COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall picture

Palmerston remains a place many residents value. The outcomes of the 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey remain consistently positive and continue to demonstrate positive levels of community satisfaction. There has been a decline compared to the results of 2025, which has been considered as part of the review of the results.

- 67% rated Council's overall performance as good or very good.
- Overall Council performance averaged 6.84 out of 10, compared with 7.26 in 2025.
- Ten of the 28 services and facilities achieved an average score of at least 7 out of 10.
- 57% identified crime or safety as one of the two most important local issues.
- 39% contacted Council in the previous 12 months
- Among residents who contacted Council in the previous 12 months, 66% rated the ease of interaction as 'good' or 'very good', while 63% gave the same rating to Council's customer service delivery.
- Overall satisfaction has remained within a consistent range over the past 8 years.

What this means

Council has a solid base of valued services, particularly libraries, waste services and community events.

Section	Measure	2026	Average 2021-2025	Gap
Living in Palmerston	Awareness of Council's slogan 'A place for people'	55%	48%	+7%
	Agreement with Council's slogan 'A place for people'	6.66	6.81	-0.15
	Recommend Living in Palmerston (NPS)	-4	-10	+6
	Inclusion of Indigenous Community	6.37	6.64	-0.27
Performance of Council	Overall satisfaction	6.84	7.00	-0.16
	Council has a long term vision for economy	6.50	6.65	-0.15
	Council is accountable	6.41	6.59	-0.18
	Council is effective	6.16	6.58	-0.42
	Council is innovative	6.10	6.39	-0.29
	Elected Members are accessible	6.08	6.43	-0.35
	Council is flexible	5.89	6.28	-0.39
	Category Sat: Family and Community (7 measures)	6.92	7.15	-0.23
	Category Sat: Vibrant Economy (1 measure)	5.79	5.97	-0.18
	Category Sat: Cultural Diversity (4 measures)	7.09	7.47	-0.38
	Category Sat: A Future Focus (7 measures)	6.45	7.01	-0.56
	Category Sat: Environmental Sustainability (7 measures)	7.04	7.31	-0.27
	Category Sat: Governance (2 measures)	6.01	6.35	-0.34
Contact and Communication	Contact with Council	39%	34%	+5%
	Council making it easy for you to interact with them	6.91	7.11	-0.20
	Council's Customer Service Delivery when you dealt with them	6.77	6.99	-0.22

Blue/Red = A significantly higher/lower rating (compared to average 2021-2025)

About the research

The survey was designed to understand residents' experiences of living in Palmerston and their views of Council services and performance.

How it was conducted

Micromex Research surveyed 406 residents between 9 and 27 July 2026. There were 402 telephone interviews and four opt-in online responses. Results were weighted by age and gender using 2021 Census data.

How to read the scores

Most satisfaction and agreement questions used a scale from 0 to 10. All survey results are reported on a 10-point scale and categorised as follows:

- 0: Very poor.
- 2-3: Poor.
- 4-6: Neutral.
- 7-8: Good.
- 9-10: Very good.

The maximum reported sampling margin of error is ±4.9 percentage points at 95% confidence.

Differences between scores are not automatically statistically significant.

The key messages for Council

The findings point to a distinction between liking Palmerston as a place to live and being satisfied with Council's current performance.

Strengths

- Residents rate libraries, waste services, community events and recreation facilities well.
- Awareness of the slogan "A place for people" reached 55%, matching 2025 and exceeding the five-year average of 48%.
- Residents' willingness to recommend living in Palmerston improved against the five-year average.

Issues requiring attention

- Community safety was a main priority for residents, even though much of the direct responsibility sits outside Council.
- There is a perception that road and footpath maintenance has declined and is strongly linked to overall Council satisfaction.
- Residents gave lower ratings to 'opportunities to influence Council's decisions' and 'to Council advocacy on planning issue'.
- Business support, environmental action and confidence in Council effectiveness also warrant attention.

Living in Palmerston

Residents continue to identify positive aspects of living locally, but community safety has an effect on whether they would recommend the area.

Willingness to recommend

Palmerston's Net Promoter Score was -4 in 2026, compared with -10 for the 2021–2025 average and -6 in 2025. This measure subtracts the share of detractors from the share of promoters. A negative score means detractors still slightly outnumber promoters. However, 28% rated their likelihood to recommend living in the Palmerston area in 2026 a 9 or 10 (very likely). 69% ranked it a 7 or above.

What residents appreciate

Residents who strongly recommend Palmerston commonly describe it as a good place to live, family friendly and close to shops, schools and other services. Of promoters, 71% mentioned Palmerston being a good place to live and 31% mentioned its family-friendly character.

