

Local Government Reform



Engagement Summary Report

Prepared For:
Kāpiti Coast District Council

Prepared By:
PublicVoice



Prepared by PublicVoice Limited

This report was produced by PublicVoice Limited, in partnership with Kāpiti Coast District Council. It draws together the responses to the Council's Local Government Reform engagement - an online survey hosted on the Council's Have Your Say platform, and written submissions received on paper and by email - to set out community views on the future structure of local government in Kāpiti.

About PublicVoice

PublicVoice Limited is a research and engagement consultancy headquartered in Wellington, New Zealand. We specialise in public policy research and consultation, providing services to local and central government agencies throughout New Zealand. To learn more, please visit www.publicvoice.co.nz.

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1 Executive summary

This engagement asked the Kāpiti Coast community how local government should be structured under Central Government’s local government reform programme. Between 9 and 30 June 2026, it drew 2,770 responses - 2,683 through the online survey and 87 written submissions - analysed as a single dataset. It was an open consultation: respondents are self-selected, the majority were older residents (61% were aged 60 or over) and ratepayers in Kāpiti (97%), so results describe the people who took part rather than a representative sample of the district. All figures are unweighted, and percentages below are of all respondents. Sub-group percentages quoted in this summary are first-preference shares from the accompanying cross-tabs workbook; Appendix C presents the age and area breakdowns as standardised scores.

What future do respondents prefer?

Among those who responded, going it alone leads on first preferences, with looking north to Horowhenua close behind; support for joining Wellington is limited, and very few want the decision made by Central Government (75 respondents, 3%).

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Go it alone as a single authority	1,186	2,370	8,197	2,752
2	Look north (e.g. with Horowhenua)	999	2,652	8,686	2,750
3	Wider Wellington regional unitary authority	498	2,361	6,656	2,744

Ranked 1st = number of respondents placing the option first (actual votes). Ranked in top 3 = number placing it in their top three. Score = rank points (a first ranking of K options scores K points, a last ranking scores 1) summed over respondents who ranked the option. These definitions apply to all summary tables in this section; each shows the top three options only, and the full tables appear in the body of the report.

Table 1: Preferred scenario - top three options (first preferences)

The two leading options are closer than the first-preference gap suggests: the Horowhenua option was ranked in the top two by more respondents overall, so it leads on the rank-points score. The result is best read as a two-way preference - stand alone, or look north - with a clear message from respondents that they want the decision made in Kāpiti, not made for it.

Who prefers what?

The preference is not uniform across the sample:

- Younger respondents lean hardest toward independence: just over half of those in their thirties put going it alone first, against 39% of those in their sixties. Appendix C shows the same divide on standardised scores: going it alone scores highest with respondents under 40 (79 against 73 for looking north), while every group from the forties up puts the Horowhenua option ahead.
- Written submissions leaned further toward going it alone than the online survey (56% vs 42%).
- No area put the Wellington option first. Ōtaki respondents were the most open to it (23%), consistent with their comments about hospital and transport links, while the smaller northern and semi-rural communities leaned most strongly to Horowhenua.

What matters most to respondents about local government?

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Protecting a strong local voice and local decision making	854	1,638	13,561	2,751
2	Affordability and potential cost efficiencies	813	1,858	14,401	2,750
3	Quality of infrastructure and services	617	2,032	14,747	2,750

Table 2: What matters most - top three priorities

Among those who responded, local voice and affordability lead almost level on first preferences, while quality of infrastructure and services is the most widely held priority overall - 73% placed it in their top three. The weight on local voice rises with age: respondents aged 70 and over give it its highest standardised score in Appendix C (75, against 67 to 69 for every younger group), and 44% of those aged 80 and over ranked it first.

Which Council services matter most?

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Water services (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water)	1,046	1,699	58,900	2,499
2	Districtwide planning (including strategies, policies and bylaws)	281	661	34,922	1,758
3	Roads	185	888	45,742	2,188

Table 3: Most important Council services - top three

Water services lead by a wide margin - more first preferences than the next four services combined. The comments explain why: safe, reliable water is treated as the baseline of Council business, and Kāpiti's investment in its own water services (including metering) is a point of pride - respondents do not want water services dissolved into a larger entity.

What do respondents see in amalgamation?

Among those who responded, scepticism came first: "No clear benefits" topped the ranked advantages, and 159 respondents wrote that they saw no advantages or could not judge without costings.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	No clear benefits	961	1,026	6,226	1,152
2	Better coordination of infrastructure and planning	535	1,177	6,722	1,427
3	Potential for cost savings	422	1,076	6,460	1,454

Table 4: Advantages of amalgamating - top three

The dominant concern is financial exposure: the potential rates impact of cross-subsidising a larger area sat in the top three for 65%, and the written comments are explicit about the mechanism - Kāpiti has paid to sort its own water and infrastructure, Wellington has not, and amalgamation is expected to send the bill north. This rating-impact concern comes from a respondent base that was predominantly ratepayers (97%).

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Potential rates impact, and cross-subsidising rates for services across a larger area	1,028	1,789	15,233	2,297
2	Loss of local voice	637	1,162	11,651	1,929
3	Services becoming less responsive or decrease in existing service levels	301	1,332	12,281	2,094

Table 5: Concerns about amalgamating - top three

And in standing alone?

The concerns are about scale - funding major infrastructure and carrying costs across a small ratepayer base - though 539 respondents said they had no major concerns at all. The advantages mirror the engagement's core values. A concern the ranked options did not offer was written in by respondents: that choosing to stand alone may not stick, with Central Government's backstop provisions forcing a later, worse amalgamation.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Limited ability to fund major infrastructure	806	1,567	10,801	1,826
2	Potential rates impact	630	1,269	9,445	1,740
3	No major concerns	539	581	4,214	750

Table 6: Concerns about standing alone - top three

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Local decision-making and community voice retained	717	1,335	13,258	1,761
2	Protection of local rates being spent within Kāpiti	643	1,361	13,960	1,915
3	Decisions better reflect Kapiti's unique needs and priorities	475	1,429	13,614	1,852

Table 7: Advantages of standing alone - top three

What do respondents want changed, and kept?

From 6,694 coded open-text comments across nine questions (one comment per respondent per question; 2,057 respondents answered at least one), among those who responded:

- Change: financial discipline - focus on core services and infrastructure (the single most-raised theme in the whole engagement: 751 respondents across all questions, 397 on this question alone), stop overspending (359), and hold rates to what households can afford (260).
- Keep: localness - local voice and representation, community boards and accessible councillors, the district's identity, and its water services.
- The two messages coexist with a current of goodwill: satisfaction with council performance was raised by 156 respondents in the change question and 130 in the keep question, so the discontent is directed at spending priorities rather than at the institution.

What does this mean for the reform decision?

Taken together, the engagement answers its own question fairly directly. Respondents' first preference is to retain local control - either standing alone or, with almost equal weight, in a northward partnership with Horowhenua that respondents see as a fit of geography, scale and lifestyle. Support for joining Wellington is limited and heavily conditioned by fear of inheriting its infrastructure liabilities; opposition to Central Government deciding is near universal in this sample. Whatever structure eventuates, respondents attach conditions:

- rates raised in Kāpiti are spent in Kāpiti;
- a local voice that survives any restructure; and
- a council - existing or new - that spends less and concentrates on core services.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the engagement

Kāpiti Coast District Council ran this engagement between 9 and 30 June 2026 to hear from the community about the future structure of local government in Kāpiti. In 2026 Central Government announced a reform pathway - “Head Start” - under which councils can work together and propose how they could be reorganised into fewer, larger councils. Councils that put forward their own proposal get to shape how the new structure looks; those that do not may have one decided for them later. Before Council settles its position, it wanted to understand where the community stands.

2.2 Coverage

The engagement was open to everyone. People could respond through two channels, which are combined into a single dataset for this report:

- **Online survey** - hosted on the Council’s Have Your Say engagement platform (2,683 responses).
- **Written submissions** - paper feedback forms, emails and letters (87 submissions), transcribed and appended to the survey dataset.

In total, 2,770 responses are analysed - equivalent to roughly 11% of the district’s approximately 25,600 rating units, and about 5% of its usually resident population (55,914 at the 2023 Census). Because this was an open consultation rather than a controlled sample, results describe the people who chose to take part, not necessarily the district as a whole (see Methodology).

2.3 The scenarios in front of the community

The engagement asked people to weigh four potential futures for local government in Kāpiti:

- Kāpiti Coast District Council goes it alone as a single authority.
- Looking at opportunities north - for example Kāpiti Coast District Council and Horowhenua District Council.
- Joining with councils in the wider Wellington region to form a regional unitary authority.
- Letting Central Government decide.

2.4 Questions the engagement was designed to answer

The survey and feedback form were built around a small number of structural questions:

- **What matters most** to people about how local government works in Kāpiti.
- **Which Council services** people see as most important.
- **The advantages and concerns** people weigh up for the two broad paths - amalgamating with other councils, or standing alone.
- **Which scenario** people prefer for Kāpiti’s future.

Open-text questions then asked what changes are needed in local government in Kāpiti, what should remain unchanged, and gave space for other concerns, advantages and comments at each step.

2.5 Guide to the rest of the report

The **Methodology** section sets out how the two channels were collected and combined, and how the ranked questions are reported.

The **Respondent profile** describes who took part.

Body sections then cover **What matters most, Most important Council services, Amalgamating and standing alone: advantages and concerns**, and the **Preferred scenario**.

The **Qualitative themes** section draws together the open-text material. Appendix A summarises the engagement questions, Appendix B is a glossary of the qualitative themes, and Appendix C breaks the ranked questions down by demographic group.

3 Methodology

3.1 Overview

The engagement ran as an open public consultation with two response channels - an online survey on the Council's Have Your Say engagement platform, and written submissions - analysed as a single combined dataset.

Channel	n
Online survey (Have Your Say platform)	2,683
Written submissions (paper forms, emails and letters)	87
Total	2,770

Table 8: Responses by channel

3.2 Written submissions

Written submissions - 87 in total, comprising scanned paper feedback forms, emails and letters - were transcribed and structured to match the online survey questions, then appended to the survey dataset. Handwriting was extracted with automated transcription and every submission passed through a systematic quality-assurance review, with discrepancies adjudicated manually against the source documents.

