over a three-year period:

- interviews with Waiheke Local Board members, Auckland Council staff and Auckland Transport staff (conducted in 2018, 2019 and 2020)
- surveys of Waiheke Local Board members (conducted in 2018, 2019 and 2020), and
- surveys of the Waiheke community (conducted in 2018 and 2020).

The report does not go into detail that is covered in previously published evaluation reports, such as the mid-pilot evaluation⁴, and pre-pilot community survey⁵.

³ The Governance Framework Review report can be found here:

<https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/media/9572/auckland-council-governance-review-released.pdf>

⁴ An Evaluation of the Waiheke Governance Pilot: Progress after the first 18 months:

<https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1392/tr2019-020-waiheke-governance-pilot-progress-after-the-first-18-months.pdf>

⁵ Waiheke Community Survey. Results from a 2018 survey of Waiheke residents:

<https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/publications/waiheke-community-survey-results-from-a-2018-survey-of-waiheke-residents/>

2.0 Background

This section provides background information on the aims of the Waiheke pilot as well as an overview of Waiheke Island's social and economic context.

2.1 Waiheke Local Board pilot

The objective of the Waiheke Local Board pilot was to trial greater devolvement of decision-making to the Waiheke Local Board. The project scope included consideration of:

- potential changes to the allocation or delegations⁶ of specific decision-making
- solutions to long-standing issues
- changes to policy and planning support
- increased local board influence over funding
- improvements to compliance and enforcement, and
- relationships with CCOs.

To deliver the pilot, resourcing was provided for a full-time Waiheke and Gulf Islands Programme Manager. The role focused primarily on progressing long-standing issues where previous attempts have not resulted in satisfactory outcomes.

2.1.1 Changes over the course of the pilot

Several important changes have occurred over the course of the pilot that are likely to have impacted on the nature of support provided to local board members and relationships between the board and council departments. These include:

- a change in two local board members as a result of the 2019 election
- a change in local board chair near the commencement of the pilot
- a shift toward more geographic-centric operating structures in some departments
- changes to the way work programmes are developed with local boards
- the establishment of integration team meetings to bring together different parties who interact with each local board
- COVID-19 lockdowns, and
- the delivery of a substantial CCO review in 2020.

Some of these factors are described in more detail in Section 3.9.

2.2 Waiheke Island

Waiheke Island is the most populated and second-largest island in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf. Located just 21.5km and 35 minutes via ferry from the Downtown Ferry Terminal in central Auckland, the island is both separate from and closely connected to the rest of Auckland.

⁶ Note, delegations can refer either to when powers are delegated from one decision-making body to another (such as the from Governing Body to a local board), or to when powers are delegated from one staff member to another (such as from the Chief Executive to a subordinate staff member). The term delegations used in this report refers to the former.

The island has experienced notable growth in recent decades. The current residential population in the Waiheke Local Board area is 9510 (as at June 2019), having grown 42 per cent over the last 23 years, from 6680 in 1996.⁷ Many of the permanent residents have strong economic ties with the rest of Auckland, with approximately one-in-five employed Waiheke residents (19%) commuting regularly via ferry off the island. Fullers Ferries is currently the main provider of passenger ferry services to and from the island.⁸

Matiatia ferry terminal, on the western end of the island, is the main passenger transport gateway for travel on and off the island. Increasing use of this gateway by residents, bus services, taxis, tour operators, and businesses has resulted in parking and space pressures.

The island is home to a number of vineyards, olive oil producers, and – prior to COVID-19 – a thriving hospitality industry. The island is a popular tourist destination, with pre-COVID-19 visitor numbers of more than a million unique visitors per year.⁹

Many people have holiday homes on the island that they use regularly and/or rent out to temporary guests via online platforms such as Airbnb and Bookabach. A 2018 analysis of Airbnb activity in Auckland estimated that 16 per cent of the island's rental stock (three per cent of all Waiheke dwellings) was available for rent on Airbnb 'full time'.¹⁰

Tourism and population growth have created a range of environmental and infrastructure pressures on the island, including water pollution, litter and pressures on public toilet and private septic tank infrastructure.

2.3 Governance context

Auckland Council has a unique two-part governance structure made up of the Governing Body and local boards. The Governing Body focuses on Auckland-wide decisions including strategies, policies, plans, regulations, and activities. The Governing Body also appoints the Chief Executive and has arm's-length governance of council-controlled organisations such as Auckland Transport.

Local boards set local direction through local board plans¹¹ and make decisions on most local issues, activities, and services. Local boards are also responsible for representing the interests and preferences of their communities as they relate to council strategies, policies, plans and bylaws.

⁷ This level of population growth for Auckland as a whole was 51% in the same time period.

⁸ The other provider is SeaLink, offering vehicle ferried from Kennedy Point.

⁹ For example, the island received an estimated 1.3 million unique visitors in 2016/2017, made up of approximately 60% Aucklanders, 10% other domestic and 30% international visitors.

¹⁰ <http://www.knowledgeauckland.org.nz/assets/publications/TR2018-001-Airbnb-and-housing-in-Auckland.pdf>.

¹¹ The 2020 Waiheke Local Board Plan was in the process of being published at the time of writing this report. Once published it can be found at <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/local-boards/all-local-boards/waiheke-local-board/Pages/default.aspx>.

2.4 This evaluation

This report summarises the main impacts of the three-year pilot and provides recommendations in relation to the continuation of the Waiheke Pilot as well as roll out to other local boards.

The report builds on previously published evaluation reports as footnoted in Section 1.0. It broadly covers the findings from these other evaluations but does not replace them in their entirety.

The evaluation is based on both qualitative, semi-structured interviews with local board members and council group staff, as well as quantitative surveys of local board members and the community. Interviews were recorded and the resultant transcripts and/or audio files were analysed thematically to establish the evaluation findings. Where appropriate, secondary sources of information, such as meeting minutes, were also used to triangulate findings and track impacts of the pilot. The number of interviews and survey responses at each time point are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Sample sizes at different data collection points

	Baseline (2018)	Mid-pilot (2019)	End of pilot (2020)
Local board member interviews	<i>n</i> = 5	<i>n</i> = 4	<i>n</i> = 5
Local board member surveys	<i>n</i> = 5	<i>n</i> = 4	<i>n</i> = 5
Staff interviews	<i>n</i> = 29	<i>n</i> = 25	<i>n</i> = 14
Community survey	<i>n</i> = 477	N/A	<i>n</i> = 252

Verbatim excerpts from interviews are used throughout the report to demonstrate the themes that emerged from the data collection and analysis. Where they fit or exemplify the theme well, verbatim quotes are used in preference to descriptions of the theme by the authors. A theme may have been evident in multiple interviews, but only one exemplar quote is used.

Some quotes have been edited slightly to maintain the confidentiality of participants, or to aid readability. Excerpts followed by (LB member) are from local board members; those followed by (Staff member) are from council and CCO staff.

3.0 Main findings

The following section summarises the main findings of the pilot.

3.1 The pilot has created the context for increased board influence

Some might question the need to 'pilot' good ideas, rather than implement them directly. One finding from this evaluation is that there are distinct benefits of driving change under the banner of a 'pilot'.

Notably, the contained nature of the pilot (in terms of local board area and time limit) decreased the perception of risk amongst staff, encouraging them to try different ways of meeting the board's needs without having to worry that these different (and possibly more difficult) ways of working would automatically be required for all other local board areas. It is likely that without a pilot there would have been greater reluctance and resistance to change amongst staff.

The broad and somewhat undefined scope of the pilot has also been successfully used as leverage by local board members, the Programme Manager and Local Board Services staff to encourage teams to try doing things differently in a way that would not have been possible with specific changes to 'business-as-usual' procedures.

The board are able to actually say 'under the governance pilot project this is within our remit to make this decision', and use that as a justification for doing it. (Staff member)

The main disadvantage to making changes under the guise of a pilot is that unless specific efforts are made to 'lock in' the progress made, staff may revert to their pre-pilot behaviour if/when the pilot ends. The recommendations in Section 6.0 focus on embedding enduring changes to departmental processes as one way to prevent this.

3.2 Relationships have improved significantly

Interviews with board members and staff at the start of the pilot revealed an unproductive working environment, with the board expressing high levels of frustration with the performance of council staff, and staff reluctant to engage with the board due to sometimes hostile interactions with board members. At the mid-pilot point, this had improved markedly, and has continued to remain positive since.

The pilot, along with other organisational changes, provided the context for a relationship 'reset' and resulted in an improved local board environment for staff, an increased willingness of staff to engage with the board, and more productive working relationships between the board and staff.

[The level of staff delivery] has moved so far... (LB member)

By and large, we're getting excellent support [from staff]. (LB member)

The board now is more willing to have a conversation with council staff and listen to the recommendations. They won't necessarily agree with them, but they will listen to it and will get more into a dialogue, rather than be instantly disparaging of a few things people might say, or downright rude, as it was before. (Staff member)

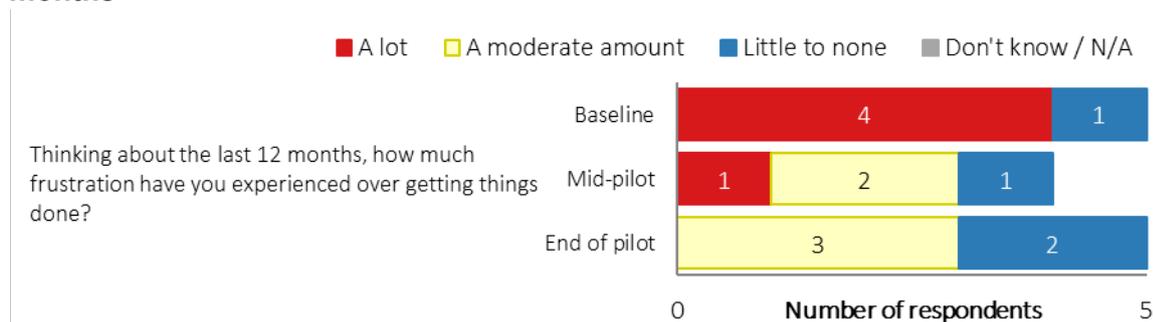
Staff in general reported feeling much more appreciated for their work compared to before the pilot. They also reported continuing to be challenged by the board on important issues – as expected given the board's governance role – but that such challenges were seen as fair, honest and not personal.

The following contributed to the relationship improvements:

- the pilot was initiated with board members and senior staff meeting to agree on the direction of the programme. The presence of executive-level staff demonstrated to board members the level of organisational commitment behind the pilot
- a baseline evaluation was conducted that documented the experiences of staff and elected members working with one another. These findings were communicated back to all parties to encourage more productive ways of working
- staff showed willingness to work more flexibly to meet the board's requests
- the board began recognising staff efforts and created a positive board environment, and
- board frustrations lessened as the Programme Manager began making progress on longstanding issues.

The improvement in relationships and staff delivery has resulted in a reduction over the course of the pilot in local board member frustration at getting things done, as seen in Figure 1 below.

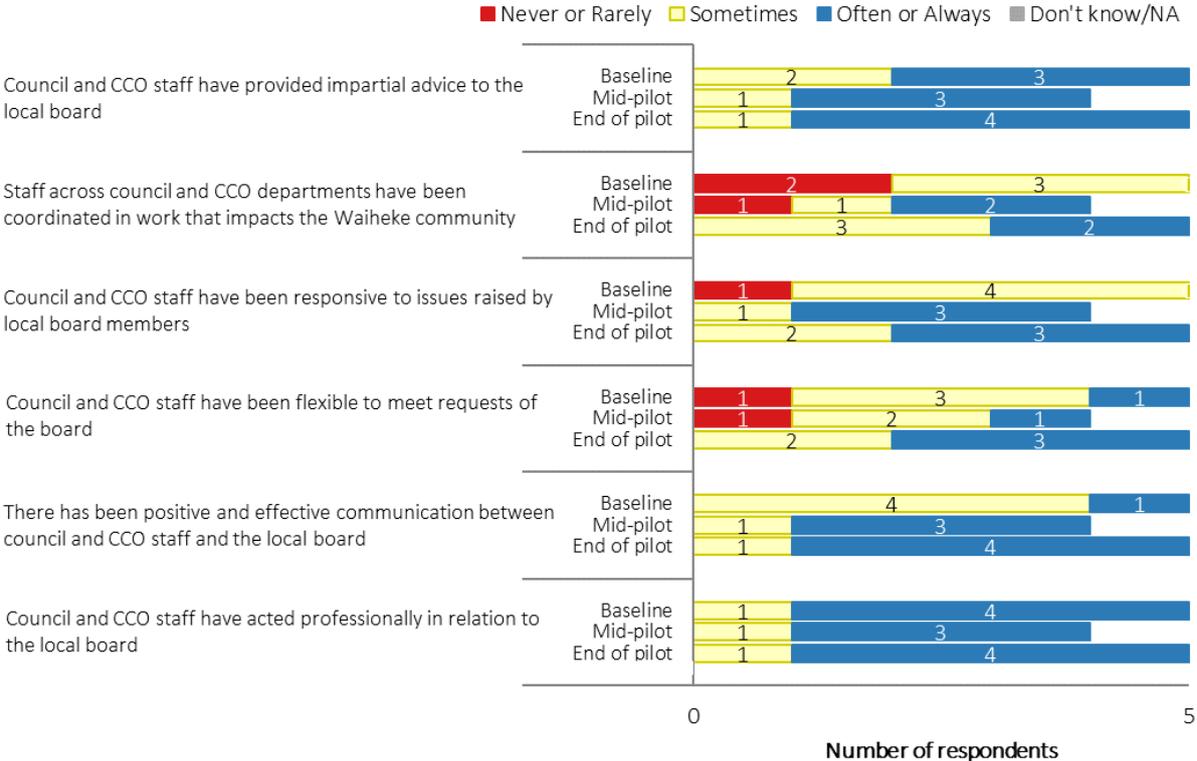
Figure 1. Local board members' frustration over getting things done in the previous 12 months



Note: Only four out of five local board members completed the survey at the mid-pilot stage. Also, due to the 2019 election, membership of the local board at the end of the pilot was different to the previous two time points (with two new members joining). This change in membership may affect responses.

This change was also evident in other board member survey responses, which show an increase in frequency of positive staff behaviours such as coordination, responsiveness, and flexibility.

Figure 2. Local board members’ perceptions of the frequency of positive council and CCO staff behaviour



It is important to note that there remain areas for improvement. One board member highlighted that while individual relationships and staff responsiveness had improved across council departments, they believed that not enough formal mechanisms had been put in place, in the form of changes to allocations and delegations, to increase the level of local board influence independent of better working relationships.

I sit here remaining deeply dissatisfied with Auckland Council, and I don't see the pilot having an enduring outcome, in that we haven't seen substantial culture shift. If anything, ironically, the poster child of the shift has been AT, but you know there has been a whole lot of hierarchical change there from the Chief Executive down – where the board of directors have intentionally sought out a Chief Executive that is going to be a bit more local board-centric in his thinking. But then talking to AT officers, they are still combatting the same siloed thinking within AT. (LB member)

The recommendations in Section 6.0 seek to address some of the concerns outlined above.

3.3 Auckland Transport have successfully transformed their relationship with the local board

At the start of the pilot, transport issues (e.g. roads, public transport, ferries and parking) were some of the local board’s greatest frustrations, and as a result, relationships between board members and AT staff were strained.

