

Local Government Reputation Index

Waitomo District Council
Public boost

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Objectives

1

Understand public, business and local council attitudes and priority issues for target audiences to determine levels of and triggers for involvement and interest.

2

Test LGNZ and sector brand messages and guide programme development;

Define segments within priority audiences;

Weight actions and initiatives for importance and impact.

3

Develop an ongoing Reputation Index.

Method



Online
survey

Survey conducted online using sample sourced from Colmar Brunton's online panel (a panel of 265,000 New Zealanders who've agreed to do surveys in exchange for rewards).



2,400
across NZ,
101 in
Waitomo

Sampling and weighting ensured that the sample is representative by age, gender, income and location.



September -
October
2014

Fieldwork conducted September and October 2014.

Understanding these results

- Results are about all of local government in New Zealand.
- All questions were about the sector rather than the respondent's local council – so, for example, where the results refer to Waitomo this should be interpreted as Waitomo residents' views of local government in New Zealand, not their views of Waitomo District Council. However, it is likely that respondents' views about their own local authority will have some influence on how they view the local government sector.
- This report focuses on the general public. We compare the views of the general public across the nation with the views of residents in Waitomo.

Importance of local government

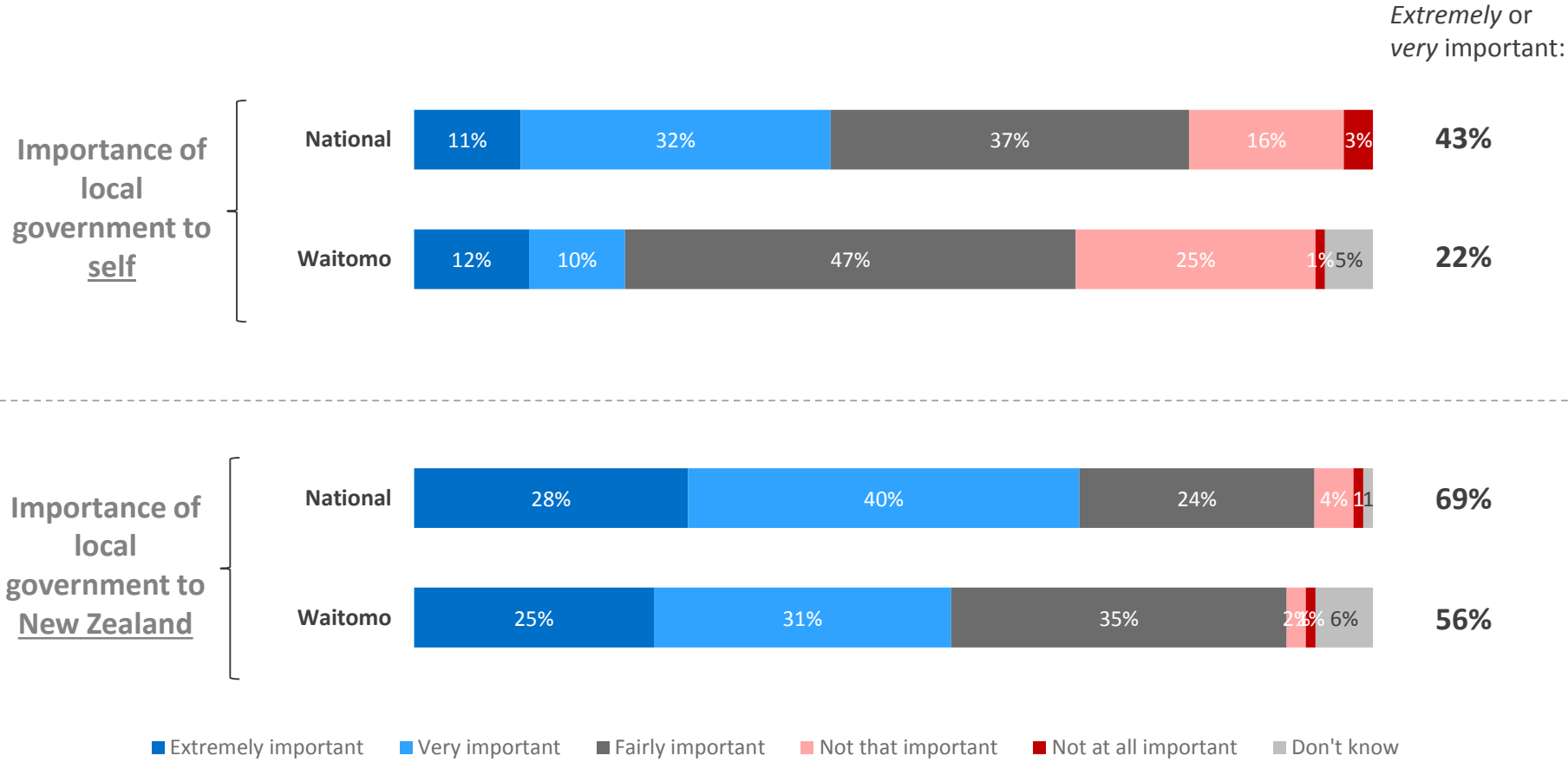
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Just over two in ten Waitomo residents say that local government is either 'extremely' or 'very' important to them personally (this is lower than the national average). Six in ten consider local government to be 'extremely' or 'very' important to New Zealand (which is also lower than the national average).



Q: How important is the collective effort of local government for the prosperity and wellbeing of New Zealand? Q: How important is local government to you in your daily life?

Awareness of
local government

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SUMMARY OF AWARENESS IN WAITOMO

Most Waitomo residents are aware that local government is responsible for noise and animal control, solid waste, water and sanitation, maintaining local amenities and facilities, and town planning, local/regional roads, and building/resource consents.

APPROXIMATELY...

9 in 10

... are aware the local government is responsible for:

solid waste, water and sanitation, playgrounds, local parks, public toilets, sports and recreation facilities, libraries, museums, galleries, public art, animal and noise control