Paper responses do not always follow the survey's ranking format, so a small set of documented rules, confirmed with Council, was applied consistently:

- Ticks or selections without a rank number were recorded as *selected but unranked*: the item counts as selected but does not contribute a rank.
- Where a respondent gave the same rank to more than one item, or one written line covered more than one option, the tie was recorded as written.
- Where several written lines mapped to a single option on the form, the best (highest) written rank was used.
- Ranks written beyond the number of available options were recorded as selected but unranked.
- Written submissions recorded age in decade bands rather than the online form's five-year bands, so the respondent profile reports age in decades for all respondents. Other demographic labels were harmonised to the online wording.

One structural difference between the channels affects the services question: the paper form presented 24 service options where the online survey listed 26 - the paper form combined "Parks and reserves" with "Playgrounds and sports fields", and "Roads" with "Footpaths and cycleways, walkways and bridleways". A paper rank given to a combined line is counted toward both of the corresponding online options, as a tie. This preserves the respondent's intent for both services, but means a single paper response can contribute to two rows of the services table.

3.3 How the ranked questions are reported

Most of the engagement’s closed questions asked respondents to rank options in order of importance or preference. Throughout the body of this report, ranked questions are presented using the **top-frequency method**: options are ordered by the number of respondents who ranked them first - actual votes, not averages. This presentation was chosen by Council as the most direct and transparent reading of first preferences.

Any summary of ranked data involves a methodological choice, and different methods can order options differently - in particular where one option attracts many first preferences while another is ranked consistently high but first by fewer people. For transparency, each question’s table also reports the number of respondents placing each option in their top three and a rank-points score (which credits an option for every rank it receives, weighted by position). Where the choice of method changes the ordering of leading options, this is noted in the relevant chapter. Appendix C breaks each ranked question down by age band and area.

Two reporting conventions apply to all ranked questions. First, percentages use all respondents as the base, including those who did not rank the question, so percentages read conservatively. Second, the online form required every option to be ranked on some questions, and a recurring point in the comments was that respondents had been made to rank options they oppose. A low ranking for an unpopular option should therefore not be read as endorsement, and top-three counts can overstate support for options few people put first - most visibly “Let Central Government decide” on the scenario question, which attracted 75 first preferences but 856 top-three placements.

3.4 Weighting and representativeness

All figures in this report are **unweighted** - they describe the people who took part. This was an open consultation: anyone could respond, and those who did are self-selected rather than a controlled sample of the district.

The Have Your Say engagement platform did not require registration, so demographic data is limited to what the form itself collected (age band, area, property ownership, ratepayer status, and whether the response was made as an individual or on behalf of an organisation).

Population weighting has not been applied. In practice 97% of respondents identified as ratepayers, so these figures are best read as a snapshot of views held by engaged local property owners: a substantial minority of Kāpiti households - those who do not own their home, who tend to be younger and on lower incomes - are largely absent from the responses. Results should be read as the views of engaged respondents, not as a statistically representative survey of the Kāpiti Coast population.

3.5 Qualitative coding

The open-text responses were coded by the research team against a framework generated from the responses themselves, so categories emerge from the data rather than a fixed list. The framework is styled to each question: where a question already frames its answers (an “other concerns” box contains concerns; an “advantages missed” box contains advantages), themes are named as the concern or advantage itself and grouped into categories. Sentiment tags (Support, Concern, Oppose, Consider) are applied only where a comment runs against the question’s frame or where a question invites mixed commentary. Theme frequencies are reported across the combined dataset as counts of distinct respondents; because a respondent can raise more than one theme, counts do not sum to the number of

respondents, and theme counts should be read as indicative relative frequencies rather than precise measures.

In total 6,694 comments were coded - one per respondent per question, from 2,057 respondents who answered at least one open-text question.

Question-level comment counts quoted in the report (for example, n=893 for the services question) are substantive comments: responses along the lines of “n/a” or “no comment” are coded as null and excluded from those counts and from the theme tables.

Quoted comments throughout the report are verbatim (including original spelling) and were selected to illustrate the leading themes and the range of views; they are illustrative, not statistically representative.

Themes from a comment box attached to a ranked question are reported alongside that question in the body chapters; the two stand-alone open questions (what should change, what should stay) have their own chapter, which also summarises each theme category across the whole engagement. A glossary defining every theme is in Appendix B.

3.6 Things to keep in mind

Self-selection is the main caveat: an open consultation attracts people with stronger views, and the achieved sample should not be assumed to mirror the district’s population (see Respondent profile). Written submissions were transcribed from handwriting; while all passed quality assurance, a small number of hard-to-read entries are flagged in the working dataset. Base sizes vary by question because not every respondent answered every question - each table and chart reports its own base.

4 Respondent profile

This section describes who took part, so the views that follow can be read in context. It is an unweighted description of the people who responded. The engagement form collected a limited demographic set - age band, area, property ownership, ratepayer status and respondent type - and not every respondent answered every demographic question, so base sizes vary. Written submissions provide these details only where the submitter included them. Because written submissions recorded age in decade bands, age is reported in decade bands for all respondents.

4.1 Age

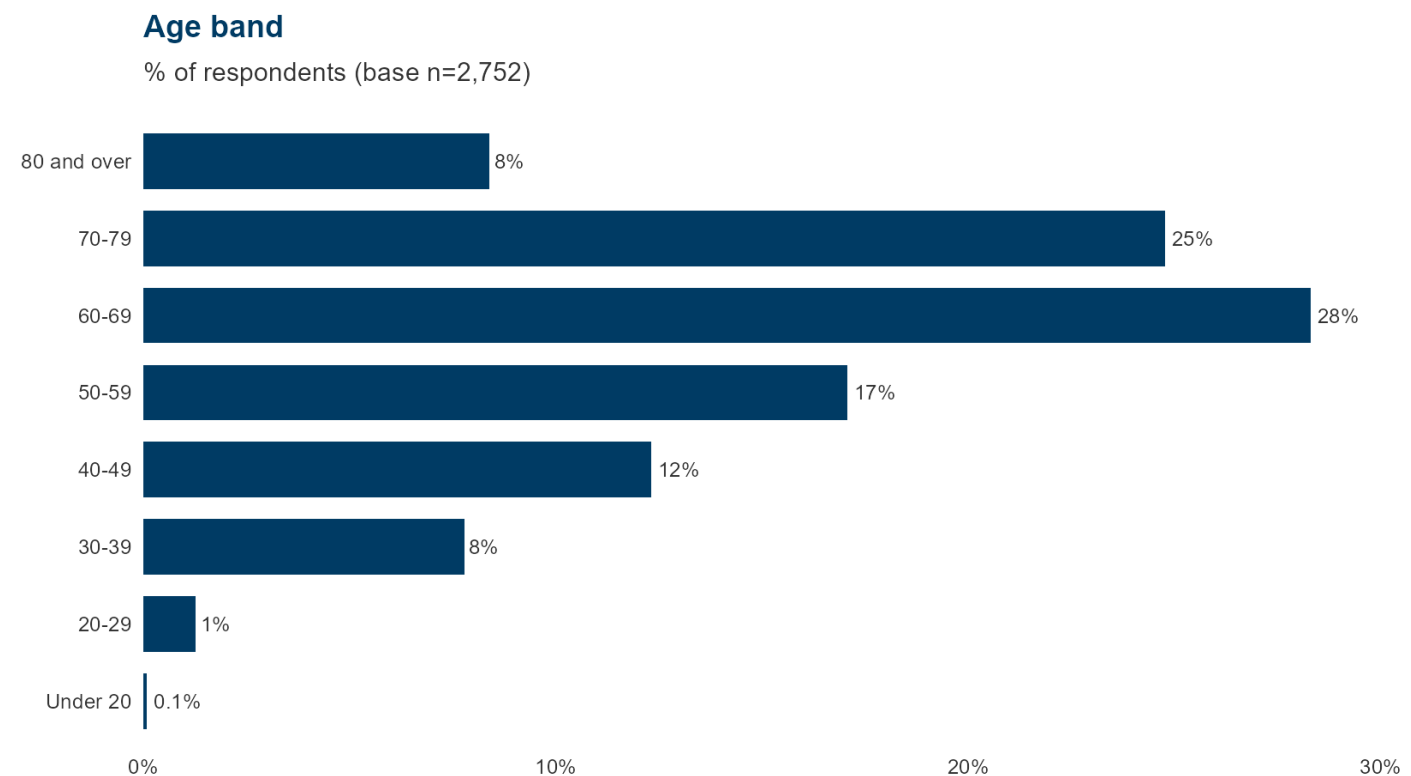


Figure 1: Age band

Category	n	%
Under 20	2	0.1%
20-29	35	1%
30-39	214	8%
40-49	339	12%
50-59	470	17%
60-69	779	28%
70-79	682	25%
80 and over	231	8%

Base: respondents who answered (n=2,752 of 2,770).

