

From: [Information Management Team](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: LGOIMA request [#5929BD]
Date: Friday, 5 March 2021 4:07:00 PM
Attachments: [2019 HCC Survey of Councillors and Community Board Members Report.pdf](#)
[2020 HCC Survey of Elected Representatives Report.pdf](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[image005.jpg](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)

05/03/2021

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

We refer to your official information request dated 5 February 2021 for information regarding employee satisfaction surveys and Councillor surveys.

Part of the information you have requested is enclosed. However, the Council has not run employee satisfaction surveys since 2018 and therefore these may not be relevant to your request.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact us at informationmanagementteam@huttcity.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

Hutt City Council

Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand
[W www.huttcity.govt.nz](http://www.huttcity.govt.nz)

Encl

2019 HCC Survey of Councillors and Community Board Members Report.PDF

2020 HCC Survey of Elected Representatives Report.PDF

From: Euan Kyle
Sent: Tuesday, 9 February 2021 3:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: LGOIMA request [#5929BD]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 5 February 2021 2:13 PM
To: "Contact" <Contact@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: LGOIMA request

Good afternoon,

Could you please supply me with the two most recent employee satisfaction surveys and Councillor surveys, the later being conducted by Peter Glen Research.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]



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**SURVEY OF COUNCILLORS AND
COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS**

Report prepared for Hutt City Council

Wendy Moore

August 2019

Released under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Background	3
2. Survey requirement	3
3. Research objectives	4
4. Method	5
5. Timing	5
6. Summary of Findings	6
6.1. Performance attributes	7
6.1.1. Accuracy of advice	7
6.1.2. Timeliness of advice	7
6.1.3. Technical explanations	8
6.1.4. Comprehensiveness of options presented	9
6.1.5. Thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement	9
6.1.6. Thoroughness of legal considerations	10
6.1.7. Thoroughness of financial considerations	10
6.1.8. Support services	11
6.1.9. Access to key staff	12
6.1.10. Receipt of invitations	12
6.1.11. The level of response from council officers	13
6.1.12. The overall formal advice received from Council Officers	13
6.2. Reasons for dissatisfaction/areas of concern	14
6.3. Aspects of performance that Council staff does particularly well	17
6.4. Extent to which elected members have detected a change in performance levels	20
6.5. Rating of the Reception Team and Call Centre	26
6.6. Key areas of professional advice and/or service delivery for future focus	28
6.7. Conclusion	31
7. Questionnaire	33 - 42

1. BACKGROUND

Hutt City Council is governed by a Mayor and twelve Councillors, all elected by Hutt City residents. The Councillors are currently elected across six wards (two Councillors per ward), to ensure that each part of the city is represented in the Council.

However, it can be noted that the Local Government Commission has ruled that at the next election (to be held in October 2019), Hutt City Council's representation structure will be changed. The city will move to 'mixed' representation at Council level, with the Council comprising the Mayor and twelve councillors (one elected per ward and six elected from the city as a whole).

The elected Council sets the broad strategic direction and policies for the Chief Executive and staff of Hutt City Council to implement, and audits the results. Council ensures, on behalf of the community, that the organisation achieves what it should and that it avoids undesirable situations and circumstances.

The Chief Executive, through staff, is responsible for:

- Implementing the decisions of Council;
- Providing advice to the Council and other city representatives (e.g. Community Board members); and
- Ensuring all functions delegated to the Chief Executive, or to other employees, are carried out.

Hutt City Council also has second-level representation, with three Community Boards (Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata), which were set up under the Local Government Act. The role of these local representatives is to support Council in its governance role, by facilitating local input to Council's decision-making process.

There are also four Community Panels in the areas not served by Community Boards (Northern, Eastern, Western and Central), which were established in July 2017. Separate research has previously been undertaken with these community representatives and it is planned that further feedback will be gained from them in a 2019 study that will follow on from this research project.

2. SURVEY REQUIREMENT

As part of its ongoing performance measurement, Hutt City Council is required to survey Councillors and Community Board members, regarding the administration's performance in meeting their expectations.

Since 2010, Peter Glen Research has undertaken the annual survey, using a personal interview approach to elicit feedback from the city's representatives. The response rates obtained from this approach have been very good (80%+), with this year's survey achieving a similar level of participation. Prior to 2010, the survey had been undertaken by way of a self-completion questionnaire, which had resulted in low levels of response.

Peter Glen Research has now conducted the 2019 update survey. This year's survey was again undertaken by way of personal interviews (predominantly by telephone, but

where necessary by face-to-face contact) to achieve the desired response level and to enable a greater understanding of the context in which the satisfaction ratings are made.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

These were defined as follows:

- (1) To determine the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction that exists among Councillors and Community Board members with the overall quality of formal advice they have received from Council Officers in the past twelve months.
- (2) To identify their reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction.
- (3) To determine how satisfied/dissatisfied the above representatives are with specific aspects of service delivery, i.e.
 - Accuracy of advice
 - Timeliness of advice
 - Adequacy of technical explanations
 - Ease of comprehension of technical explanations
 - Comprehensiveness of options presented
 - Thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement
 - Thoroughness of legal considerations
 - Thoroughness of financial considerations
 - Sufficiency of support services
 - Access to key staff
 - Receipt of invitations to attend relevant meetings and/or briefings
 - The level of response from Council Officers to requests for help
- (4) To gain an updated reading on the overall satisfaction rating of the formal advice that is given.
- (5) To obtain the respondents' input on how formal advice could be improved or strengthened.
- (6) To identify aspects of performance that Council Officers and Administration Staff do particularly well in support of Councillors/Community Board members

- (7) To check how satisfied the city's representatives are with the level of customer service provided by Council staff at the Front Desk and Contact Centre.

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4. METHOD

4.1. OVERALL APPROACH

In total, there were potentially twenty-nine Hutt City representatives to be interviewed, including the Mayor, Councillors and Community Board members. They were interviewed individually, mainly by pre-arranged telephone interviews. However, as it was important to maximise the response rate, in some cases where the respondent indicated a preference for face-to-face contact, this was facilitated.

4.2. LIST OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Hutt City Council provided Peter Glen Research with a list of the city representatives, including their name and contact details (telephone and email addresses). This was to enable Peter Glen Research to contact the stakeholders and arrange a suitable day/time for interview.

4.3. INTRODUCTORY EMAIL

Hutt City Council initially wrote to prospective respondents to:

- inform them of the impending research and its purpose
- seek their co-operation
- stress the confidentiality of individual replies and Peter Glen Research's role as an independent market research organisation.

4.4. RECRUITMENT AND RESPONSE RATE

Peter Glen Research telephoned and/or emailed the respondents to arrange a suitable time for interview. Multiple contacts were made, where necessary, to secure an interview, in order to maximise the response rate.

In total, twenty-three out of the twenty-nine city representatives participated in the study. This represents an 80% response rate to the survey. The twenty-three research participants included ten Councillors and thirteen Community Board members.

4.5. REPORTING

The results of the research are presented in a format that summarises the overall ratings given by the research participants. Insights to the current strengths and weaknesses of service delivery, and the issues that were identified, have been shown in a summary format in the report. Care has been taken to preserve the identity of the respondents as far as practicable.

5. TIMING

Interviewing was undertaken throughout June and July 2019.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS




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6.1. PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES



The research participants were initially asked to rate the formal advice given to them by officers from across Council. In the introduction, some focus was placed on the areas of strategic planning, policy and strategy development and advice, monitoring and reporting, as well as support services. However, respondents were informed that feedback could extend beyond these areas, where appropriate.






The ratings that were given generally reflected respondents' *overall* impressions of performance in the past twelve months, after weighing positive and negative experiences. Most of the ratings indicated a net level of satisfaction. Nevertheless, it should be noted that some respondents identified that problems can and do arise, but it was acknowledged that most issues are satisfactorily resolved.






The performance ratings given by the survey participants are summarised below.



ACCURACY OF ADVICE	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		5	22	2	20	3	23
Quite satisfied		16	69	7	70	9	69
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		2	9	1	10	1	8
Not very satisfied			-	-	-	-	-
Not at all satisfied			-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate			-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%

TIMELINESS OF ADVICE	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		9	39	5	50	4	31
Quite satisfied		12	52	5	50	7	54
Not very satisfied		2	9	-	-	2	15
Not at all satisfied			-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate			-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%

Key:  = Mayor/Councillors  = Community Board Members

ADEQUACY OF TECHNICAL EXPLANATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		5	22	2	20	3	23
Quite satisfied		14	61	7	70	7	54
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	4	1	10	-	-
Not very satisfied		2	9	-	-	2	15
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		1	4	-	-	1	8
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%






EASE OF COMPREHENSION OF TECHNICAL EXPLANATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		6	26	1	10	5	39
Quite satisfied		12	52	8	80	4	31
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	4	1	10	-	-
Not very satisfied		2	9	-	-	2	15
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		2	9	-	-	2	15
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%




Key:  = Mayor/Councillors  = Community Board Members



COMPREHENSIVENESS OF OPTIONS PRESENTED	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		6	26	2	20	4	31
Quite satisfied		14	61	8	80	6	46
Not very satisfied		3	13	-	-	3	23
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%




THOROUGHNESS OF CONSULTATION AND/OR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		4	17	1	10	3	23
Quite satisfied		9	39	6	60	3	23
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		2	9	2	20	-	-
Not very satisfied		7	31	1	10	6	46
Not at all satisfied		1	4	-	-	1	8
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%





Key: = Mayor/Councillors = Community Board Members

THOROUGHNESS OF LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		5	22	3	30	2	15
Quite satisfied		10	43	6	60	4	31
Not very satisfied		3	13	1	10	2	15
Not at all satisfied		2	9	-	-	2	15
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		3	13	-	-	3	24
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%



THOROUGHNESS OF FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		6	26	3	30	3	23
Quite satisfied		15	65	7	70	8	62
Not very satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		2	9	-	-	2	15
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%




Key:  = Mayor/Councillors  = Community Board Members




ADEQUACY OF SUPPORT SERVICES GENERALLY	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		14	61	6	60	8	61
Quite satisfied		8	35	4	40	4	31
Not very satisfied		1	4	-	-	1	8
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%



SUPPORT AND ADVICE RECEIVED FROM COMMITTEE ADVISORS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		15	65	7	70	8	61
Quite satisfied		6	26	3	30	3	23
Not very satisfied		1	4	-	-	1	8
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		1	5	-	-	1	8
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%



Key:



 = Mayor/Councillors = Community Board Members

ACCESS TO KEY STAFF	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		13	57	8	80	5	38
Quite satisfied		9	39	2	20	7	54
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	4	-	-	1	8
Not very satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%


RECEIPT OF INVITATIONS TO ATTEND RELEVANT MEETINGS AND/OR BRIEFINGS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		10	43	6	60	4	31
Quite satisfied		11	48	4	40	7	54
Not very satisfied		2	9	-	-	2	15
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%

Key:  = Mayor/Councillors  = Community Board Members

THE LEVEL OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCIL OFFICERS TO YOUR REQUESTS FOR HELP	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		12	52	5	50	7	54
Quite satisfied		11	48	5	50	6	46
Not very satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%

THE OVERALL FORMAL ADVICE YOU RECEIVE FROM COUNCIL OFFICERS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		8	35	4	40	4	31
Quite satisfied		15	65	6	60	9	69
Not very satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		23	100%	10	100%	13	100%

Key:  = Mayor/Councillors

 = Community Board Members

6.2. REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION/AREAS OF CONCERN

Although 'net' satisfaction continues to be expressed in most performance areas, issues and concerns were raised by some Councillors and Community Board members in some areas of service delivery. The areas in which two or more city representatives expressed concern have been summarised below.

ACCURACY OF ADVICE

The elected members who felt there could be improvement in the accuracy of advice noted that the accuracy and quality of advice varies across the council organisation. They commented:

"It varies. Some areas of advice are excellent (e.g. Finance, Community Services), others are less so."

"The accuracy and quality of advice varies across council. Some officers are better than others at delivering the advice."

TIMELINESS OF ADVICE

Respondents who were not entirely satisfied with the timeliness of advice expressed the following views:

"Some advice takes too long."