What holds others back

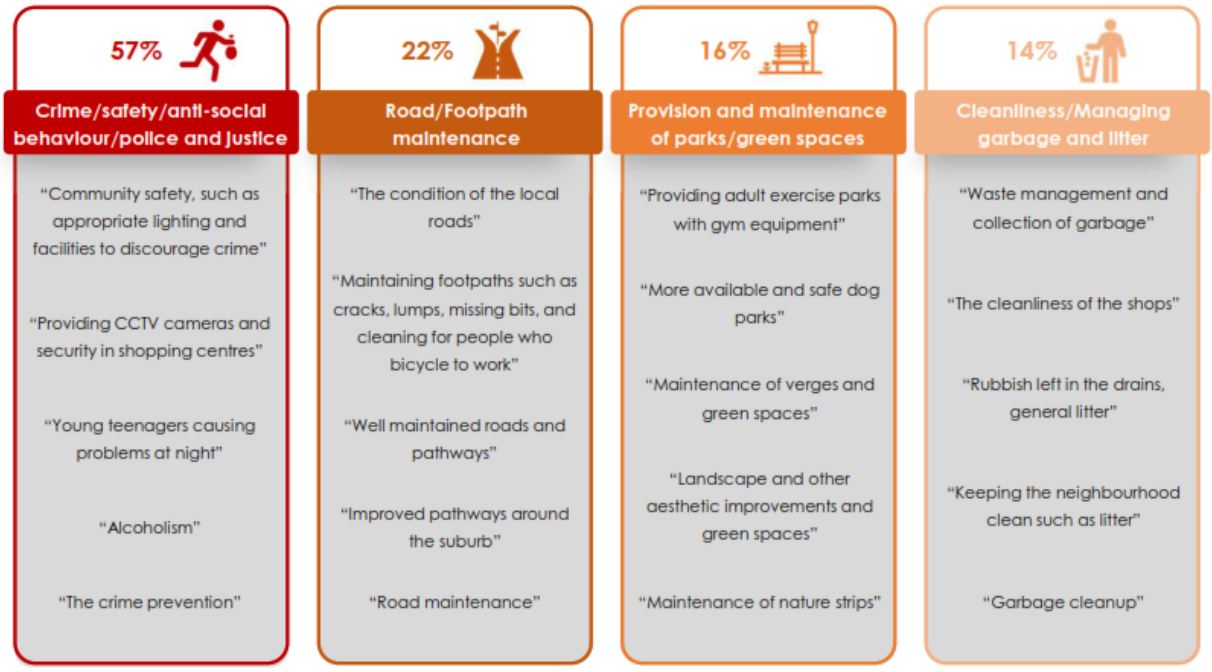
Among detractors, 60% referred to crime, safety, antisocial behaviour or policing and justice. This helps explain why residents may value the location but remain cautious about recommending it.

Council identity

Of those surveyed, 55% recognised Council's slogan "A place for people" and 58% agreed with the statement. Agreement averaged 6.66 out of 10, slightly below the five-year average of 6.81.

What matters most to residents

When asked to name the two most important issues in their local area, residents placed safety well ahead of other concerns.



Leading community issues

- Crime, safety, antisocial behaviour, youth crime, policing and justice: 57%.
- Road and footpath maintenance: 22%.
- Parks and green spaces: 16%.
- Cleanliness, rubbish and litter: 14%.

Differences between suburbs

The report indicates safety was especially prominent in Woodroffe (82%) and Gray (73%). Road and footpath maintenance was especially prominent in Driver (55%), while parks and green spaces led in Durack (41%). These suburb samples were each below 50 respondents and should be treated as indicative.

Overall performance of Council

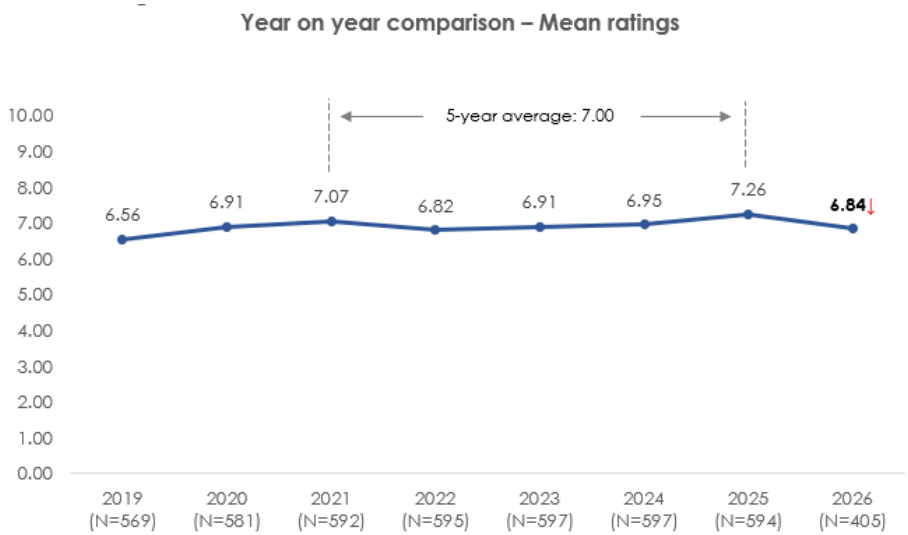
Council continues to receive generally positive feedback from the community, achieving an overall satisfaction score of 6.84 out of 10. While this represents a modest decline from previous years, the result demonstrates that residents continue to hold a broadly favourable view of Council's performance.