8 in 10

... town planning, local and regional roads, building and resource consents

7 in 10

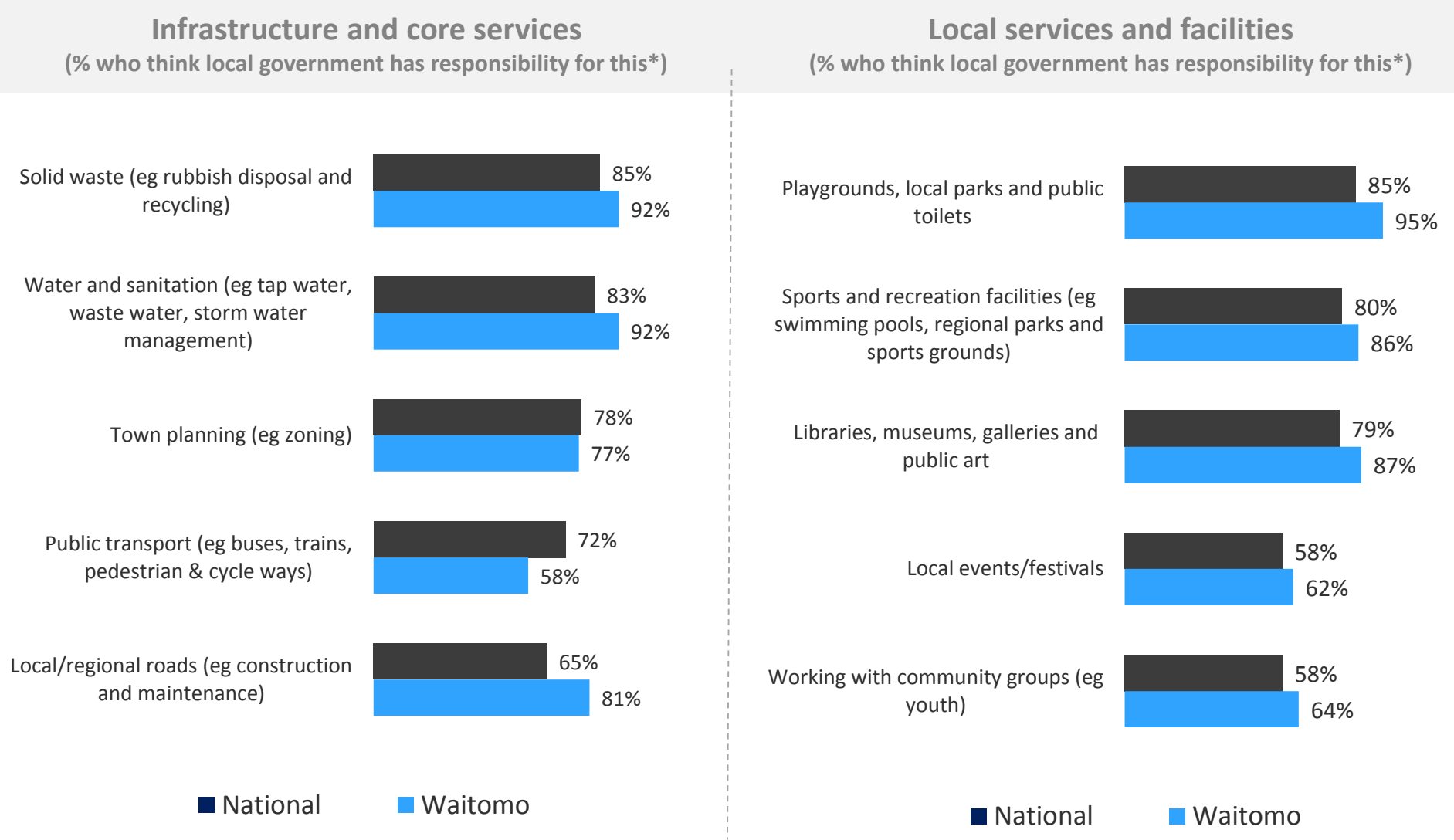
... health protection, regulating control of alcohol sale and supply, regulating the place of sale of legal highs, civil defence and emergency management, economic development and activity

6 in 10

... public transport, local events/festivals, working with community groups, planning for natural hazards, managing biodiversity, coastal planning and management, promoting the local area to tourists, attracting major events

Q: How much responsibility does local government have for the following? (All those responding 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale)

Relative to the national average, Waitomo residents tend to be more aware that local government has responsibility for local services and facilities, and infrastructure and core services.

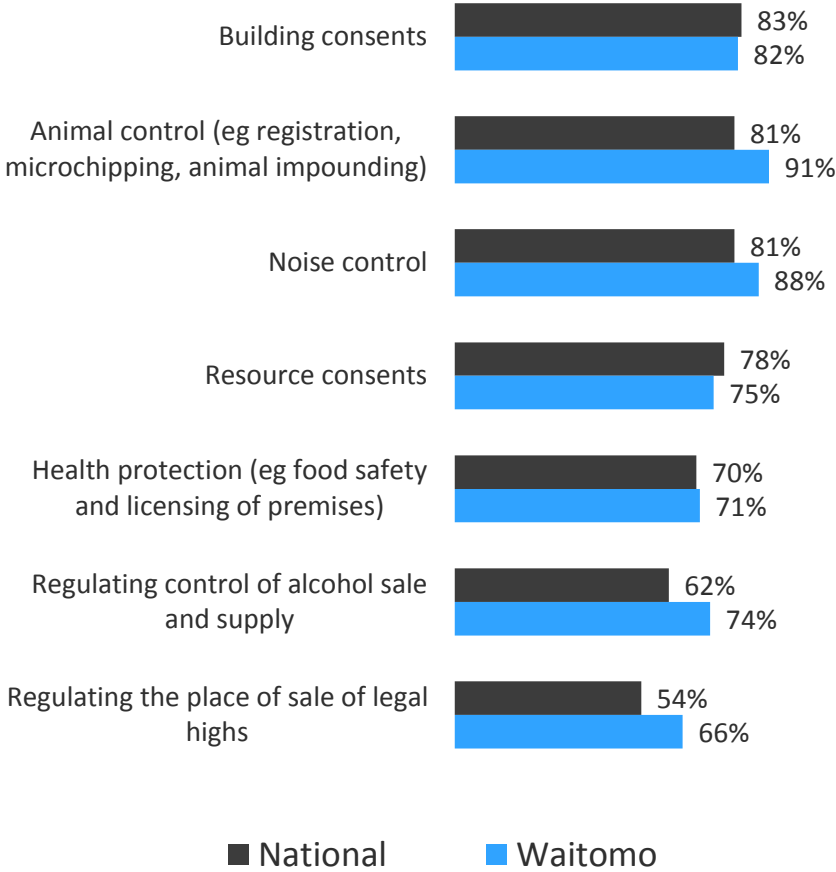


Q: How much responsibility do you think local government currently has for the following?

Compared to the national results, Waitomo residents also appear to be more aware of local government’s role in compliance and regulation and management of natural resources and hazards.