Table 9: Age band

4.2 Area

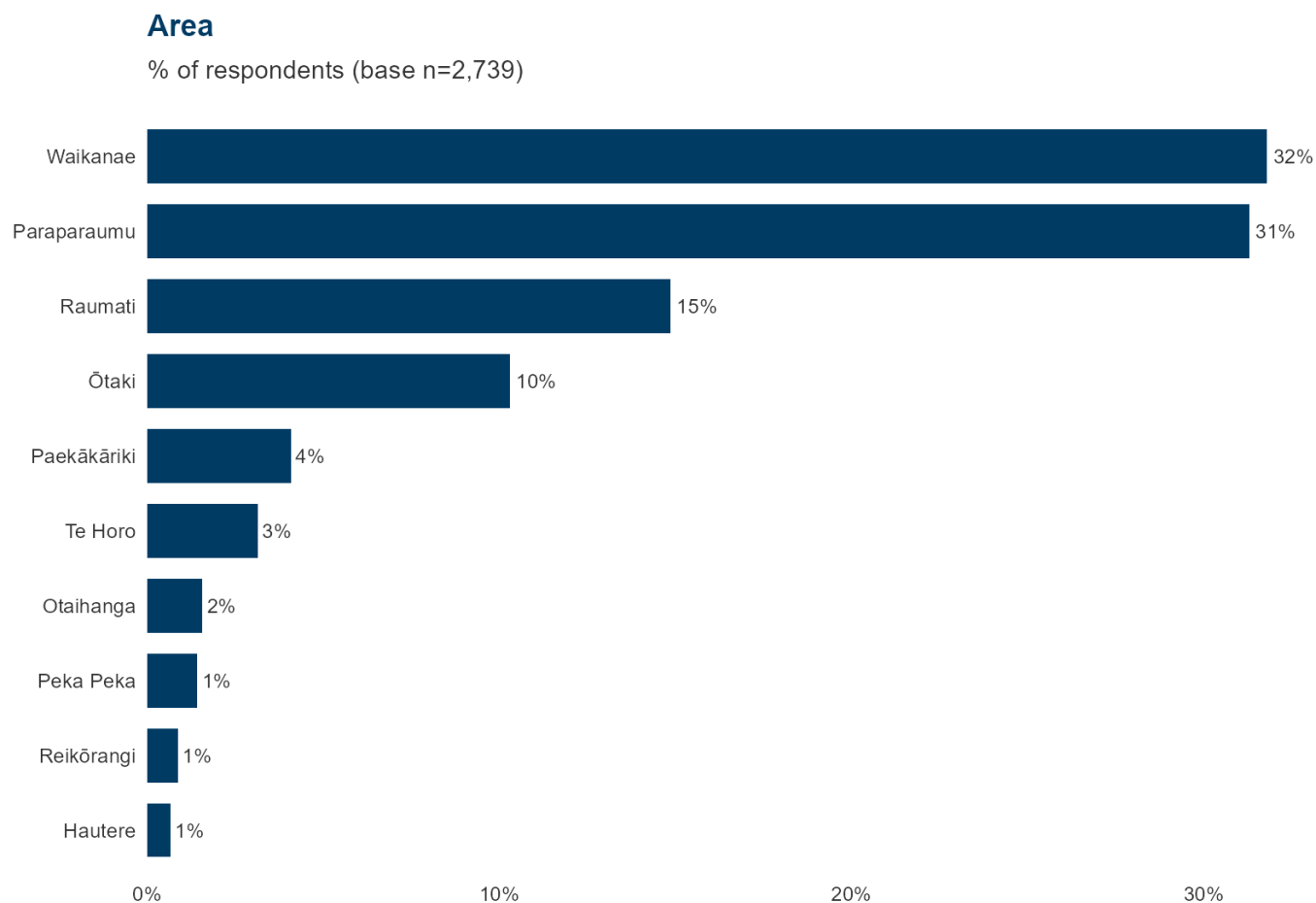


Figure 2: Area

Category	n	%
Waikanae	871	32%
Paraparaumu	857	31%
Raumati	407	15%
Ōtaki	282	10%
Paekākāriki	112	4%
Te Horo	86	3%
Otaihanga	43	2%
Peka Peka	39	1%
Reikōrangī	24	1%
Hautere	18	1%

Base: respondents who answered (n=2,739 of 2,770).

Table 10: Area

4.3 Property ownership and rates

Lives/owns property in Kāpiti

% of respondents (base n=2,753)

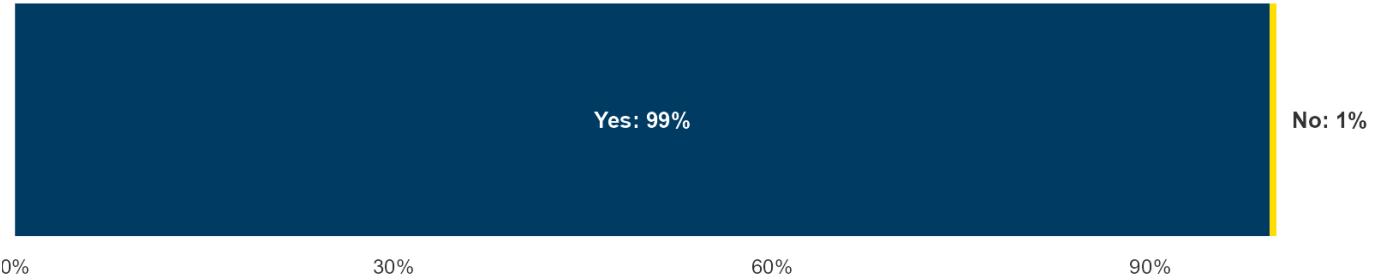


Figure 3: Lives/owns property in Kāpiti

Category	n	%
Yes	2,737	99%
No	16	1%

Base: respondents who answered (n=2,753 of 2,770).

Table 11: Lives/owns property in Kāpiti

Kāpiti ratepayer

% of respondents (base n=2,755)

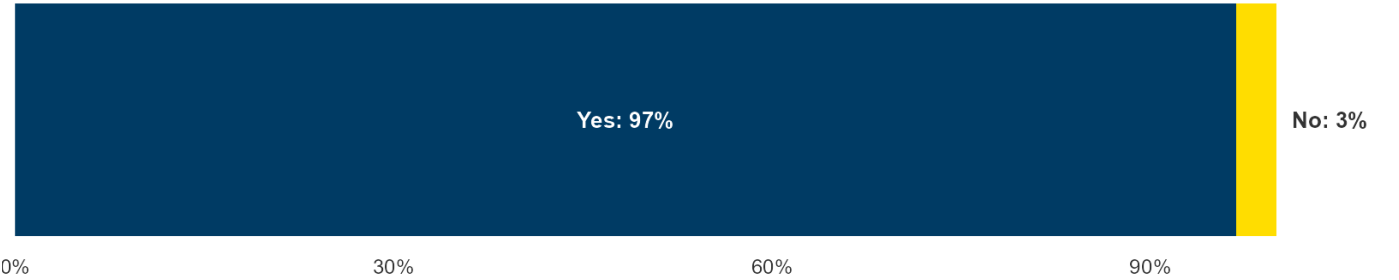


Figure 4: Kāpiti ratepayer

Category	n	%
Yes	2,666	97%
No	89	3%

Base: respondents who answered (n=2,755 of 2,770).

Table 12: Kāpiti ratepayer

4.4 Responding as an individual or organisation

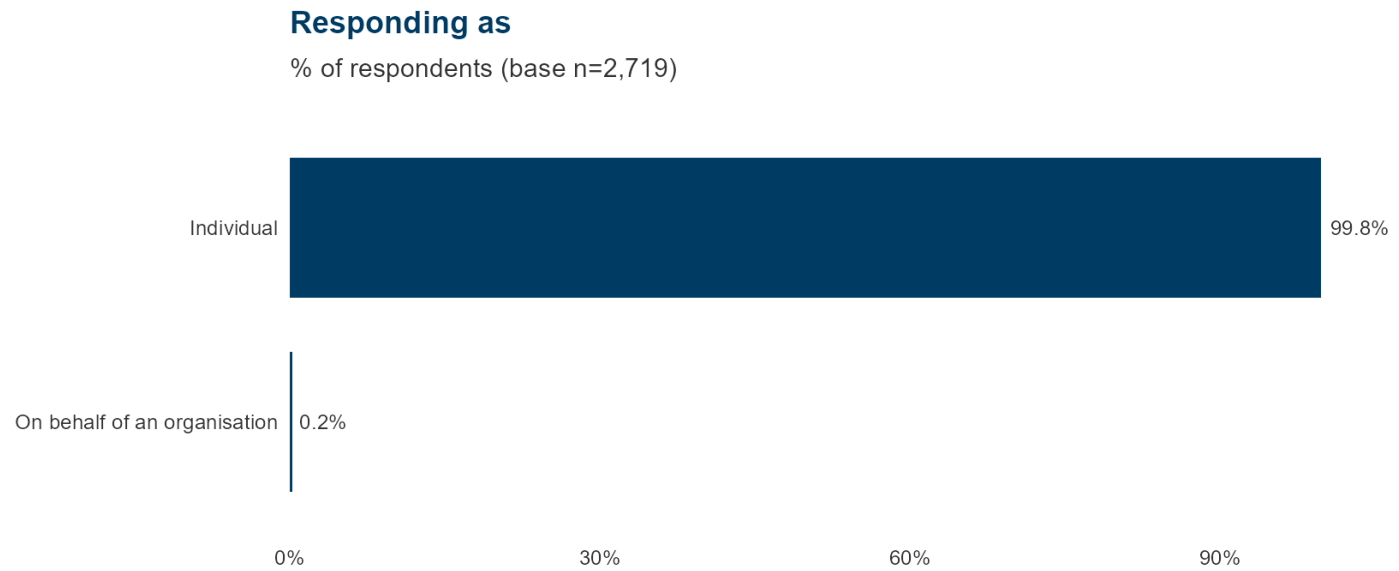


Figure 5: Responding as

Category	n	%
Individual	2,713	99.8%
On behalf of an organisation	6	0.2%

Base: respondents who answered (n=2,719 of 2,770).

Table 13: Responding as

5 What matters most

Respondents ranked what matters most about how local government works in Kāpiti. Results are reported using the top-frequency method: items are ordered by the number of respondents who ranked them first (actual votes), not by averaged ranks.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Protecting a strong local voice and local decision making	854	1,638	13,561	2,751
2	Affordability and potential cost efficiencies	813	1,858	14,401	2,750
3	Quality of infrastructure and services	617	2,032	14,747	2,750
4	Protecting our district's identity and character	210	959	10,675	2,750
5	Locally delivered infrastructure and services	161	1,108	11,053	2,750
6	Coordination across the Greater Wellington region	72	417	6,661	2,747
7	Coordination up the West Coast	37	253	5,961	2,748

*Items ordered by the number of respondents ranking them first (actual votes). * items tied on first-preference votes (order within ties set by top-3 count, then rank-points score). Score = rank points (rank 1 = 7 ... rank 7 = 1) summed over respondents who ranked the item. Base: respondents who ranked the question.*

Table 14: Priorities: first-preference votes (top-frequency method)

5.1 Top three

The chart below shows the share of all respondents placing each item in their top three.