Overall satisfaction

The average rating was 6.84 in 2026. This compares with 7.00 across 2021–2025 and 7.26 in 2025. Overall, 67% rated performance as good or very good.

Perceptions of Council

- Accountable: 6.41 compared with a five-year average of 6.59.
- Effective: 6.16 compared with 6.58.
- Innovative: 6.10 compared with 6.39.
- Flexible: 5.89 compared with 6.28.



COMMUNITY PLAN OUTCOME AREAS

Family and community

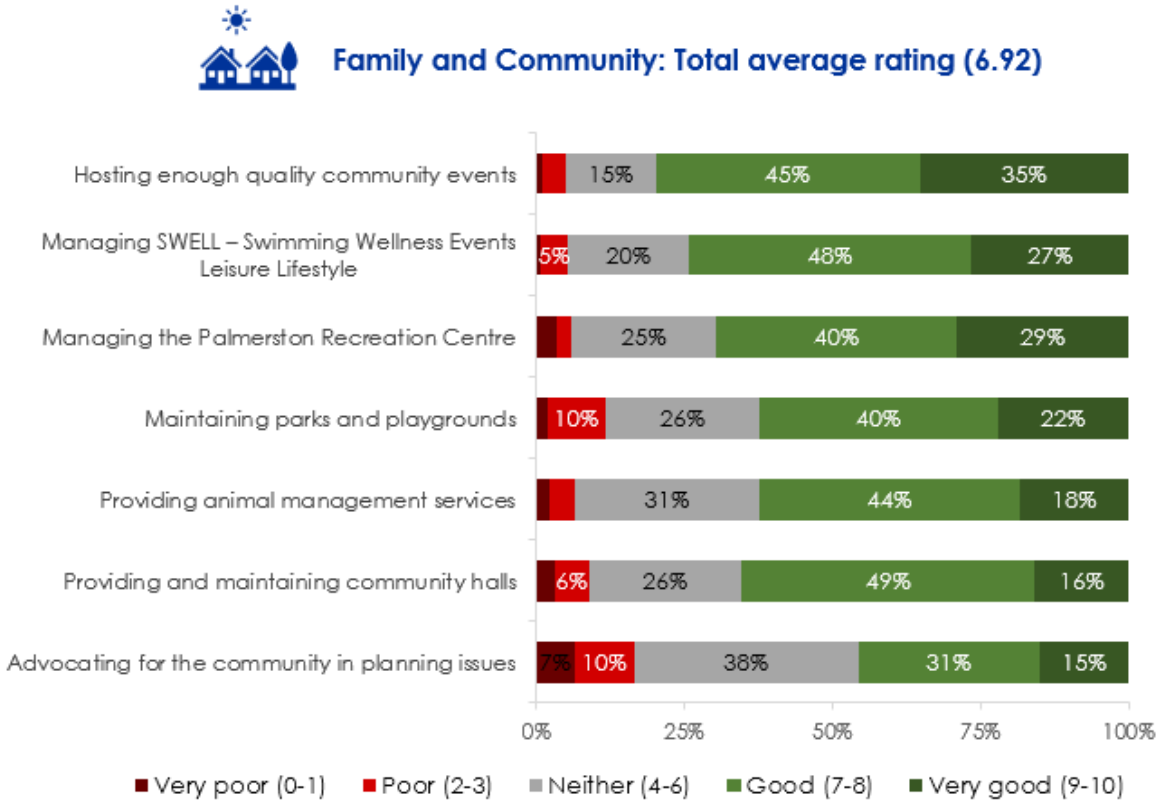
Community events and recreation remain areas of strength, while advocacy and some community facilities scores were slightly lower.

2026 scores

- Quality community events: 7.62.
- SWELL: 7.39.
- Palmerston Recreation Centre: 7.19.
- Parks and playgrounds: 6.82.
- Animal management: 6.76.
- Community halls: 6.76.
- Advocacy on community planning issues: 5.94.

Trend

The category achieved an overall satisfaction rating of 6.92 out of 10, reflecting generally positive community perceptions and remaining close to the five-year average of 7.15. While all seven measures recorded slightly lower ratings than their historical averages, satisfaction remained relatively strong across most services. Community halls and planning advocacy experienced statistically significant declines, highlighting opportunities for targeted improvement.