"They are meeting the requirements of a two-day response (before the meetings). Some of the things they do are not timely, as I feel they have known about them for some time and could have given us the information earlier."

TECHNICAL EXPLANATIONS

The comments expressed by elected members who were not fully satisfied with the adequacy of technical explanations were:

"Some are too light, some too techno-speak, but at least most officers are receptive to change."

"Some of the language used is not straight-forward. Sometimes I think they have dreamt an idea and used this language to promote it. They also need to be more open to questions and feedback about it."

"Often, officers are repeating the technical explanations. They need to improve it by explaining the points in non-technical terms. I am referring to the information that they give the public, as well as the advice to us."

COMPREHENSIVENESS OF OPTIONS PRESENTED

Some of the city representatives remain critical of this aspect of service and still feel that a greater number of options could be explored. Their comments were:

"We don't get the full scope and, in some cases, none. For example, speeds along Petone Esplanade and the options to fix it. We didn't get any options, when there were several available that should have been considered."

"Often, officers already have one thing or one outcome in mind. It's an attitude thing that comes back to culture. Are they serving the people, or who?"

"In many cases, there are not enough options presented."

THOROUGHNESS OF CONSULTATION AND/OR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement remains the area of Council Officer performance most widely criticised by the city's representatives, albeit at a slightly lower level than last year. Three out of the ten Councillors (30%) and six out of the thirteen Community Board members (46%) commented about it.

Their comments covered a number of points, including variation in the extent and how well consultation is undertaken, the problems relating to the SNA (Significant Natural Areas), a lack of consultation with the public/user groups, and the approach used for the Annual Plan. Example comments, that expressed the views of these city representatives, are shown below:

"It is mixed. It depends on the officer. The work on homelessness has been particularly well done and they engaged with the community well. Others are not so good. It is a governance fault, as well as operational. Sometimes Council and officers choose not to do a full consultation."

"It depends on the officers and the topic. Some are okay, some are hopeless. It is partly because some officers have a social outlook and responsibility, and some do not."

"The community does not feel properly engaged. Some advice lacks a level of neutrality. Some officers have their own agenda."

"In relation to SNA (Significant Natural Areas), from the way consultation went, Council lost the public's trust over this matter."

"Poor SNA."

"Consultation is really random. SNA was awful. There was no consultation. They had to backtrack and apologise for it."

Sometimes with contentious issues, there hasn't been a lot of consultation. Certainly not as much as had been done previously."

“Consultation doesn’t really happen. Surveys are used, i.e. City Voice. They often seem a bit biased. That should not be the end of engagement. They need more face-to-face public consultation and more public meetings.”

“They limit themselves and only consult a small number of the public, e.g. about the bus stop and bus service. They only consulted the immediate neighbours and did not consult with the people who use the service. Another was the dog park, where they only consulted a few users. If they had put up a sign saying they wanted feedback, they would have heard back sooner. As it was, they didn’t hear from some groups until after changes were announced.”

“This year, the council decided it would not be receiving the usual submissions for the Annual Plan. Instead, Council have set up an online engagement tool.... The online forum came out of the belief that there was not enough time for the community representatives, such as my colleagues, to promote to the ‘Have Your Say’ platform. It will take time. The new system of interaction, in my view, won’t happen overnight. ‘Have Your Say’ is an interaction with the Mayor, Councillors and Board Members. It will take time to make it happen. The second issue with this is the technical side of it. We had to make ourselves consistently available. There was pressure on the representatives to be able to interact and engage on the platform. It puts a lot more pressure on us, in addition to our face-to-face engagements and our usual workloads, emails and social media.”

THOROUGHNESS OF LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

A few respondents again expressed concern about legal advice and how it is interpreted and applied. Their comments were:

“The current legal advice seems to have a bet both ways, especially in verbal advice.”

“I can think of instances when the advice has been there, but it was not given early enough.”

“The rating I have given relates to a court case for the SNA. They don’t understand the legal implications or the SNA, so now we are in a very messy legal situation.”

“They stuffed up with the SNA. There was a huge amount of court costs, ‘agro citizens’ and a backlash from the public.”

THE SUPPORT SERVICES AREAS

The two board members who commented about the support services areas provided the following insights.

“Secretarial is excellent, but there is not much outside of that. I’m not sure of the services available. It’s my third year on the board. We have, in the past, been invited to everything and now we are not invited to anything. Something has noticeably changed.”

“We need a calendar, which marks events and indicates who they anticipate inviting.”

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6.3. ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE THAT COUNCIL STAFF DOES

PARTICULARLY WELL

The research participants were asked to comment on areas of service delivery or advice, in which council officers and the council administration team perform particularly well in support of them as a city representative. Virtually all the respondents identified an area of positive performance.

Comments have been summarised into the following main categories. They are outlined in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

6.3.1. Staff qualities and performance (Council Officers and staff generally)

Many of the research participants commented that they have good working relationships with the council officers with whom they have contact. Several respondents linked their comments to specific staff members. However, the individual names have not been disclosed in this report, in order to preserve respondent and staff confidentiality.

The elected members identified several qualities, which they associate with the council staff with whom they have contact. These were similar to the qualities identified in previous years and included:

- Council officers are generally helpful, friendly, polite, approachable and most are prepared to listen.
- Many council officers are prepared to go out of their way to attend meetings (outside normal business hours, where necessary).
- The council officers are generally open in their communication/you can talk to them quite openly about matters.
- The communication is two-way and officers often give good advice/ideas (that lead to good outcomes)
- The quality of work/standard of most reports produced by council officers is excellent/very good.
- Council officers are prepared to meet and discuss matters, when necessary.
- Questions and information requests are usually answered fairly promptly, or you are put in touch with the right person who can help with the matter.

It was also acknowledged, by some councillors, that *'staff have been under pressure with the transition/some restructuring/staff loss in some areas/ heavy workloads and have done well, considering the challenges they have faced'*.

6.3.2. Secretariat and the Support Services area

Many of the elected members described the staff in the Support Services area as:

- Excellent/very good
- Helpful
- Supportive/always there for us
- Responsive to requests

Some of the research participants expanded on their initial comments by stating:

- The support services/administration staff go the extra mile/beyond their regular duty to help us (outside hours/all the time).
- They give good, helpful advice/answer our questions well.
- They manage our calendar well.
- They provide excellent minutes/secretarial services.
- They are efficient at what they do/respond promptly.
- They are professional and polite and sometimes bring a calming influence where it is needed.
- They are proactive/think ahead for you.
- They support the elected members in public situations.
- They give excellent support to the Community Panels.

6.3.3. The performance of specific departments/areas

As in previous surveys, some of the respondents identified particular departments (and/or staff within departments) who they felt had performed especially well and provided good support to the city's representatives. These are again listed in no particular order and included: the support services staff and secretarial; the front desk/frontline counter staff; the community services team (including youth); parks and gardens; roading; traffic; the financial team; the senior leadership team (GMs, divisional managers); democratic services; the Mayor's staff; those who worked on the homeless strategy; the licensing people (there has been no bad press)

6.3.4. Miscellaneous

One other positive aspect mentioned by an individual respondent was:

- *'The Eastbourne skate ramp was a brilliant job and success for the officers. They copped abuse from those who opposed it, but it is a success story. Noise was one of the accusations against it, but the only noise is laughing. People use it, enjoy it and have a great time'.*

6.3.5. A time of change/transition

A new area of comment also emerged in this year's survey, when the city representatives were asked to think about the positive and not so positive aspects of the year in review. Several of the councillors freely commented about the changes that had occurred within the organisation, especially at a senior level.

Some described it as a '*transition period*', which had occurred for the first time in many years. It was acknowledged that there had been some '*uncertainty*' among staff and that most officers '*have done a good job in a pressured time*'.

It was also acknowledged that Matt Reid had done an '*excellent/superb job*' as interim Chief Executive and that '*there had been little slippage of services*'.

Many of the research participants, both Councillors and Community Board members, commented positively about the arrival of the new Chief Executive, Jo Miller. In particular, they felt her appointment signalled hope for a new era of leadership. The key points expressed were that the new Chief Executive:

- is very experienced/well qualified/capable
- will bring stronger leadership (and will make the management team more cohesive)
- will bring commitment to the one-team approach
- will bring better relationships with Council
- has got out-and-about since she arrived here (which is a positive)

6.4. EXTENT TO WHICH ELECTED MEMBERS HAVE DETECTED A CHANGE IN PERFORMANCE LEVELS

A number of performance areas were identified in previous surveys that the research participants felt could potentially be improved. In recent years, some gains have been made in these areas. The results of this year's survey are presented in the charts that follow and show the extent to which any changes have been detected in the past twelve months.

To summarise:

6.4.1. Councillors

There were twelve areas of service performance on which the Councillors were asked to express an opinion.

As in previous surveys, it can be noted that the views expressed were not universally held. On some counts, there were mixed views, with some Councillors detecting positive improvement, whilst others noted some deterioration. A comparison of these two ratings will provide the reader with an indication of 'net' positive or negative change.

Overall, a majority of the Councillors noticed little or no change in many areas of performance.

However, in some areas significant change had been detected. Most notable was the use of 'social media' and 'the communication of good news stories', where a majority of Councillors acknowledged that there had been improvement.

In the case of 'quality leadership', there was a mixed response. Some Councillors expressed their rating from the viewpoint of performance prior to the leadership transition, whilst others noted improvement more recently.

With regard to 'legal advice', the SNA was cited as an example of deterioration.

'IT technical support' attracted a mixed response due to a number of factors and staff changes. Some Councillors noted that there had been an improvement in the level of response, but others felt that there remains room for improvement.

RATINGS GIVEN BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
The degree of impartiality of officers when presenting options to Council	-	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ 20%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 70%	-	100%
The quality of leadership and connectivity, geared toward the overall vision for the city	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ 20%	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 40%	-	100%
Council officers engaging early with elected members, when developing policy options	↑ 10%	↑ 10%	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 70%	-	100%
Giving adequate early warning of developments and issues that are likely to affect Councillors	-	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	-	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 70%	-	100%
Ensuring there is an adequate level of detail with regard to the advice and range of options that are presented to Council	-	↑ 10%	-	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 90%	-	100%
Ensuring there is adequate time to consider and digest important issues that are on the agenda or are in the process of consultation	-	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ 20%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 70%	-	100%

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

RATINGS GIVEN BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
Ensuring that Council receives solid legal advice that does not leave it exposed	-	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 60%	-	100%
The level of IT technical support to councillors, to meet their individual needs	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ ↑ 20%	↑ 10%	100%
The timeliness of IT technical support to councillors	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ ↑ 20%	↑ 10%	100%
The extent of broad-based community consultation and engagement, using a range of methods to achieve this	-	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 60%	-	100%
Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	↑ 10%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 70%	-	↑ ↑ 20%	-	100%
The communication of 'good news stories' to the public	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	-	↑ ↑ ↑ 30%	↑ 10%	100%

6.4.2. The Community Board Members

The Community Board members had eleven service performance areas to rate that were identified as areas for potential improvement in the previous studies. The list of ratings is again shown in the charts that follow overleaf.

There were a number of areas in which several Community Board members had detected 'net' improvement. These included:

- The effectiveness of the call-logging system
- The availability of Council Officers to attend meetings
- The accessibility of senior staff members
- The level of community engagement
- The use of 'Plain English' and less jargon in documentation and verbal communication
- Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders
- The degree of openness of Council Officers regarding financial input and debate.

Conversely, 'net' deterioration was noted by Community Board members in two areas in particular, viz 'early warning from Council Officers of matters that could involve us' and 'briefings for Community Board members'.