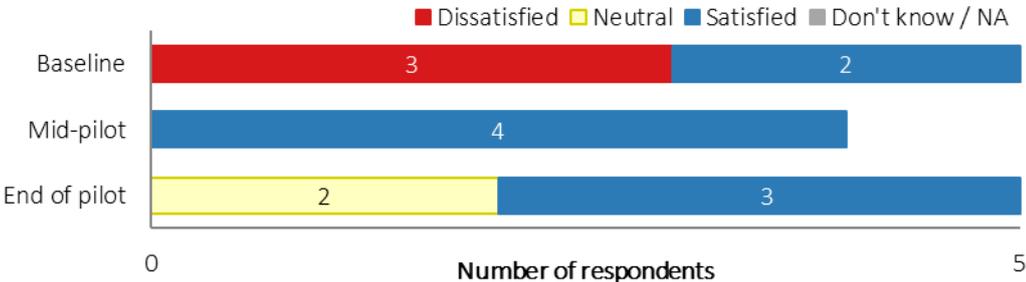
The working relationship between the local board and AT has improved dramatically since the start of the pilot. Several interviewees cited the improvements in relation to AT as one of the key successes of the pilot to date.

AT has gone from our biggest bugbear to now working great together (LB member)

The key one for us, is we've made headway with Auckland Transport, [particularly] the 10-year plan, [and] our transport manager assigned to Waiheke... (LB member)

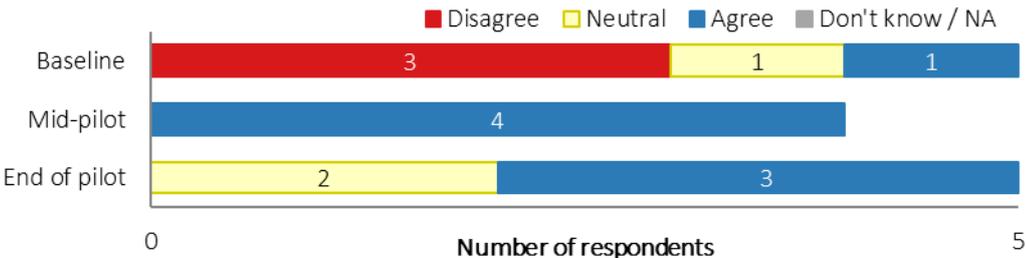
This improvement was also reflected in local board member survey responses with a shift from dissatisfaction to either neutral or satisfied ratings with AT's performance during the pilot.

Figure 3. Local board members' overall satisfaction with Auckland Transport



A similar shift over time was seen in perceptions of whether AT had recently considered the wishes and aspirations of the Waiheke Local Board.

Figure 4. Local board members' agreement with a statement that Auckland Transport had taken into account the wishes and aspirations of the Waiheke Local Board in the previous 12 months



The improvements are due to:

- early and genuine engagement by AT senior leadership
- the early development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AT and Waiheke Local Board
- the establishment of a Waiheke Transport Forum
- the development of a 10-year transport plan, and
- the creation of a new Waiheke Operations Manager role.

Each is described in more detail below. Some challenges experienced by the new AT Operations Manager are also detailed in that section.

3.3.1 Early and genuine engagement by Auckland Transport senior leadership

The involvement of AT's senior leadership, particularly its Chief Executive, was seen as a crucial factor for improving relationships. An initial face-to-face meeting between the local board and the AT Chief Executive on the island near the start of the pilot played an important role in communicating AT's commitment to the pilot. Ongoing engagement and support of senior AT staff has ensured this early progress has been maintained.

3.3.2 Development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AT and the Waiheke Local Board

An MoU between AT and the local board was signed in May 2019. The MoU – the first of its kind in between a local board and CCO – commits the two parties to work together and to extend the boundaries of the working relationship between AT and the local board. It encourages the relationship to be innovative and proactive, and for the two organisations to work together to address issues that arise and to advance projects.

The memorandum stipulates that AT and the board will work in good faith, take a no-surprises approach and keep each other informed.

There are good reasons psychologically for developing a formal written commitment in the form of an MoU, which are outlined in Section 5.1. Indeed, one interviewee noted how the MoU had encouraged new board members elected in late 2019 to challenge and engage with AT in more productive ways early in the term, when previously they may have taken to Facebook to publicly criticise the organisation.

3.3.3 Establishment of a Waiheke Transport Forum

A Waiheke Transport Forum was established during the early stages of the pilot. The forum is an advisory group made up of members of the local board, AT, NZ Police, and community representatives, and has resulted in more effective community and stakeholder input into transport projects than previously.

3.3.4 Development of a 10-year transport plan

The development of a 10-year transport plan for Waiheke¹² is notable. In 2019, AT, the Waiheke Local Board and the wider Waiheke community worked together to create a 10-year plan for Waiheke's transport system. This is the first such plan and is significant because it functions to align local board and AT priorities with regard to transport projects. Previously a significant amount of frustration, conflict and bad press was caused by a misalignment of these priorities.

The plan is a direct result of the MoU, and:

¹² <https://at.govt.nz/about-us/transport-plans-strategies/waiheke-10-year-transport-plan/>

- sets out Waiheke's goals for its transport system, particularly 'on island', and takes a strategic view of Waiheke's future, considering its economy and role
- provides a prioritised list of projects, plans, services, and processes on Waiheke to be considered for funding from 2021 to 2031
- recognises Waiheke's unique character and the pressures the island is experiencing now and into the future – particularly due to tourism and population growth
- is intended to evolve with Waiheke's changing transport needs.

3.3.5 Creation of a Waiheke Operations Manager role

As part of the MoU, AT committed to creating a Waiheke Operations Manager position. The purpose was to create a role that would act as a key point of contact for the local board, and which had operational decision-making power over island-related transport projects. Combining the relationship management and operational decision-making functions into one local board-facing position is intended to ensure decisions better meet the needs of the Waiheke Local Board and its community, by creating a direct relationship between the local board and transport decision-makers.

This role was appointed in May 2020. In line with the pilot principles, the local board chair was part of the selection panel for this role.

Although the role took some time to create and appoint, early indications are that board members are happy with the appointment and that progress is already being made.

The [new AT Operations Manager]... Some of the best reports we've ever had. Some of the best liaison we've ever had. Somebody who's able to work their way around AT. We might not like the answers, but at least he gets them to us. And he's working on some of the more intractable issues and he's getting on top of things. So I think that was a really good appointment. (LB member)

[What's different is the] immediacy, [the AT Operations Manager] can see things, he's here, things are happening, [he goes] straight back, knows who to contact in the system. (LB member)

There were indications that the new AT Operations Manager was facing some challenges, however. At the time of preparing this report, awareness and understanding of the new role within AT was still relatively low and this was impacting the Operations Manager's ability to develop buy-in within the organisation.

I'm not sure it's been really discussed within the organisation, within the bits of it that really need to discuss it. It's been announced on the intranet and what have you, but I'm not sure it's really been taken on board of what this means and that this is a new way of doing things. (Staff member)

The second challenge was budgetary. The role was initially envisaged to be assigned approximately \$600k per annum to deliver work on Waiheke. Due to COVID-19 funding restrictions, however, this budget was removed, thus lessening the potential for the role to develop solutions to issues identified on the island.

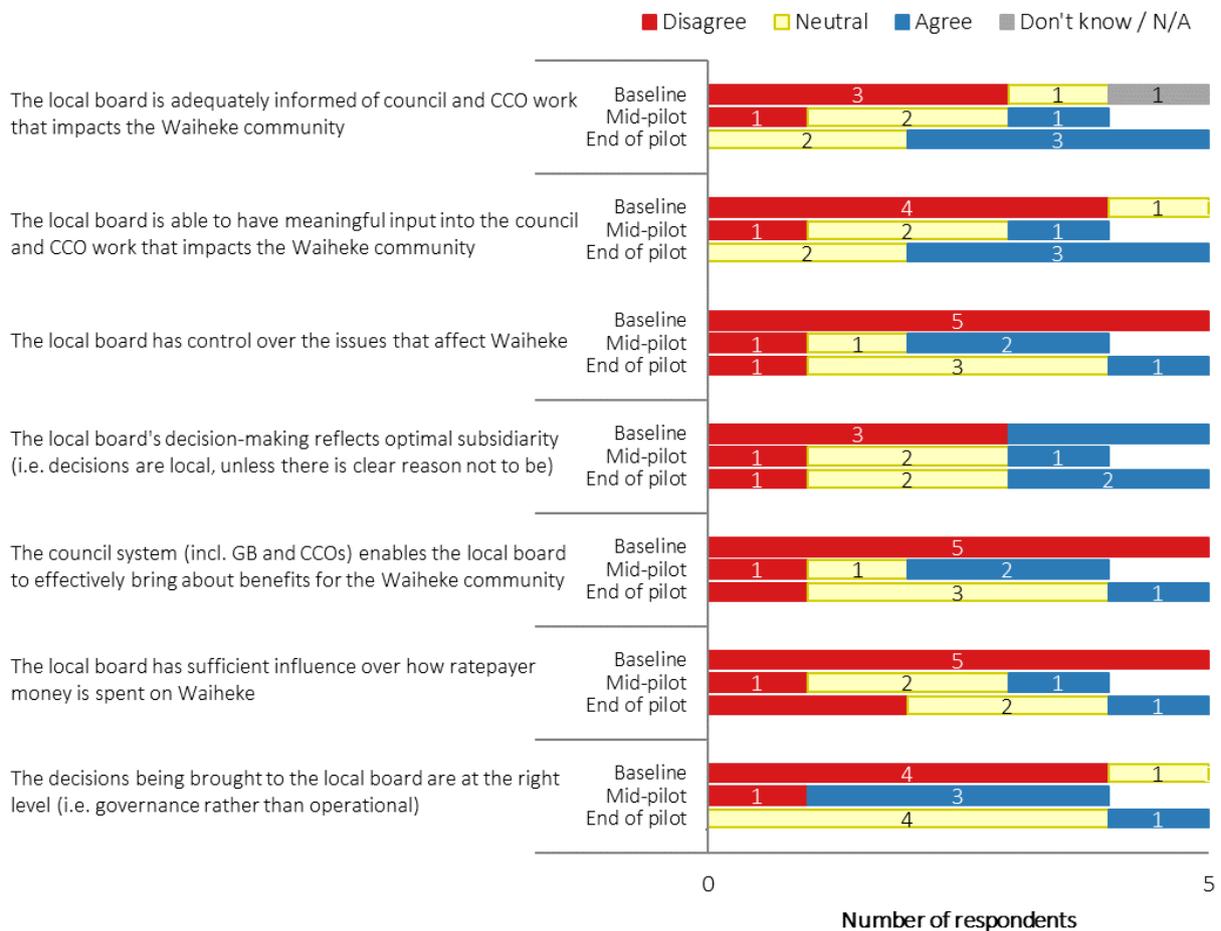
It's working well, but it's working well under duress. The money is not there. (Staff member)

Two recommendations in Section 6.0 focus on increasing the awareness of and support for the AT Operations Manager within AT, as well as reinstating the budget initially associated with the role.

3.4 The local board has been better able to influence local issues of importance

Board members' survey responses show that perceived influence and control has increased compared to prior to the pilot, as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Local board members' perception of their influence in the previous 12 months



In addition to transport, as noted above, the pilot has increased the local board's influence in a range of areas, including:

- Matiatia strategic planning
- oversight of the use of properties such as the old Harbourmaster building
- prioritisation of spending on facilities and services
- local procurement, and
- the local area plan process.

Further detail on each of these areas has already been published in the mid-pilot evaluation¹³, so are only described briefly here.

3.4.1 Matiatia

Matiatia is the main passenger ferry transport gateway for travel on and off the island. Increasing use of this gateway by residents, bus services, taxis, tour operators, and businesses has resulted in parking and space pressures.

The Governing Body delegated decision-making over Matiatia land to the Waiheke Local Board (in May 2018), enabling the board to progress plans for the area. Along with this delegation, ownership, and management of the land in the Matiatia area was simplified, enabling Auckland Council and AT to work more effectively to plan for the future and to manage the use of existing assets (such as the lease of the old harbourmaster building). The delegation of Matiatia decision-making is an example of how similar local planning decisions could be delegated to other local boards.

Partial funding of \$15 million for the project has been allocated to the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) – Auckland Transport’s 10-year investment programme for transport in Auckland, and work is currently underway to obtain co-funding from NZTA.

3.4.2 Local procurement

At the start of the pilot, local board members highlighted a desire for increased delivery of services by local businesses. The management of waste on the island is also an important issue for the local community, and so the 2019 renewal of the island’s waste management contract offered an opportunity to explore new approaches to procurement.

The local board provided input into the procurement plan, resulting in the contract being split into three components (to give equal opportunity during the tender to all potential suppliers, including island-based organisations), as well as an increase in assessment criteria weighting to non-price aspects such as community development and environmental innovation.

The board was also given the opportunity to endorse or not the successful tenderers when the contract was taken to a Governing Body committee for approval. The process was seen positively by board members and is a good example of how local boards can be empowered through less formal means than delegations.

It is unclear whether standard procurement processes have changed as a result of this trial, however. The recommendations in Section 6.3 highlight the need to make permanent such changes in process as part of the pilot ending transition.

¹³ <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1392/tr2019-020-waiheke-governance-pilot-progress-after-the-first-18-months.pdf>

3.4.3 The local area plan process

The Waiheke Area Plan is intended to be a 30-year vision to help shape the future of Waiheke and the other inner Hauraki Gulf Islands.

Led by the Waiheke Local Board, the draft plan was consulted on in July-August 2020. The final area plan will replace Essentially Waiheke Refresh 2016. The area plan then becomes the strategic plan to achieve the vision for the area, key outcomes, projects strategies and actions.

A delegation was obtained from the Governing Body to the local board for final signoff of the plan, in line with the pilot's principles. This reflects an increase in local board power.

Some board members expressed reservations about how their area plan might be subsequently incorporated into the Auckland Unitary Plan and the possible loss of protections from 'over development' that might result. These reservations largely reflect the fact that Unitary Plan decisions are regulatory and are therefore allocated to the Governing Body and outside the direct influence of the local board. Note, there are good reasons for zoning decisions to be made by the Governing Body with a regional focus.

3.5 The Programme Manager has been central to the pilot

The Waiheke Programme Manager has been essential in raising awareness of the pilot, in advocating for different ways of working in relation to the local board, and in making progress on long-standing issues.

A decision was made with the local board at the start of the pilot for the Programme Manager to focus on progressing long-standing operational issues rather than focus on investigating broader – but less tangible – systemic changes to delegations and processes to empower the local board.

While there has been some debate over the course of the pilot as to what the appropriate focus of the Programme Manager should be, the consensus amongst those involved is that the Programme Manager has played a unique and valuable role in addressing intractable issues identified by the board.

Just the immediacy of [things] happening, getting action, getting things done, is absolutely brilliant. (LB member)

If [the Programme Manager's] role were to not continue, then things like the Matiatia Master Plan and the developments there, I wouldn't have a clue who would coordinate that on behalf of the board, because it doesn't really fall into Community Facilities, it doesn't really fall completely into AT's portfolio. It needs that role that pulls different council organisations and teams together. (Staff member)

The Programme Manager's success has been largely due to their ability to coordinate between multiple parties and to take ownership of projects that would have previously 'fallen through the cracks' as a result of responsibility for the issue not resting clearly with any one department.