Vibrant Economy

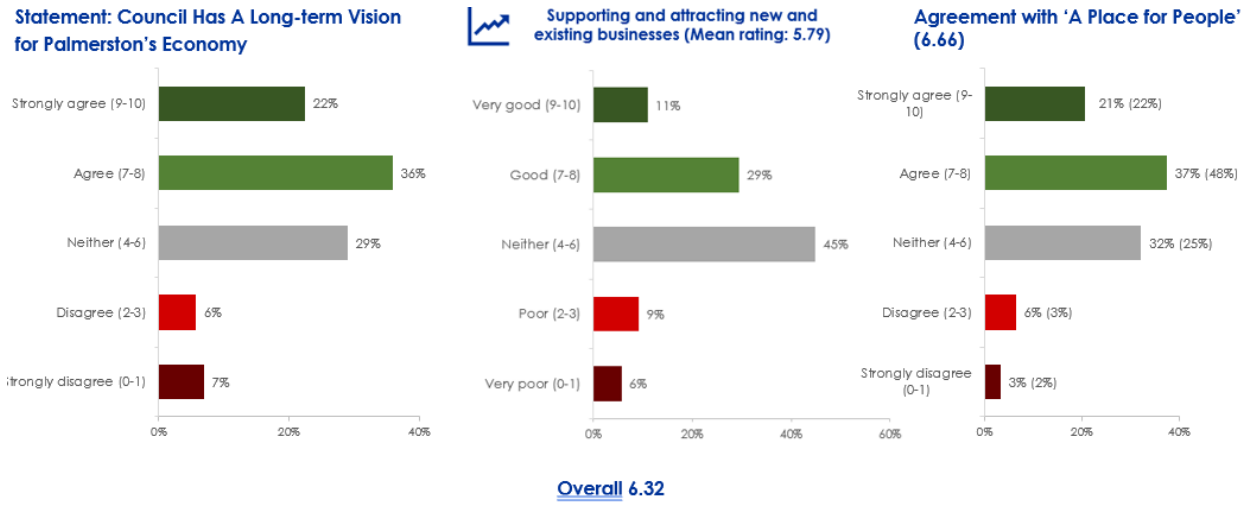
Council continues to support Palmerston's economic development, with residents providing a generally positive rating of 6.50 for Council's long-term vision for the local economy. Opportunities remain to further strengthen support for existing businesses, attract new investment and encourage innovation within the business community.

Key findings

- Council's long-term vision for Palmerston's economy: 6.50.
- Supporting and attracting new and existing businesses: 5.79.
- Awareness of Council's slogan 'A Place for People': 55%, above the five-year average of 48%.
- Agreement that Palmerston is 'A Place for People': 6.66.

Change over time

Satisfaction with supporting and attracting businesses was 5.79, compared with the five-year average of 5.97. While results have moderated slightly, awareness of Council's slogan remains strong and has improved compared with previous years.



Cultural Diversity

Council continues to perform strongly in supporting cultural diversity, with libraries and culturally diverse events remaining among its highest-rated services. These results reflect the community's ongoing appreciation for accessible facilities, cultural celebrations and opportunities that bring people together.