RATINGS GIVEN BY THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
The functionality of the committee system, especially with regard to decision-making and input to Council	-	↑ ↑ 15%	↑ 8%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 62%	↑ ↑ 15%	100%
Briefings for Community Board, including content, calendar and timetable	↑ 8%	↑ 8%	↑ ↑ ↑ 23%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 53%	↑ 8%	100%
The availability of Council Officers to attend meetings when requested	↑ ↑ 15%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 31%	↑ 8%	↑ ↑ ↑ 38%	↑ 8%	100%
The degree of openness of Council Officers regarding financial input and debate	-	↑ ↑ ↑ 23%	-	↑ ↑ ↑ 46%	↑ ↑ 31%	100%
The level of community engagement, through local committees, community associations, staff on-the-ground, websites, etc	↑ ↑ 15%	↑ ↑ ↑ 23%	↑ ↑ 15%	↑ ↑ ↑ 39%	↑ 8%	100%
Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	↑ ↑ 15%	↑ 8%	-	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 62%	↑ ↑ 15%	100%

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

RATINGS GIVEN BY THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
Input and direction through the triennium training	-	↑ 8%	-	↑↑ 31%	↑↑↑ 61%	100%
Early warning from Council Officers of matters that could involve us	-	-	↑↑↑ 46%	↑↑↑ 46%	↑ 8%	100%
The use of 'Plain English' and less jargon in documentation and verbal communication and debate	-	↑↑↑ 31%	-	↑↑↑ 61%	↑ 8%	100%
The effectiveness of the call-logging system, to ensure that reported problems in the community have been resolved.	↑↑↑ 23%	↑↑ 15%	-	↑↑ 31%	↑↑ 31%	100%
The accessibility of senior staff members, to talk to about important issues and to seek advice	↑↑ 15%	↑↑↑ 23%	↑↑ 15%	↑↑↑ 31%	↑↑ 16%	100%

6.5. RATING OF THE RECEPTION TEAM AND THE CALL CENTRE

In this year's survey, the Councillors and Community Board members were asked how frequently they have contact with the Customer Service staff at Hutt City Council. Perhaps, not surprisingly, Councillors have more frequent contact than do the Community Board members, as shown in the table below.

TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF CONTACT	Councillors		Community Board members	
	No	%	No.	%
<u>CONTACT WITH FRONT DESK STAFF</u>				
Often	8	80	8	62
Occasionally	2	20	5	38
Never	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	10	100%	13	100%
<u>CONTACT CENTRE (8am – 5pm Weekdays)</u>				
Often	9	90	6	46
Occasionally	1	10	6	46
Never	-	-	1	8
TOTAL	10	100%	13	100%
<u>CONTACT CENTRE (After hours)</u>				
Often	6	60	-	-
Occasionally	3	30	4	31
Never	1	10	9	69
TOTAL	10	100%	13	100%

Nevertheless, virtually all the city representatives felt they had enough contact to be able to answer the questions about the overall level of service they had experienced from the customer service staff.

All of the Councillors and Community Board members interviewed in this year's survey were satisfied with the service they had received. Words and phrases that were frequently used to describe the service included:

- Excellent/great/brilliant/very good
- Provide consistently good service; always/consistently good
- Helpful/very helpful
- Polite/pleasant/friendly/lovely to deal with

Other descriptors, mentioned by individual respondents, included:

- Move heaven and earth to help
- Go out of the way to help us do our job
- Are supportive
- Nothing is ever a problem
- Provide a useful service for me and residents
- Have improved

A small number of respondents did, however, comment that:

“After-hours can be a bit hit-and-miss, but I find it helps if I introduce myself.”

“After-hours is not as good. It requires more follow-up on things that need doing.”

Given the high level of satisfaction that exists with the customer service staff, only one respondent offered a suggestion as to how service might be improved. Their observation was as follows:

“The service I have received has been very good apart from one incident. There was a power outage in the community. I asked the person at the contact centre to put me through to the power company and she put me onto the wrong company. There needs to be refresher training or reminding staff of those major companies and the contacts HCC has within them. It is especially important in case of a disaster. The phone operators should be able to give us a direct answer, rather than residents having a fruitless search.”

6.6. KEY AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND/OR SERVICE

DELIVERY FOR FUTURE FOCUS

The Councillors and Community Board members were finally asked:

*“If Hutt City Council could improve just **one** aspect of its professional advice and/or service delivery to the City’s representatives, what would you focus it on?”*

It can be noted that whilst some of the city’s representatives gave more than one suggestion, three Community Board members felt that no improvement was necessary. Therefore, the number of comments in the following pages do not necessarily total the number of city representatives.

The suggestions that emerged from this year’s survey are summarised below.

6.6.1. COUNCILLORS

“Getting the good news stories out there. Community groups say they don’t know about it. We need to do it better, especially as the work pressure goes on. It needs to be internal, as well external. We have a bit of ‘silo mentality’, doing good things and not sharing success with others.”

“We need to promote the one-team approach.”

“I have good relationships with staff and their advice is respected. But focus on giving me ‘no surprises’, especially if there are negative comments about the Council and anything that could hit the press.”

“They need to focus on matters/topics that may affect us and give us early warning of these things. They do well on this now. Just keep up this emphasis of involving us.”

“Keep all advice neutral. Neutrality is not always evident now. As I mentioned earlier in this interview, some staff have their own points-of-view and own agendas.”

“Officers need to be more neutral and stay out of political decisions. This has caused friction, in some cases, between elected members, because they have different ideology.”

“Focus on staffing. There is not enough access at GM level. We need better, more direct line of communication in the GM roles.”

“There should be more resource and time put into community consultation.”

“I mentioned this last year. It would be good to have all the area of things that are going on in our ward on one page, so we can easily refer to what is happening in our wards. We should be able to go online and get access to it. For example, if a member of the public wants to talk about some work that is going on in a particular street, I should be able to go in and find out exactly what it is, without having to have someone call me about it.”

“I’m not unhappy. Just ensure that the IT problem I encountered does not recur. I was unable to get an IT person on the phone to help with a problem I was having with my council PC. When you have a problem, you need it sorted promptly.”

“Parking – when we get an all-day meeting, there is poor provision given to thought about where we can park. Why couldn’t they clear one bank of the carpark behind the Dowse for council meetings. 6pm is when carparks come free, but we can then be late.”

6.6.2. COMMUNITY BOARDS

“More communication from Council to Community Board members. They are out there fulltime and consulting with the public and attending meetings. Sometimes we are left in the dark, as we do not often hear from councillors about what has happened at council meetings. We would like feedback filtered down to us, especially on topics that affect our area.”

“Timeliness. Don’t treat elected Community Board members as some sort of second-class representatives. We are elected, councillors are elected, so we should get the same level of advice, particularly on local issues that could be contentious. There is a new CEO, so we are hoping to see a more inclusive and approachable council.”

“Make sure we are ‘in-the-know’. Let us know about small or big issues that come up for our area. We wish to be kept in the loop.”

“There needs to be a more comprehensive and consultative approach. In my view, it’s all about decision-making processes and I think we need to look at a more group consultative approach, which really encompasses representatives and officers working towards a more comprehensive solution. I am talking about when it comes to issues such as SNA. The officers involved could have facilitated, or been more aware of the whole process. The process, when there is a controversial issue, or an issue that attracts a lot of public interest, should involve the Mayor, the CEO and the relevant management team. They should be facilitating a workshop of council officers from across all departments and involve the elected representatives. This forum would mitigate a lot of uncertainty.”

“We need a clearer outline of upcoming developments in the city. Make it simple. If we could see the ‘roadmap’ of where our priorities fit in the overall priorities, it would help. Having said that, they did a pretty good infographics diagram, which we got copies to distribute in the community. Keep that up, do more of that.”

“Have a clear plan, for ratepayers and citizens, of the Hutt and where it is heading. You don’t have to be a ratepayer to be a citizen. If you have the plan, you can see which areas are getting the money and the timeframe involved.”

“Departments need to talk to each other, so that they are all on the same page.”

“Improve the timeliness of advice. It takes too long to come through.”

“Focus on the depth of knowledge of the experts. It is not always evident that they are the experts. I’m not sure if, when it comes to council officers, that the right people are in the right roles, or that they understand what they are told and is expected of them.”

“The system for public complaints, to report a problem (e.g. a light not working), is clumsy. The app system is not user-friendly, not tailored to high volume. It requires you to log your name, address, physical location, then the details of what it is – every time. It could be altered so you do not have to enter all this every time.”

“I do report things (faults) on behalf of others. With regard to the logging system, I receive an email when a job is logged, but not when it is completed. It would be nice to hear when the job/complaint has been resolved.”

“Real community development together. Communities should be worked with and involved genuinely about future possibilities. For example, Naenae residents were asked about the proposed Naenae Hub. The questions were something like ‘do you need a hub – yes or no? If so, what do you want in it?’ People didn’t realise that the plan was to pull down the current hall and shift the current library into a new hub, and then use the library site for housing. They weren’t transparent.”

“Council officers, e.g. the traffic division, need to ‘up their game’ on matters such as congestion issues. Be more responsive.”

6.7. CONCLUSION

This year's survey has been conducted among 23 out of 29 of the city's elected representatives (i.e. Councillors and Community Board members). This is an 80% participation rate, which again provides a strong base on which to measure the elected members' current opinions of the service received from council officers and administration staff.

The results of the 2019 survey indicate that the city's representatives remain satisfied with the overall service received, after weighing positive and negative experiences. Indeed, the comparative ratings reveal that significant gains have been made in most areas of service performance.

The overall satisfaction ratings ('very satisfied' and 'quite satisfied' combined) are summarised in the chart below.

PERCENTAGE SATISFIED WITH SPECIFIC AREAS OF PERFORMANCE	TOTAL		Councillors		Community Boards	
	2018 (n=25) %	2019 (n=23) %	2018 (n=11) %	2019 (n=10) %	2018 (n=14) %	2019 (n=13) %
Accuracy of advice	80	91	91	90	72	92
Timeliness of advice	76	91	91	100	64	85
Adequacy of technical explanations	92	83	100	90	86	77
Comprehensiveness of options presented	72	87	91	100	57	77
Thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement	48	56	73	70	28	46
Thoroughness of legal considerations	76	65	91	90	65	46
Thoroughness of financial considerations	84	91	82	100	86	85
Adequacy of support services	96	96	100	100	93	92
Support and advice received from Committee Advisors	92	91	100	100	86	84
Access to key staff	92	96	91	100	93	92
Receipt of invitations to attend meetings/briefings	92	91	100	100	86	85
The level of response from Council Officers to requests for help	84	100	91	100	79	100
The overall formal advice received from Council Officers	88	100	91	100	86	100

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Overall, it would seem that the collective performance of the council officers and administration team has been well regarded by the city's representatives in a year that has presented a lot of challenge, change and transition. There clearly remain issues that are important to individual Councillors and Community Board members that can potentially be addressed as areas for improvement. These are covered in Sections 6.2, 6.4 and 6.6 of this report.

As in previous years, it can be noted that virtually all of the city representatives who participated in the research study were again able to identify an aspect of performance that council officers and staff do particularly well in support of them. The qualities they identified are outlined in Section 6.3 of this report. These can be used as an opportunity to remind staff that constructive relationships exist between the elected city representatives and council officers and that their efforts are appreciated.

The research has also detected a "*mood*" for change, opportunity and improvement, as Hutt City Council moves into a new era of leadership.

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7. QUESTIONNAIRE

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<p>SURVEY OF HCC COUNCILLORS AND COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS</p>

June/July 2019

INTRODUCTION

“Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am ... from Peter Glen Research. You may have received a letter from Wendy Moore of Hutt City Council recently, explaining that we are conducting this year’s independent survey of Councillors and Community Board Members. The purpose of the survey is to rate aspects of the professional advice you have received from Hutt City Council officers from across Council in the past twelve months and to obtain guidance on how it can be improved or strengthened.”

“The interview will take approximately (...) minutes to complete. Can we please arrange a suitable day and time for me to call you to conduct the interview?”

Day/date: _____ Time: _____

RESPONDENT NAME: _____ **PHONE NO:** _____

(PLACE OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW, WHERE NECESSARY): _____

THE INTERVIEW

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am ... from Peter Glen Research. Is it still convenient to conduct the interview we had arranged, regarding aspects of the professional advice you have received from Hutt City Council officers in the past twelve months?”

(IF NOT, ARRANGE ANOTHER APPOINTMENT TIME: _____)

“The questions I am about to ask, relate to the formal advice given to you by officers from across Council and, in particular, in the areas of strategic planning, policy and strategy development and advice, monitoring and reporting.”

“Before we begin, I would just like to assure you that the comments you make will be treated confidentially. Our aim is to provide an overall interpretative report that informs the Hutt City Council, but does not disclose the specific identities of the people making the comments.”