There needs to be someone to pull the threads together (LB member)

[The Programme Manager] covers the front-end work to enable us to deliver (Staff member)

The Programme Manager's success highlights the broader need for some form of generalist, project manager type role connected to local boards to prevent issues from 'falling through the cracks'. Section 6.3 includes a recommendation to establish a cohort of area managers for each local board area who would assume some of the Programme Managers responsibilities in the future.

3.6 There is unfinished business

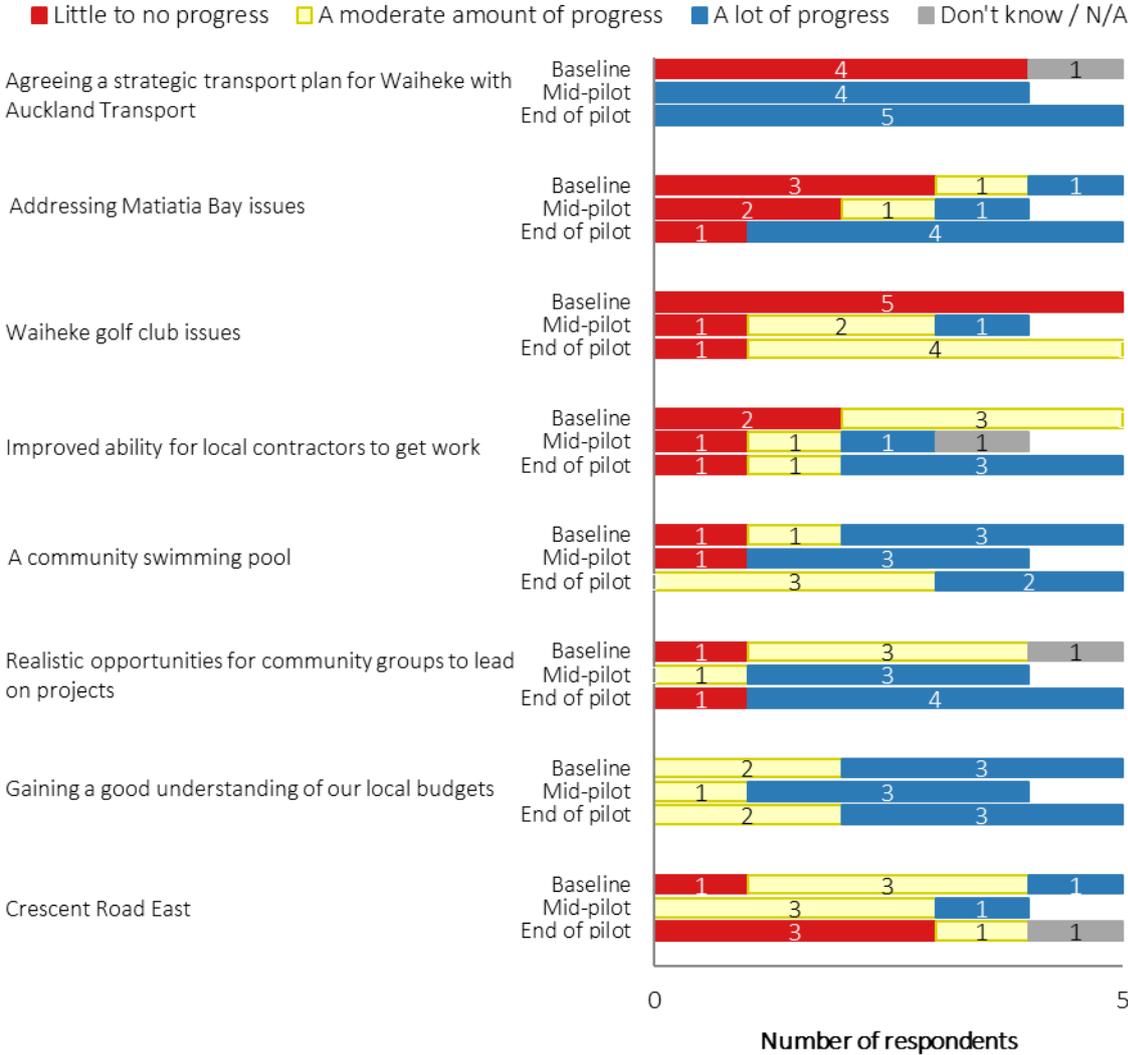
The pilot has resulted in a number of projects being progressed and new ways of working trialled, however the pilot has not been able to address all issues.

At the start of the pilot, local board members were asked to identify a range of issues they wanted the pilot to focus on. Each board member was surveyed at the start, middle and end of the pilot asking how much progress they felt had been made on this range of issues in the preceding 12 months. As Figure 6 below shows, most local board members report that progress has been made over the course of the pilot on many of the issues, but interviews indicate that there is much still to do before the issues are resolved.

In addition to the issues covered in Figure 6, some issues appear to have proven too difficult to make any notable progress on. In particular, pressures from visitors have proven difficult to address. This is because most council services and assets are funded primarily based on resident population. Board members argue that for an island such as Waiheke, which has a relatively low base population but a large number of non-resident visitors, such funding formulas do not adequately allow council departments to fund the infrastructure needed to account for pressures arising from visitors.¹⁴ The pilot has been unable to address these issues, with the exception of progressing a toilet block in Oneroa, and would require specific local policy development support to do so.

¹⁴ Although the current funding formula does have an additional specific loading for Waiheke to account for some of this, board members would argue it is insufficient.

Figure 6. Local board members' perceived progress on important issues over the previous 12 months



Despite progress being made, many of the longstanding issues above require further work. Given the Programme Manager's role in progressing these issues, re-assigning this individual to non-pilot activities at this stage risks undermining progress that has been made to date.

Note, local board members' perceptions of progress are used here as an indicator of the pilot's impact, but it is an imperfect measure and should be viewed with caution. This is because, in addition to insufficient empowerment of the board, there are other reasons why progress may be slower than desired, including resources and how realistic a project is.

There may even be deliberate disagreement on the part of the Governing Body in response to local board advocacy that is contributing to a feeling of slow progress on the part of board members. The ability for the local and regional perspectives to be balanced to manage trade-offs is a feature of the shared governance model and may be expected, even when the system is running well, to result in some disappointment amongst some of the parties some of the time.

3.7 More work exploring opportunities for formal delegation of decision-making is needed

The pilot scope explicitly noted an intention to trial an increased level of devolved decision making to the Waiheke Local Board¹⁵, the formal mechanism for which involves changes to allocations and/or delegations.

Except for the delegation of decision-making over Matiatia and the Local Area Plan, no additional governance decisions have been formally delegated to the board during the pilot. This is likely due to a combination of an inability of board members and staff to easily identify specific decisions to be delegated¹⁶, as well as the Programme Manager's focus being primarily on progressing projects rather analysing which decisions across the organisation could be delegated to the local board.

An important finding of this evaluation is that significant improvements in local board influence can be achieved through less formal mechanisms such as improved relationships and changes to staff ways of working. Nevertheless, there may still be opportunities to further delegate decisions to the local board that have not been pursued because no one has done the work to identify them. The mid-pilot evaluation recommended further exploration of opportunities regarding delegations, but it does not appear this occurred in any systematic way. Some of the recommendations in Section 6.0 focus on further investigating delegations, should the pilot be extended.

The quotes below reflect a desire from both local board members and staff to continue testing the limits of what is possible.

I would have hoped that the Governing Body and the committees would have been more proactive in looking for opportunities to trial delegated responsibility. (LB member)

Is that all we can do? We should still be exploring other opportunities to give boards more decision-making on service levels, and allow boards more discretion about doing things differently. (Staff member)

¹⁵The pilot scope can be seen here:

http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2017/09/GB_20170928_AGN_7818_AT_files/GB_20170928_AGN_7818_AT_Attachment_55680_5.PDF

¹⁶ Specific delegation suggestions were sought during both the baseline and mid-pilot evaluations, with few viable suggestions provided.

3.8 Governing Body members and senior council staff need more visibility of the pilot

Interviews indicated that ongoing awareness of the pilot and its outcomes amongst some Governing Body members is low. Similarly, it appeared that it had been some time since Auckland Council Executive Lead Team members had been updated on pilot progress. While there are no indications that this created significant barriers to change, low awareness and engagement is likely to make rolling out aspects of the pilot to other local boards and transitioning successful initiatives to business-as-usual practice more difficult.

Given the intention of the pilot was to trial different ways of working and to draw learnings from those trials, it is important to ensure these learnings are conveyed. The recommendations in Section 6.0 are intended to address this.

3.9 Other, non-pilot changes across the organisation have had a positive impact

In addition to the factors identified above, other changes across the organisation occurred at the same time as the pilot are likely to have had a positive impact. These changes include:

- a shift toward more geographic-centric operating structures. Such changes have occurred or are in the process of occurring in AT, Local Board Services, Community Facilities, and across the Customer and Community Services directorate. Similar local board-focused structures across multiple departments will enable a ‘virtual lead team’ consisting of key staff in each functional area of council to be established for each local board area
- changes to the way work programmes are developed with local boards, enabling board members to have more influence over the prioritisation of how money is spent in their area (e.g. changes to the way projects within Community Facilities and Community Services work programmes are prioritised)
- the establishment of ways for all staff working in a local board area to communicate and get to know one another (e.g. integration team meetings organised by Local Board Services staff to bring together different parties who interact with the board).

Work is also underway to enable local boards to have greater control of service levels in their local board area. Under the ‘equity of service levels and funding’ programme, the Governing Body will establish region-wide minimum service standards (e.g. minimum operating hours for libraries), and local boards will have full control to determine service levels over and above those minimum standards (within their budget envelope). Under the proposal, local boards will have the power to make trade-offs between different types of services in their area. At the time of preparing this report, elected members were being consulted about the proposal; if it goes ahead, it will be implemented in 2021.

Similarly, the CCO review¹⁷ was published in late 2020, with several recommendations relating to empowerment of local boards.

¹⁷ <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/council-controlled-organisations/Pages/review-of-council-controlled-organisations.aspx>

3.10 The local board would like the pilot to continue

There was consensus amongst board members that the pilot should continue, although members were realistic and flexible about the form that might take.

All members noted the importance of the Programme Manager at least seeing through the major projects he has been leading.

There was also agreement that the pilot should trial some additional things prior to aspects being formally dissolved and/or made permanent. The specific nature of this focus should be agreed in a collective board setting. One board member articulated a desire for the next steps to look at opportunities more systematically within Governing Body committees and individual departments, as can be seen below:

It would be good to grow it, in the sense of trialling a few more things, with a very specific charter... I would like to ask 'we've made this progress, what could now be achieved with each of the committees, or the subcommittees of council?'. Or look at departments, and say 'what could happen. What could you actually do?' And to task them with having to trial some things. And Waiheke could just keep going, because we've got a head of steam and we're happy to trial it and we've got some experience that says 'we know how to do that'. And we've got the wherewithal to do it. (LB member)

4.0 Changes in community perceptions

While the primary focus of the pilot was on increasing the decision-making power of the Waiheke Local Board and improving working relationships between board members and support staff, it was hoped that progress in these areas would also result in improvements in community outcomes. To investigate this, community surveys were conducted at the start of the pilot (early 2018) to obtain a baseline, and the end of the pilot (late 2020) to track changes over time.

Note, because community perceptions are driven by many factors, and general awareness of the pilot amongst the community is likely low, it is not possible to draw clear causal connections between the pilot and the changes in community perceptions over time. The results should be interpreted as general snapshots in time that may be influenced by the pilot but are likely also influenced by other, unrelated events happening in the community.

The same approach was used for recruitment for both surveys. Every residential address on Waiheke Island was sent a letter inviting occupants to complete the survey online, or via hardcopy at the Auckland Council Service Centre or Waiheke Library. A total of 477 people completed the survey in 2018 and 252 people in 2020. Due to the opt-in nature of the survey and only partial response rates, the results are unlikely to be an accurate representation of all island residents.

Both surveys asked about the main issues residents were concerned about; the perceived effectiveness of the local board, Auckland Council, and AT in relation to those issues¹⁸; general attitudes toward the functioning of each of the three entities; and perceptions of the adequacy of the local board's power.

The main findings are outlined below, and the full findings in Appendix A.

4.1 Biggest issues currently facing Waiheke Island

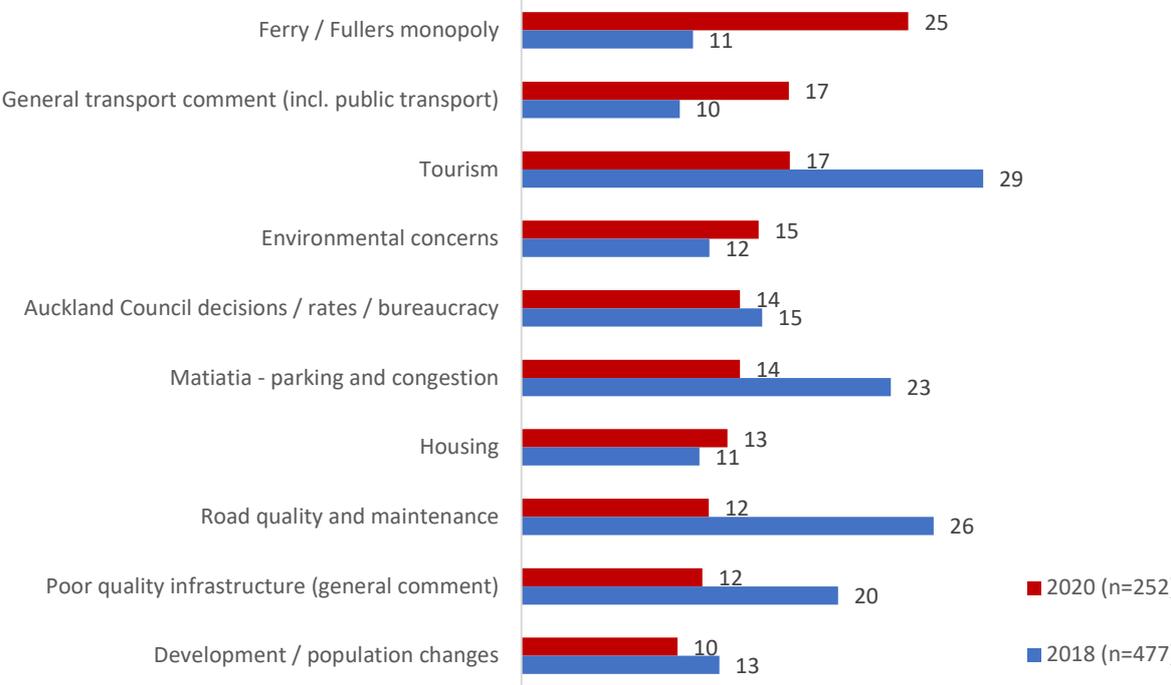
Respondents to the 2020 survey most frequently described the 'Fullers ferry monopoly', general transport concerns, tourism, environmental concerns, Auckland Council, and parking/congestion at Matiatia as the biggest issues currently facing the island.