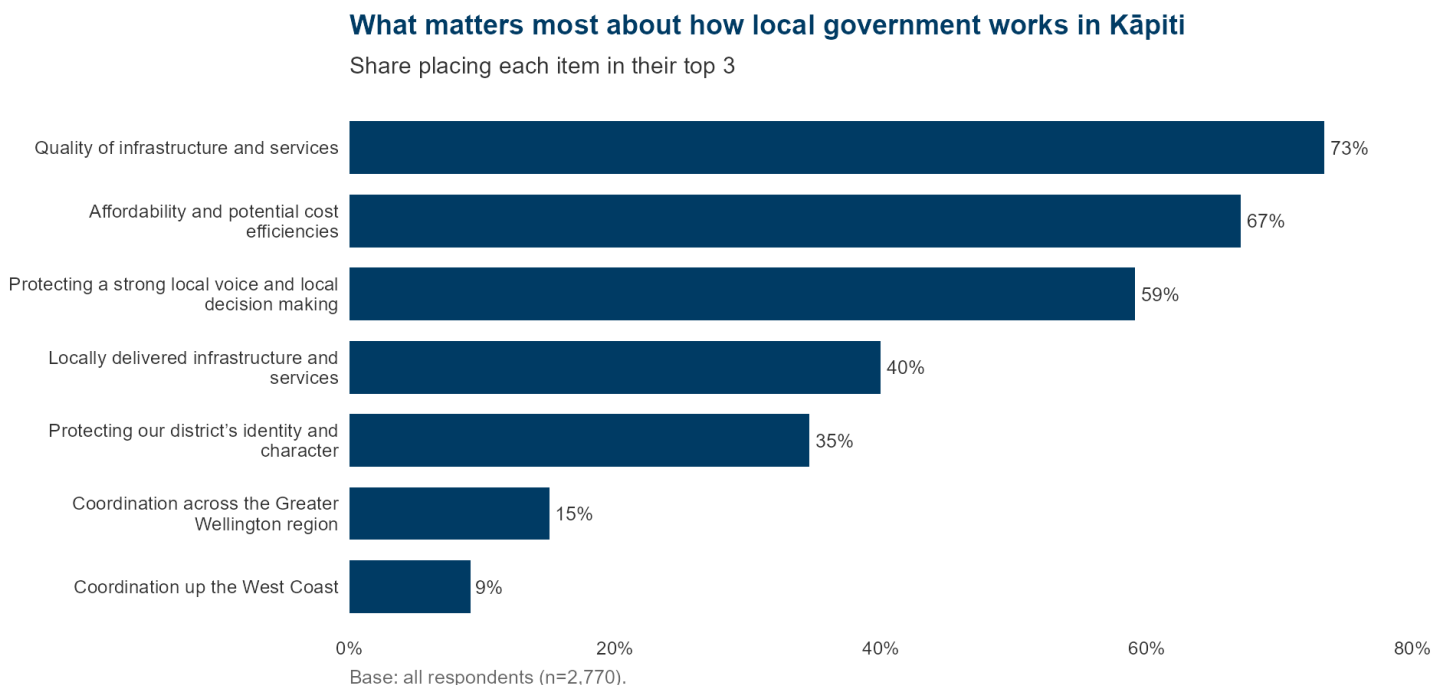


Figure 6: Priorities: share ranking each in their top three

Demographic breakdowns of this question, by age band and area, are provided in Appendix C.

5.2 Anything we've missed

Survey question: *"Is there anything we've missed?"*

Overview

Respondents (n=501) used this box mainly to restate what they most want protected. Rates and cost (119 respondents) and local voice and representation (118) lead the themes, followed closely by service delivery priorities (116), cost-sharing concerns (108) - led by not wanting to subsidise Wellington's water infrastructure - and views on which councils Kāpiti should partner with (102), where opposition to joining Wellington and a preference for looking north to Horowhenua were the recurring positions. Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

RATES & COST (119 respondents, 24%)

Affordability - second on first preferences in the ranking - reads in these comments as a household-budget issue rather than an abstract one: rates increases and affordability (77) and council overspending (52) lead, with staffing and bureaucracy (26) behind them. The recurring ask is restraint: rate rises held to inflation, spending matched to what households can carry.

"Living within our means with regard to household earnings in our district." - Waikanae resident

"Rates increases limited to inflation. Improved efficiency and cost reduction" - Raumati resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (118 respondents, 24%)

These comments echo the ranking above, where protecting a strong local voice attracted more first preferences than any other priority. What respondents added in their own words is what that voice is for: fair representation of the district's residents (72 raised local voice directly, 58 local decision-making), a council that listens to ratepayers rather than louder interests (21), and being heard by Central Government - a recurring framing was that Kāpiti's voice would simply disappear inside a larger authority.

"Ensuring that Council fairly represents the views and wishes of the district residents" - Raumati resident

"Providing a voice for Kapiti's unique needs to central government representatives" - Reikōrangī resident

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (116 respondents, 23%)

What matters here is continuity of delivery: focus on core services and infrastructure (61), long-term value for money with infrastructure keeping pace with growth (27), and Kāpiti's own investment record (21). 16 respondents put it more bluntly - they care about the quality and cost of services, not who delivers them.

"Continuing reliable infrastructure and services across Kapiti" - Waikanae resident

"Focus on providing essential services, not ideological pursuits." - Raumati resident

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (108 respondents, 22%)

Distinct from the general rates worry, this is about whose bills Kāpiti would pay: not subsidising Wellington's water problems (63), not inheriting other councils' debt (40), and keeping rates raised in Kāpiti spent in Kāpiti (29). It previews the concern that tops the amalgamation question later in the report.

"Not having to pay for others area's poor infrastructure" - Waikanae resident

"Not inheriting another district's bad decision making and debt" - Ōtaki resident

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (102 respondents, 20%)

Though this question asked about priorities rather than partners, a fifth of commenters volunteered a position anyway: opposition to joining Wellington (66), arguments from geography and fit (40), and a preference for Horowhenua (28) - the same pattern the scenario ranking later confirms.

"Merge with any one HDC. Not Wellington. Kapiti is not a city." - Paraparaumu resident

"We don't want to inherit Wellington's infrastructure problems." - Paraparaumu resident

GENERAL (77 respondents, 15%)

Straight statements of position: 48 opposed amalgamation or preferred the status quo, while 29 supported amalgamation or change - a reminder that the engaged sample, though leaning strongly one way, is not unanimous.

"We should not be forced to become just one greater council." - Waikanae resident

"It's best to merge for reduced council and water rates." - Ōtaki resident

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (63 respondents, 13%)

The efficiency-minded raised economies of scale (27), shared services or collaboration short of amalgamation (23), and reducing duplication (18). A recurring angle was collaboration with neighbours as a way to capture these gains without giving up the council.

"Reduction in operating costs. With a more efficient administration" - Waikanae resident

*"We should join with our close councils to work together not a big distant bodies" -
Paraparaumu resident*

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (54 respondents, 11%)

A mix of both currents that run through the whole engagement: accountability for how rates are spent (27) and distrust of the current council (24) on one side, and on the other a smaller group content with how the district is run.

"Investigation into current spending by council to reduce rates" - Raumati resident

"It's not broken doesn't need fixing. Council is doing a great job." - Paraparaumu resident

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE (47 respondents, 9%)

Environmental protection (41) was raised as a priority the listed options under-weighted - protecting the natural environment as the district grows - with the climate question splitting four wanting climate resilience prioritised against two wanting less focus on it.

“Protecting our environment and mitigating climate change” - Ōtaki resident

“Looking to our future while recognising our unique environment” - Waikanae resident

IWI & TE TIRITI (26 respondents, 5%)

Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti commitments were raised as things to carry through any restructure - relationships that respondents did not want lost in a larger authority.

*“Commitment to uphold Te Tiriti. Relationships and engagement with Mana Whenua.” -
Survey respondent*

“Co-governance. Ensuring Māori voice at every decision level” - Paekākāriki resident

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (25 respondents, 5%)

Opposition to the decision being made in Wellington rather than Kāpiti (13), and calls for the Council to lead and engage on reform rather than have it imposed.

*“Better to make the decision ourselves than have it imposed by central government” -
Paraparaumu resident*

*“Resisting poorly considered or planned changes from Central Government.” - Waikanae
resident*

REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (22 respondents, 4%)

Almost entirely one topic: public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington (22) - the practical southward tie these respondents felt the “look north” argument overlooks.

*“For public transport and hospital it is better to link to Wellington than Horowhenua” -
Ōtaki resident*

*“Access to essential services such as hospitals and public transport are very important.” -
Written submission, Waikanae*

STANDING ALONE (11 respondents, 2%)

A small group restated the case for independence: Kāpiti is well run and big enough to manage its own affairs.

*“We want nothing to do with anything the other councils are doing, Kapiti coast works
well being independent.” - Paraparaumu resident*

*“I have seen no economic analysis that says Kapiti would benefit from any merger-so I say
stay independent” - Paraparaumu resident*

COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES (5 respondents, 1%)

Five respondents named access to health services and hospital links as a priority the list had missed.

“Fixing confusion with Health Services being provided by two DHBs.” - Waikanae resident

Theme	n
RATES & COST	119
Rates increases and affordability	77
Council overspending / waste	52
Staff numbers and bureaucracy	26
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	118
Local voice and representation	72
Local decision-making on local priorities	58
Listen to Kāpiti ratepayers and heed their views	21
Access to elected members / councillors	8
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	116
Focus on core services and infrastructure	61
Long-term value for money and infrastructure matching growth	27
Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record	21
Quality and cost of services over who delivers them	16
Arts, culture and community services	7
Kāpiti airport ownership, retention and future	2
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	108
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	63
Assuming other councils' debt and deficit burden	40
Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti	29
Transition and reform costs	9
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	102
Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington	66
Geographic, cultural fit and sensible boundaries	40
Preference for Horowhenua / looking north	28
GENERAL	77
Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo	48
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	29
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	63
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	27
Shared services / collaboration without amalgamation	23

Theme	n
Reducing duplication of roles and services	18
Ease of dealing with council / consents process	9
Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed	2
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	54
Accountability for how rates are spent	27
Distrust of current council / leadership	24
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	8
Satisfaction with current council performance	5
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE	47
Environmental protection	41
Disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness	5
Climate resilience and coastal protection	4
Reduced focus on climate change	2
IWI & TE TIRITI	26
Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti	26
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	25
Opposition to Central Government deciding / 'done to us'	13
Council leadership and engagement on reform	9
Distrust of Central Government motives	6
Central Government overriding local planning	4
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	22
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	22
STANDING ALONE	11
Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run	11
COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES	5
Access to health services and hospital links	5

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 15: Anything we've missed - themes

6 Most important Council services

Respondents ranked the Council services most important to them, from a list of 26. Results are reported using the top-frequency method: services are ordered by the number of respondents who ranked them first (actual votes), not by averaged ranks.