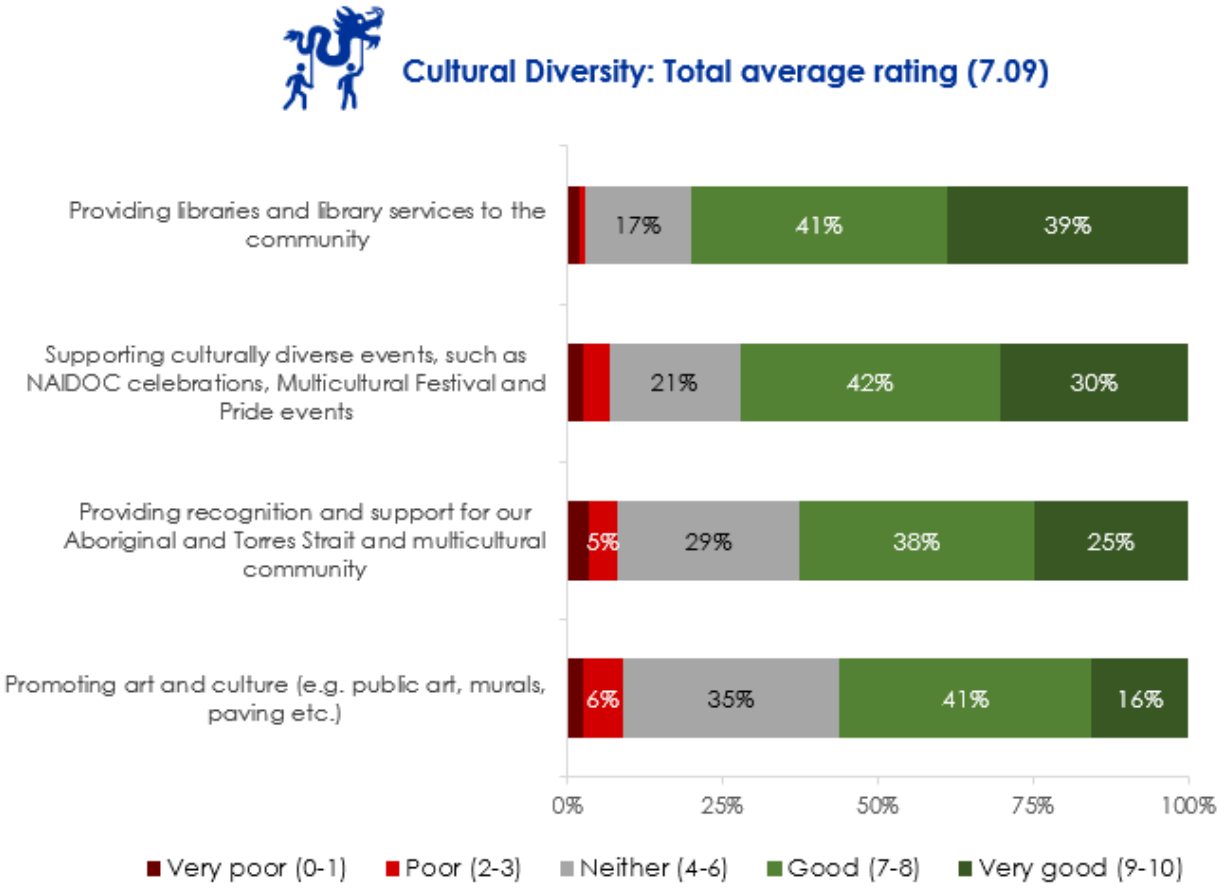
Key findings

- Library services: 7.77.
- Supporting culturally diverse events: 7.24.
- Recognition and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities: 6.84.
- Promoting art and culture: 6.51.

Change over time

The Cultural Diversity category achieved an overall satisfaction rating of **7.09**, remaining within the good performance range despite moderating from the five-year average of 7.47.

While ratings for libraries, culturally diverse events and promoting art and culture declined compared with historical averages, libraries and cultural events continue to receive strong community satisfaction.



A Future Focus

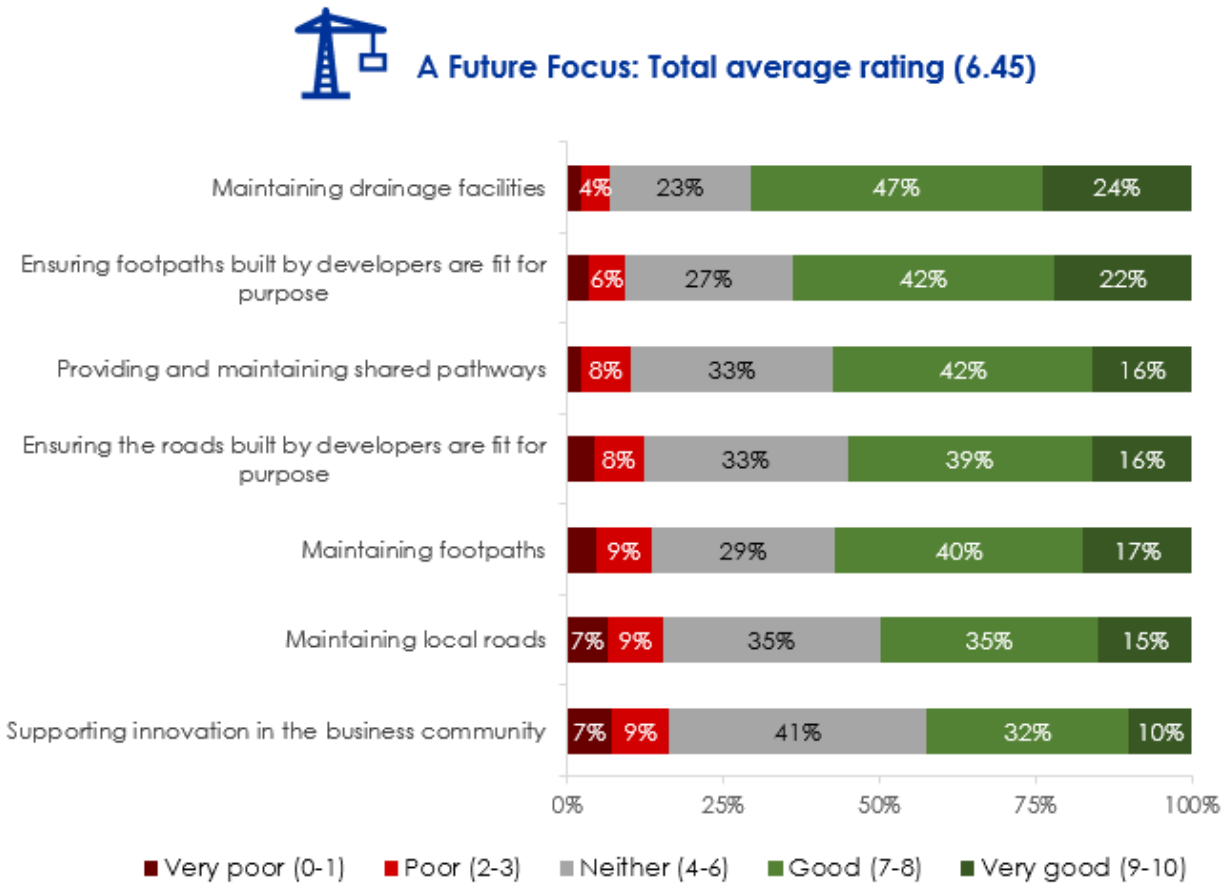
Roads and footpaths are among the clearest improvement priorities because residents rate them relatively poorly and they have a strong relationship with overall satisfaction.