Many issues of concern have changed over time, with notable increases in concern with Fullers/ferry related issues, and general transport issues. Notable decreases in concern were

¹⁸ 'Auckland Council' is technically made up of the Governing Body, the local boards, and the council organisation led by the Chief Executive. It is therefore artificial and technically incorrect to separate the Waiheke Local Board from Auckland Council, as we have done in this survey. The intention however was to measure attitudes toward the local board, toward council staff, and toward AT staff. Survey respondents seem to have been able to easily separate the local board from the rest of council, but there are some indications that some respondents thought primarily of Governing Body members when they responded to 'Auckland Council' items, whereas others thought of council staff. This is a limitation of the survey and means responses to Auckland Council items should be interpreted with some caution.

expressed in relation to tourism, road quality and maintenance, Matiatia parking and congestion, and poor quality infrastructure. The top 10 issues in 2020 are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Percentage of respondents identifying different issues of concern (top 10 issues shown)



4.2 Perceived influence of the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and AT

Respondents felt that Auckland Council and AT had relatively high influence over the issue(s) they identified (with 81% and 77% of respondents rating the respective entities as having ‘high’ or ‘moderate’ influence). Only 47 per cent rated the local board as having high or moderate influence over the issues most important to individuals.

There were no substantial changes in how much influence the three entities are perceived to have, although the local board’s perceived influence trended higher with an increase of 4.2 percentage points.

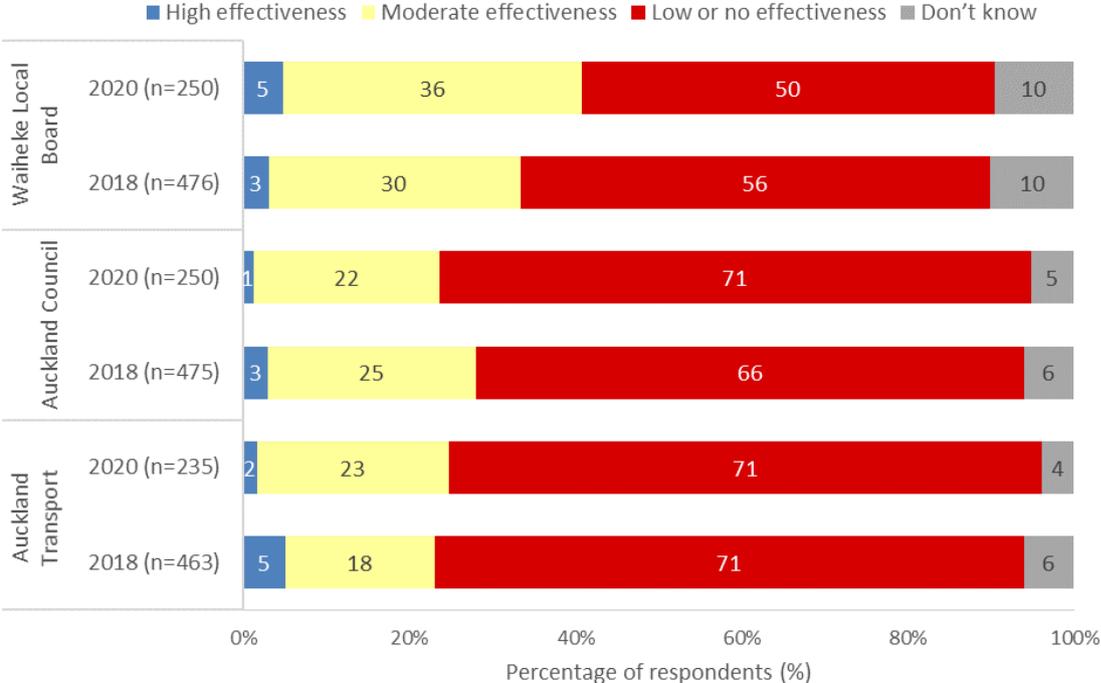
4.3 Effectiveness of the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and AT

Of the three entities – and despite their relatively lower perceived influence – the local board was seen as most effective in addressing the issues identified above, although perceived effectiveness was still relatively low for all parties, as seen in Figure 8.

For the local board, 41 per cent of respondents rated them as ‘moderately’ or ‘highly’ effective, and this has increased 7.8 percentage points compared to 2018.

Only 25 per cent and 24 per cent of respondents rated AT and Auckland Council as moderately or highly effective, respectively. AT’s rating was relatively unchanged from 2018, and Auckland Council’s was down 4.4 percentage points.

Figure 8. Perceived effectiveness of the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and Auckland Transport



7-point scale simplified to 'High effectiveness = 6-7; 'Moderate effectiveness' = 3-5; 'Low or no effectiveness' = 1-2.

Those that provided a response of 'moderate' or 'little to no effectiveness' were asked to provide an explanation as to why they provided that rating. A full thematic analysis of results for each entity is provided in Appendix A.

4.4 Attitudes towards the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and AT

Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with several statements about the local board, Auckland Council and AT. These statements related to understanding each entity’s role, and how well they listen to, communicate with, and make decisions on behalf of the community.

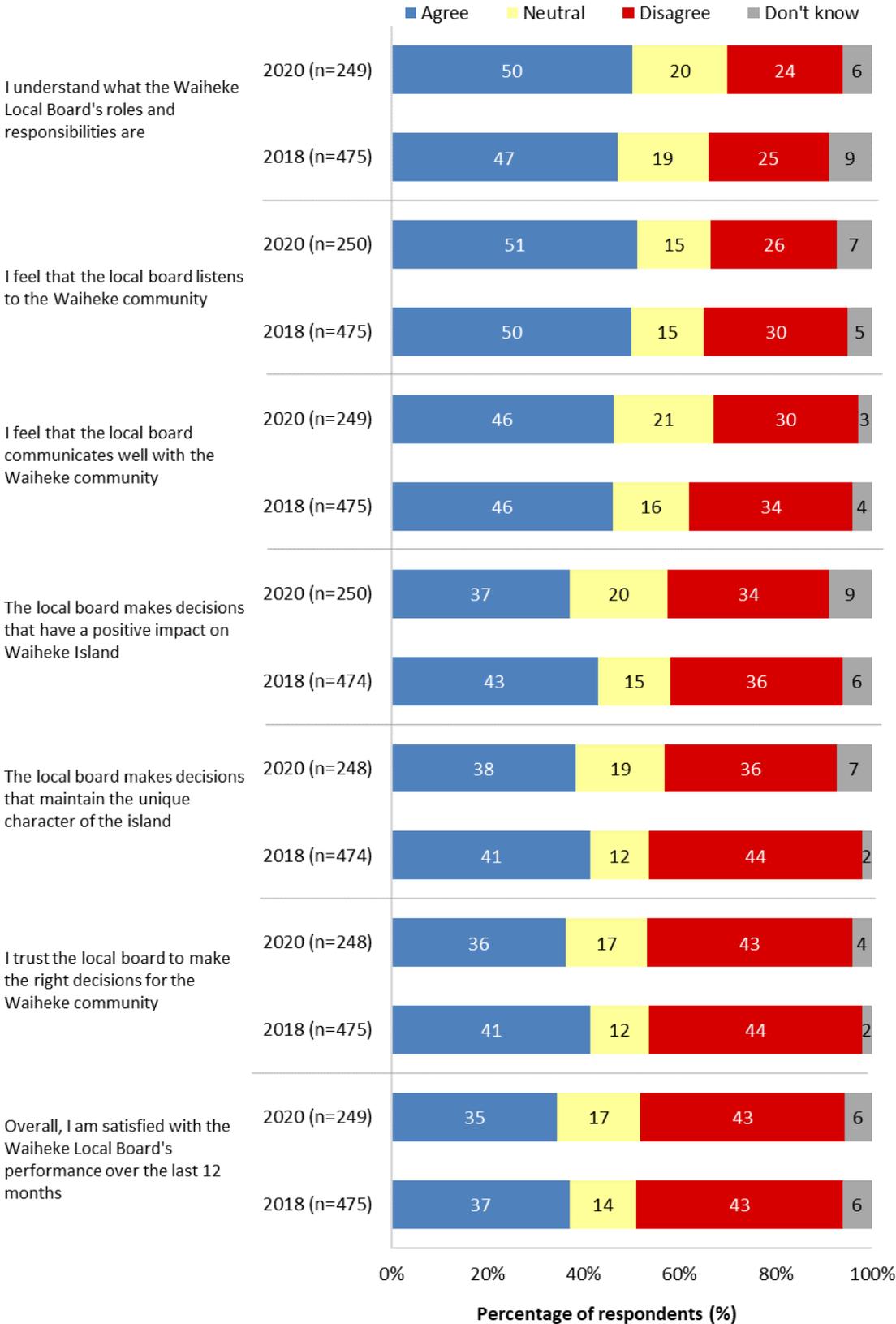
In general, respondents were more positive about the local board than about either Auckland Council or AT. For instance, in 2020, 51 per cent of respondents agreed that the local board listens to the Waiheke community, whereas this number was only five per cent for Auckland Council and seven per cent for AT.

While ratings were fairly stable over time for Auckland Council and AT (see Figure 16 and Figure 18 in Appendix A), there was a small trend toward worsening ratings for the local board, seen in Figure 9 below. For the local board, the notable decreases in agreement were seen in relation to perceptions that the local board makes decisions that have a positive

impact on the island (down six percentage points), and trust in the local board to make the right decisions for the Waiheke community (down five percentage points). In both cases, however, the shifts reflect increases in neutral responses rather than active disagreement.

A thematic analysis of what respondents stated would need to change in order to improve their ratings for each entity can be seen in Appendix A.

Figure 9. Attitudes toward the Waiheke Local Board



7-point scale simplified to 'Agree' = 5-7; 'Neutral' = 4; 'Disagree' = 1-3.

4.5 Adequacy of the Waiheke Local Board’s power

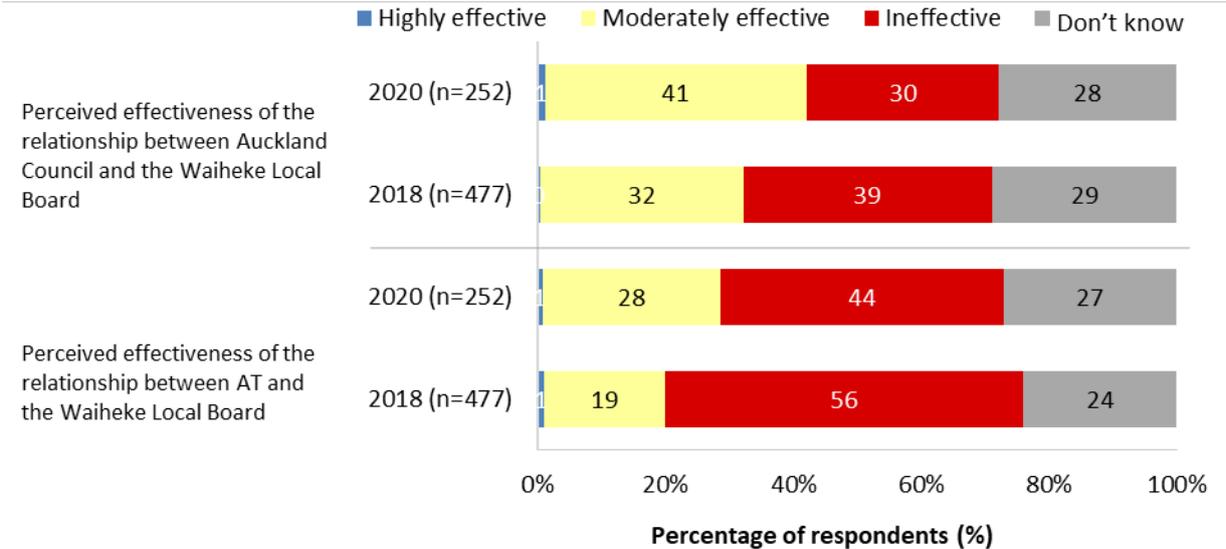
Two thirds of respondents (65%) felt the local board does not have enough power over issues that affect Waiheke, with almost one in ten (9%) feeling they do. The remainder (25%) were unsure. Results are unchanged from 2018.

4.6 How effectively Auckland Council and AT work with the Waiheke Local Board

Respondents were asked how effectively Auckland Council and AT were working, respectively, with the Waiheke Local Board. As seen in Figure 10, ratings have improved markedly over the course of the pilot, although with some way to go in both cases.

The perception that Auckland Council is working ‘moderately’ or highly’ effectively with the local board has increased 9.8 percentage points, while the rating for AT has increased 8.6 percentage points.

Figure 10. Perceived effectiveness of working relationships between the local board and Auckland Council and AT



5.0 Ingredients for success

There is interest across Auckland Council in applying the lessons learnt during this pilot to other local boards. The following section provides an overview of the necessary ingredients for success, as well as some recommendations of how to apply such an approach to different local boards.

The following were identified by those connected to the pilot as necessary ingredients for success:

- genuine involvement of senior staff from the start, with attendance at in-person meetings particularly important
- a formal agreement by all parties to reset the relationship and a genuine willingness to work more productively together. A commitment in the form of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) is recommended as a mechanism for ensuring the relationship is positive and productive over time (see Section 5.1 below for more information on developing an MoU)
- a recognition and documentation of all parties' aspirations, as well as constraints
- a willingness on behalf of staff to consider and try alternative ways of working that might differ from standard processes but contribute to meeting the aspirations of the board
- resourcing of staff with appropriate skills and time to solve complex issues that might arise, and
- for departments to put appropriately senior people in board-facing roles and for those individuals to act as a stable point of contact for the board over time.

Many of these ingredients are captured in the following quotes:

That fact that you've had really senior people – in fact the chief executive of a CCO – prepared to personally front up and listen, learn and discuss, is incredibly powerful. I think that's been an important pre-condition. (Staff member)

One of the strengths of this pilot is that it has allowed an environment in which all the different parties can understand the drivers, frustrations and everything that is going on [for others]. So rather than just fighting their corner, people in the different parties involved actually came to understand where people were coming from. And that meant you could then have those discussions which actually led to solutions. (Staff member)

5.1 Improving relationships via a public memorandum of understanding (MoU)

Behavioural science shows that a written, public commitment is a powerful way to encourage lasting behaviour change.¹⁹ Therefore, the use of a public commitment in the form of an MoU (or similar) should be considered when seeking to improve relationships between local board members and staff.

The MoU developed between the Waiheke Local Board and AT as part of the pilot has had a strong positive effect and provides a template for future agreements.²⁰ The MoU outlines:

- the background to why the agreement was formalised
- the purpose of the document
- the outcomes sought
- each parties' roles and responsibilities
- an agreed way of working together, including treating each party with respect
- a list of priority initiatives or focus areas
- a mechanism for resolving disputes if they occur, and
- a timeframe for reviewing and refreshing the MoU.

Such a document enables both parties to hold each other to account and to correct any future deviations away from a productive working relationship should they occur. The psychology of making a formal, public, written commitment means that both parties are more likely to stick to the agreement.