Water services lead by a wide margin on first preferences. Note that not every respondent ranked every service - the number who ranked each service is shown in the right-hand column, and services further down a respondent's priorities were often left unranked.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Water services (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water)	1,046	1,699	58,900	2,499
2	Districtwide planning (including strategies, policies and bylaws)	281	661	34,922	1,758
3	Roads	185	888	45,742	2,188
4	Governance, planning and reporting	135	365	23,778	1,345
5	Local amenities	131	388	34,247	1,819
6	Business growth and development	113	353	26,592	1,484
7	Emergency management	110	470	37,938	1,933
8	Coastal protection	94	380	31,312	1,698
9	Parks and reserves	76	391	40,000	2,072
10	Libraries	75	300	32,830	1,800
11	Communications and engagement	68	184	18,660	1,199
12	Footpaths and cycleways, walkways and bridleways	64	398	36,473	1,934
13	Waste minimisation	45	261	26,639	1,532
14	Community advocacy	42	128	15,527	986
15	Consenting and building services	40	236	24,977	1,458
16	Playgrounds and sports fields	35	191	30,172	1,707
17	Emissions reduction	31	88	13,139	1,007
18	Aquatics facilities	27	110	22,028	1,401
19	Events, arts and culture	25	104	19,789	1,323
20	Community development and grants	24	119	17,988	1,202
21	Older persons housing	18	86	15,079	1,089
22	Tourism and destination promotion	12	85	13,608	1,042
23	Public toilets *	10	106	24,347	1,497
24	Compliance *	10	61	13,233	977
25	Community halls	4	33	16,615	1,188

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
26	Cemeteries	2	25	12,439	1,027

*Items ordered by the number of respondents ranking them first (actual votes). * items tied on first-preference votes (order within ties set by top-3 count, then rank-points score). Score = rank points (rank 1 = 26 ... rank 26 = 1) summed over respondents who ranked the item. Base: respondents who ranked the question.*

Table 16: Most important Council services: first-preference votes (top-frequency method)

One channel difference affects two rows of this table: the paper feedback form combined “Parks and reserves” with “Playgrounds and sports fields”, and “Roads” with “Footpaths and cycleways, walkways and bridleways”, where the online survey listed them separately. A paper rank on a combined line counts toward both corresponding options as a tie (see Methodology).

6.1 Top three

The chart below shows the share of all respondents placing each service in their top three.

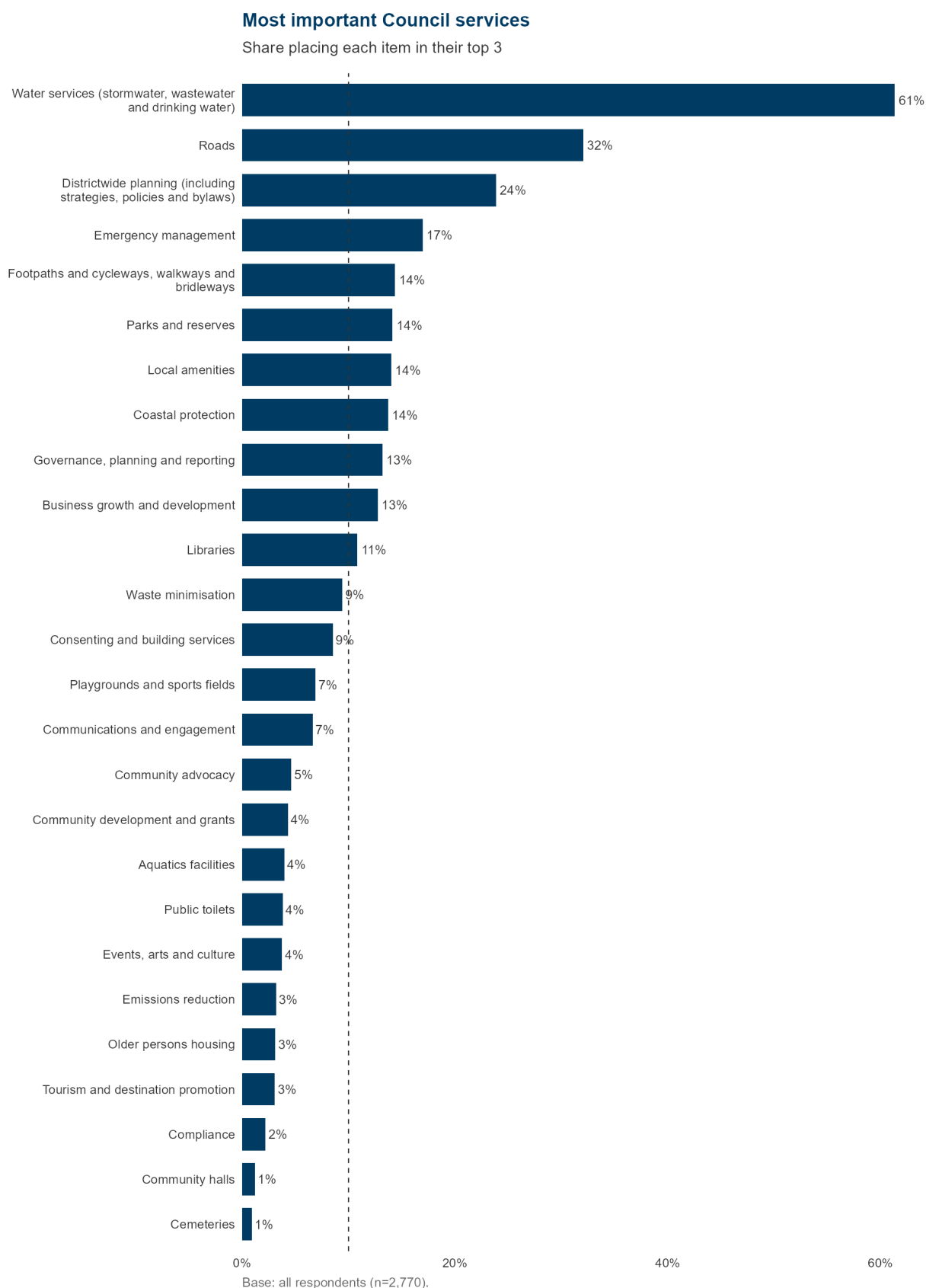


Figure 7: Most important services: share ranking each in their top three

Demographic breakdowns of this question, by age band and area, are provided in Appendix C.

6.2 Why these services are important

Survey question: “Please explain why these services are important to you and include any we may have missed.”

This question was asked in the online survey only; the paper form’s equivalent box was used for the service ranking itself, so these themes are almost entirely online voices.

Overview

Among the 893 respondents who made a substantive comment on this question, the most common explanation mirrors the ranking itself: a focus on core services and infrastructure (426 respondents raised service delivery themes, 371 of them the core-services message specifically) - water, roads and waste first, with “nice to haves” deferred while money is tight.

The next largest group of comments (271) valued community wellbeing and amenities: parks, libraries, pools and walkways as the things that make the district liveable and support physical and mental health.

Rates and cost discipline (177) ran through the explanations, 158 respondents simply noted that everything listed matters, and environmental protection and climate resilience (142) rounded out the leading themes. Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (426 respondents, 48%)

Waters position at the top of the service ranking is explained here in plain terms: it is a basic need, and basic needs come first. The core-services message (371) is less about cutting anything in particular than about sequencing: get water, roads and waste right before anything discretionary. Alongside it sit pride in Kāpiti’s water delivery record (23) and provision for an ageing population (30).

“Safe, reliable water is a basic need. Everything else is lower priority.” - Waikanae resident

“These are the core services that I believe are vital for our district.” - Raumati resident

COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES (271 respondents, 30%)

The counterweight to the core-services message: for 271 respondents the parks, libraries, pools, playgrounds and walkways are not “nice to haves” but the reason the district works. Recreation facilities (140) and the link between services and physical and mental wellbeing (99) lead the category, with libraries (51) and facilities for families and young people (51) named often - a reminder that the services ranked mid-table in the quantitative results carry real weight for the people who use them.

“The KCDC does a great job of maintaining a high quality of life, particularly an active and outdoors lifestyle.” - Paraparaumu resident

“These are important for the mental & physical wellbeing of residents of all ages” - Peka Peka resident

RATES & COST (177 respondents, 20%)

Cost discipline frames these explanations: overspending and waste (112) and rates affordability (88) are the reasons given for putting core services first, with affordable rubbish collection (21) the practical example most often named.

“Stick to core functions at a time of unprecedented cost increases” - Waikanae resident

“A lot of money is wasted and allocated to lower priority items” - Paraparaumu resident

GENERAL (166 respondents, 19%)

A sizeable group (158) declined to differentiate: everything on the list matters, with recurring pushback that ranking them at all felt artificial - context worth carrying when reading the service table's lower rows.

“Ranking doesn't reflect importance these are all important” - Waikanae resident

“These are all critical services to a well functioning region.” - Ōtaki resident

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE (142 respondents, 16%)

Environmental protection (83) and climate resilience and coastal protection (57) were named as reasons the environmental services matter, though the category holds dissent too: 15 respondents argued climate and emissions are a national responsibility rather than a district one, and 13 were sceptical about funding coastal protection.

*“Protecting and preserving the natural environment. Adapting to climate change” -
Waikanae resident*

“Climate change risk assessment and the changing environment” - Paraparaumu resident

LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY & CONTROL (112 respondents, 13%)

Not just which services, but who runs them: keeping infrastructure and delivery under local control (82) and securing water as the population grows (31). Wellington's water troubles are the cautionary tale running through these comments.