2026 infrastructure scores

- Drainage facilities: 7.16.
- Footpaths built by developers being fit for purpose: 6.83.
- Shared pathways: 6.52.
- Roads built by developers being fit for purpose: 6.45.
- Maintaining footpaths: 6.42.
- Maintaining local roads: 6.04.

Where performance fell

Local roads dropped from a five-year average of 7.08 to 6.04, a decline of 1.04 points. Roads built by developers fell by 0.66 points and footpath maintenance by 0.52 points.



Environmental Sustainability

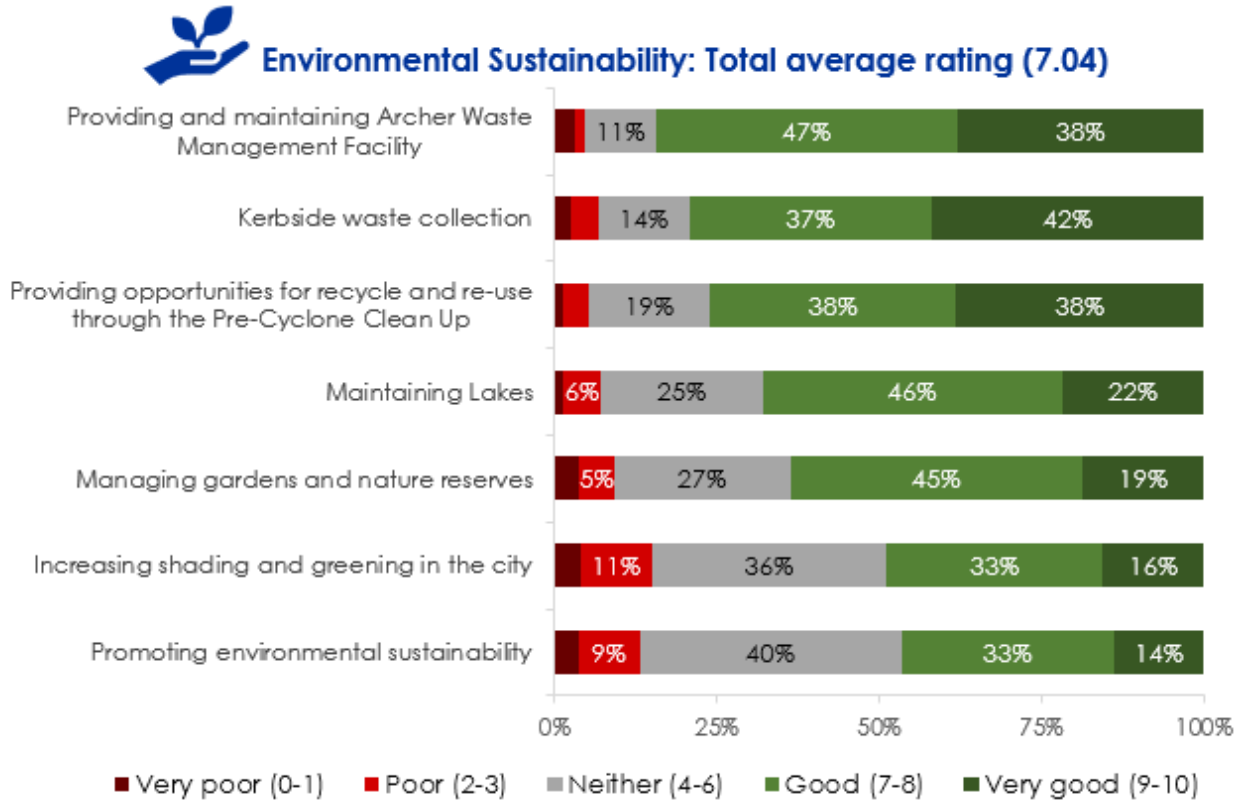
Residents are generally satisfied with waste services, while shading, greening and environmental action scored lower.