¹⁹ See the 'Commitments' card in RIMU's behavioural insights toolkit for more information: <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1889/behavioural-insights-toolkit-rimu-auckland-council-june-2020.pdf>

²⁰ The MoU can be seen here: <https://at.govt.nz/media/1983124/memorandum-of-understanding-signed-and-dated-23-may-2019.pdf>

6.0 Recommendations

The pilot is governed by the Waiheke Local Board, and the spirit of the pilot dictates that decisions on its future should be made in partnership with the local board.

The following recommendations for next steps are proposed. They relate to three areas: reporting the results of the evaluation; next steps regarding the Waiheke Local Board pilot; and rolling aspects of the pilot out across all local board areas. These are discussed in turn below.

6.1 Reporting

It is recommended that:

- the findings of this evaluation be presented to a public Waiheke Local Board meeting
- the Joint Governance Working Party is used by Auckland Council staff as the primary mechanism to advance pilot evaluation recommendations where they apply across all local boards.

6.2 Waiheke Local Board pilot

The evaluation has shown that the pilot has yet to achieve all of its initial objectives. It is recommended to formally extend the pilot through until the end of June 2022 (the end of the 2021/22 financial year), with a specific aim to:

- see through uncompleted projects, particularly the Matiatia Plan
- investigate a small number of additional pilot-related opportunities regarding Governing Body relationships and departments that have not participated to date. The specifics of these additional focus areas should be formally agreed with the Waiheke Local Board
- work with the Waiheke Local Board to agree areas where it is seeking further delegations and/or increased governance responsibilities and as appropriate formalise these by seeking approvals from the Governing Body
- further support the effectiveness of the AT Waiheke Operations Manager within AT, ideally led by the AT Executive Lead Team
- request that AT allocate specific budget to the AT Waiheke Operations Manager to ensure the intent of the role is met
- further raise awareness of the pilot's successes with Governing Body members and Auckland Council's Executive Lead Team.

6.3 Roll out of the pilot lessons across all local board areas (including Waiheke)

The lessons from the pilot are relevant and applicable to other local board areas. While Waiheke was selected in part because of its geographic isolation, and although its specific issues may not be shared by other local boards, the mechanisms by which change occurred (a process for improved relationships, allocation of staff resource to progress issues etc.) are

unrelated to geography. As such, lessons from the pilot can and should be applied to other local boards.

Several organisation-wide changes are already underway that are in line with the pilot principles, such as a council group-wide shift to departmental structures focused on local board clusters employing local board-focused area managers; the Governance Framework Review 'equity of service levels and funding' work programme; and the CCO review recommendations²¹, particularly regarding local board empowerment.

Considering the Waiheke Pilot, it is recommended that the following actions are taken, with a focus on all local boards:

- the Waiheke Programme Manager, with support from Auckland Council's Executive Lead Team, to work with departmental managers and staff to incorporate successful components of the pilot into business-as-usual departmental practice for all local boards
- the establishment of a cohort of new local board-focused area managers across the council group. They will be responsible for developing and embedding aspects of the Waiheke Programme Manager's current functions that have been successful on Waiheke. Notably, this group should be set up to be able to resolve issues that might have previously 'fallen through the cracks' as a result of no one department having primary responsibility for their resolution
- set up an enduring organisation-wide process for local boards to more easily request delegated decision-making from the Governing Body on an ad hoc basis without the need for the high levels of staff advocacy that was provided by the Waiheke Programme Manager during the pilot.

The pilot also demonstrates the value of a higher degree of organisational intervention for a specific local board when circumstances require. Most local boards have specific project or initiatives they are seeking to achieve that do not always 'fit' well with council policies, guidelines, practises or processes. These can continue to create tensions that might be resolved if attention is brought to them. We suggest that specific and targeted intervention may be beneficial in the following circumstances:

- where local board members feel frustrated in their desire to influence local matters
- where relationships between elected members and staff are dysfunctional
- where staff are finding they are regularly treated poorly by elected members, and/or
- where there are specific local issues that have not or cannot easily be addressed by existing council policies or practises.

All options should be considered in light of the reasons for selecting a specific local board for intervention, including implementing processes for improving relationships, encouraging increased staff flexibility regarding standard departmental processes, assigning staff time to resolving issues, and seeking formal delegations from the Governing Body.

Of all the mechanisms for increasing local board influence, the pilot has shown that improving relationships is the most fundamental and important. Unless productive

²¹ <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/council-controlled-organisations/Pages/review-of-council-controlled-organisations.aspx>

relationships exist, positive outcomes are unlikely, even if, for example, significant delegations are made to a local board.

Based on observations of the pilot, the following steps are recommended when looking to improve relationships between local board members and council staff:

- assign a facilitator who has an existing strong relationship with the respective local board, who has the board members' respect and with a high level of organisational influence to bring all parties together
- involve senior managers from within the council group who have the power to bring about necessary changes to staff processes and behaviour
- agree and document principles of respectful working relationships, ideally via a formal MoU,²² which sets out the expectations and obligations of each party and provides mechanisms for ensuring positive working relationships are maintained
- agree on a course of action to improve local board influence. This might include the allocation of staff to manage specific projects, trialling new departmental processes, obtaining formal delegations, and changing how elected members receive and interact with staff
- provide an independent advice service to elected members on ways to more effectively influence, considering behavioural science relating to interpersonal influence, the legal constraints of their elected member roles, and the organisational context in which they are working
- specific considerations for staff include:
 - ensuring there is adequate staff resourcing to successfully address the areas of frustrations within the local board. A fundamental component of improving relationships must be reducing frictions that have contributed to poor relationships
 - maintaining regular updates to board members on activities and progress, even if no progress is made. Some of the positive impact of the Programme Manager, for instance, is attributable to their regular updating of board members, even when little progress had been made.
 - being open to altering standard ways of working.
- where relevant, the process above should highlight for elected members the organisation's resourcing constraints, staff experience of working with the board, and the benefits – as demonstrated by the Waiheke Pilot – of working more constructively with staff. The pilot also demonstrated that there is no substitute for adequate “face time” between staff and local board members.

²² More detail on the importance of a written commitment in the form of an MoU and the important components of such an agreement can be seen in Section 5.1.

7.0 Conclusion

The context in which the Waiheke Governance Pilot has sought to improve local governance is complex, characterised by two separate but interacting levels of governance (themselves comprised of 170 elected members with differing political priorities), a large region with multiple competing challenges, and a large supporting organisation with multiple departments and a complex CCO structure.

The pilot has shown that it is possible to effect real improvements, despite this complexity. While formal accountability mechanisms in the form of allocations and delegations are important – and there is further work to be done in this area – an important finding of the pilot is the importance of establishing good working relationships for productive governance. Many of the benefits of the pilot have arisen from resetting and re-establishing working relationships between elected members and staff. The recent independent review of council-controlled organisations²³ also highlights this point:

No amount of mechanisms will make accountability work – it takes people, and relationships between people, to achieve this.

While the pilot has been beneficial, there remains work to do. Focus is required on ‘locking in’ pilot successes into enduring departmental processes, as well as further investigating opportunities with regard formal delegations from the Governing Body. There are also several lessons that can be applied to local boards across the region.

²³ <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/council-controlled-organisations/Pages/review-of-council-controlled-organisations.aspx>

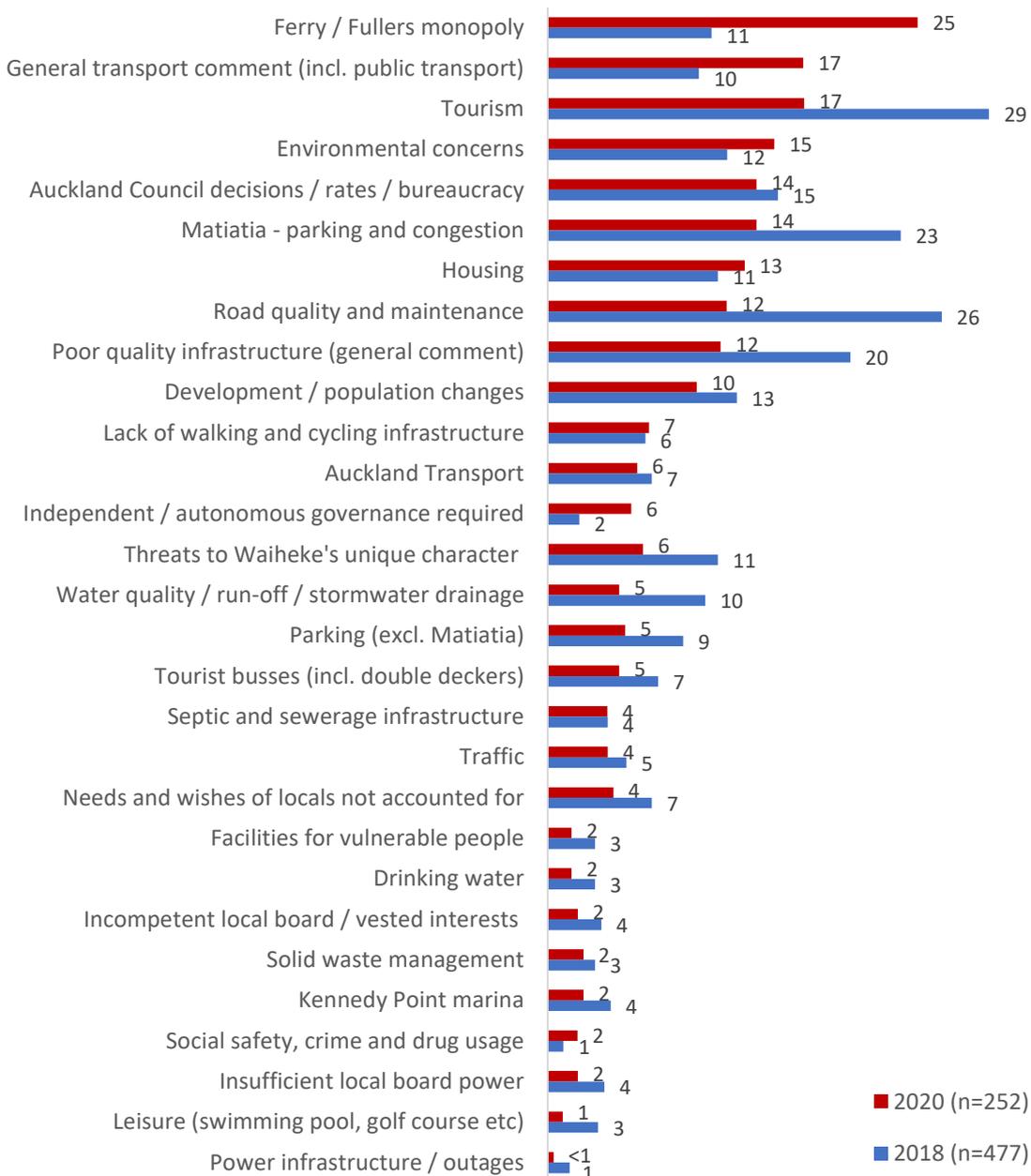
Appendix A Waiheke Community Survey summary

The following sections provide a detailed summary of the Waiheke community survey responses in 2018 and 2020.

Biggest issues currently facing Waiheke Island

Survey respondents were asked to describe in their own words what they thought the biggest issue was currently facing Waiheke Island. A variety of issues were described, and in many cases, respondents took the opportunity to describe more than one issue. Responses have been thematically analysed, with results presented in Figure 1 below, alongside results from the 2018 baseline survey. The top six issues are then described in more detail.

Figure 11. Percentage of respondents identifying different issues of concern



In 2020, the most frequently given issues included concerns with the 'Fullers ferry monopoly', general transport concerns, tourism, environmental concerns, Auckland Council and parking/congestion at Matiatia.

Issue 1: Fullers ferry monopoly

A quarter (25%) of respondents described an issue related to the passenger ferry service, Fullers or a perceived 'ferry monopoly', more than double than in 2018 (11%).

Respondents predominantly noted expensive ferry fares, and perceptions of poor service. They felt more sailings should be scheduled, especially during winter when the service is cut back, and at peak commuting times. There were also concerns over service reliability.

Respondents described how they felt the current ferry 'monopoly' held by Fullers was contributing to these issues, and that allowing competition among other ferry providers would lead to improvements in the service provided as well as reduced fares.

There were also concerns about the relationship between Fullers and AT. Some respondents felt AT should have more control over Fullers to ensure they provide good service at an affordable cost to Waiheke residents. AT was perceived to allow Fullers full licence to operate however they wish, at the detriment of the island's residents. Note, because the ferry route currently has a central government exemption from the Public Transport Operating Model, this means that AT cannot set operating conditions for Fullers to abide by and fares are not subsidised. Many residents are unlikely to understand this legislative background, but many respondents did note a desire for the ferry route to be operated like other public transport across the region. Some also felt fares should be subsidised for residents to keep household costs down.

*The limited winter ferry timetable at peak times and early evening, no 5.30pm ferry!
Ferry price increases for commuters - what are we getting for the extra increases other than a sub-standard timetable?*

Fullers and their predatory model. The fact they are not accountable as private operators of public services.

Affordability of passenger ferries. It's now cheaper to fly to other parts of NZ than get the ferry to and from Waiheke.

Poor and expensive service from the only ferry Company available Fullers. We can't say anything about that because it is the only option, sad and unfair.

Issue 2: General transport (including public transport)

In total, 17 per cent of respondents described a non-ferry related transport issue (including public transport), up from 10 per cent in 2018.

The most common complaints were related to the public bus service on the island. Buses were perceived to be too large for Waiheke's roads, often empty, slow moving and harmful for the environment. Smaller, more eco-friendly buses were desired.²⁴

Bus services were perceived to run infrequently, and not service the whole island. More bus stops and bus routes are desired, especially to service vulnerable people and those with limited mobility. Better co-ordination between bus and ferry schedules was also desired. There was a general dissatisfaction with recent changes made to the bus service, though a minority were in favour of this (and others who are satisfied are unlikely to perceive bus services as a major issue on the island). Finally, there was a feeling the bus service had been designed to predominantly cater to the needs of tourists, over the needs of residents.

No imagination on how to maintain the unique features of Waiheke e.g. why do we have huge city side buses running infrequently rather than cutesy, small 20 - 30 seaters running every 5 minutes during rush hour, our roads cannot handle the big buses.

Lack of bus stops, bus routes and accessible schedules. Too much focus on buses for tourism.

Transport! For residents who aren't wealthy, we need buses all over the island.

Busses are ridiculous slow with 3 people on board. Why don't you change them with electric mini busses?

Issue 3: Tourism

In total, 17 per cent of respondents described tourism as one of the biggest issues facing Waiheke, down from 29 per cent in 2018. This decline is likely in part a result of decreased tourism on Waiheke due to COVID-19.

Respondents described rising tourist numbers, particularly over the peak summer months. They felt tourism was putting the island's limited infrastructure under increasing pressure, to the point it was struggling to cope. There was also concern about the negative impact of tourism on the island's natural environment.

There was a general feeling that Waiheke is losing its unique and special character, partially because of increased tourism. Further, respondents felt the needs of tourists were becoming prioritised over the needs of residents by Auckland Council and AT.

In saying this, some respondents acknowledged the economic benefits of tourism, and felt the negative impact of COVID-19 on tourism was a key issue for the island. Many respondents believed tourism needed to be balanced against the natural and social environment of the island. This could be done by encouraging a shift to sustainable tourism.