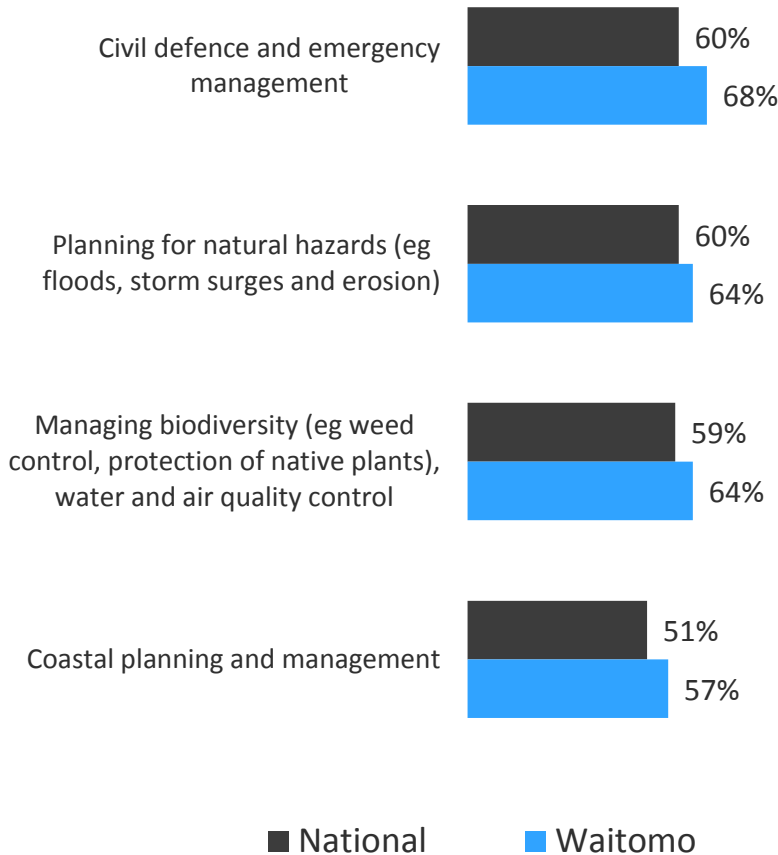
Compliance and regulation

(% who think local government has responsibility for this*)



Natural resources and hazard management

(% who think local government has responsibility for this*)

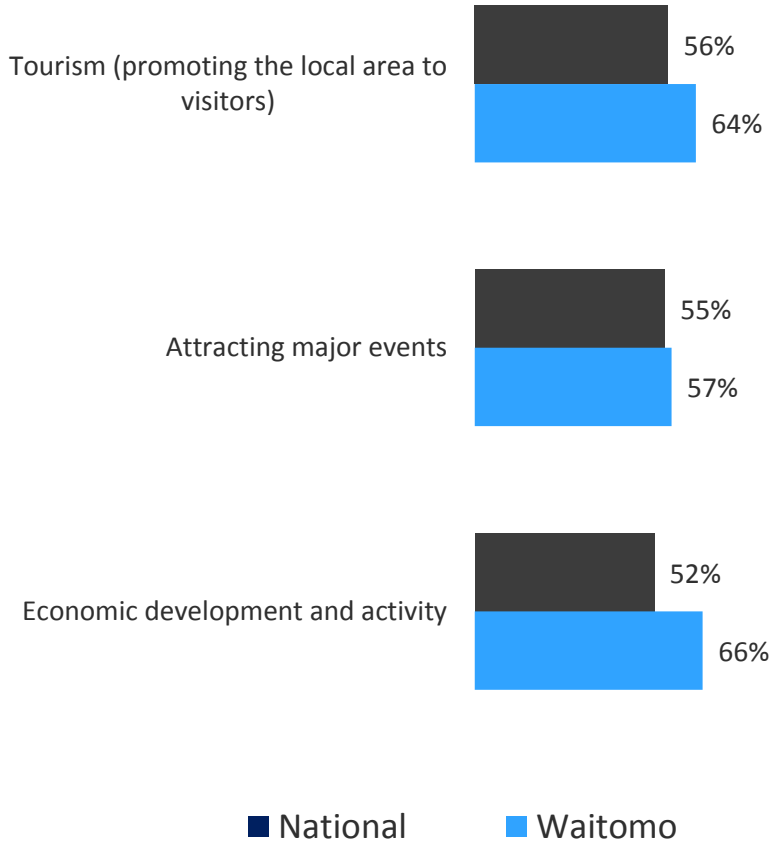


Q: How much responsibility do you think local government currently has for the following?

Waitomo residents' awareness of local government's responsibility for business and industry development is higher than the national average, particularly regarding local government's role in economic development and activity.

Business and industry development

(% who think local government has responsibility for this*)



Q: How much responsibility do you think local government currently has for the following?

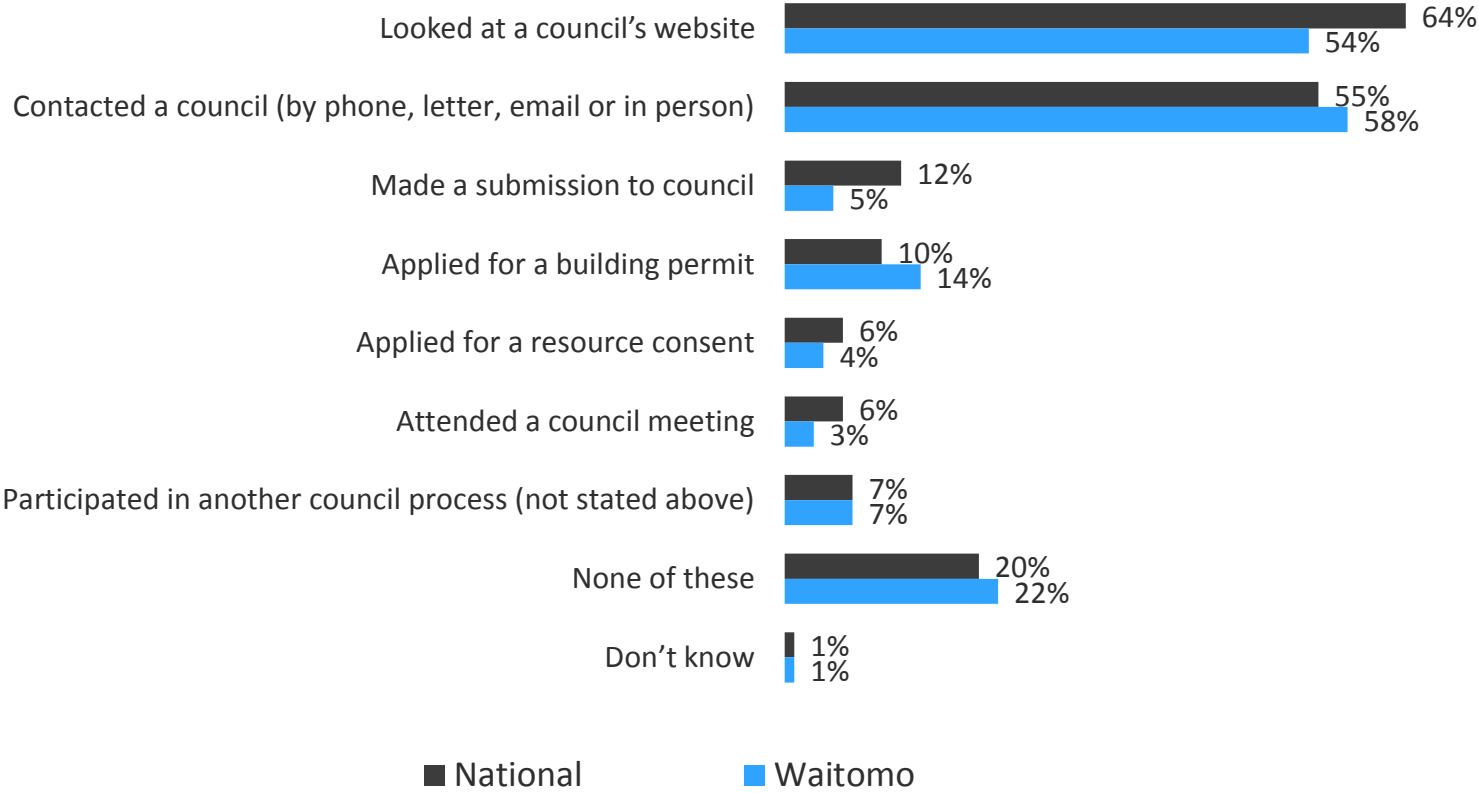
Interaction with local government

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Residents of Waitomo are less likely than those at a national level to have interacted with a council in the past year by looking at a council’s website or by making a submission to council.