SECTION A: ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

Q.1 “I have here a list of performance attributes that I would like to rate. As I read each statement, can you please tell me whether you are very satisfied, quite satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with that aspect of performance? The (first/next) statement is....”

STATEMENTS	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Not At All Satisfied	(Can't Rate/Unsure)
(a) Accuracy of advice	01	02	03	04	05
(b) Timeliness of advice	01	02	03	04	05
(c) Adequacy of technical explanations	01	02	03	04	05
(d) Ease of comprehension of technical explanations	01	02	03	04	05
(e) Comprehensiveness of options presented	01	02	03	04	05
(f) Thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement	01	02	03	04	05
(g) Thoroughness of legal considerations	01	02	03	04	05
(h) Thoroughness of financial considerations	01	02	03	04	05
(i) Adequacy of support services generally	01	02	03	04	05
(j) Support and advice received from Committee Advisors	01	02	03	04	05
(k) Access to key staff	01	02	03	04	05
(l) Receipt of invitations to attend relevant meetings and/or briefings	01	02	03	04	05
(m) The level of response from Council Officers to your requests for help	01	02	03	04	05
(n) The overall formal advice you receive from council officers	01	02	03	04	05

SECTION C: ASK THIS SECTION OF ALL COUNCILLORS AND COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Q.5 “In previous surveys, there has been a number of areas for improvement that (councillors/community board members) have collectively identified. As I mention each of these areas, can you please tell me whether you think that area of performance has greatly improved, improved a little, deteriorated, or stayed the same?”

LIST TO BE ASKED OF MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	Stayed the same
(a) The degree of impartiality of officers when presenting options to Council	01	02	03	04
(b) The quality of leadership and connectivity, geared toward the overall vision for the city	01	02	03	04
(c) Council officers engaging early with elected members, when developing policy options	01	02	03	04
(d) Giving adequate early warning of developments and issues that are likely to affect Councillors	01	02	03	04
(e) Ensuring there is an adequate level of detail with regard to the advice and range of options that are presented to Council	01	02	03	04
(f) Ensuring there is adequate time to consider and digest important issues that are on the agenda or are in the process of consultation	01	02	03	04
(g) Ensuring that Council receives solid legal advice that does not leave it exposed	01	02	03	04
(h) The level of IT technical support to Councillors, to meet their individual needs	01	02	03	04
(i) The timeliness of IT technical support to Councillors	01	02	03	04
(j) The extent of broad-based community consultation and engagement, using a range of methods to achieve this	01	02	03	04
(k) Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	01	02	03	04
(l) The communication of ‘good news stories’ to the public	01	02	03	04

LIST TO BE ASKED OF COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	Stayed the same
(a) The functionality of the committee system, especially with regard to decision-making and input to Council	01	02	03	04
(b) Briefings for Community Board members, including content, calendar and timetable	01	02	03	04
(c) The availability of Council Officers to attend meetings when requested	01	02	03	04
(d) The degree of openness of Council Officers regarding financial input and debate	01	02	03	04
(e) The level of community engagement, through local committees, community associations, staff on-the-ground, websites, etc	01	02	03	04
(f) Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	01	02	03	04
(g) Input and direction through the triennium training	01	02	03	04
(h) Early warning from Council Officers of matters that could involve us	01	02	03	04
(i) The use of 'Plain English' and less jargon in documentation and verbal communication	01	02	03	04
(j) The effectiveness of the call-logging system, to ensure that reported problems in the community have been resolved.	01	02	03	04
(k) The accessibility of senior staff members, to talk to about important issues and to seek advice	01	02	03	04

SECTION D: ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

“I would now like you to think about the service you receive at reception, when you are visiting or contacting the Mayor’s office and administration areas. We would like to get an updated reading of your experience with regard to the service provided by the Customer Service staff.”

Q.6 “How frequently do you have contact with the Customer Service staff in the following situations?”

SERVICE SITUATIONS	Often	Occasionally	Never
The front desk staff at the main council building	01	02	03
Staff at the contact centre during normal business hours (8 am to 5 pm weekdays)	01	02	03
Staff at the contact centre after hours	01	02	03

Q.7 “How would you describe the overall level of service you have received from the Customer Service staff in the past twelve months?” **PROBE UNTIL CLEAR**

Q.8 “Do you have any suggestions for improving or enhancing service from the Customer Service staff? If so: How could service be improved?”

PROBE UNTIL CLEAR

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SECTION E: ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

Q.10 “Finally, if Hutt City Council could improve just **one** aspect of its professional advice and/or service delivery to the City’s representatives, what would you focus it on? And why?”

PROBE UNTIL POINTS ARE CLEAR

“Thank you very much for your participation in this survey. My name is (...) from Peter Glen Research.”

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**SURVEY OF COUNCILLORS AND
COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS**

Report prepared for Hutt City Council

Wendy Moore

October 2020

Released under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Background	3
2. Survey requirement	4
3. Research objectives	5
4. Method	6
5. Timing	6
6. Summary of Findings	7
6.1. Performance attributes	8
6.1.1. Accuracy of advice	8
6.1.2. Timeliness of advice	8
6.1.3. Technical explanations	9
6.1.4. Comprehensiveness of options presented	10
6.1.5. Thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement	10
6.1.6. Thoroughness of legal considerations	11
6.1.7. Thoroughness of financial considerations	11
6.1.8. Support services	12
6.1.9. Access to key staff	13
6.1.10. Receipt of invitations	13
6.1.11. The level of response from council officers	14
6.1.12. The overall formal advice received from Council Officers	14
6.2. Reasons for dissatisfaction/areas of concern	15
6.3. Overall satisfaction among the newly elected (first-time) representatives	19
6.4. Extent to which Councillors (who have previously served) have detected a change in performance levels	20
6.5. Extent to which Community Board members (who have previously served) have detected a change in performance levels	22
6.6. Aspects of performance that Council staff does particularly well	24
6.7. Rating of the Reception Team and Call Centre	26
6.8. Councillors' opinions relating to information technology	28
6.9. The system of ward and citywide representation	29
6.10. COVID-19 and its effect on elected representatives' vision/focus	32
6.11. How Councillors summarise their current vision/focus	34
6.12. Key areas of professional advice and/or service delivery for future focus	36
6.13. Conclusion	39-41
7. Questionnaire	42-54

1. BACKGROUND

Hutt City Council is governed by a Mayor and twelve Councillors, all elected by Hutt City residents.

Hutt City Council's representation structure was changed for the last election held in October 2019. The city moved to a 'mixed' representation model at Council level, with the Council comprising the Mayor and twelve Councillors (one elected for each of the six wards and six elected from the city as a whole). Previously, there had been two Councillors per ward.

The elected Council sets the broad strategic direction and policies for the Chief Executive and staff of Hutt City Council to implement, and audits the results. Council ensures, on behalf of the community, that the organisation achieves what it should and that it avoids undesirable situations and circumstances.

The Chief Executive, through staff, is responsible for:

- Implementing the decisions of Council;
- Providing advice to the Council and other city representatives (e.g. Community Board members; and
- Ensuring all functions delegated to the Chief Executive, or to other employees, are carried out.

Hutt City Council also has second-level representation, with three Community Boards (Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata), which were set up under the Local Government Act. The role of these local representatives is to support Council in its governance role, by facilitating local input to Council's decision-making process.

There are also four Community Funding Panels in the areas not served by Community Boards (Northern, Eastern, Western and Central). These replace the Community Panels that were established in July 2017. Separate research has previously been undertaken with these Community Panels (last conducted in late-2019). It is envisaged that further feedback will be gained from the Community Funding Panels at a later date, when the membership has been established.

2. SURVEY REQUIREMENT

As part of its ongoing performance measurement, Hutt City Council has conducted an annual survey of Councillors and Community Board members, regarding the administration's performance in meeting their expectations.

Since 2010, Peter Glen Research has undertaken the annual survey, using a personal interview approach to elicit feedback from the city's representatives. The response rates obtained from this approach have been very good (80%+), and this year's result has been even higher (93%). Prior to 2010, the survey had been undertaken by way of a self-completion questionnaire, which had resulted in low levels of response.

Peter Glen Research has now conducted an update survey in 2020. This year's survey was again undertaken by way of personal interviews, to achieve the desired response level and to enable a greater understanding of the context in which the satisfaction ratings are made. Given that COVID-19 Level 2 rules applied at the commencement of the study, some flexibility was needed in approach, with the interviews being tailored to the needs of individual respondents, i.e. by face-to-face, telephone, or video link such as Skype or Zoom. All three of these contact methods were used.

This year's survey has again sought the feedback of the Mayor, the Councillors and the Community Board members.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the research were again defined as follows:

AMONG COUNCILLORS AND COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

- (1) To determine the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction that exists among Councillors and Community Board members with the overall quality of formal advice they have received from Council Officers in the past twelve months.
- (2) To identify their reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction.
- (3) To determine how satisfied/dissatisfied the above representatives are with specific aspects of service delivery, i.e.
 - Accuracy of advice
 - Timeliness of advice
 - Sufficiency of technical explanations
 - Ease of comprehension of technical explanations
 - Comprehensiveness of options presented
 - Thoroughness of consultation
 - Thoroughness of legal considerations
 - Thoroughness of financial considerations
 - Sufficiency of support services
 - Access to key staff
 - Receipt of invitations to attend relevant meetings and/or briefings.
- (4) To gain an updated reading on the overall satisfaction rating on the formal advice that is given.
- (5) To obtain the respondents' input on how formal advice could be improved or strengthened
- (6) To identify aspects of performance that Council Officers and Administration Staff do particularly well in support of Councillors/Community Board members
- (7) To check how satisfied the city's representatives are with the level of customer service provided by Council staff at the Front Desk and Contact Centre.

New objectives set for the 2020 study were:

- (8) To obtain further direction on the needs of Councillors with regard to their use of IT
- (9) To gain independent feedback on Councillor's opinions of how they consider the new system of 'mixed representation' is working
- (10) To gain an independent check on how COVID-19 has impacted the respondents' perspectives on their role as a (Councillor/Community Board member) and what they want to achieve.

4. METHOD

4.1. OVERALL APPROACH

In total, there were potentially thirty Hutt City representatives to be interviewed, including the Mayor, Councillors and Community Board members. They were interviewed individually, mainly by pre-arranged telephone interviews. However, as mentioned earlier in Section 2 of this report, face-to-face interviews and Zoom were also used where requested.

4.2. LIST OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Hutt City Council provided Peter Glen Research with a list of the city representatives, including their name and contact details (telephone and email addresses). This was to enable Peter Glen Research to contact the stakeholders and arrange a suitable day/time for interview.

4.3. INTRODUCTORY EMAIL

Hutt City Council initially wrote to prospective respondents to:

- inform them of the impending research and its purpose
- seek their co-operation
- stress the confidentiality of individual replies and Peter Glen Research's role as an independent market research organisation.

4.4. RECRUITMENT AND RESPONSE RATE

Peter Glen Research telephoned and/or emailed the respondents to arrange a suitable time for interview. Multiple contacts were made, where necessary, to secure an interview, in order to maximise the response rate.

In total, twenty-eight out of the thirty city representatives participated in the study. This represents an 93% response rate to the survey. The twenty-eight research participants included twelve Councillors and sixteen Community Board members.

4.5. REPORTING

The results of the research are presented in a format that summarises the overall ratings given by the research participants. Insights to the current strengths and weaknesses of service delivery, and the issues that were identified, have been shown in a summary format in the report. Care has been taken to preserve the identity of the respondents as far as practicable.

5. TIMING

Interviewing was undertaken throughout late-August to mid-October 2020.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS






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6.1. PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES

The research participants were initially asked to rate the formal advice given to them by officers from across Council.

The ratings that were given generally reflected respondents' *overall* impressions of performance in the past twelve months, after weighing positive and negative experiences. Most of the ratings indicated a net level of satisfaction.






The performance ratings given by the survey participants are summarised below.