2026 service ratings

- Archer Waste Management Facility: 7.80.
- Kerbside waste collection: 7.70.
- Pre-Cyclone Clean Up recycling and reuse: 7.61.
- Maintaining lakes: 7.03.
- Gardens and nature reserves: 6.76.
- Increasing shading and greening: 6.20.
- Promoting environmental sustainability: 6.19.

Trend

The category average was 7.04, compared with 7.31 across 2021–2025. Maintaining lakes was the only measure in this group above its five-year average.



Governance

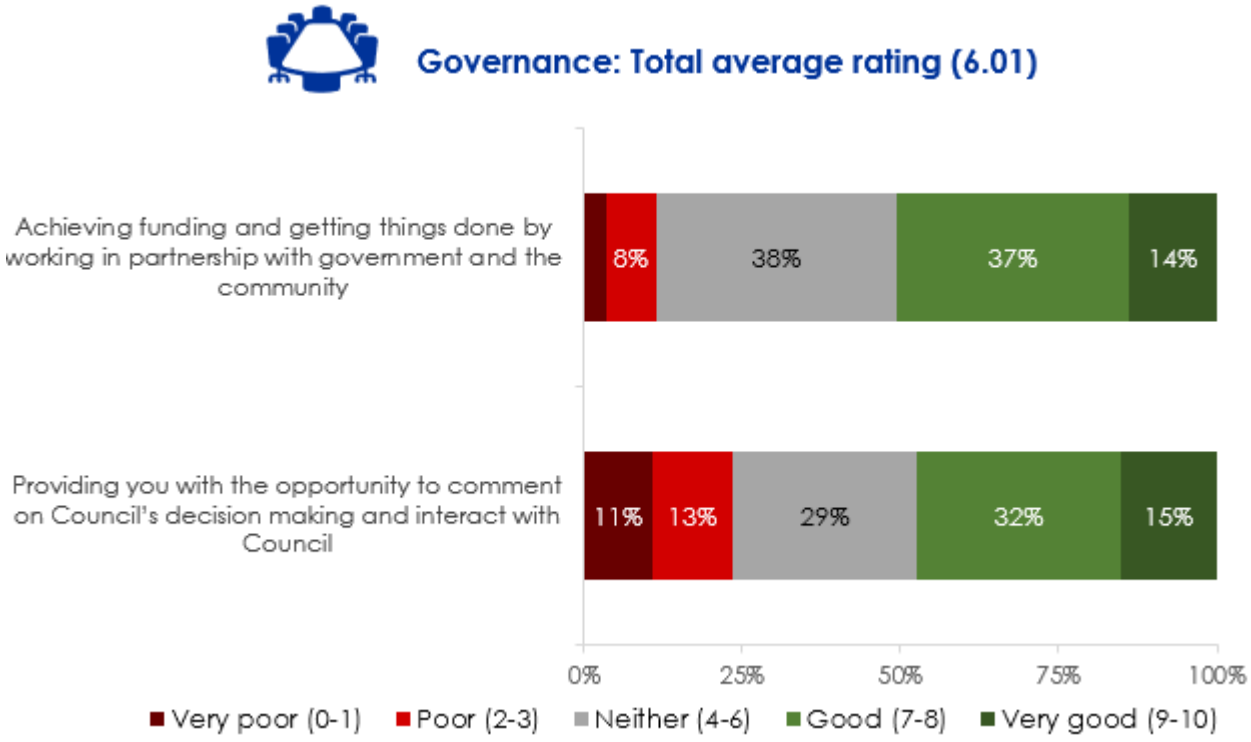
Community engagement presents an opportunity for Council to further strengthen its relationship with residents by providing more accessible and meaningful opportunities to contribute to decision making. While this area received the lowest satisfaction rating, it offers an opportunity to build community confidence and encourage greater participation in Council decisions.

Key ratings

- Opportunities to comment on Council decisions and interact with Council: 5.73.
- Achieving funding and results through partnerships: 6.29.
- Council is accountable: 6.41.
- Council is effective: 6.16.