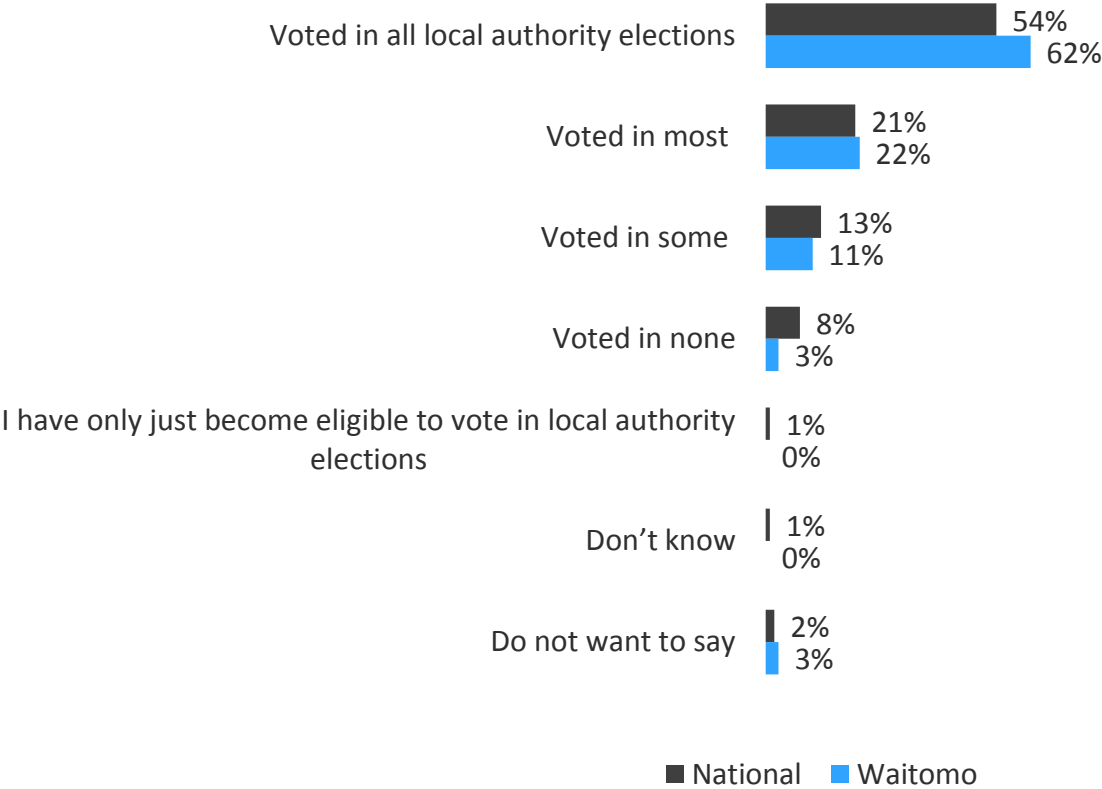
Interaction with a council in the past year



Q: Have you done any of the following in the past year?

Around six in ten Waitomo residents say they vote in all local authority elections, slightly higher than the national average of five in ten (please note that voting participation questions are subject to a degree of social desirability*).

Local election voting history



* 'Social desirability' is defined as "the tendency to present oneself in a favourable light by underreporting undesirable attributes and overreporting desirable ones" (R.M. Groves et al, Survey Methodology, 2004, p208)

Q: Since you have been eligible to vote in local authority elections, have you...

Overview of satisfaction
with, and reputation of,
the sector

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On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is 'not at all likely to talk favourably about local government if asked' and 10 is 'very likely' the average score was 4.3 (slightly lower than the national result).

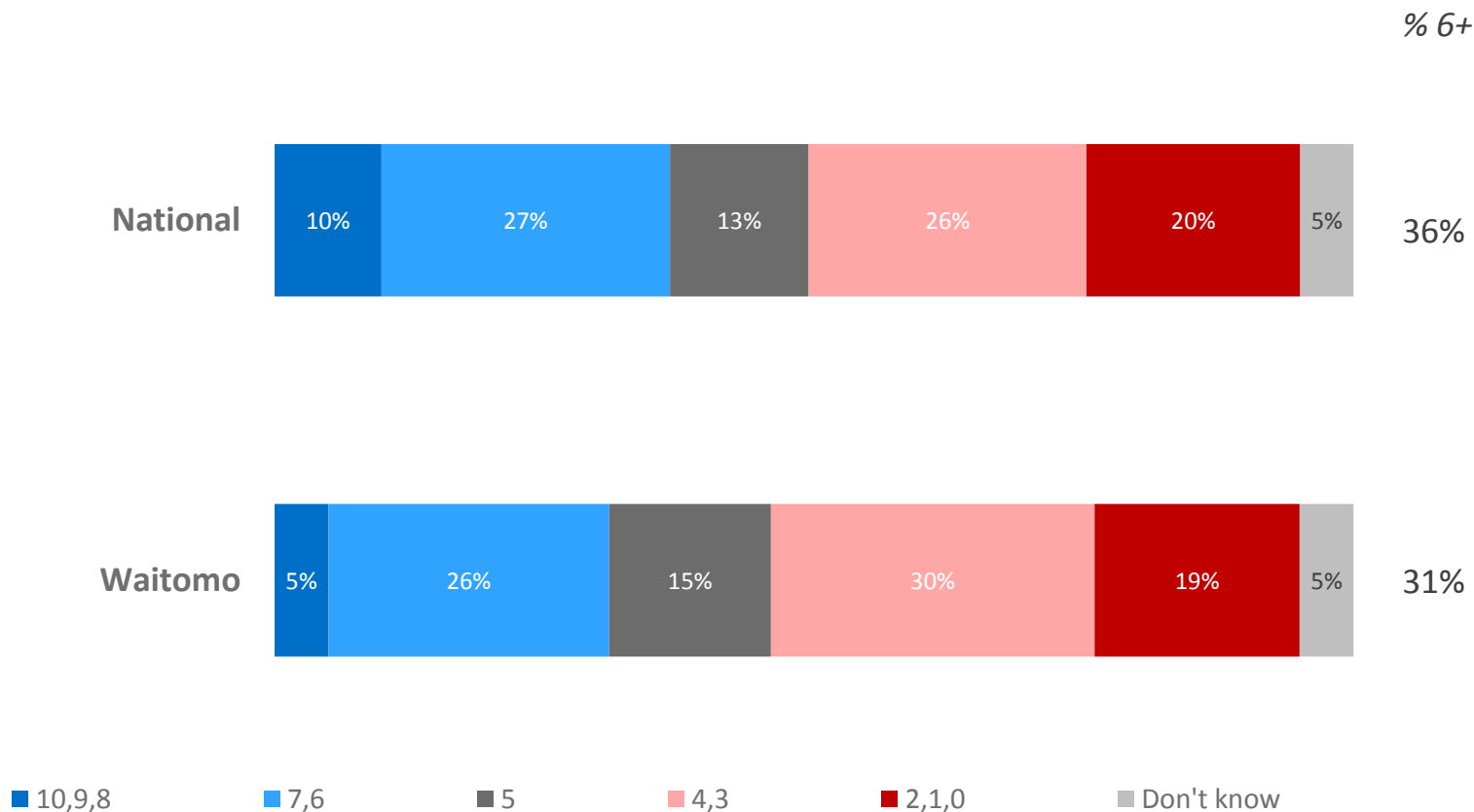
Likelihood to talk favourably about local government on a scale of 0 to 10