ACCURACY OF ADVICE	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		9	32	5	42	4	25
Quite satisfied		14	50	3	25	11	69
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	3	-	-	1	6
Not very satisfied		3	11	3	25	-	-
Not at all satisfied		1	4	1	8	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%



TIMELINESS OF ADVICE	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		4	14	2	17	2	13
Quite satisfied		17	61	7	59	10	62
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		2	7	1	8	1	6
Not very satisfied		4	14	1	8	3	19
Not at all satisfied		1	4	1	8	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%

Key:  = Mayor/Councillors

 = Community Board Members

ADEQUACY OF TECHNICAL EXPLANATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		11	39	6	50	5	31
Quite satisfied		11	39	4	33	7	44
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	4	-	-	1	6
Not very satisfied		4	14	2	17	2	13
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		1	4	-	-	1	6
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%





EASE OF COMPREHENSION OF TECHNICAL EXPLANATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		11	39	6	50	5	31
Quite satisfied		11	39	5	42	6	37
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	4	-	-	1	6
Not very satisfied		3	11	1	8	2	13
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		2	7	-	-	2	13
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%





Key:  = Mayor/Councillors  = Community Board Members



COMPREHENSIVENESS OF OPTIONS PRESENTED	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		6	21	3	25	3	19
Quite satisfied		13	47	6	50	7	44
Not very satisfied		6	21	2	17	4	25
Not at all satisfied		1	4	1	8	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		2	7	-	-	2	12
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%

THOROUGHNESS OF CONSULTATION AND/OR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		8	29	3	25	5	31
Quite satisfied		8	29	4	33	4	25
Not very satisfied		6	21	2	17	4	25
Not at all satisfied		4	14	3	25	1	6
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		2	7	-	-	2	13
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%

Key: = Mayor/Councillors = Community Board Members

THOROUGHNESS OF LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		10	36	6	50	4	25
Quite satisfied		8	28	4	33	4	25
Not very satisfied		3	11	2	17	1	6
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		7	25	-	-	7	44
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%






THOROUGHNESS OF FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		12	43	8	66	4	25
Quite satisfied		7	25	2	17	5	31
Not very satisfied		4	14	2	17	2	13
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		5	18	-	-	5	31
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%






Key:  = Mayor/Councillors  = Community Board Members


ADEQUACY OF SUPPORT SERVICES GENERALLY	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		14	50	7	59	7	44
Quite satisfied		11	39	4	33	7	44
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	4	-	-	1	6
Not very satisfied		2	7	1	8	1	6
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%


SUPPORT AND ADVICE RECEIVED FROM COMMITTEE ADVISORS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		15	54	9	75	6	38
Quite satisfied		7	25	2	17	5	31
Not very satisfied		4	14	1	8	3	19
Not at all satisfied		1	4	-	-	1	6
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		1	3	-	-	1	6
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%





Key: = Mayor/Councillors = Community Board Members





ACCESS TO KEY STAFF	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		8	28	5	42	3	19
Quite satisfied		12	43	4	33	8	50
Not very satisfied		5	18	1	8	4	25
Not at all satisfied		1	4	1	8	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		2	7	1	9	1	6
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%

RECEIPT OF INVITATIONS TO ATTEND RELEVANT MEETINGS AND/OR BRIEFINGS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		13	46	10	83	3	19
Quite satisfied		10	36	2	17	8	50
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		1	4	-	-	1	6
Not very satisfied		3	11	-	-	3	19
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		1	3	-	-	1	6
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%

Key:  = Mayor/Councillors

 = Community Board Members

THE LEVEL OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCIL OFFICERS TO YOUR REQUESTS FOR HELP	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		14	50	7	58	7	44
Quite satisfied		12	43	4	34	8	50
Not very satisfied		1	4	-	-	1	6
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		1	3	1	8	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%

THE OVERALL FORMAL ADVICE YOU RECEIVE FROM COUNCIL OFFICERS	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		COUNCILLORS		COMMUNITY BOARDS	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied		12	43	6	50	6	38
Quite satisfied		11	39	3	25	8	50
Both satisfied and dissatisfied		2	7	2	17	-	-
Not very satisfied		3	11	1	8	2	12
Not at all satisfied		-	-	-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		28	100%	12	100%	16	100%

Key:  = Mayor/Councillors  = Community Board Members

6.2. REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION/AREAS OF CONCERN

Section 6.1 revealed that overall 'net' satisfaction continues to be expressed in most areas of council officer performance, after the elected representatives have weighed their positive and negative experiences. However, it can be noted that 79% of the total elected representatives in this year's survey, including some of those who expressed 'net' satisfaction, freely commented on areas of performance, issues and concerns that they had. These were made by both Councillors (85%) and Community Board members (75%).

The main areas of comment can be summarised as follows:

ACCURACY OF ADVICE

Approximately one-third of the elected members felt there could be improvement in the accuracy of advice. Some noted that the accuracy and quality of advice can vary across the council organisation, depending on the issues and who it comes from. Other concerns included:

- There are sometimes inconsistencies and inaccuracies, which lead to conflicting advice
- Statements are sometimes made without good backup/supporting data
- Some advice is clearly biased in favour of what the council officer wants/their own agenda
- The Council is sometimes influenced too much by senior officers
- Experienced staff have gone/there is loss of institutional knowledge
- There are now restrictions on who you can talk to, to get informed about important/major issues.

TIMELINESS OF ADVICE

Timeliness of advice was also commented on by around one-third of the elected representatives. A number of the elected members noted that timing had been impacted by COVID-19 and that some major decisions had to be made with short timeframes. This, of course, was viewed as not so much as a problem of council officer performance, but a factor that the Council had to contend with.

Beyond this, the concerns expressed were:

- Some timelines are tight, especially with large agendas
- In some cases, there have been very long papers/large documents to read in a short space of time (e.g. a 350-page paper to read and digest in two days)
- Have found a slow response to Elected Members' Requests

- There have been delays in getting advice, when critical dates are pending

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- Simple requests are usually answered reasonably quickly but the more complex issues take longer (sometimes too long)
- Timeliness issues relate to capacity (some teams take longer to respond and you have to follow-up/check in with them)
- For the Community Boards, there has been a lack of advance notice with regard to consultation (e.g. on recreational facilities in our area, and about tree operations)
- More time is needed for the Community Boards to do their job and to be inform the Council
- Issues come up that we read about in the paper. We get advised of things too late. It should not happen.

THOROUGHNESS OF CONSULTATION

Although many of the elected members expressed satisfaction with the thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement, just over 40% of them consider it an area for potential improvement. Again, some prefaced their remarks by stating that they recognised COVID had been a problem/limited the ability to consult. Nevertheless, their concerns were:

- There has been a lack of consultation on some things. COVID was used as a reason used to push through some things without proper consultation
- Not everyone in the community feels they are consulted
- In some situations, there is token consultation, not quality consultation
- Community consultation goes out completed, rather than being co-designed with the community. Outcomes are pre-determined
- There is sometimes not thorough consultation. Officers don't engage with those members of the community who are not online, e.g. the elderly
- No everyone has the internet, so Council has to improve the way it consults with the public
- More time is needed to reach/connect with some members of the community
- They need to take into account a wider world view, e.g. people with disabilities, different cultural groups, migrants, Maori, Pacifica
- Council needs to expand on who they consult with. For example, with regard to Jackson Street, many of the business owners weren't contacted. Officers may have spoken to shop assistants only, not the owner. They need to reach the right people.

- A recent survey on recycling was very misleading; the matrix did not reflect the document
- Some consultation documents lacked information about the financial implications of options, e.g. Naenae Pool
- When they want to avoid resistance, the Council is not always open (with the Community Boards and the public).

COMPREHENSIVENESS OF OPTIONS

Over 20% of the elected representatives were also somewhat critical of the (lack of) comprehensiveness of options presented. The views expressed included:

- The options presented are adequate, but not all the options that should be presented are covered
- Sometimes, the options chosen have not been the best we could have
- Many times, we do not have all the options presented to us
- We do not get to question or debate the options adequately. If you ask too many questions, or challenge their thinking, you get shut down quickly and it is seen as a criticism of the council officers.
- There is a tendency for council officers to get what they want
- Some of the options that are presented are very poor. The process is driven for a result

ACCESS TO KEY STAFF AND COUNCIL OFFICER RESPONSE

This was also commented on by several of the elected representatives. It was noted, mainly by councillors, that a new system of Elected Members' Requests has been introduced. They acknowledged that this system is generally positive in that it enables all councillors to be on the same page and they get to see all the questions and answers (*'some that I wouldn't even think of'*). However, they also noted that there are some downsides to the system, these being:

- A line is drawn between the councillors and the council officers
- It is difficult for elected members to build relationships with council officers (*'we should, at least be able to talk with them'*)

- It makes councillors somewhat reluctant to contact council officers, to follow-up and clarify points
- Sometimes it would be easier and more efficient to simply pick up the phone
- In some situations, councillors are divorced from what is happening and are finding out about significant/important issues second-hand

It was also noted, by one of the Community Board members, that *'we used to get a three-monthly calendar of all the meetings, but we don't get this now. We were then at least aware of what was going on, even if we were not directly involved. Now we learn about things after the event'*.

SUPPORT SERVICE AREAS

Only a few comments were raised with regard to the support services area and these can be noted as follows:

- We are missing an Elected Members support person, which can lead to delays in getting information
- The support services area seems very understaffed. Things are quite delayed and not necessarily available when you need them
- When council officers attend community board meetings, they often say *'I need to ask my manager'*. I would really like it if the key staff could be there, who know what they are doing and who have answers for us.

6.4. EXTENT TO WHICH COUNCILLORS (WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY SERVED) HAVE DETECTED A CHANGE IN PERFORMANCE LEVELS





















RATINGS GIVEN BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
The degree of impartiality of officers when presenting options to Council	↑↑ 29%	-	↑↑ 29%	↑↑ 28%	↑ 14%	100%
The quality of leadership and connectivity, geared toward the overall vision for the city	↑↑ 29%	-	↑↑ 29%	↑↑ 28%	↑ 14%	100%
Council officers engaging early with elected members, when developing policy options	↑↑ 29%	↑↑ 29%	-	↑↑ 28%	↑ 14%	100%
Giving adequate early warning of developments and issues that are likely to affect Councillors	↑ 14%	↑↑ 29%	-	↑↑↑ 43%	↑ 14%	100%
Ensuring there is an adequate level of detail with regard to the advice and range of options that are presented to Council	↑ 14%	↑ 14%	↑ 14%	↑↑↑ 43%	↑ 15%	100%
Ensuring there is adequate time to consider and digest important issues that are on the agenda or are in the process of consultation	↑ 14%	-	-	↑↑↑ 72%	↑ 14%	100%

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

6.4. EXTENT TO WHICH COUNCILLORS (WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY SERVED) HAVE DETECTED A CHANGE IN PERFORMANCE LEVELS

RATINGS GIVEN BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
Ensuring that Council receives solid legal advice that does not leave it exposed	 29%	-	-	 57%	 14%	100%
The level of IT technical support to councillors, to meet their individual needs	 71%	 29%	-	-	-	100%
The timeliness of IT technical support to councillors	 71%	 29%	-	-	-	100%
The extent of broad-based community consultation and engagement, using a range of methods to achieve this	 29%	 29%	 14%	 14%	 14%	100%
Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	 29%	 14%	-	 43%	 14%	100%
The communication of 'good news stories' to the public	 29%	 14%	-	 43%	 14%	100%

6.5. EXTENT TO WHICH COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS (WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY SERVED) HAVE DETECTED A CHANGE IN PERFORMANCE LEVELS

RATINGS GIVEN BY THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
The functionality of the committee system, especially with regard to decision-making and input to Council	↑ 11%	↑↑ 22%	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑↑↑ 45%	100%
Briefings for Community Board, including content, calendar and timetable	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑↑↑ 67%	-	100%
The availability of Council Officers to attend meetings when requested	↑↑ 22%	↑↑↑ 33%	-	↑↑↑ 34%	↑ 11%	100%
The degree of openness of Council Officers regarding financial input and debate	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑↑↑ 56%	↑ 11%	100%
The level of community engagement, through local committees, community associations, staff on-the-ground, websites, etc	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑↑↑ 45%	↑↑ 22%	100%
Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	↑↑ 22%	↑ 11%	-	↑↑↑ 45%	↑↑ 22%	100%