“These are core functions that need to be handled locally.” - Raumati resident

“Local understanding of local needs, and the capacity to act on that.” - Waikanae resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (97 respondents, 11%)

Almost entirely the local decision-making message (96): services matter because they are decided and paid for here.

“These services illustrate the word ‘local’ in the term ‘local government’.” - Paekākāriki resident

*“Our infrastructure done our way with our money. This is where I want to spend my
RATES on.” - Te Horo resident*

GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & CHARACTER (78 respondents, 9%)

A growth-positive current: 61 respondents linked the services to keeping the district attractive and avoiding stagnation, while 17 pushed back on intensification and townhouse development.

“Without growth and development areas stagnate and fall into decline. Everything else links from this.” - Paraparaumu resident

“We need to grow our community and be attractive to business to make it sustainable” - Raumati resident

LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER (78 respondents, 9%)

Respondents tied the services to the district’s identity (75) - public spaces as what makes the local area local.

“Public spaces like libraries, pools, parks are the key to what makes our local area local” - Paraparaumu resident

“All Areas listed are important to ensure the uniqueness of Kapiti in supporting our diverse community” - Paraparaumu resident

CORE SERVICES & PRIORITIES (71 respondents, 8%)

Two specific stances: the Council should not fund tourism and business promotion (41) - consistent with that service ranking near the bottom of the table - and safety and security should come first (30).

“They are important to ensure we have a good safe community to live in.” - Otaihangā resident

“Core services need to be done better, the other add-ons don’t matter much.” - Waikanae resident

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (60 respondents, 7%)

A pragmatic middle position: some services are better delivered regionally (45) - back-office, compliance, specialist functions - while frontline and local amenities stay local.

“The basic services are what are needed and controlled locally. Some of the others could be done further a field.” - Waikanae resident

“Important to pay for important community assets shared across a wide number of people to make it affordable” - Paekākāriki resident

TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY (50 respondents, 6%)

A distinctive split appeared on active transport - footpaths valued, cycleway spending questioned (27) - alongside roading and rural access priorities (27).

“Council should concentrate on water, drainage roads and other infrastructure items.” - Paraparaumu resident

*“Keep services to core services, that is 3 waters and roading, libraries are important.” -
Raumati resident*

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (24 respondents, 3%)

A small group tied service priorities to scepticism about elected members (14) and accountability for spending (11).

“Reducing wasteful expenditure, holds councillors accountable and ensures best bang for buck” - Ōtaki resident

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (19 respondents, 2%)

Even in a question about services, the Wellington water worry surfaced: all 19 raised not paying for other councils' infrastructure.

“Mainly filling this in so we DO NOT pay for Wellington aging pipes” - Waikanae resident

*“We need to avoid what is happening with Wellington water and sewage.” -
Paraparaumu resident*

REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (17 respondents, 2%)

Public transport and rail connectivity (17), raised mostly by Ōtaki and northern respondents wanting better links south.

*“Better public transport from Otaki. More emphasis on rail services to and from Otaki
instead of continual roadworks.” - Ōtaki resident*

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (7 respondents, <1%)

Seven respondents warned against Central Government overriding local planning in service delivery.

*“It's important to keep a local understanding. One size doesn't fill all! And central
government will not understand local impact.” - Paraparaumu resident*

Theme	n
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	426
Focus on core services and infrastructure	371
Provisions for older / aging population	30
Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record	25
Kāpiti water services and strong delivery record	23
Local roads and traffic congestion	8
COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES	271
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	140
Services support mental and physical wellbeing	99
Libraries valued across the district	51
Services and facilities for families and young people	51

Theme	n
Access to health services and hospital links	22
Protecting the most vulnerable	21
RATES & COST	177
Council overspending / waste	112
Rates increases and affordability	88
Affordable rubbish collection and recycling	21
GENERAL	166
All listed services are important	158
Support: General preference to stand alone	10
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE	142
Environmental protection	83
Climate resilience and coastal protection	57
Climate and emissions as a national responsibility	15
Scepticism about funding coastal protection	13
LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY & CONTROL	112
Keeping infrastructure and service delivery under local control	82
Water security with population growth	31
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	97
Local decision-making on local priorities	96
Retaining community boards	2
GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & CHARACTER	78
Growth and development to avoid stagnation	61
Opposition to intensification and townhouse development	17
LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER	78
District identity and special character	75
Cluster of villages / distinct township identities	4
CORE SERVICES & PRIORITIES	71
Council should not fund tourism and business promotion	41
Safety and security as the first priority	30
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	60
Some services better delivered regionally	45
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	18
Shared community assets affordable across many people	5
TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY	50
Footpaths valued but cycleways questioned	27

Theme	n
Roading and rural access priorities	27
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	24
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	14
Accountability for how rates are spent	11
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	19
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	19
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	17
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	17
Loss of regional oversight if GWRC dissolved	2
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	7
Central Government overriding local planning	7

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 17: Why these services are important - themes

Because these comments justify what respondents ranked, the table below groups the themes by the service each commenter ranked first - connecting the “why” to the “what” even where a comment doesn’t name the service.

Service ranked #1 / why it matters (themes)	n
Water services (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water)	(328 commenters)
Focus on core services and infrastructure	178
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	52
Council overspending / waste	48
All listed services are important	38
Keeping infrastructure and service delivery under local control	35
Rates increases and affordability	34
Services support mental and physical wellbeing	33
Local decision-making on local priorities	27
Districtwide planning (including strategies, policies and bylaws)	(110 commenters)
Focus on core services and infrastructure	40
All listed services are important	24
Local decision-making on local priorities	20
Environmental protection	17
Services support mental and physical wellbeing	14
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	13
Keeping infrastructure and service delivery under local control	12
District identity and special character	11

Service ranked #1 / why it matters (themes)	n
Governance, planning and reporting	(65 commenters)
Focus on core services and infrastructure	30
All listed services are important	19
Council overspending / waste	11
Local decision-making on local priorities	9
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	8
Rates increases and affordability	6
Services support mental and physical wellbeing	6
Council should not fund tourism and business promotion	5
Roads	(58 commenters)
Focus on core services and infrastructure	36
Council overspending / waste	15
Rates increases and affordability	10
All listed services are important	8
Roading and rural access priorities	6
District identity and special character	5
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	3
Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record	3
Local amenities	(42 commenters)
Focus on core services and infrastructure	14
All listed services are important	11
Local decision-making on local priorities	7
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	6
Services support mental and physical wellbeing	6
Council overspending / waste	5
District identity and special character	5
Keeping infrastructure and service delivery under local control	4
Business growth and development	(36 commenters)
Growth and development to avoid stagnation	14
Focus on core services and infrastructure	13
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	8
All listed services are important	5
Rates increases and affordability	4
Water security with population growth	3
Affordable rubbish collection and recycling	2

Service ranked #1 / why it matters (themes)	n
Council overspending / waste	2

Themes from the 'why these services are important' comments, grouped by the service each commenter ranked first. n = distinct respondents raising the theme among that service's #1-rankers. Respondents with tied #1 ranks count under each tied service. Top 6 services by first preferences among commenters; top 8 themes each.

Table 18: Why it matters, by top-ranked service

7 Amalgamating and standing alone: advantages and concerns

Before ranking the scenarios, respondents weighed each of the two broad paths in turn: what would be gained and what would be at risk if Kāpiti amalgamated with other councils, and the same if Kāpiti stood alone. All four questions were rankings; results are reported using the top-frequency method (options ordered by first-preference votes). Demographic breakdowns for all four questions are in Appendix C. Each ranking was followed by an open-text box for advantages or concerns not listed; the themes from those comments are reported alongside the ranking they relate to.

7.1 Advantages of amalgamating

Among those who responded, “No clear benefits” attracted the most first-preference votes on this question - more than any single named advantage - though nearly two-thirds (65%) gave a named advantage their first preference. Among the named advantages, better coordination of infrastructure and planning and the potential for cost savings led.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	No clear benefits	961	1,026	6,226	1,152
2	Better coordination of infrastructure and planning	535	1,177	6,722	1,427
3	Potential for cost savings	422	1,076	6,460	1,454
4	More efficient use of rates	359	852	5,259	1,190
5	Improved consistency in regional planning and decision making	256	909	5,483	1,286
6	Stronger regional decision-making	211	732	4,540	1,103

*Items ordered by the number of respondents ranking them first (actual votes). * items tied on first-preference votes (order within ties set by top-3 count, then rank-points score). Score = rank points (rank 1 = 6 ... rank 6 = 1) summed over respondents who ranked the item. Base: respondents who ranked the question.*

Table 19: Biggest advantages of amalgamating: first-preference votes

7.2 Other advantages of amalgamating

Survey question: “Are there any advantages of Kāpiti amalgamating that you think we have missed?”

Overview

Comments here (n=337) split two ways. The single largest response was scepticism: 159 respondents said they saw no advantages, or none they could assess without costings. Among those who did identify benefits, efficiency and scale themes led (101 respondents): economies of scale, reducing duplication of roles and services, and access to deeper expertise and capacity, followed by stronger regional decision-making and planning (63). A recurring qualifier on both sides was that any amalgamation would be more acceptable with Horowhenua than with Wellington. Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

GENERAL (180 respondents, 53%)

The written scepticism matches the ranking above, where “No clear benefits” drew more first-preference votes than any named advantage. Two strands run through the 159 no-advantages comments: some see amalgamation as a straightforward loss - of identity, of control, of affordable rates - while others simply feel unable to judge, because no costings or options analysis have been put in front of them.

“Nope I think we will completely lose our identity and bigger is not better.” - Waikanae resident

“No future costings have highlighted. So no clear benefits is the only option” - Waikanae resident

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (101 respondents, 30%)

Where respondents did see upside, the advantages named were the familiar ones: economies of scale (46), less duplication of roles and services (44), and access to expertise and deeper pockets (38) - the same logic behind the ranked advantages of better coordination and potential cost savings. A recurring condition ran through these comments: efficiencies are welcome only if local voice survives the restructure.