Q: How likely would you be to talk favourably about local government if asked by a friend or colleague?

Just over three in ten (31%) Waitomo residents are likely to talk favourably about local government (that is they rate their chances of talking favourably as 'six in ten or greater'), lower than the national average of 36%.

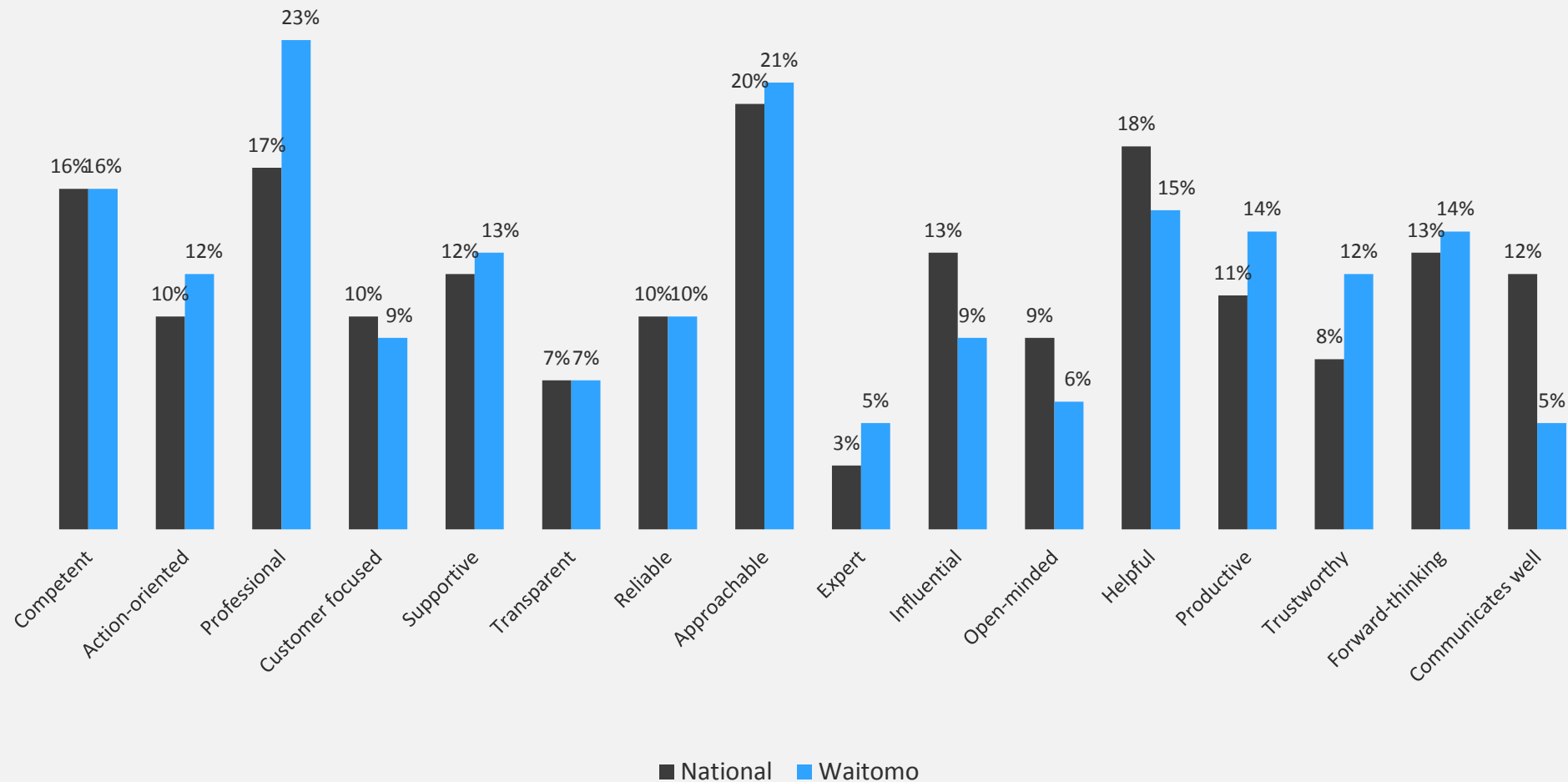
Likelihood to talk favourably about local government on a scale of 0 to 10



Q: How likely would you be to talk favourably about local government if asked by a friend or colleague?

Waitomo residents score local government higher than the national average on the positive word of 'professional'.