Trend

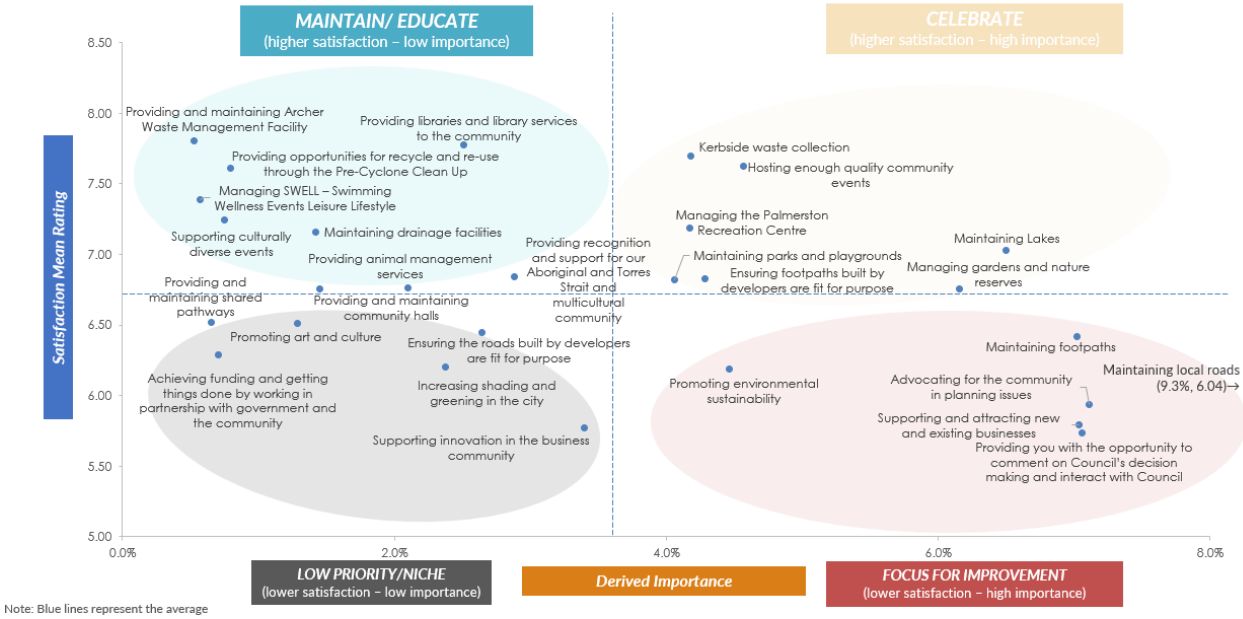
The governance service category averaged 6.01, down from 6.35 across 2021–2025 and 6.66 in 2025. The rating for opportunities to comment on decisions was also lower than its five-year average of 6.08.



What drives satisfaction with Council

Micromex used statistical modelling to estimate which service ratings are most closely associated with residents' overall view of Council.

Quadrant Analysis – Satisfaction vs Derived Importance



Note: Blue lines represent the average

Top ten drivers and estimated influence

- Local roads: 9.3%.
- Advocacy on planning issues: 7.1%.
- Opportunities to comment on decisions: 7.1%.
- Supporting and attracting businesses: 7.0%.
- Maintaining footpaths: 7.0%.
- Maintaining lakes: 6.5%.
- Gardens and nature reserves: 6.2%.
- Quality community events: 4.6%.
- Promoting environmental sustainability: 4.5%.
- Footpaths built by developers being fit for purpose: 4.3%.

Understanding the model

The ten measures account for approximately 64% of the model's estimated importance. Across all 28 measures, "A Future Focus" accounts for 28.8%, environmental sustainability for 25.0% and family and community for 24.0%. The model reports an R-squared of 0.76.

Contacting and communicating with Council

More residents are contacting Council and most describe their interactions positively, although there is room to improve.

Contact and service

- 39% had contacted Council in the past year, the highest proportion across the eight survey waves.
- The most common contact methods were phone (63%), email (38%) and in person (35%). Respondents could use more than one method.
- 66% of those who contacted Council rated ease of interaction as good or very good.
- 63% gave Council customer service delivery a good or very good rating.

How residents want information

Social media (37%) and the Council website (26%) were the leading preferred channels. Email was preferred by 20% and letter drops by 18%. Only 5% currently receive information by email, suggesting an opportunity to expand opt-in email updates.

In summary

Overall, the 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey presents a positive picture of Council's performance. While satisfaction ratings have moderated from previous years, 67% of residents continue to rate Council's overall performance as good or very good, demonstrating a strong foundation of community satisfaction. The results highlight Council's ongoing achievements in delivering valued services and facilities, while identifying opportunities for continued improvement. Importantly, the findings provide a valuable opportunity for Council to build on its strengths, respond to evolving community expectations and continue delivering positive outcomes for the Palmerston community.