²⁴ At the time of preparing this report a new fleet of electric buses was launched on the island: <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/articles/news/2020/11/auckland-s-first-electric-bus-fleet-officially-launched-on-waiheke-island/>

For example, by reducing tourist numbers (mass tourism) and providing a high-value and high-quality experience to reduced numbers of tourists.

The huge number of visitors and balancing the economic benefits with damage to our environment and community. There is a risk of privileging visitors over residents.

Tourism exploiting and changing the beautiful island.

Too many people - which leads to overloaded infrastructure, water shortages, degradation of the environment, traffic congestion, and resident irritation.

How best to encourage and benefit most from the right sort of tourism (i.e. high value and sustainable rather than mass tourism) without destroying the natural and community values that lead people to live here.

Developing sustainable tourism - and by sustainable I mean a tourism and commercialisation of the island that leaves it the same or better than if that tourism were not occurring - better for residents, better for temporary staff (hospitality workers etc), better for all of Auckland, and better for visitors. We need the island to be environmentally protected but also socially protected to ensure a diverse community and ensuring people who work here, some on low wages, can actually afford to live here. I'm very pro-tourism and sharing the island with the world - but it must not come at the expense of harming it.

Issue 4: Environmental concerns

In total, 15 per cent of respondents expressed concern about the natural environment, similar to 12 per cent in 2018.

Respondents felt the island's natural environment was being put under threat by increasing development, economic interests, tourism, and a growing population. Auckland Council was perceived to be in support of these developments, and to have little interest in protecting Waiheke's unique and special natural environment. Respondents felt that council decisions regarding resource and building consents in particular have had a negative impact on the natural environment.

Specific impacts described included degradation of the marine environment, pollution (air and water ways), over-fishing, lack of ground water, increased run-off and storm water management, flooding, destruction of natural habitats, dune degradation, sea level rises, and general climate change.

Respondents felt more needed to be done to manage and protect Waiheke's environment. Ideas for this included better management of; or imposing limitations on development, population growth and tourism, creating a partial marine reserve around the island and producing a long-term plan to protect the natural environment.

Destruction of the environment mainly due to Auckland Council not listening to locals and granting consents willy nilly that destroy our natural Taonga.

Balancing the growth of tourism/visitors and the desire for a sustainable environmentally focused island.

Decline in areas of trees and ecological quality due to the increasing size of new developments and homes. These are coupled with an increase in impermeable area (driveways/hard stands/wider roaring) which creates more road pollution run off, lack of ground water recharge, flooding, and less resilient ecology. This is driven by capital investment in oversized homes and significant increase in car use (and size and speed of cars) on the island.

Control over future development, including land development, housing, possible water/sewerage connection, tourism etc in terms of maintaining and enhancing Waiheke's ecological sustainability.

Being under the control of an aloof and out-of-touch Council that is not interested in protecting Waiheke's environment and special character; and indeed actively works with "Big Money" vested development interests against the wishes of most islanders.

Issue 5: Auckland Council decisions, rates, and bureaucracy

In total, Auckland Council was described as one of the biggest issues facing Waiheke Island by 14 per cent of respondents, in line with 15 per cent in 2018.

Respondents voiced concerns about Auckland Council. A key theme emerged around Auckland Council imposing bureaucracy, governance, and decisions on Waiheke, without understanding, acknowledging, and protecting its unique characteristics. There was a feeling that council viewed Waiheke as just another Auckland suburb, or was trying to change it to be so.

Many respondents believed the current governance structure was dysfunctional for Waiheke, and that the Local Board should be empowered and funded to shift towards a self-governing model. The current governance structure was perceived as top heavy, distant, and bureaucratic.

Auckland Council was perceived to be primarily interested in the development of the island, economic growth and tourism, often more so than the needs of the local community.

Respondents felt more or improved infrastructure needed to be provided by the council, to keep up with an increasing resident population and tourist numbers. Infrastructure was described as under pressure and not keeping up with rising demand.

Finally, many respondents complained about rates, and rate increases imposed by Auckland Council. It was questioned what extra value residents would receive as a result of increased rates. Others questioned why Waiheke residents had to pay the same level of rates as the rest of Auckland, when they are self-sufficient in terms of drinking water and sewerage.

Failure by Auckland Council to recognise and respect the local board's concerns on island issues and their power or lack of to resolve them.

The battle for appropriate governance. The one-size-fits-all super-city approach doesn't work on Waiheke.

Ongoing rate increases for no visible benefits.

There is an ill-advised push to turn Waiheke into 'just another suburb' of Auckland, to the detriment of those who call the island home. If Auckland Council cannot or will not recognise the special circumstances of island life, then Waiheke should not be under the governance of Auckland Council.

Auckland Council treats it like it owns the place.

Getting the mainland bureaucracy off our backs. We know our island best. They come over, thinking they know better, but don't, and proceed to waste vast sums of money, making things worse.

Issue 6: Matiatia parking and congestion

In total, 14 per cent of respondents mentioned Matiatia parking or congestion to be one of the biggest issues facing Waiheke Island, down substantially from 23 per cent in 2018.

It is possible that parking and congestion issues at Matiatia may have lessened due to fewer people travelling to and from the island via Matiatia as a result of COVID-19. Additional Matiatia parking reconfigurations by AT may have also contributed to a lessening in some parking pressures.

A common theme in respondents' comments was that there are not enough parking spaces at Matiatia. The carpark fills early in the morning with commuters' vehicles, leaving few parking options for those arriving to Matiatia after 9am. There were also complaints about the number of available parking spaces being reduced, despite limited parking availability.

Respondents complained about traffic and congestion getting to Matiatia, and in the Matiatia 'keyhole' (pick up and drop off area) especially. It was perceived that large tourist buses were being prioritised over transport options for locals in the keyhole, this issue becoming exasperated during the peak tourist season in summer. Some respondents felt the layout of the keyhole was dysfunctional and needed to be improved.

Parking at Matiatia is a constant debacle.

At the expense of local buses and taxis, the Fullers busses are allowed access to the Matiatia keyhole.

The chaos of the keyhole at Matiatia as summer, and the tourist season approaches.

Parking at Matiatia. We need a parking building. Parking down there is impossible unless you get there by 9am. I can't always catch a bus.

Lack of parking options and spaces for locals at Matiatia. Too much money going into poorly thought out trials without considering local feedback.

Parking at Matiatia. There is not enough for commuters and non-commuters. Commuters take the majority of spaces first meaning non commuters miss out.

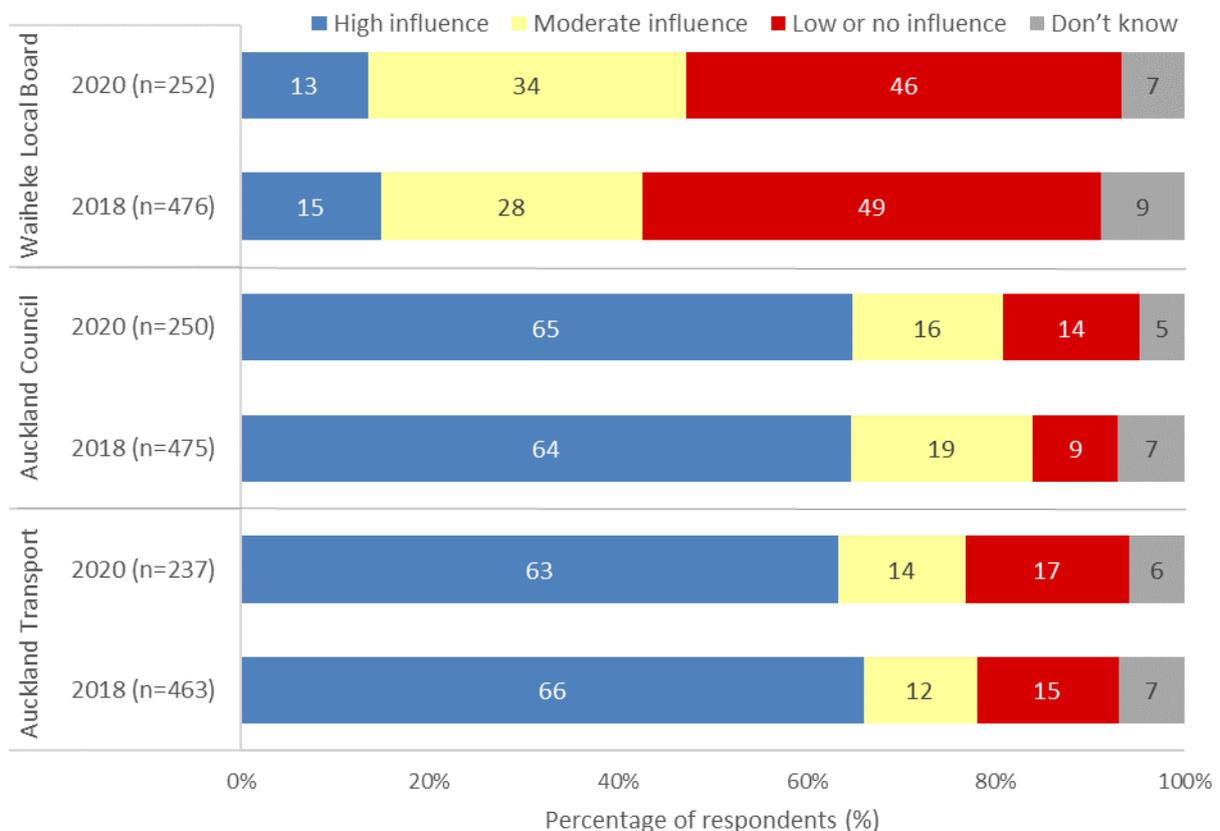
Influence of the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and AT

Respondents were asked to rate how much influence they thought the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council, and AT had over the issue(s) they had previously identified.

In 2020, respondents felt that council and AT had the most influence (65% and 63% rating these as having 'high influence' respectively). The Local Board was perceived to have a lower influence, with just 13 per percent providing a 'high influence' rating.

Since 2018, there are no substantial changes in how much influence the three organisations are perceived to have.

Figure 12. Perceived influence of the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and AT



7-point scale simplified to 'High influence' = 6-7; 'Moderate influence' = 3-5; 'Low or no influence' = 1-2.

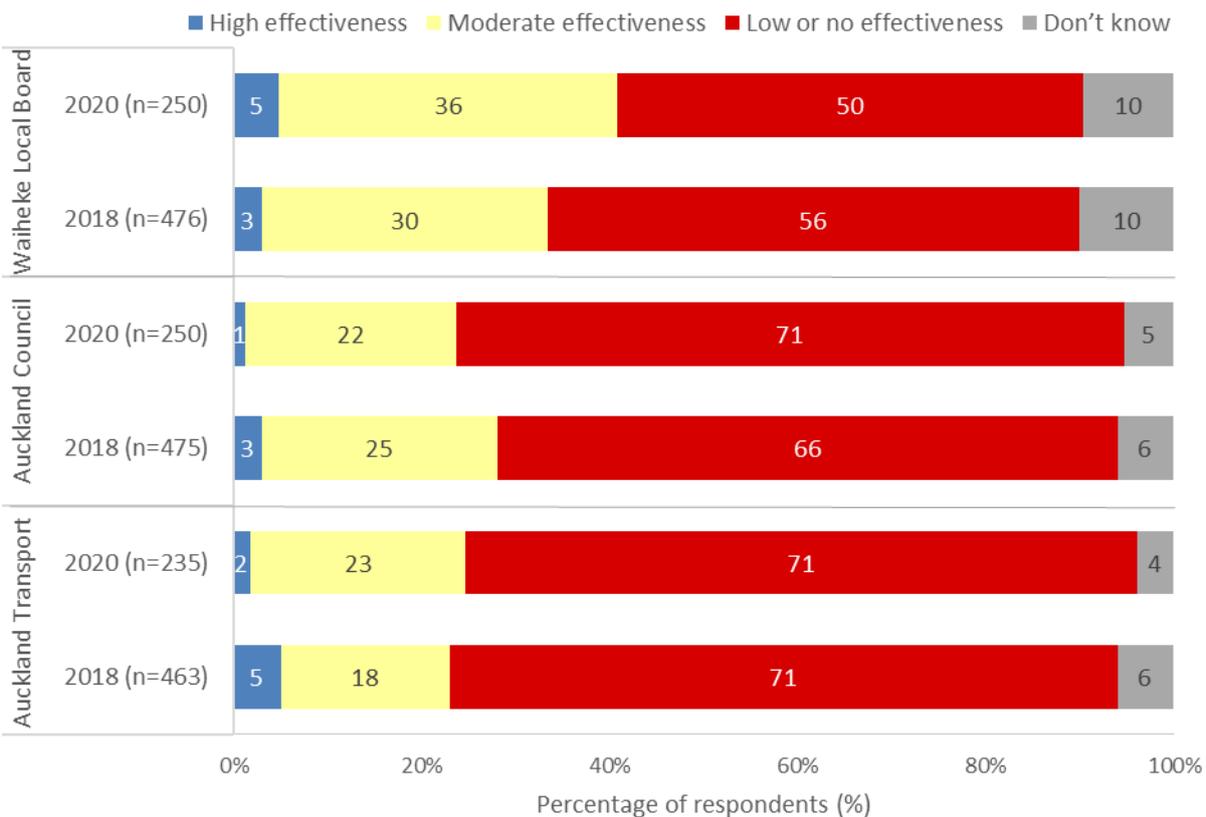
Effectiveness of the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and Auckland Transport

Respondents were asked to rate how effective they thought the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council, and AT were at addressing the issue(s) they had previously identified.

Respondents expressed low levels of perceived effectiveness when asked about both Auckland Council and AT, with 71 per cent providing a rating in the ‘low or no effectiveness’ range for both organisations. Although still low, perceived effectiveness was comparatively higher when asked about the local board, with half (50%) providing a rating in the ‘low or no effectiveness’ range, and 36 per cent providing a rating in the ‘moderate effectiveness’ range. Just five per cent felt the local board was highly effective.

Figure 3 suggests that since 2018 there has been a general increase in the perceived effectiveness of the local board, and a general decrease in the perceived effectiveness of Auckland Council, and to a lesser degree, AT.

Figure 13. Perceived effectiveness of the Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council and AT



7-point scale simplified to ‘High effectiveness = 6-7; ‘Moderate effectiveness’ = 3-5; ‘Low or no effectiveness’ = 1-2.

Those that provided a response in the ‘moderate’ or ‘little to no effectiveness’ range were then asked to provide an explanation as to why they provided that rating. Responses have been thematically analysed and key themes are summarised below:

The Waiheke Local Board

- The local board does not have the political authority to make decisions and implement change independently, Auckland Council is seen as responsible for this. The local board is therefore not blamed for lack of positive change by many residents.
- Perceived to be weak advocates for residents and have little influence over decisions made by Auckland Council about the island. The local board needs a better relationship with Auckland Council, which would allow them greater sway and influence.
- Such respondents feel little positive change has been brought about due to the local board, and if anything, issues have become worse in recent years.
- The local board is seen to do their best by some, creating plans and initiatives to improve issues. But don't have the political authority to implement these, so actual change is rare.
- Need to engage more closely with the community, including more public consultation and open discussions. The local board is currently not seen to be acting on behalf of the community by some respondents.
- Little confidence in current board members specifically was expressed by some. The local board needs to unite, work together and display stronger leadership.