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

RATINGS GIVEN BY THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	No change	Can't rate	TOTAL
Input and direction through the triennium training	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑ 11%	↑ ↑ 22%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 45%	100%
Early warning from Council Officers of matters that could involve us	↑ ↑ 22%	↑ 11%	↑ ↑ 22%	↑ ↑ ↑ 34%	↑ 11%	100%
The use of 'Plain English' and less jargon in documentation and verbal communication and debate	↑ 11%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 45%	-	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 44%	-	100%
The effectiveness of the call-logging system, to ensure that reported problems in the community have been resolved.	↑ 11%	-	-	↑ ↑ ↑ 33%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 56%	100%
The accessibility of senior staff members, to talk to about important issues and to seek advice	↑ · 11%	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ 67%	↑ · 11%	-	↑ · 11%	100%

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6.6. ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE THAT COUNCIL STAFF DOES

PARTICULARLY WELL

All of the elected representatives were able to freely identify an aspect of performance that council officers and the council administration team do particularly well in support of them. The aspects of service performance and/or the qualities identified are summarised as follows:

- Council officers are generally regarded as helpful, polite/respectful, approachable/personable, knowledgeable and are prepared to listen
 - Questions and information requests are usually answered promptly/quickly within a short time/they get back to you in a day or two
 - Leadership during the COVID-19 lockdown was excellent. For example, we were helped into lockdown, with ZOOM and all the equipment we needed; workshops were organised; it has brought about more livestreaming of Council meetings; there were regular updates on departments and what was closed/open)
 - The Elected Members Information Requests process works well/answers are thorough
 - Council officers make an effort to explain things clearly/easily/in a way you can understand
 - Financial implications are often complicated (especially for the new representatives), but communication is good and at a level that all can understand
 - Many of the council officers are passionate about/committed to what they do/their work
 - Council officers generally have integrity and aim to do right by the community
 - The support services and administrative team are particularly good/responsive in their support of elected representatives
 - The support services team give good guidance on processes
- The support services team also provide excellent support in the meetings/to the committee meetings
- There has been good training provided (e.g. chairperson training, IT training and support, a good induction programme)

- Legal advice is very sound/has improved – officers are prepared to be blunt and honest
- Reporting by officers is generally sound/thorough
- Hutt City Council do well/act promptly with residents' requests/'Mr Fix-it' type things
- Specific departments/areas of council function that were identified as being particularly good were: traffic, roading, parks and gardens (response to tree problems), legal, financial, the events team (were doing good work pre-Covid), the Healthy Families area, the communications area
- Good help/support has been provided to the Community Boards in specific areas (e.g. with a community survey that was undertaken; maps for the Petone Fair; good communication via Facebook)

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6.7. RATING OF THE RECEPTION TEAM AND THE CALL CENTRE

The Councillors and Community Board members were asked to indicate how frequently they have contact with the Customer Service staff at Hutt City Council. The frequency of contact varies among both Councillors and Community Board members, as shown in the table below. However, a majority of the elected representatives now consider the frequency of contact to be 'occasional'.

TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF CONTACT	Councillors		Community Board members	
	No	%	No.	%
<u>CONTACT WITH FRONT DESK STAFF</u>				
Often	3	25	2	13
Occasionally	7	59	12	75
Seldom/rarely	1	8	2	12
Never	1	8	-	-
TOTAL	12	100%	16	100%
<u>CONTACT CENTRE (8am – 5pm Weekdays)</u>				
Often	4	33	3	19
Occasionally	5	42	11	69
Seldom/rarely	1	8	2	12
Never	2	17	-	-
TOTAL	12	100%	16	100%
<u>CONTACT CENTRE (After hours)</u>				
Often	2	17	-	-
Occasionally	4	33	5	31
Seldom/rarely	4	33	1	6
Never	2	17	10	63
TOTAL	12	100%	16	100%

As in previous years, most of the city representatives indicated they had enough contact to be able to answer the questions about the overall level of service they had experienced from the customer service staff.

The Councillors and Community Board members, generally made positive comments about the frontline service they had received. Words and phrases that were frequently used to describe the service included:

- The staff provide very good service/really good service/great customer service
- They are consistently excellent/excellent/very good/amazing
- Helpful/very helpful/they go out of their way to help

- Friendly/accommodating/always pleasant
- Welcoming/lovely/caring approach
- You are put through quickly/they don't leave you hanging
- Responsive/very efficient; are prompt and follow-up well with information/get action where needed
- Always point me in the right direction
- Polite/always polite/polite and positive/respectful
- The customer service team is a great team/I appreciate what they do

Few of the elected representatives had suggestions for improving the customer service they had experienced. Those who did commented:

"My suggestion would be around making the frontline service more interactive with the public. For example, when I made contact about a water leak, it took a few minutes to locate. Make it easier for the public and staff to locate these things, e.g. via GPS."

"There is only one time I can think of where I contacted customer service and the outcome wasn't very satisfactory. I was enquiring about parking for board members, but nobody seemed to know anything about it. They didn't know what I was talking about and what I needed."

"If the staff redirect calls, or send us messages from the public, then ensure that a return name and number is included."

"I would like to see more diversity in terms of age and ethnicity."

6.8. COUNCILLORS' OPINIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

As was shown earlier in the report (refer to Section 6.4) all of the Councillors, who had previously served, noted that IT support from HCC had improved. The new (first term) Councillors were also generally satisfied with the level of IT support.

Some of the elected members freely commented that IT support has been very good during the past twelve-month period. This was reflected in comments such as:

"There is an excellent team in IT and although systems need upgrading, it is more streamlined than it used to be."

"It has improved. We have very little paper now and good training has been provided for us."

"They have done a good job in the area of IT. It is an area of success. I am comfortable where it is at."

"I have been impressed by what they do in the area of IT and IT support."

They were further questioned as to whether there are any ways in which they would like to apply, or use technology in their role as a Councillor, that they have not been able to do to date. Five out of the twelve Councillors interviewed (42%) identified an area, or areas, that they would like to see improved or developed, as illustrated in their comments below.

"Technology in the Council Chamber is lacking and needs improvement around live streaming."

"I would like to see more live streaming of meetings. At present there are barriers to doing this, with old microphones and camera. It involves money, but we would get more/better use out of the equipment."

"Live streaming of meetings to the public. This will require different technology – new systems, new cameras."

"Ideally, I would like a computer dashboard of where things are at."

"As I said before, a think service to the public and staff could be improved with more interactive IT, e.g. locating infrastructure problems quickly via GPS."

"I used to be able to access information online (e.g. who a staff member is and who they report to), but am now unable to do so. I have been told that it would be fixed, but it hasn't been yet."

"I would like to be able to download and print board papers, but I can't do so without having a huge watermark on the pages. It is a trust issue that we need to work through."

“I would say that HCC IT system is definitely improving, but it is not up-to-date and not there yet. It is a matter of continuing to improve.”

6.9. THE SYSTEM OF WARD AND CITYWIDE REPRESENTATION

The Councillors were next questioned about the change that occurred at the last local body elections, from the system of having ward councillors only, to having a mixture of ward and citywide representatives. They were asked to indicate how well they thought the new structure is working. Their ratings are shown in the chart below.

HOW WELL IS THE NEW STRUCTURE WORKING?	NUMBER RATING	TOTAL COUNCILLORS		WARD COUNCILLORS	CITYWIDE COUNCILLORS
		No.	%	No.	No.
Very well	👍 👍 👍	3	25	2	1
Quite well	👍 👍 👍 👍	4	34	2	2
Works well in some ways, not in others	👍 👍 👍	3	25	1	2
Not very well	👎	1	8	-	1
Not at all well		-	-	-	-
Couldn't/wouldn't rate	👎	1	8	1	-
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		12	100%	6	6

It would seem that whilst a majority of Councillors feel that the new system is working well, there remains room for improvement.

The aspects of the new system that the Councillors collectively identified as working well have been summarised as follows:

- The introduction of citywide councillors brings an overarching perspective for the city, with (potentially) less ‘patch protection’
- Citywide and ward councillors have distinct roles, with a balance of numbers for each position
- The quality of the elected members is impressive (different backgrounds, skills, expertise, community connections, etc)

- There is a good spread of capable councillors across the city

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- From a ratepayer’s point-of-view, there is a bigger choice of people they can bring issues to
- Some citywide councillors enjoy that they can be involved *‘in bits everywhere/a range of involvement’* throughout the city (but, at the same time, they acknowledge that they have less responsibility/focus for a specific area)

The aspects of the new system that were identified as potential downsides, or possibly in need of some attention, included:

- In some respects, the community misses out, because citywide councillors don’t go out talking to the public as much as the ward councillors. Now there are fewer ward councillors for the public to interact with
- In some situations, the workload can be more burdensome for the ward councillor
- Some ward councillors may be confused as to whether citywide councillors should *‘come into my ward’*
- There is the impression, among some councillors, that citywide councillors are not being invited enough into the wards, which may reflect some *‘patch protection’*.
- Some citywide councillors may try to do too much/everything, rather than focus on a particular area of involvement they want to pursue
- Some citywide councillors have yet to define their areas of focus, whether it be, for example, *‘a ward, the elderly, or some other area of interest/need’*
- Some citywide councillors may feel they *‘don’t have a home’* and/or *‘feel like they should be representing more of the city, but gravitate to the areas they know’*
- There was, and still may be, some uncertainty among both citywide and ward councillors as to *‘how do we fit in with each other?’*. For example, *‘What level of involvement is too much for an area?’* and *‘I am concerned that I may be in the way of the ward councillor – it needs clarifying’*
- Some citywide councillors have the impression that they may be regarded as second-tier/less important than ward councillors, which they are not. For example, *‘people usually ring the ward councillor first’* and *‘ward councillors were in on the funding panel appointments’*
- Citywide councillors have to promote themselves across the city, not just in their wards. It involves more time and money to do so.

Following on from this, the councillors were questioned as to how the current system could be improved or strengthened. Two-thirds of them made suggestions, which covered the following points:

- It is important for each councillor to provide feedback about how they are feeling; it is important to communicate (to avoid confusion); it is conversation we need to have as a Council
- The wards are adequately covered, in terms of representation, but there is the need/opportunity to work with community groups and community panels
- More opportunities need to be created for citywide councillors to go into the wards. Find ways to connect with the grassroots community
- There is perhaps a need to give all councillors specific areas of responsibility to focus on; focus on particular areas/issues they want to pursue – don't try to do everything
- Clarify the two different, but distinct, roles of the citywide and ward councillors
- Clarify what is '*too much*' for an area
- We have our committees. We need to meet as a group to see what we can do to enhance our involvement in various areas. A more coordinated approach may be useful
- Ideally, it would be preferable to have either all citywide, or all ward councillors. We all act for the community as a whole.

6.10. COVID-19 AND ITS EFFECT ON ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES' **VISION/FOCUS**

As was indicated earlier in the report, several of the elected representatives freely mentioned the leadership and good management of staff into the COVID-19 lockdown period (refer to Section 6.6 of this report).

The research participants were further questioned as to whether the occurrence of COVID-19 had prompted them to change their vision or focus in any way in their role as an elected representative.

Virtually all of the councillors acknowledged that there had been change to their vision or focus, especially with regard to priorities and focus on the impact that COVID has had on peoples' lives and livelihoods. That is:

"The fundamental focus has changed regarding the priorities. The real economic impacts haven't fully hit yet. We have been doing things like supporting the Chamber of Commerce to help soften the blow and supporting local supply."

"We have been keeping an eye out for people more. Public space-wise, there have not been many opportunities, as many people have been operating from home. With regard to policy and work focus there is a need to be prepared with contingencies if another outbreak occurs."

"We have had to change, because the vision has changed. It is focused on more of the essential things like good roading, water supply, sewerage, etc."

"The vision has had to be curbed a little bit, which impacts community creativity. We have to focus on how do we and other people pay the bills, including those who have been harmed by COVID. It requires a short and medium-term perspective. By community creativity, I mean the things that make a community really buzz. It's not fair to give people the expectation that these things can be funded. COVID has swallowed up funding, which means we have needed to focus on the 'needs not the wants'."