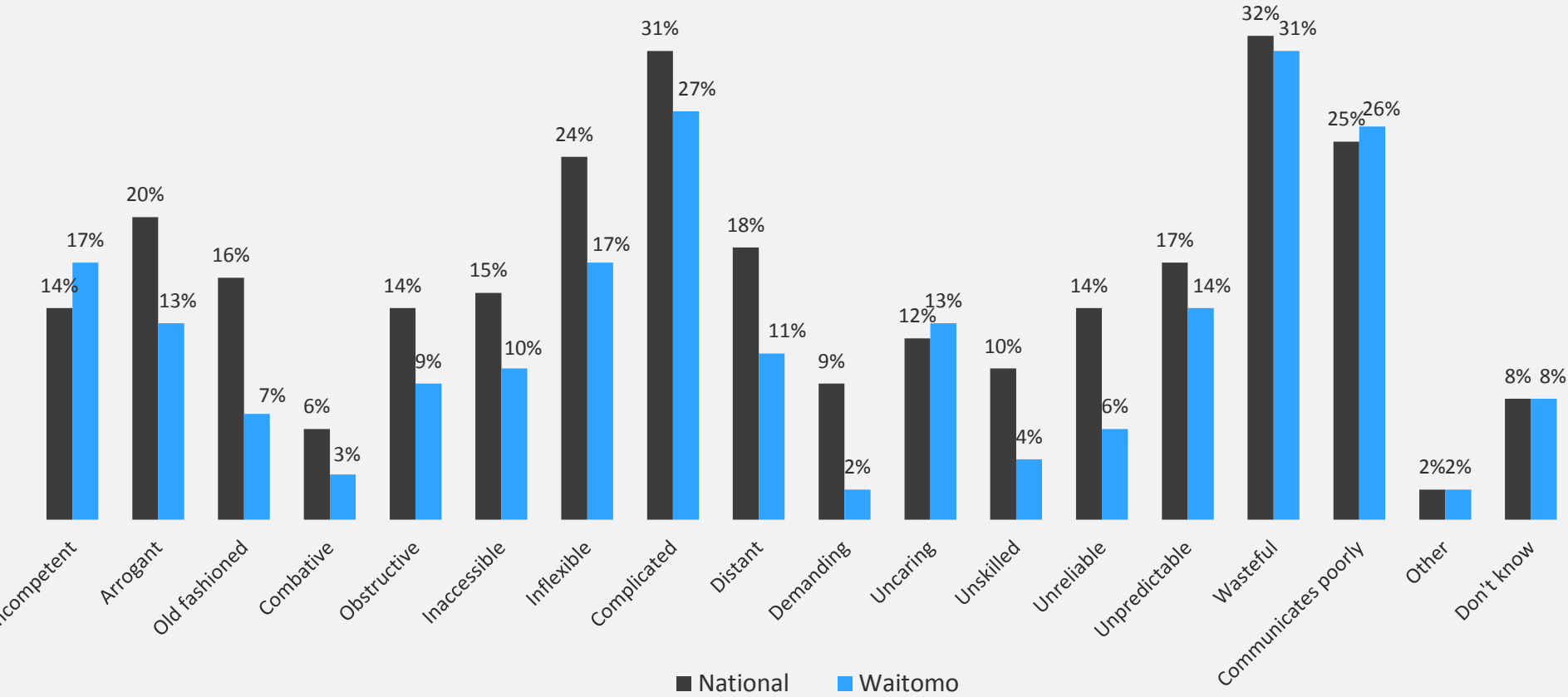
Positive words describing local government selected by the public



Q: Now please think about local government and which words you would associate with the sector

Residents in Waitomo are slightly more likely than the national average to describe local government as 'incompetent'. But, overall, Waitomo residents are less likely than respondents across New Zealand to use negative words to describe local government.

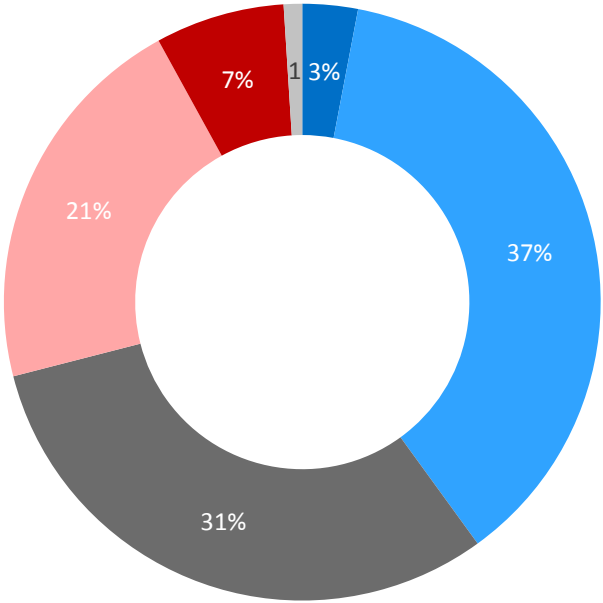
Negative words describing local government selected by the public



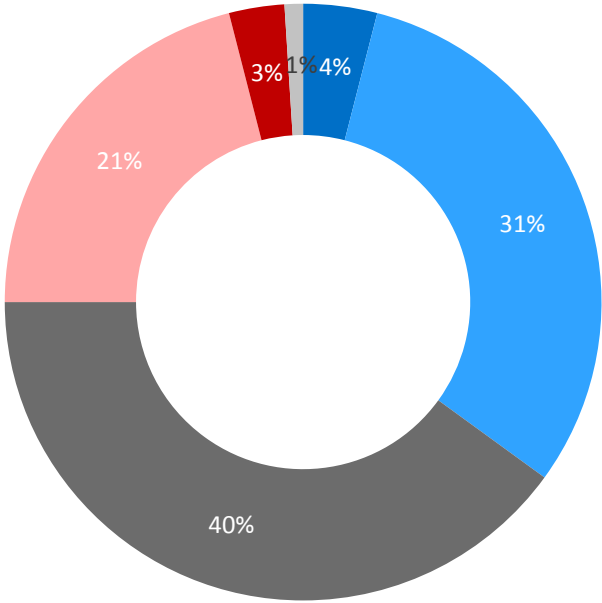
Q: Now please think about local government and which words you would associate with the sector

Over a third (35%) of Waitomo residents are satisfied with the overall performance of local government, lower than the national average of 40%.

National



Waitomo



Very satisfied Fairly satisfied Neither nor Fairly dis-satisfied Very dis-satisfied Don't know

Q: Overall how satisfied or dis-satisfied are you with the performance of local government in New Zealand?

Base: All respondents.

Performance of the sector

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SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE IN WAITOMO

Half of Waitomo residents agree that local government has the skills and expertise needed to manage community affairs, keeps people informed about what they are doing and has constructive working relationships with Iwi.

Approximately...

5 in 10

... agree local government:

keeps people informed about what they are doing, has constructive working relationships with Iwi, has the skills and expertise to manage community affairs

4 in 10

... provides sufficient opportunities for people to have their say, leads on matters of importance to communities, have confidence in local government to make the right decisions, is effective, managers and staff do a good job, continually looks for ways to improve performance, partners effectively with other councils, local and community boards facilitate the responsiveness of council decision making to local needs, mayors and regional council chairs display sound and effective leadership, mayors, chairs and councillors have good strategies for developing the prosperity and wellbeing of their communities, councillors display sound and effective leadership

3 in 10

... is efficient

2 in 10

... makes it easy for people to interact and engage with them, listens to the needs of people, acts on the needs of people, provides good value for rates dollar spent, manages its finance well, can be trusted to make good spending decisions

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how local government in New Zealand interacts and engages with people? (All those who strongly agree or tend to agree)

Waitomo residents rate local government lower than the national average on statements about making interactions easy, and listening and acting on the needs of people.

Interaction and engagement with the public

Strongly agree and tend to agree (removing DKs*):



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how local government in New Zealand interacts and engages with people?

* DKs= 'Don't know' – we removed the proportion that said 'don't know' from the analysis of each statement. This allows findings to be more directly compared side-by-side.

Compared to national results, Waitomo residents rate local government higher in terms of having the skills and expertise to manage community affairs, and continually looking for ways to improve performance.