“Less duplication of service delivery cost is a good thing so long as local voice is not lost in Governance and planning” - Ōtaki resident

“There are advantages in reducing duplication of services, greater capacity in some areas, shared expertise and access to experts in a wide range of areas.” - Waikanae resident

REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (63 respondents, 19%)

The regional case: stronger regional decision-making and planning (30), more influence with Central Government (17), and keeping the connection with the wider Wellington region for work and services (15).

“Consistency/coordination of the long term regional plan” - Paraparaumu resident

“A stronger voice at a national level. A connection with the place most of us work and play.” - Waikanae resident

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (51 respondents, 15%)

Even when asked for advantages, respondents attached a direction: 28 opposed Wellington, 20 preferred Horowhenua, and 20 argued from geographic fit - benefits are conditional on the partner.

“Difficult to understand true benefits. If an amalgamation was required. I’d rather go north than south.” - Raumati resident

“Public transport from Otaki northwards can be more easily organised if KCDC amalgamate north.” - Te Horo resident

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (38 respondents, 11%)

Mostly one message (33): the information needed to weigh advantages - costings, options analysis, likely partners - has not been provided.

“I think I need to know more about govt plans beforehand” - Ōtaki resident

"I would need to know what benefits there are potentially" - Raumati resident

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (29 respondents, 9%)

This group saw amalgamation itself as the accountability fix - a chance to reset a council they rate poorly (20 raised accountability, 16 views of elected members).

*"This is a perfect time to get rid of our under performing council with a joint council." -
Paraparaumu resident*

"We need to cut the number of elected officials and also cap their pay" - Raumati resident

RATES & COST (29 respondents, 9%)

For these respondents lower rates are the test of the whole exercise: an advantage if delivered, a dealbreaker if not.

"The ONLY reason to amalgamate is to save costs, not increase costs." - Te Horo resident

*"We ought to have improved outcomes from shared services and reduced costs." - Ōtaki
resident*

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (25 respondents, 7%)

The cross-subsidy worry surfaces even here, as the reason claimed advantages ring hollow: Kāpiti has invested where others have lagged (23 raised subsidising others' infrastructure).

*"Biggest concern is kapiti subsidising other councils that have lagged in investment." -
Paraparaumu resident*

"I think the KCDC has it sorted, and we risk subsidizing others." - Paraparaumu resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (23 respondents, 7%)

Local voice appears here as the condition on any advantage - and occasionally as an advantage itself: choosing a partner now preserves more control than having one imposed later.

*"If we choose who we amalgamation with, we have more control than if it is foisted upon
us by central government." - Waikanae resident*

*"Has potential as long as local voice kept and cost for other areas are not transferred" -
Te Horo resident*

AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS (15 respondents, 4%)

Auckland's super city is the reference point on both sides (13): most cite it as a warning, one or two as a model that paid off over time.

*"Auckland as an example had large rate increases after amalgamation" - Waikanae
resident*

*"I saw the set up of Auckland's Super City and can see the benefits many years later. Less
wastage." - Te Horo resident*

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (13 respondents, 4%)

Kāpiti's infrastructure record (10) framed as the reason amalgamation offers little: the district's assets are in better shape than its neighbours'.

"It seems like our infrastructure is in better condition than our neighbouring councils. As that seems to be a major cost for ratepayers, I see no advantage in amalgamation." -

Written submission, Peka Peka

IWI & TE TIRITI (3 respondents, <1%) and STANDING ALONE (3 respondents, <1%)

Three respondents raised protecting mana whenua relationships in any new configuration, and three argued the real risk runs the other way - that Kāpiti is too small to be heard standing alone.

"Mana Whenua - if Mana Whenua relationships are halted, then keeping district wide Maori Ward seats in this new configuration." - Paraparaumu resident

"There is no evidence that there are any advantages, but I am sure there would be many disadvantages. We would be a small fish in a big pond." - Paraparaumu resident

Theme	n
GENERAL	180
Oppose: No advantages / sceptical of claimed benefits	159
Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo	16
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	16
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	101
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	46
Reducing duplication of roles and services	44
Access to expertise, capacity and deeper pockets	38
Shared services / collaboration without amalgamation	8
Improved planning, quicker consents and lower building costs	6
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	63
Stronger regional decision-making and planning	30
Regional influence / lobbying Central Government	17
Maintaining connection with the wider Wellington region	15
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	11
Loss of regional oversight if GWRC dissolved	4
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	51
Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington	28
Geographic, cultural fit and sensible boundaries	20
Preference for Horowhenua / looking north	20
Porirua / northern Wellington grouping option	3

Theme	n
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	38
Lack of information, options analysis and costs	33
Central Government overriding local planning	6
RATES & COST	29
Lower rates and reduced council costs	29
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	29
Accountability for how rates are spent	20
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	16
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	25
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	23
Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti	3
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	23
Local voice and representation	23
AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS	15
Auckland super city and past amalgamation failures	13
Alternative governance models and safeguards	3
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	13
Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record	10
No loss of current services in any change	4
IWI & TE TIRITI	3
Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti	3
STANDING ALONE	3
Too small / lacks scale to be effective	3

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 20: Other advantages of amalgamating - themes

7.3 Concerns about amalgamating

Rates lead the concerns about amalgamating: the potential rates impact, including cross-subsidising services across a larger area, drew the most first-preference votes, followed by loss of local voice.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Potential rates impact, and cross-subsidising rates for services across a larger area	1,028	1,789	15,233	2,297
2	Loss of local voice	637	1,162	11,651	1,929
3	Services becoming less responsive or decrease in existing service levels	301	1,332	12,281	2,094
4	No major concerns	271	309	2,723	533
5	Investment in Kāpiti may not be prioritised	236	1,265	12,230	2,125
6	Services becoming less locally focussed	229	1,219	11,671	1,994
7	Unclear future of community boards representation	40	263	4,691	1,168
8	Reduced access to elected members	21	171	3,629	1,023

Items ordered by the number of respondents ranking them first (actual votes). * items tied on first-preference votes (order within ties set by top-3 count, then rank-points score). Score = rank points (rank 1 = 8 ... rank 8 = 1) summed over respondents who ranked the item. Base: respondents who ranked the question.

Table 21: Biggest concerns about amalgamating: first-preference votes

7.4 Other concerns about amalgamating

Survey question: “Do you have any other concerns about Kāpiti amalgamating with other councils?”

Overview

The written concerns (n=602) centre on financial exposure. Cost-sharing and infrastructure liability is the largest category (218 respondents): subsidising other councils’ infrastructure - Wellington’s water in particular (113) - and assuming other councils’ debt (82). Rates and cost concerns (149) run alongside, followed by loss of local voice and representation (155) and views on partners (144), where opposition to joining Wellington City or the wider Wellington region led (115). The Auckland super city was repeatedly cited as evidence that promised efficiencies do not materialise. Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (218 respondents, 36%)

This is the written elaboration of the ranked result above, where the potential rates impact of cross-subsidising a larger area topped the concerns. The logic respondents set out is consistent: Kāpiti has already paid to sort its own water and infrastructure, other councils - Wellington above all - have not, and amalgamation would send the bill north. Subsidising others’ infrastructure (113), inheriting their debt (82) and paying for projects outside the district (32) are the recurring forms of the worry.

“Paying for other councils lack of planning and upkeep of infrastructure.” - Paekākāriki resident

“Very concerned about potential of having to pay for other regions debts.” - Paraparaumu resident

RATES & COST (149 respondents, 25%)

Distinct from the cross-subsidy fear, these comments are about the rates bill itself: increases already feel high (100 raised affordability), and respondents doubt amalgamation would bring them down - where support was offered, it was conditional on demonstrated savings. Council overspending (53) and staffing costs (39) carry into this question from the wider engagement.

“Kapiti rates are already very high. Would not like to see ongoing increases.” - Raumati resident

“Our Kapiti Rates might go up to raise funding for non-local amenities.” - Paraparaumu resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (155 respondents, 26%)

Loss of local voice (118) ranked second among the listed concerns, and the comments give it shape: being outvoted by bigger population centres, priorities set by the loudest advocates, decisions drifting away from local knowledge (52 raised local decision-making).

“Could we become the poor cousins to a larger council? Will we lose our voice?” - Raumati resident

“Having local preferences ignored/ruled out by outside voices” - Ōtaki resident

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (144 respondents, 24%)

For 115 respondents the concern is not amalgamation in principle but the partner in prospect: they opposed joining Wellington City or the wider region, with geographic fit (31) and a northward preference (23) as the alternatives - though a counter-current argued the opposite direction.

“Not with Wellington because they have too many problems” - Waikanae resident

“If Kapiti merges, I want it to be with southwards and Wellington and definitely not northwards with Levin” - Ōtaki resident

GENERAL (89 respondents, 15%)

Unusually for this engagement, the general stances here lean supportive: 56 expressed support for amalgamation or change against 33 opposed - a common supportive answer was simply that they had no major concerns.

“I have no major concerns. I think it will help Kapiti grow.” - Paraparaumu resident

“More concerned about the cost of doing it alone if we don’t merge.” - Raumati resident

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (86 respondents, 14%)

Kāpiti’s water services (35) and infrastructure record (25) appear as things amalgamation puts at risk, alongside a practical worry: services becoming harder to access once they are centralised.

“We already manage our water better than the rest of the region.” - Raumati resident

“Increased bureaucracy and inability to access services needed when needed.” - Written submission, Paraparaumu

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (76 respondents, 13%)

Efficiency arguments cut both ways here: 40 raised economies of scale, but 31 warned the claimed benefits are not guaranteed and depend entirely on who ends up in control.

“You should use economy of scale without compromising local priorities.” - Hautere resident

“Any change MUST result in MAJOR SAVINGS to ratepayers - otherwise NO GO!!!” - Paraparaumu resident

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (79 respondents, 13%)

The process itself is a concern: no costed options or named partners (35), reform experienced as imposed from Wellington (35), and a timeframe seen as rushed against the election cycle (28).

“Dislike the bullying approach of the current government in demanding amalgamation.” - Waikanae resident

“You have not said with what councils we are likely to merge with. This has a huge impact on this set of questions” - Waikanae resident

AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS (77 respondents, 13%)

Two linked fears: that bigger means too big to care (55), and that Auckland’s super city already proved the model disappoints (29).