"COVID has changed the vision slightly. We have needed to get back to basics and focus on core council services. We have needed to consider job losses and low incomes and how people have been affected."

"It has made me more conscious of business and people losing their jobs. We have needed to think what could happen and the uncertainty that brings. With decision-making, the decisions need to be made with the impact on the people in mind."

"It has impacted on the vision and focus significantly. We have needed to focus on what is good/needed now in the community and I have been involved with setting up a support group."

“There are areas of huge need in the community. There is a big range between the ‘haves and have nots’. More empathy and focus is required on those less fortunate. COVID has highlighted the need.”

Councillors also freely mentioned that COVID-19 had prompted significant change in the way Council conducts its business and communicates, by utilising technology and hastening the move toward more online services.

“COVID has hastened the move to online services, which is a good thing in that sense. We have had the ability to meet remotely, which is also good because it reduces carbon emissions and is efficient. But there is still work to do to have adequate systems for us and the public.”

“COVID has brought about a lot more online, digital focus. A lot of families are rethinking their work patterns and doing more online. It has prompted change to how we meet and communicate as a Council.”

“We have had to adapt to different methods. We certainly had more Zoom meetings. I personally don’t like them.”

“The COVID restrictions showed us what could be achieved. It took away some things we were used to doing. The Council meetings were watched by more people than would normally attend.”

By way of comparison, approximately half of the Community Board members felt that COVID-19 had not prompted change to their vision or focus. However, those who did mention change, primarily acknowledged the efforts that were made to engage with the community during COVID and the challenges that this presented. This was reflected in comments such as:

“COVID has focused us to work as a team more. We use Zoom for our board meetings and talk once a week now, which is more often than it used to be. Good use has been made of email, WhatsApp and Zoom for communicating. I feel the community in our area has responded also to better engage with each other.”

“We try to engage with the community. A Facebook group was created in Level 1.”

“Right through lockdown, I was active in supporting the community, by organising community support groups in each street to look after themselves. There was a private Facebook group for each street and a contact for that group. I wrote a pretty comprehensive set of resources for the community. We hosted, on website and Facebook page, which was updated daily. The response was pretty positive. It attracted a lot of discussion during lockdown. We were acting as a conduit and answering questions, providing resources, making sure everyone was supported, creating a list of businesses still operating under various levels and how they would be accessed. The vision was to contribute to community resilience, which comes from being informed and being involved.”

“In the early stages of COVID, a lot of information was coming online, but not reaching everyone. There has been less community contact. Some people in the community are vulnerable, with no access to the internet. The inability to get the message out to everyone still needs addressing. There is door knocking, but this was not allowed and members of my community felt cut off, isolated. It was not until Level 2 that we were able to connect to the public. I have developed my monthly clinic, to listen to the community and help them to understand. It is ongoing education, especially for those without the internet.”

“My outlook has not changed, but we have had to think about what the needs are and how to connect to people in our community.”

“There had to be a different way of communicating with the community. There were lots of emails during lockdown, it was amazing. There was a lot of stuff on Facebook I’d share with council staff. I decided to do things on email and I got a lot of positive feedback. There has been focus on supporting people, personal wellbeing and sharing postings. There were postings for children too. I am still doing it to some extent, but not to the same intensity.”

“There is more concern relating to residents’ needs and the vitality of Jackson Street and the impact on businesses from the economic impact of COVID. We have had to take into account different circumstances as a result of COVID. Our plans might have changed as a result of this. The public’s focus was on family, the day-to-day things, people weren’t so concerned with the citywide issues.”

6.11. HOW COUNCILLORS SUMMARISE THEIR CURRENT VISION/FOCUS

Following on from the previous section, the Councillors were asked to briefly summarise their current vision, aims, or aspirations as an elected member. By way of introduction to this section, it should be noted that Councillors were asked for their top-of-mind thoughts on their vision (their ‘20-second ad’) and, as such, it does not purport to be a comprehensive view of what each elected member stands for. However, it does provide an interesting glimpse into current thinking and there are some common themes that emerged. In particular, Councillors alluded to their desire to create/contribute to a positive community in which people are engaged (with Council and each other), focusing on current needs/priorities (especially in light of COVID-19 and its effects), being open and transparent, being an enabling Council (fewer barriers to business and to personal goals), updating/modernising methods and systems as appropriate.

The brief summaries provided were:

“My aim is to have people on board, getting to know them and getting them to know how Council affects their life. Part of the vision is having good parks and spaces, good bones to the city, a planned city.”

“The fundamental focus has changed a bit. Housing issues are still there, as are topics like landfill and transport. We still need to tackle these challenges, but we need to put the current environment considerations over it.”

“We need to go with the new Mayor’s vision. There is a new focus of essential things in the vision, e.g. good roading, water supply, sewerage, etc. These need to be efficient and well run. I see the need for housing and the homeless as a government responsibility, rather than for Council. There is a focus on Maori housing and social housing. There needs to be more focus on older people and youth.”

“My vision is to see that every child gets equal opportunity to thrive in our city. And every child has a warm, dry home to live in. We are a community that cares. Housing and the homeless are important issues.”

“Hutt City Council is still a bit old school. There is a need for more innovation and to be more technology driven, but it is improving (e.g. forms can now be filled in online). We need a five or ten-year plan, a ‘big picture’ as to where it goes.”

“Council is endeavouring to be more open, transparent, environmentally aware, and community engaged.”

“My vision hasn’t changed. Its about ensuring the highest quality service to the community. Having rates under control, delivering value, being connected.”

“Our vision needs to be fine-tuned, not struggling, having an extension to work as new ways are presented. Achieving good outcomes. Involving the public.”

“I went into Council because I love the city. Council was my biggest barrier when I was setting up my business. I want to make it easier for people to live here.”

“I would like Hutt City Council to achieve the best outcomes for myself and my family. We need to be an enabling Council, which doesn’t put obstacles in the way of business and personal aims. People should enjoy living here.”

“My focus is on what is needed now in the community. My aim is to change things for the better. I want to support and help others to do it. I also have a focus on the needs of the elderly.”

6.12. KEY AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND/OR SERVICE DELIVERY FOR FUTURE FOCUS

The Councillors and Community Board members were finally asked:

*“If Hutt City Council could improve just **one** aspect of its professional advice and/or service delivery to the City’s representatives, what would you focus it on?”*

Virtually all of the elected city representatives identified an area that they would like to see improved. Several of them made more than one suggestion and these are summarised below:

6.12.1. COUNCILLORS

“It is important that we have clear processes in place and benchmark reporting. Ideally, I would like a ‘dashboard’ of where things are at. We need to have confidence that people will do what they say they will do.”

“We need to get to know who everybody is – knowing the new team members and structure. It is important that we meet the people through the key projects that are on (hear from the key players).”

“We need to have the opportunity to interact and build relationships with the management team. We should all be working together, to the same end. We should be allowed to ask questions, not stopped. That is how we will make the best decisions for the city.”

“We are a team. We need more opportunities for teamwork type things. That is the way we will build trust and collaboration.”

“I feel we should keep to our roles and let others keep to theirs. We don’t always get what we expect. One example was we recommended paying the Living Wage to cleaning staff and we were going to consult for reactions about this. The new CEO decided to pay other groups as well. It was taken out of our hands and that was not right.”

“The way Hutt City Council consults and communicates and collaborates with communities. Be prepared to work with people and change if necessary. I don’t like the ‘tick-off’ approach.”

“Make sure that options that we are provided with are those that exist, with the correct information.”

“With large decision processes, we should perhaps be given a clearer guide on acceptable outcomes before we begin. For example, with regard to the process on rubbish and recycling, we had heard feedback from lots of people and we were left to make black-and-white recommendations, ‘yes or no’, but ‘no’ was not an option. We needed to have the limitations explained to the Councillors at the start. The approach used does not lead to the best outcomes.”

“It would help if I could have a simple, one-page agenda summary to share with my people, which I can use online.”

“Housing is an important area of focus. We are moving away from low-rise which many people like.”

“Infrastructure (especially water) is an area of key focus for the city.”

“Youth Inspire is an important area for focus.”

“We don’t have an identity as a city (e.g. whether it be something like the Garden City or Recreation City. Melbourne is known as the Sporting City of Australia). I don’t have a fixed view on what our identity should be, but we need one.”

“Improve the speaker and sound system in the Council chamber.”

“Personally, I would prefer meetings to be 4pm in the afternoon, rather than 2pm. Many of the Councillors work in other jobs, so we must be able to fit it in to our day.”

6.12.2. COMMUNITY BOARDS

“I don’t yet understand who is who, which Councillors are responsible for what, and who to call on. A list of people and their areas of responsibility would be very helpful.”

“I would like to see them gather people together and build a collective vision. We need to get to know each other and the roles we each have. If we could have one or two occasions each year, to meet with everyone together, then we may appreciate each other.”

“There are some big issues coming up and communities will be involved in a major way in the few weeks’ time. It is important to communicate, so we can coordinate our efforts and encourage our communities to get involved.”

“We need timely delivery of information relating to the community. Council will come and do something and we will be surprised. We can’t warn the community. The gap is very short and causes stress for us.”

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“It would be good if all information relevant to our board was made available to it. We need more advance warning than we get.”

“Supply as much information for us as possible to do our job, so that we are armed with all possible details.”

“To enable good community engagement, more time is needed to better enable the boards to do their job. We need resources for boards to better inform and engage with the community, to make it easier for the community to take part.”

“Timeliness of advice. They are too bound up with rules and need someone with political nous. If there is a contentious issue that will be big for our area, they should think ‘I’d better make sure all community board members are briefed’. If the rule book doesn’t say it, they don’t do it.”

“I have in mind the timeliness of advice. I have in mind one occasion where advice came far too late, at the embarrassment of the council officers themselves, as well as elected members. The officer didn’t regard it as a priority. They had over a month to provide the advice but it came too late. This caused more issues which we then had to deal with. In the end, the officers worked with myself to coordinate an appropriate response to the information requested. All parties learnt from that.”

“The timing of consultations. I would like to see them widen the timelines, to include and accommodate more of the community than they do now. It is important to reach those who are further apart and harder to contact. There is more opportunity to involve more people and to get their responses.”

We need true consultation. Talking to one person heavily involved doesn’t mean they have spoken to iwi. They have simply ticked the box. They need to speak to the Polynesian and Maori communities and go and see them. It is not right to speak to a few and say they have spoken to iwi. Council does have an online presence, but the usual groups look at these. They are still not getting to every corner of the community and it is important to do this.”

“Some officers have agendas of their own and do not wish to hear our view. They manipulate proceedings, to include their own chosen approach. This is an area for improvement.”

“In some cases, the level of service is affected by councillors going their own way. They are a ‘squeaky wheel’ and get attention. A conversation needs to be had, because in some cases excess information is circulating, some of which is false. Some are trying to undermine (the overall direction).”

“I would like them to focus on raising the profile of our board in the community. My focus is to actively engage with the community and advocate on their behalf. Many people do not understand the role of the Community Board. I try to pass on information and connect with the community.”

“The protection and enhancement of heritage and character, especially in Petone and Moera. We need incentives for property owners and need recognition of pre-1930s buildings.”

Current policy and District Plans provisions are woefully lacking. There is a lack of vision and leadership in this area and the policy section is understaffed.”

6.13. CONCLUSION

This year’s survey has been conducted among 28 out of 30 of the city’s elected representatives (i.e. Councillors and Community Board members). This is a very high 93% participation rate, which provides a strong base on which to measure the elected members’ current opinions of the service received from council officers and administration staff.

The results of the 2020 survey indicate that a majority of the city’s representatives remain satisfied with the overall service received, after weighing positive and negative experiences. However, the level of satisfaction has notably declined in comparison to the previous survey.

The overall satisfaction ratings (‘*very satisfied*’ and ‘*quite satisfied*’ combined) are summarised in the chart below.