Performance of local government (chart 1 of 2)

Strongly agree and tend to agree (removing DKs*):



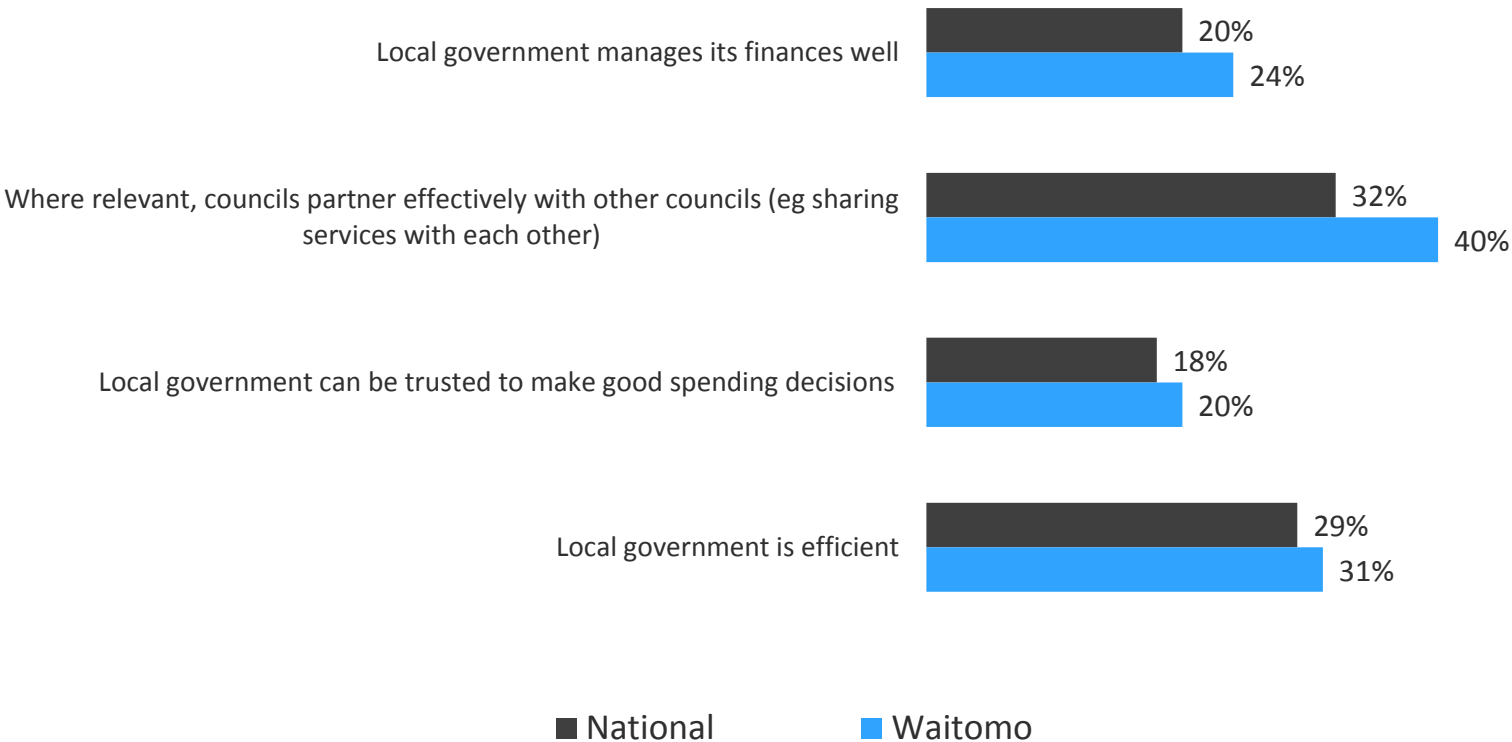
Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the performance and leadership of local government in New Zealand?

* DKs= 'Don't know' – we removed the proportion that said 'don't know' from the analysis of each statement. This allows findings to be more directly compared side-by-side.

Waitomo residents are generally more positive than the national average when it comes to believing that councils partner effectively with each other.

Performance of local government (chart 2 of 2)

Strongly agree and tend to agree (removing DKs*):



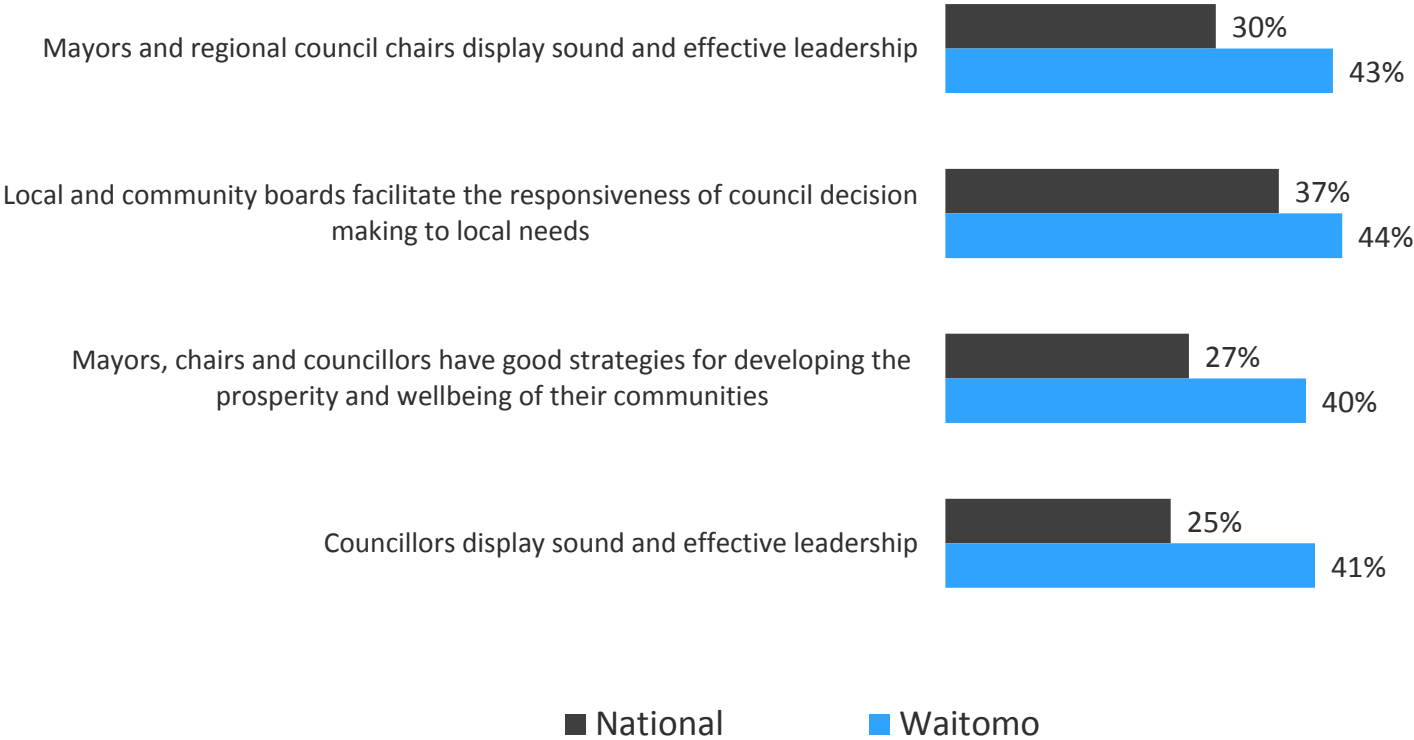
Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the performance and leadership of local government in New Zealand?