Auckland Council

- Auckland Council is not perceived to care about the island or its residents. It is not seen to be a priority among the wider Auckland context.
- Respondents felt that Auckland Council treats Waiheke like another suburb of Auckland, which is not appropriate. Council is not perceived to acknowledge, understand, and appreciate the unique character of Waiheke and does not try to preserve this – instead allowing the island to become homogenous with the rest of Auckland.
- Little improvement to key issues has been made by Auckland Council, and this has been the case for some time.
- Respondents felt the governance structure in Auckland since amalgamation aligns too heavily with a top down approach, with very little local or community focused decision making. Input from residents and the local board appear to be repeatedly overridden. Some respondents felt council should do more to empower the local board with political authority and funding.
- Auckland Council is perceived to be prioritising the economy over the community. Some residents feel council views Waiheke as a money making 'golden goose' related to its encouragement of the islands tourism industry, at the expense of locals. There are questions if this level of tourism is sustainable for Waiheke.
- Respondents felt that council is not following or implementing land use plans for Waiheke (e.g. granting inappropriate building and resource consents). This is perceived to be contributing to over development of the island, which is unsustainable.

Auckland Transport

- Ongoing major transport issues that have shown no improvements over time.
- The prospect of electric buses is well liked; however, some respondents note these buses were promised some time ago and have still not arrived.
- Although AT has conducted public consultation ahead of transport decisions in the past, these are seen as a cover to pass decisions that have already been decided

upon, in line with ATs own agenda. Respondents don't feel heard as their opinions expressed in these consultations are often not taken into account. There is very little feedback or communication to residents from AT.

- AT is seen as being financially motivated, rather than motivated by desire to provide a reliable and economical public service to residents.
- General negative comments included criticisms of AT for being incompetent, dishonest, selfish, detached, and arrogant.
- Respondents felt that AT need to bring Fullers into line. They felt AT has too close a relationship with Fullers, allowing Fullers free license to operate however they wish. Many respondents feel AT should be better advocating for residents against Fullers.
- AT are seen to be prioritising tourists over residents.
- AT have tried to apply an Auckland style one size fits all transport model to Waiheke, which is not appropriate or functional. They don't understand and Waiheke's unique context and need to find transport solutions that fit within this.
- Show little interest or care for Waiheke, its residents, natural and social environment.
- Appointment of the Waiheke Liaison at AT seen as a step in the right direction and there is hope this will help improve Waiheke's transport situation. A minority think AT is doing a good job and that they have made some improvements.

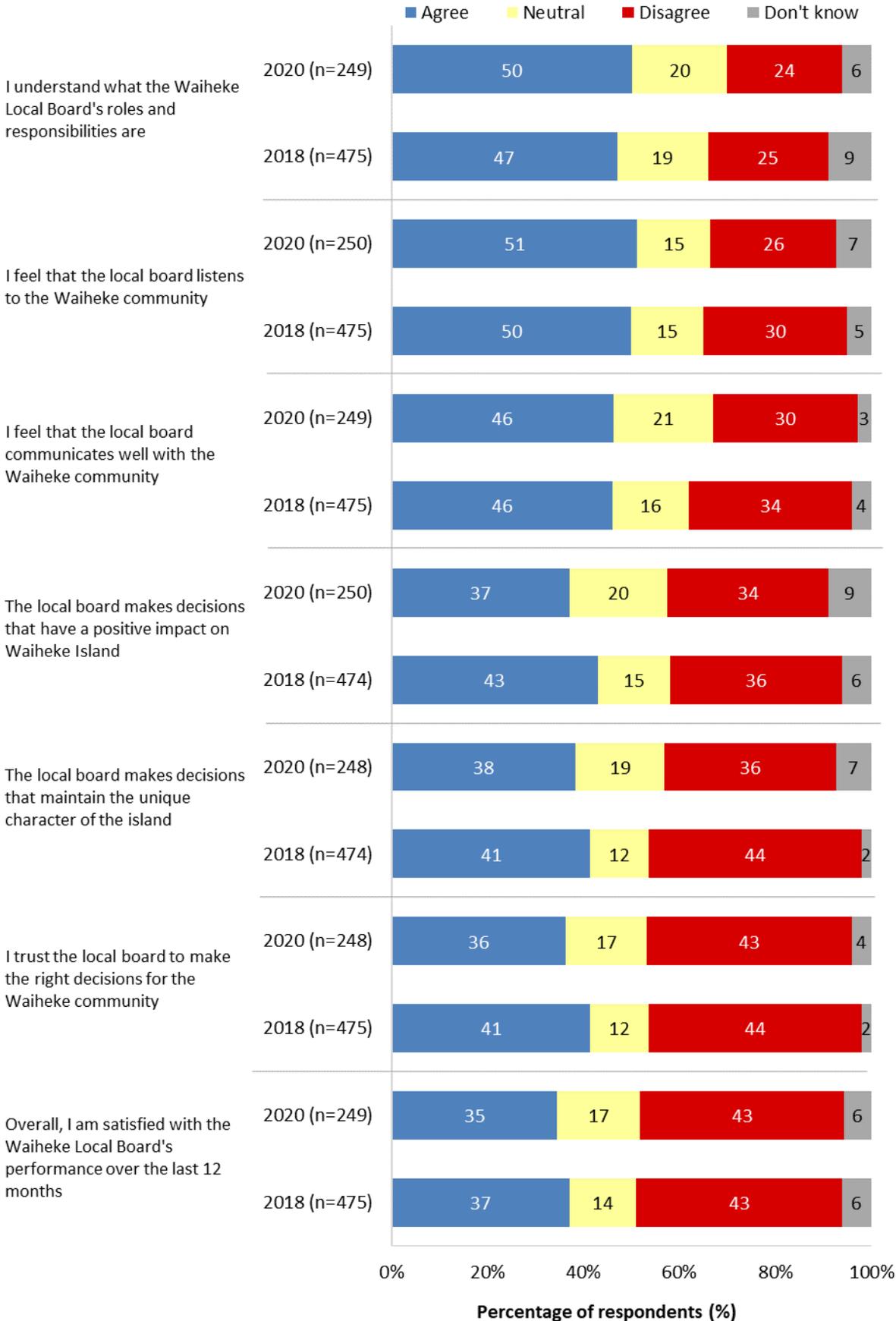
Attitudes toward the Waiheke Local Board

Respondents were asked a range of questions about their attitudes towards the Waiheke Local Board.

Generally, attitudes towards the local board were slightly less positive in 2020, compared to 2018, with fewer respondents agreeing the local board makes decision that have a positive impact on the island (down six percentage points), and trust in the local board to make the right decisions for the Waiheke community (down five percentage points).

However, respondents were more likely to agree they understand what the local board's roles and responsibilities are in 2020, compared with 2018 (up three percentage points).

Figure 14. Attitudes toward the Waiheke Local Board



7-point scale simplified to 'Agree' = 5-7; 'Neutral' = 4; 'Disagree' = 1-3.

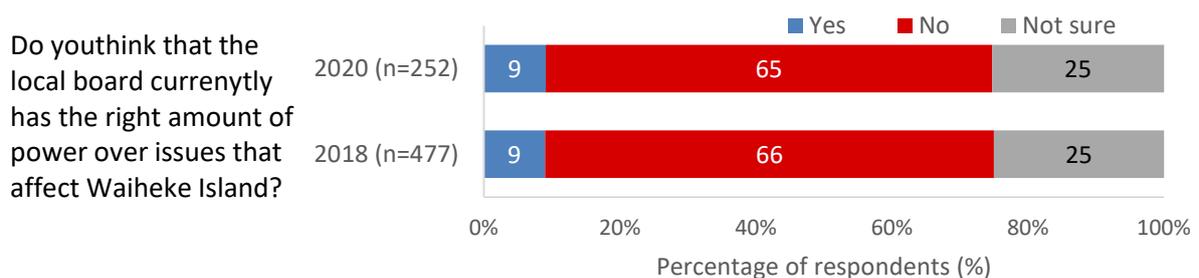
Respondents were then asked to describe what would need to change in order to more strongly agree with the above statements. Responses have been thematically analysed and key themes are summarised below:

- It was perceived that the local board requires more authority and funding to make and implement decisions. Currently Auckland Council is seen to hold a disproportionate amount of power, of which the Local Board has limited influence to sway, despite their efforts. This is problematic as Auckland Council is not perceived to understand the unique needs and interests of the island. There is a desire for the island to be governed more independently from Auckland, and Auckland Council. Respondents suggested that Waiheke should have more representation within council's governance structure, that the relationship between the local board and council should be renegotiated, or that Waiheke should be completely self-governed by its board. Conversely, a minority felt Waiheke is a part of Auckland and so should be governed by Auckland Council as such.
- The local board itself is perceived to be dysfunctional and fractured by some respondents. This is a result of competing agendas associated with different board members, with some board members undermining the efforts of others. There is a feeling the board requires better leadership and guidance. Some members are criticised for having a vested interest in business or for missing board meetings.
- Respondents felt that the local board needed to operate with improved transparency and communication. Meetings and discussions should be public, rather than occurring behind closed doors. This means consulting with and seeking feedback from residents about issues that affect them through a range of forums, and reporting back on decisions, plans and what has been done. It is important that the whole community is listened to, rather than just vocal minorities.
- A key priority of the local board is described as protecting the unique character of the island, which involves managing development, population growth and tourism. Waiheke's character is seen as a jewel to be protected. However, at the same time, residents recognise the reality of changes occurring on the island, and a need to manage these into the future, rather than try to achieve a retrospective ideal. Some residents felt that the local board needs to create a visionary long-term plan to manage the development of the island.

Adequacy of the Waiheke Local Board's power

Two thirds of respondents (65%) felt the local board does not have enough power over issues that affect Waiheke, while almost one in ten (9%) felt they do. The remainder (25%) were unsure. Results are unchanged from 2018.

Figure 15. Perceptions of the adequacy of the Waiheke Local Board's power

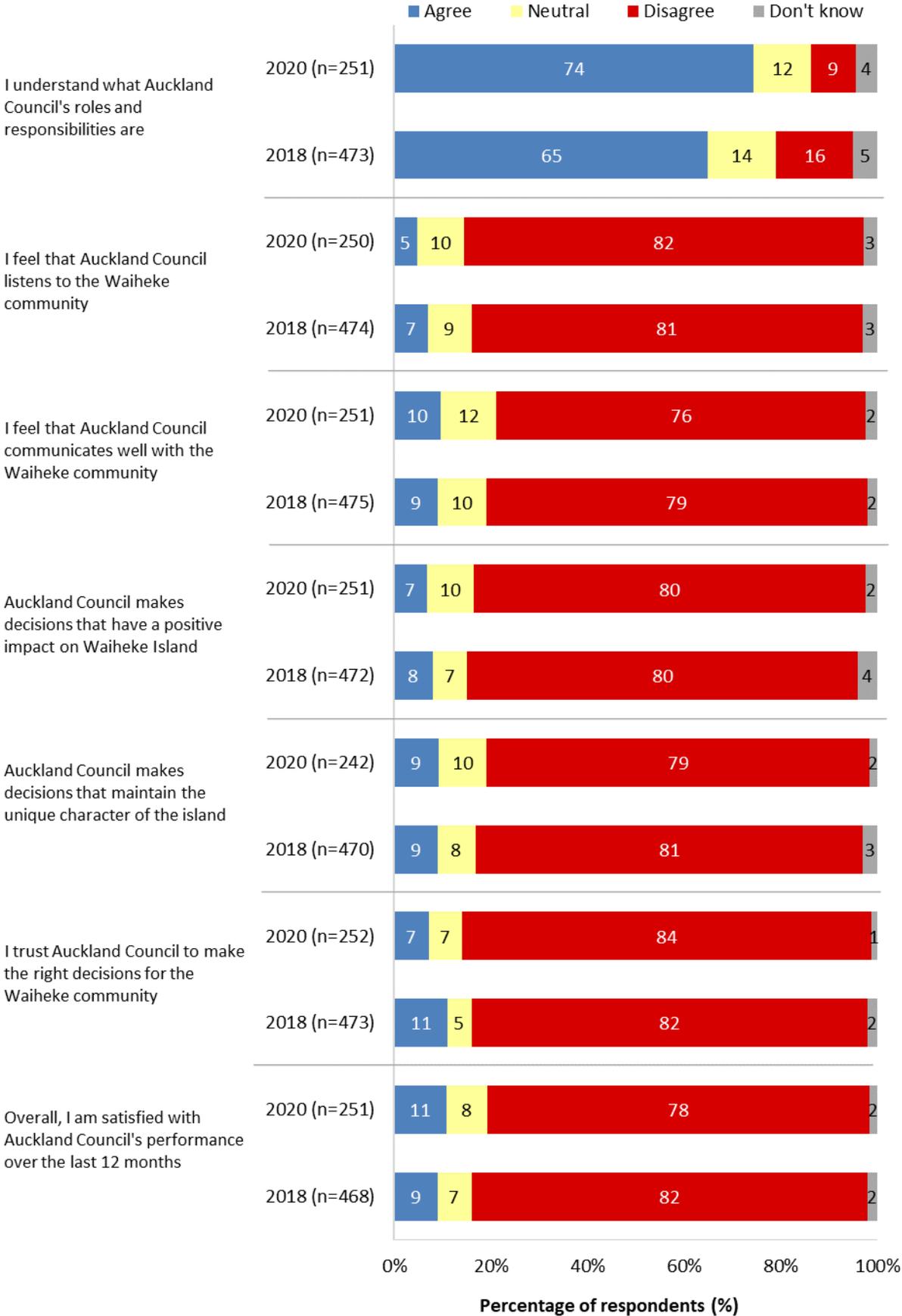


Attitudes toward Auckland Council

Respondents were asked a range of questions about their attitudes towards Auckland Council. Overall, attitudes towards Auckland Council tended to be negative, with more than three quarters of respondents disagreeing with almost all statements (with the exception of whether they understand the role and responsibility of Auckland Council). Respondents were then asked to describe what would need to change in order to agree or more strongly agree with the above statements. Responses have been thematically analysed and key themes are summarised below:

- Respondents felt council needed to do a better job of protecting Waiheke's unique characteristics. This means applying a tailored approach to decision making, rather than applying a one size fits all model that is seen to be Auckland centric. This is particularly relevant in managing development on the island (building and resource consents).
- Empower and resource Waiheke to operate more independently from Auckland. Opinions ranged from complete separation and self-governance, to providing the local board more sway in decision making of Auckland Council. There is a general feeling that being governed by Auckland Council and existing within the supercity has had a negative impact on Waiheke, and that Auckland Council has little interest and concern for Waiheke. A minority felt separation from Auckland Council would be detrimental.
- Engage and consult with residents about decisions and issues that affect them. There was an emphasis here on really listening what residents have to say, rather than holding consultations as a 'tick box exercise'. Residents would like to see a bottom up approach where issues and decisions are discussed at a community level. This includes increased transparency and democracy around decision making.
- Communicate with residents what Auckland Council is doing and has done on Waiheke. Particularly promoting positive change that council has brought about.
- Residents feel they are not getting value for money for their rates payments. Because Waiheke looks after their own water and septic services, there is an argument that residents should pay less rates than the rest of Auckland. On a related note, residents would like to see more public services provided, funded by rate payers e.g. a public swimming pool. There should be better accountability of how residents' rates are spent on the island.