PERCENTAGE SATISFIED WITH SPECIFIC AREAS OF PERFORMANCE	TOTAL		Councillors		Community Boards	
	2019 (n=23) %	2020 (n=28) %	2019 (n=10) %	2020 (n=12) %	2019 (n=13) %	2020 (n=16) %
Accuracy of advice	91	82	90	67	92	94
Timeliness of advice	91	75	100	76	85	75
Adequacy of technical explanations	83	78	90	83	77	75
Comprehensiveness of options presented	87	68	100	75	77	63
Thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement	56	58	70	58	46	56
Thoroughness of legal considerations	65	64	90	83	46	50
Thoroughness of financial considerations	91	68	100	83	85	56
Adequacy of support services	96	89	100	92	92	88
Support and advice received from Committee Advisors	91	79	100	92	84	69
Access to key staff	96	71	100	75	92	69
Receipt of invitations to attend meetings/briefings	91	82	100	100	85	69
The level of response from Council Officers to requests for help	100	93	100	92	100	94

The overall formal advice received from Council Officers	100	82	100	75	100	88
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The overall content of this report, including the ratings and summary of elected representatives' views, indicates there has been a number of successes in a difficult year in which there has been significant change to the political landscape, the structure of the council organisation and the effects of COVID-19. Some of the successes identified include:

- The focus and leadership of the Hutt City Council through the difficult period of the COVID lockdown and its impact on the organisation, its staff and the community
- The fact that, on balance, most elected members are satisfied with the quality and timeliness of the advice they had received from council officers
- Significant progress in the use of IT (especially with communication during and subsequent to the COVID-19 lockdown)
- The availability of council officers to attend Community Board meetings, to talk about important issues
- The continued level of commitment and diligence from council officers and administration staff in support of the elected representatives (both councillors and community board members)

However, there are also strong indications that Hutt City Council, the organisation as a whole, is still settling in to the challenges brought about by a new Council, a new CE, new staff, organisational change and the way it operates. Areas for future consideration and focus that have been identified in this report include:

- Perhaps, the need to clarify the roles and protocols of governance versus administration in the running of the newly-configured organisation
- Ensuring that there is adequate opportunity for elected members and council officers to get to know each other, 'team build' and establish effective working relationships
- Continued work toward more broad-based, effective community engagement
- The need for continued and improved advance warning of relevant matters that may affect Councillors and Community Board members
- Ensuring that there are adequate options presented for consideration and that a degree of impartiality is applied in the presentation of the options
- That there is adequate opportunity for elected representatives to consider, discuss and debate major issues that need to be addressed

- Some clarification may be needed on how the 'citywide' councillors can best work alongside the 'ward' councillors in the community. (Whilst there is not a major problem in this regard, there is an opportunity to advance 'best practice' and clarify process where necessary)
- The need to ensure there are further contingency plans for dealing with the effects of COVID-19 and other emergencies that may arise
- To continue the good progress that has been made with Information Technology and to update and enhance systems on a continuing basis

It should be noted that the above points are not exhaustive lists of positive achievement and areas for focus. The management team at Hutt City Council may well find other areas of potential opportunity, within the report, that can be addressed to enhance the effective running of the organisation. Most important to remember is this report provides benchmark information and considerable insight to the current attitudes of the elected representatives. As such, it can be regarded as a useful working document for ongoing reference.

Finally, many of the elected representatives asked whether they would get to see this report. It is recommended that the report, or at least a summary of key findings, be made available to them. This will assist with transparency of process and future buy-in to the value of the work.

7. QUESTIONNAIRE

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**SURVEY OF HCC COUNCILLORS AND
COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS**

August/September 2020

INTRODUCTION

“Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am ... from Peter Glen Research. You may have received a letter from Wendy Moore of Hutt City Council recently, explaining that we are conducting this year’s independent survey of Councillors and Community Board Members. The purpose of the survey is to rate aspects of the professional advice you have received from Hutt City Council officers from across Council in the past twelve months and to obtain guidance on how it can be improved or strengthened.”

“The interview will take approximately (...) minutes to complete. Can we please arrange a suitable day and time for me to call you to conduct the interview?”

Day/date: _____ Time: _____

RESPONDENT NAME: _____ PHONE NO: _____

(PLACE OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW, WHERE NECESSARY): _____

THE INTERVIEW

“Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am ... from Peter Glen Research. Is it still convenient to conduct the interview we had arranged. Regarding aspects of the professional advice you had received from Hutt City Council Officers in the past twelve months?”

(IF NOT, ARRANGE ANOTHER APPOINTMENT TIME: _____)

“The questions I am about to ask, relate to the formal advice given to you by officers from across Council and, in particular, in the areas of strategic planning, policy and strategy development and advice, monitoring and reporting.”

“Before we begin, I would just like to assure you that the comments you make will be treated confidentially. Our aim is to provide an overall interpretative report that informs the Hutt City Council, but does not disclose the specific identities of the people making the comments.”

SECTION A: ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

Q.1 "I have here a list of performance attributes that I would like to rate. As I read each statement, can you please tell me whether you are very satisfied, quite satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with that aspect of performance? The (first/next) statement is...."

STATEMENTS	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Not At All Satisfied	(Can't Rate/Unsure)
(a) Accuracy of advice	01	02	03	04	05
(b) Timeliness of advice	01	02	03	04	05
(c) Adequacy of technical explanations	01	02	03	04	05
(d) Ease of comprehension of technical explanations	01	02	03	04	05
(e) Comprehensiveness of options presented	01	02	03	04	05
(f) Thoroughness of consultation and/or public engagement	01	02	03	04	05
(g) Thoroughness of legal considerations	01	02	03	04	05
(h) Thoroughness of financial considerations	01	02	03	04	05
(i) Adequacy of support services generally	01	02	03	04	05
(j) Support and advice received from Committee Advisors	01	02	03	04	05
(k) Access to key staff	01	02	03	04	05
(l) Receipt of invitations to attend relevant meetings and/or briefings	01	02	03	04	05
(m) The level of response from Council Officers to your requests for help	01	02	03	04	05
(n) The overall formal advice you receive from council officers	01	02	03	04	05

SECTION B: ASK THIS SECTION ONLY OF NEW (FIRST-TERM) COUNCILLORS AND COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Q.4 (a) "Thinking about your experiences to date, has the information and advice given to you by Council Officers met, exceeded, or fallen short of your expectations?"

- Met my expectations _____ 01
- Exceeded my expectations _____ 02
- Fallen short of my expectations _____ 03

IF 'EXCEEDED' OR 'FALLEN SHORT' OF EXPECTATIONS, ASK Q.4 (b):

(b) "In what way has the information and advice (... exceeded/fallen short ...) of your expectations?" **PROBE UNTIL 'NO' & POINTS ARE CLEAR**

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SECTION C: ASK THIS SECTION OF ALL COUNCILLORS AND COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Q.5 “In previous surveys, there has been a number of areas for improvement that (councillors/community board members) have collectively identified. As I mention each of these areas, can you please tell me whether you think that area of performance has greatly improved, improved a little, deteriorated, or stayed the same?”

LIST TO BE ASKED OF MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	Stayed the same
(a) The degree of impartiality of officers when presenting options to Council	01	02	03	04
(b) The quality of leadership and connectivity, geared toward the overall vision for the city	01	02	03	04
(c) Council officers engaging early with elected members, when developing policy options	01	02	03	04
(d) Giving adequate early warning of developments and issues that are likely to affect Councillors	01	02	03	04
(e) Ensuring there is an adequate level of detail with regard to the advice and range of options that are presented to Council	01	02	03	04
(f) Ensuring there is adequate time to consider and digest important issues that are on the agenda or are in the process of consultation	01	02	03	04
(g) Ensuring that Council receives solid legal advice that does not leave it exposed	01	02	03	04
(h) The level of IT technical support to Councillors, to meet their individual needs	01	02	03	04
(i) The timeliness of IT technical support to Councillors	01	02	03	04
(j) The extent of broad-based community consultation and engagement, using a range of methods to achieve this	01	02	03	04
(k) Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	01	02	03	04
(l) The communication of ‘good news stories’ to the public	01	02	03	04

LIST TO BE ASKED OF COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

STATEMENTS	Greatly improved	Improved a little	Deteriorated	Stayed the same
(a) The functionality of the committee system, especially with regard to decision-making and input to Council	01	02	03	04
(b) Briefings for Community Board members, including content, calendar and timetable	01	02	03	04
(c) The availability of Council Officers to attend meetings when requested	01	02	03	04
(d) The degree of openness of Council Officers regarding financial input and debate	01	02	03	04
(e) The level of community engagement, through local committees, community associations, staff on-the-ground, websites, etc	01	02	03	04
(f) Making use of social media to communicate with residents and stakeholders	01	02	03	04
(g) Input and direction through the triennium training	01	02	03	04
(h) Early warning from Council Officers of matters that could involve us	01	02	03	04
(i) The use of 'Plain English' and less jargon in documentation and verbal communication	01	02	03	04
(j) The effectiveness of the call-logging system, to ensure that reported problems in the community have been resolved.	01	02	03	04
(k) The accessibility of senior staff members, to talk to about important issues and to seek advice	01	02	03	04

SECTION D: ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

“I would now like you to think about the service you receive at reception, when you are visiting or contacting the Mayor’s office and administration areas. We would like to get an updated reading of your experience with regard to the service provided by the Customer Service staff.”

Q.6 “How frequently do you have contact with the Customer Service staff in the following situations?”

SERVICE SITUATIONS	Often	Occasionally	Never
The front desk staff at the main council building	01	02	03
Staff at the contact centre during normal business hours (8 am to 5 pm weekdays)	01	02	03
Staff at the contact centre after hours	01	02	03

Q.7 “How would you describe the overall level of service you have received from the Customer Service staff in the past twelve months?” **PROBE UNTIL CLEAR**

Q.8 “Do you have any suggestions for improving or enhancing service from the Customer Service staff? If so: How could service be improved?”

PROBE UNTIL CLEAR

SECTION E: ASK THIS SECTION OF COUNCILLORS ONLY

“I now have some questions about the use of technology in your role as a Councillor.”

Q.9 (a) “Thinking further about the use of Information Technology in your role as a Councillor, are there any ways in which you would like to apply or use technology, that you have not been able to do to date?”

Yes _____ 01 – Ask Q.9 (b)
No _____ 02 – Skip to Q.10

Q.9 (b) “Can you tell me about that please?” **PROBE UNTIL CLEAR**

Q.9 (c) “What type of support or help would you need from the Council IT team to be able to do this?” **PROBE UNTIL CLEAR**

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SECTION F: ASK THIS SECTION OF COUNCILLORS ONLY

“I would now like to talk to you about the change that occurred at the last local body elections, from the system of having ward councillors only, to having a mixture of ward and citywide representatives?”

Q.10 (a) “In your opinion, how well do you think the new structure is working? Is it working ...?”

- Very well _____ 01
- Quite well _____ 02
- Not very well _____ 03
- Not at all well _____ 04
- DO NOT ASK Works well in some ways, not in others _____ 05
- (Don't know/Unsure) _____ 06

Q.10 (b) “Can I please ask, why did you give that particular rating?”

PROBE UNTIL CLEAR

Q.10 (c) “Do you have any suggestions on how the current system might be improved or strengthened?”

- Yes _____ 01 – Ask Q.10 (d)
- No _____ 02 – Skip to Q.11

Q.10 (d) “How could the current system be improved or strengthened? Anything else?”

PROBE UNTIL 'NO' & POINTS ARE CLEAR

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SECTION G: ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

“I now have some questions relating to COVID-19 ...”

Q.11 (a) “Has the occurrence of COVID-19 prompted you to change your vision or focus in any way, in your role as a (Councillor/Community Board Member)?”

Yes _____ 01 – Ask Q.11 (b)
No _____ 02 – Skip to Q.12

Q.11 (b) “In what way has it prompted you to change your vision or focus, in your role as a (Councillor/Community Board Member)? ”

PROBE UNTIL ‘NO’ & POINTS ARE CLEAR

Q.12 “Overall, how would you summarise your current vision, aims, or aspirations as a (Councillor/Community Board Member)?” **PROBE UNTIL CLEAR**

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SECTION H: ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

Q.13 “Finally, if Hutt City Council could improve just **one** aspect of its professional advice and/or service delivery to the City’s representatives, what would you focus it on? And why?”

PROBE UNTIL POINTS ARE CLEAR

“Thank you very much for your participation in this survey. My name is (...) from Peter Glen Research.”

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