* DKs= 'Don't know' – we removed the proportion that said 'don't know' from the analysis of each statement. This allows findings to be more directly compared side-by-side.

Compared with respondents across New Zealand, Waitomo residents are generally more positive about locally elected leaders

Local government leadership

Strongly agree and tend to agree (removing DKs*):



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the performance and leadership of local government in New Zealand?

* DKs= 'Don't know' – we removed the proportion that said 'don't know' from the analysis of each statement. This allows findings to be more directly compared side-by-side.

The drivers of
reputation

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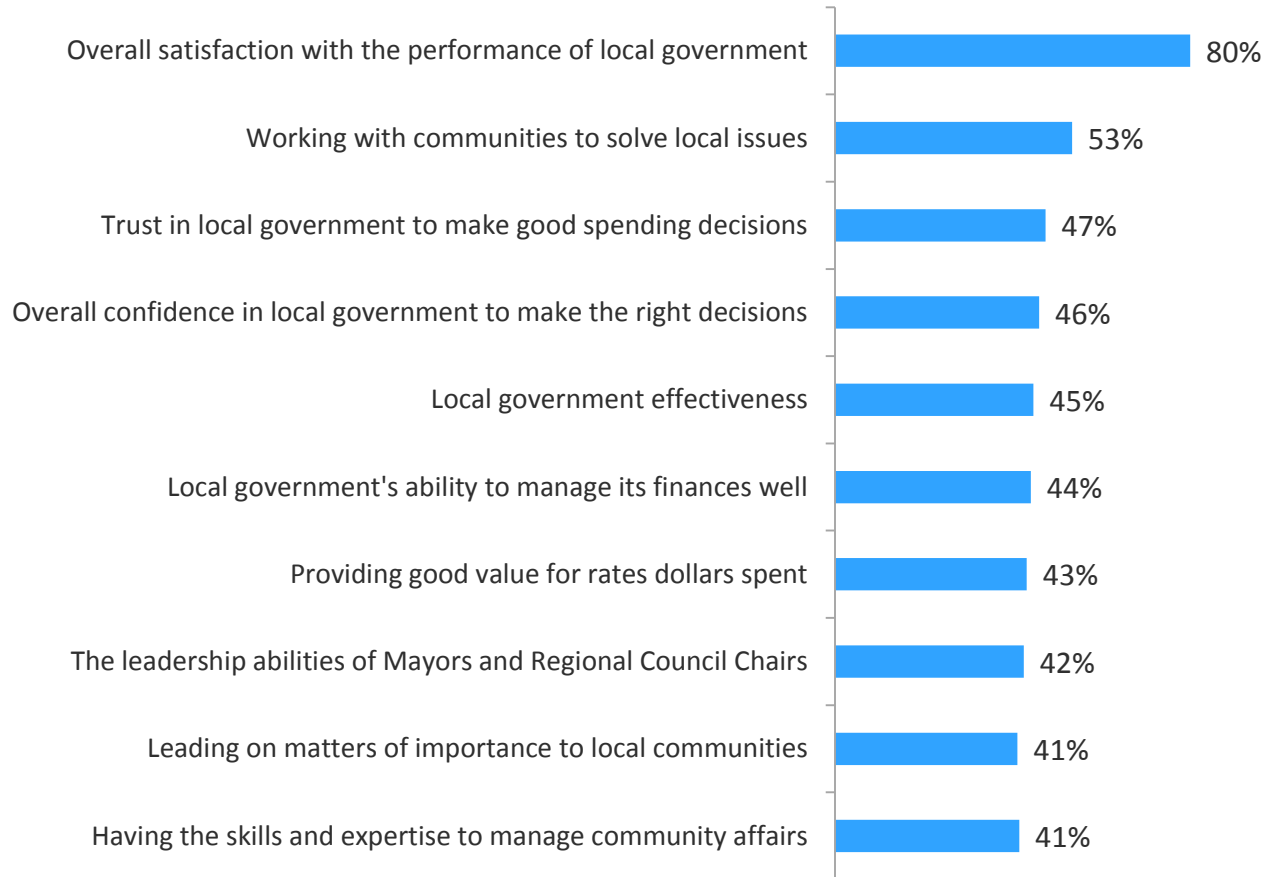


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The most important driver of local government reputation among the public in Waitomo is satisfaction with the overall performance of local government, followed by working with communities to solve local issues

Individual drivers of reputation among public in Waitomo



These figures are derived from statistical analysis of variables against likelihood to talk favourably about local government. Note that a comparison of figures against the national results is not possible because the national results are subject to reduced margins of error which means national drivers always appear higher than local drivers making the comparison meaningless.

Summary

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Summary

- Just over two in ten Waitomo residents say that local government is either 'extremely' or 'very' important to them personally (this is lower than the national average). Six in ten consider local government to be 'extremely' or 'very' important to New Zealand (which is also lower than the national average).
- Relative to the national average, Waitomo residents tend to be slightly more aware that local government has responsibility for local services and facilities, infrastructure and core services, compliance and regulation, management of natural resources and hazards, and business and industry development.
- Residents of Waitomo are less likely than those at a national level to have interacted with a council in the past year by looking at a council's website or by making a submission to council.
- Around six in ten Waitomo residents say they vote in all local authority elections, compared to the national average of five in ten (please note that voting participation questions are subject to a degree of social desirability).
- Just over three in ten (31%) Waitomo residents are likely to talk favourably about local government (that is they rate their chances of talking favourably as 'six in ten or greater'), lower than the national average of 36%.
- Waitomo residents are more likely than the national average to think of local government as 'professional'.
- On the other hand, residents in Waitomo are slightly more likely than the national average to describe local government as 'incompetent'. But, overall, Waitomo residents are less likely than respondents across New Zealand to use negative words to describe local government.
- Over a third (35%) of Waitomo residents are satisfied with the overall performance of local government, lower than the national average of 40%.
- Waitomo residents rate local government lower than the national average on statements about making interactions easy, and listening and acting on the needs of people.
- Compared to national results, Waitomo residents rate local government higher in terms of having the skills and expertise to manage community affairs, and continually looking for ways to improve performance. Waitomo residents are also more positive when it comes to believing that councils partner effectively with each other.
- The most important driver of local government reputation among the public in Waitomo is satisfaction with the overall performance of local government, followed by working with communities to solve local issues.