Figure 16. Attitudes towards Auckland Council



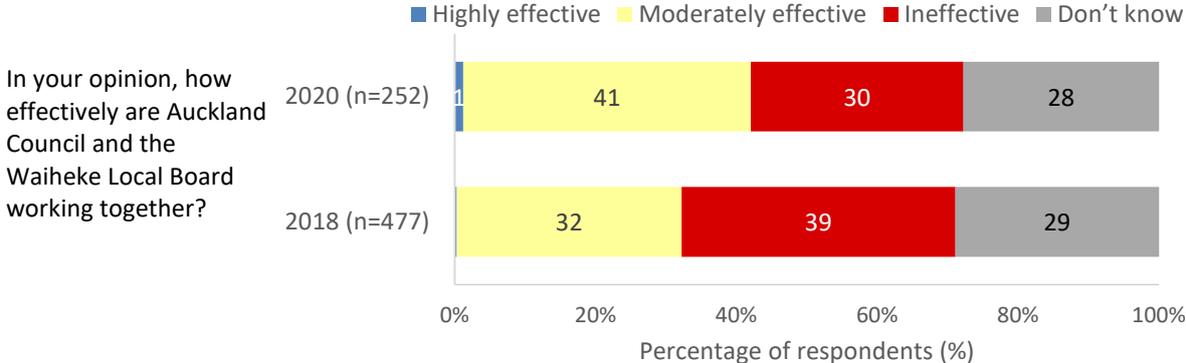
7-point scale simplified to 'Agree' = 5-7; 'Neutral' = 4; 'Disagree' = 1-3.

How effectively Auckland Council works with the Waiheke Local Board

The largest group of respondents felt Auckland Council works with the Local Board ‘moderately effectively’ (41%), followed by those who this relationship was ineffective (30%). Just one per cent felt this was a ‘highly effective’ relationship. The remainder were unsure (28%).

Since 2018, the proportion who felt this relationship was ‘moderately effective’ increased by nine percentage points, while the proportion who felt this relationship was ineffective decreased by nine percentage points. This demonstrates improvement in the perception of how well Auckland Council works with the Waiheke Local Board.

Figure 17. Perceptions of how effectively Auckland Council is working with the Waiheke Local Board

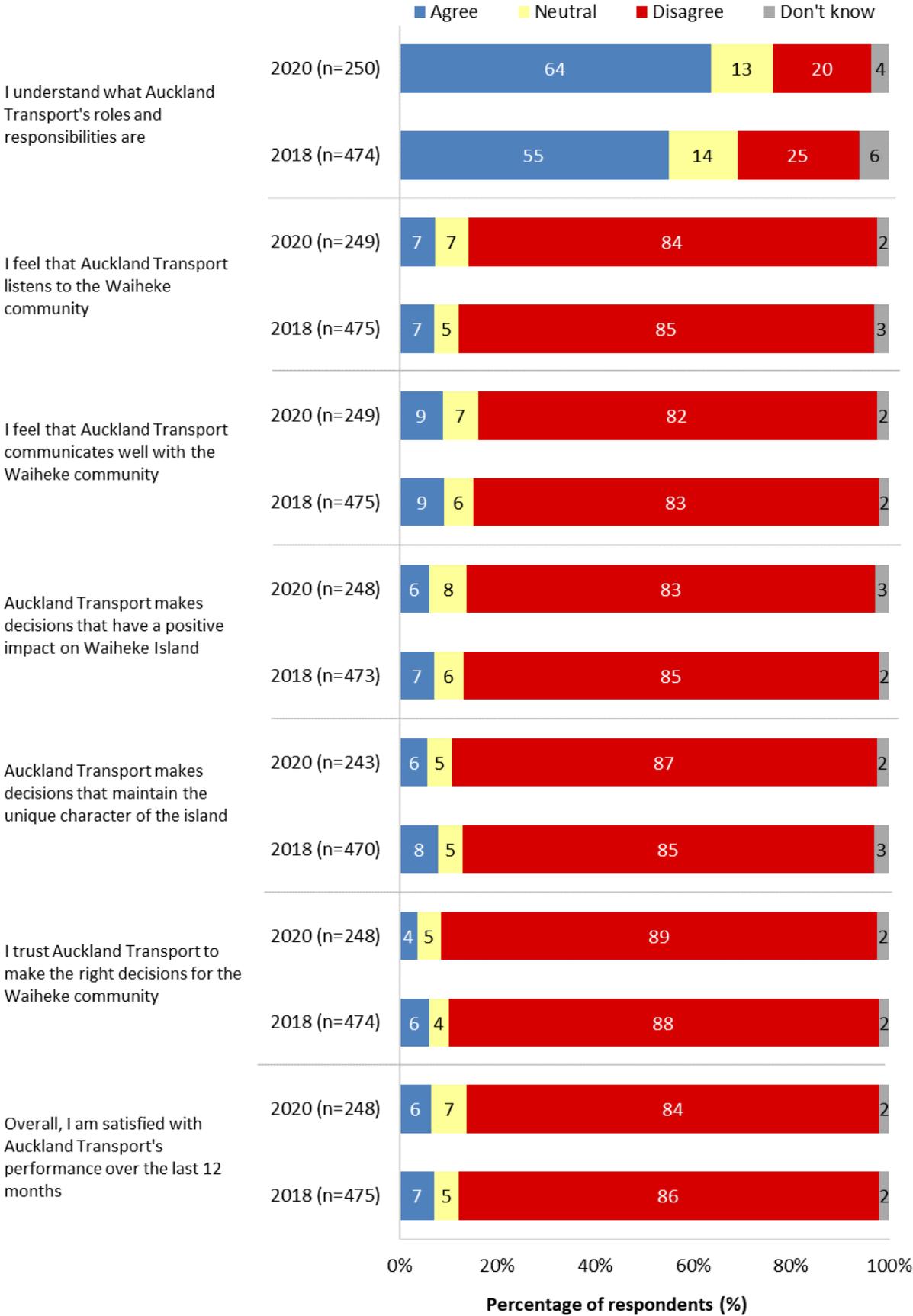


Attitudes toward Auckland Transport

Respondents were asked a range of questions about their attitudes towards AT.

Overall, attitudes towards AT tended to be negative. However, there was a slight improvement in responses compared to 2018.

Figure 18. Attitudes towards AT



7-point scale simplified to 'Agree' = 5-7; 'Neutral' = 4; 'Disagree' = 1-3.

Respondents were then asked to describe what would need to change for them to more strongly agree with the above statements. Responses have been thematically analysed and key themes are summarised below:

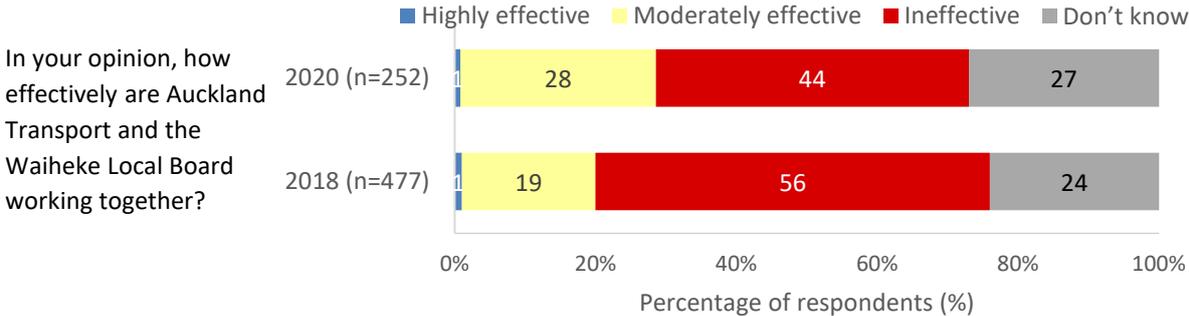
- Respondents felt transport on the island needed to be customised to ensure it is better suited to its unique needs. For example, residents often complained about the large double decker buses that are perceived to be too big for the roads on Waiheke, smaller buses are requested. These large buses are perceived to serve tourists in the peak season, but residents feel they are not appropriate for the needs of locals.
- Transport options should be more environmentally friendly. Proposed electric buses are well liked.
- AT need to bring about positive change about key transport issues on the island.
- AT is perceived to have economically driven priorities, rather than working to provide an affordable and quality public service. Many respondents felt AT views Waiheke as a money making opportunity, due to the large number of tourists who visit the island. AT is not seen to prioritise the needs of the local community.
- Allow competition in ferry providers to remove the Fullers monopoly. This is expected to lead to improved services and lower fares. AT is seen to allow Fullers to operate as they wish, want with very little advocacy for resident’s needs.
- When public consultations about transport occur, listen to residents, and treat their opinions with the respect they deserve. Currently AT is seen to hold public consultations as a ‘tick box exercise’. They are not perceived to take local submissions into account, and rather action what they had planned to do initially anyway. AT need to improve their communication, and become more accessible to locals.

Perceptions of how effectively Auckland Transport works with the Waiheke Local Board

The largest group of respondents felt Auckland Transport works with the local board ineffectively (44%), followed by those who felt this relationship was moderately effective (28%). Just one per cent felt this was a highly effective relationship, with the remainder unsure (27%).

However, since 2018 there has been improvement, with the proportion who felt this relationship was ineffective declining by 12 per centage points, and the proportion who felt it was moderately effective increasing by nine percentage points.

Figure 19. Perceptions of how effectively Auckland Transport is working with the Waiheke Local Board



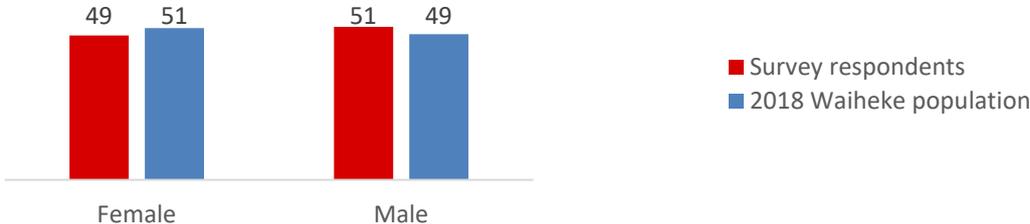
Demographics of survey respondents

A total of 252 people filled out the survey, representing 3.2 per cent of the Waiheke Island adult population aged 15 years and over (as at the 2018 Census). The characteristics of these respondents are compared to the broader Waiheke adult population below. Comparing the demographic characteristics of the 2018 and 2020 survey respondents shows them to be very similar.²⁵

Respondents were highly engaged with local government issues, with 94 per cent reporting they had voted in the 2019 local government elections.

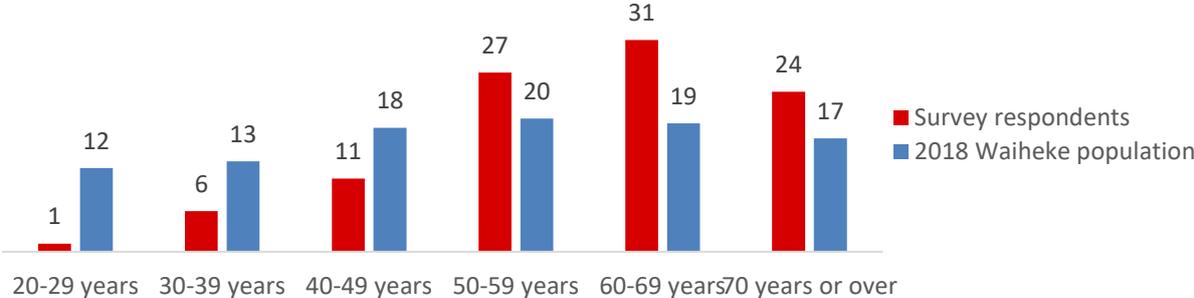
The gender distribution of survey participants was broadly similar to the Waiheke Island adult population. Two respondents identified as gender diverse.

Figure 20. Gender of respondents (n=245)



On average, respondents were older than the adult population of Waiheke Island, with 82 per cent aged 50 years or older.

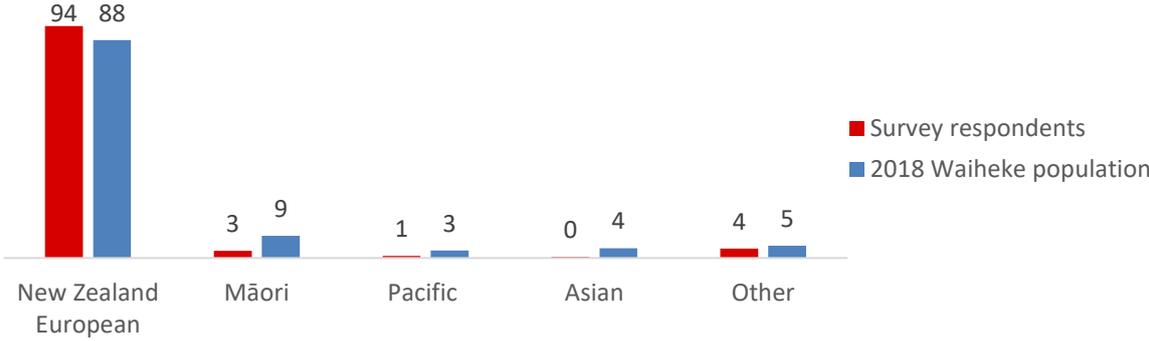
Figure 21. Age group of respondents (n=248)



The majority of respondents identified as New Zealand European (94%), a higher proportion than the general island population (88%).

²⁵ The 2018 characteristics can be seen in <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/local-boards/all-local-boards/waiheke-local-board/Documents/waiheke-community-survey-results-2018.pdf>

Figure 22. Ethnic group composition of respondents (n=241)



The majority of survey respondents reported living on the island full time (90%), with a further 11 per cent reporting living on the island part time. Just one percent did not live on Waiheke Island at all.

Among those who live full time on the island, most has lived on the island for some time. Almost three in five had lived on the island for 10 years or longer (59%), and another quarter had done so for five to nine years (25%). Just seven per cent had lived on the island for less than two.

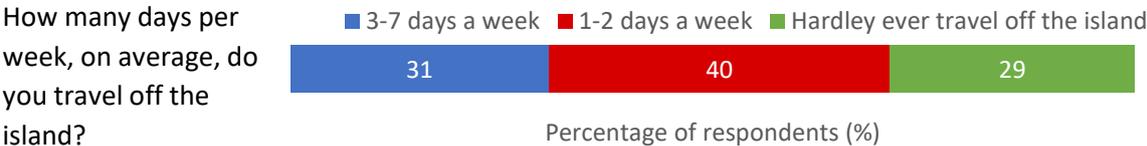
Figure 23. How long full-time residents have lived on Waiheke Island (n=100)



Those who did not live on the island full-time were asked what their connections to Waiheke were. The majority of this group owned a bach, holiday home or second home on the island (83%).

The largest group of respondents reported travelling off the island once or twice a week (40%), followed by almost a third who travel off the island three to seven days a week (31%). Almost three in ten report hardly ever travelling off the island (29%).

Figure 24. Frequency of travelling off the island (n=248)



Find out more: phone 09 301 0101, email rimu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz and knowledgeauckland.org.nz