“The Auckland super city is a failure, why would it work here?” - Waikanae resident

“Kapiti could be absorbed and minimalised in a larger grouping.” - Waikanae resident

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (64 respondents, 11%)

Both currents again: distrust of the current council (41) leading some to doubt any change managed by it, and satisfaction (17) leading others to protect what works.

“We have great systems in place that work well, we need nothing from the mess that is Wellington.” - Paraparaumu resident

“The service and response cannot be worse than what KCDC currently provide.” - Ōtaki resident

LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER (55 respondents, 9%)

The district’s identity and special character (47) as something a larger authority would dilute - the concern that runs beneath the more financial ones.

“Most crucial worry for me is we lose our identity and sense of community” - Waikanae resident

“Pretty much nailed it with the above, we want to keep Kapiti it’s unique self” - Raumati resident

STANDING ALONE (31 respondents, 5%)

The mirror concern: 26 argued Kāpiti is well run and stable as it is, so amalgamation solves a problem the district does not have.

“Rates here are stable. No need to become engrossed in other councils money short falls” - Waikanae resident

“Would rather be a council on our own or join with Horowhenua” - Paraparaumu resident

REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (24 respondents, 4%)

A smaller group (19) worried about the opposite loss - Kāpiti’s connection to the Wellington region, for work and access to services.

“Biggest concern would be Kapiti losing its connection to Wellington.” - Waikanae resident

IWI & TE TIRITI (21 respondents, 3%)

Concern that established mana whenua relationships and iwi decision-making roles would be re-prioritised or lost in a larger structure.

“My main concern - is the voice and decision making power of local iwi” - Waikanae resident

“What impact would this have on local iwi representation?” - Waikanae resident

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE (14 respondents, 2%)

A small group feared Kāpiti’s climate and coastal work would be watered down by distant, centralised planning.

“There is a risk that some of the more innovative environmental policies will be lost or watered down” - Ōtaki resident

Theme	n
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	218
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	113
Assuming other councils' debt and deficit burden	82
Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti	43
Paying for projects outside Kāpiti's area	32
Transition and reform costs	21
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	155
Local voice and representation	118
Local decision-making on local priorities	52

Theme	n
Access to elected members / councillors	9
Retaining community boards	4
RATES & COST	149
Rates increases and affordability	100
Council overspending / waste	53
Staff numbers and bureaucracy	39
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	144
Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington	115
Geographic, cultural fit and sensible boundaries	31
Preference for Horowhenua / looking north	23
Hospital and health service catchment concerns	7
GENERAL	89
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	56
Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo	33
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	86
Kāpiti water services and strong delivery record	35
Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record	25
Focus on core services and infrastructure	15
Inability to access services when needed	10
Local amenities: parking and rubbish collection	5
Local roads and traffic congestion	4
Access to Greater Wellington libraries	3
Local emergency management system	3
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	79
Lack of information, options analysis and costs	35
Opposition to Central Government deciding / 'done to us'	35
Rushed timeframe and election timing	28
Central Government overriding local planning	7
Impact on KCDC business-as-usual work	5
AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS	77
Amalgamation means too big to care	55
Auckland super city and past amalgamation failures	29
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	76
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	40
Benefits not guaranteed / depend on who is in control	31

Theme	n
Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed	7
Shared services / collaboration without amalgamation	6
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	64
Distrust of current council / leadership	41
Satisfaction with current council performance	17
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	7
LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER	55
District identity and special character	47
Cluster of villages / distinct township identities	12
STANDING ALONE	31
Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run	26
Too small / lacks scale to be effective	5
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	24
Maintaining connection with the wider Wellington region	19
Regional influence / lobbying Central Government	7
IWI & TE TIRITI	21
Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti	21
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE	14
Climate resilience and coastal protection	14

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 22: Other concerns about amalgamating - themes

7.5 Advantages of standing alone

The leading advantages of standing alone centre on local control: retaining local decision-making and community voice, keeping local rates spent within Kāpiti, and decisions better reflecting Kāpiti's unique needs and priorities.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Local decision-making and community voice retained	717	1,335	13,258	1,761
2	Protection of local rates being spent within Kāpiti	643	1,361	13,960	1,915
3	Decisions better reflect Kāpiti's unique needs and priorities	475	1,429	13,614	1,852
4	No clear benefits of standing alone	448	483	4,595	647
5	Avoidance of transition costs and disruption from amalgamation	173	655	8,649	1,458
6	Existing relationships with iwi, community groups, and stakeholders maintained	116	472	6,854	1,235
7	Greater accountability and visibility of elected members	91	476	6,902	1,204
8	Stronger community identity and sense of place	89	558	8,148	1,371
9	Certainty of ongoing community board representation	24	205	3,947	844

*Items ordered by the number of respondents ranking them first (actual votes). * items tied on first-preference votes (order within ties set by top-3 count, then rank-points score). Score = rank points (rank 1 = 9 ... rank 9 = 1) summed over respondents who ranked the item. Base: respondents who ranked the question.*

Table 23: Biggest advantages of standing alone: first-preference votes

7.6 Other benefits of standing alone

Survey question: "Are there any benefits of Kāpiti standing alone that you think we've missed?"

Overview

The benefits respondents added (n=193) centre on control: local decision-making on local priorities and retaining local control as the district grows (43 respondents raised local voice themes and 38 standing-alone themes), and keeping rates and resources in Kāpiti rather than subsidising others' infrastructure (29). Kāpiti's water services and delivery record were cited with some pride as proof the district can manage its own affairs. A sceptical group of 39 saw no benefits, mostly on the view that amalgamation will happen regardless. Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

GENERAL (63 respondents, 33%)

The largest single group here is the sceptics: 39 saw no benefits to standing alone, mostly reasoning that amalgamation is coming whether Kāpiti chooses it or not, so the question is moot. 14 restated a preference for standing alone and 13 for amalgamation.

"In this day & age, amalgamation is really the only way forward." - Raumati resident

“Frankly, if Wellington is going to amalgamate then the benefits of kapiti going it alone are limited.” - Waikanae resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (43 respondents, 22%)

The same benefit that led the ranked list - local decision-making and community voice retained - is what respondents chose to elaborate. The added texture is about scale and distance: decisions made by people who know the district, insulation from being outvoted by larger population centres, and not being steered toward priorities that suit Wellington.

“We won’t be forced into things we don’t want/need but that suit Wellington.” - Paraparaumu resident

“In control of our own rates and not being influenced from outside the area where we may be voted down.” - Waikanae resident

STANDING ALONE (38 respondents, 20%)

Rather than a benefit as such, respondents offered evidence that Kāpiti is well run and can stand alone (9): it already runs its own water (with meters), wastewater and roads to a standard they rate, and separation from Hutt City in 1989 is cited as precedent. The forward-looking version is retaining control as the district grows (13) - with others adding that standing alone need not mean isolation if regional collaboration continues on transport and resilience.

“We have water meters, a reliable supply good wastewater management, good roads, all delivered by a stand-alone council.” - Paekākāriki resident

“Kāpiti can keep its agility, accountability, and local identity while still collaborating regionally on transport, resilience, and economic development.” - Ōtaki resident

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (31 respondents, 16%)

A dissenting reading of the question: for these respondents (20 distrustful of current leadership) the benefits of standing alone depend on a council they do not currently rate, which for some cancels the benefit entirely.

“I don’t feel like the councillors are accountable now. Would hate for it to get even worse.” - Raumati resident

“Sadly KCDC track record of over spending has proved how poor the leadership is.” - Paraparaumu resident

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (28 respondents, 15%)

Process shadows the benefits: the backstop risk (10), the lack of information to judge (8), and the danger of political isolation if Kāpiti stands apart (6) - benefits that exist only if standing alone is genuinely available.

“No advantages, as all councils will be amalgamated + the decision will be made by others ie Backstop.” - Written submission, Paraparaumu

“Need more time to consider this - the process is being rushed!” - Waikanae resident

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (29 respondents, 15%)

The financial benefit named most often: rates raised in Kāpiti stay in Kāpiti - down to the level of local suppliers and contractors - rather than propping up under-invested infrastructure elsewhere.

“Our rates would be under our control and not used to solve others massive problems hopefully thus keeping them more reasonable.” - Paraparaumu resident

“More likely for smaller LOCAL suppliers being used as opposed to larger contractors that are not local.” - Waikanae resident

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (23 respondents, 12%)

Kāpiti’s three-waters record (11) and infrastructure investment (9) cited as benefits already banked - things standing alone protects rather than creates.

“The 3 waters - something that KCDC has done very well on.” - Paraparaumu resident

“We have a strong infrastructure that has grown and continues to be built.” - Raumati resident

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (20 respondents, 10%)

Partner preferences leak into this question too: avoiding Wellington’s liabilities framed as the benefit (14), with a northward alternative (10) for those who accept change is coming.

“Not having to help Wellingtons deep pockets to pay for sorting out Their water woes!” - Written submission, Paraparaumu

“Standing alone is also not an option but I think we should amalgamate with the West coast districts, not South.” - Paraparaumu resident

RATES & COST (18 respondents, 9%)

Rates control as the bottom line: staying alone keeps the rates bill answerable to Kāpiti alone.

“Cost - if we amalgamate with Wellington our rates will go up to help pay for fixing their infrastructure issues” - Paraparaumu resident

LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER (14 respondents, 7%)

The district’s culture and identity named as a benefit in its own right - something respondents felt would not survive absorption.

“The Kapiti Coast has its own culture and identity. We do not want to lose that.” - Written submission, Paraparaumu

“It is important to keep Kapiti’s uniqueness and amalgamation would be detrimental to this.” - Waikanae resident

AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS (11 respondents, 6%)

A considered middle view: the listed benefits could survive a well-managed amalgamation, particularly a small one.

*“All the so called advantages could still be achieved if we merge with one other council.” -
Raumati resident*

**IWI & TE TIRITI (9 respondents, 5%), EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (9 respondents, 5%) and
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (4 respondents, 2%)**

The remaining comments protected existing mana whenua partnerships, worried standing alone forgoes economies of scale, or questioned whether regional functions like flood protection and public transport could be run affordably from Kāpiti alone.

*“Mana Whenua - existing long-term partnerships with Mana Whenua are retained and
loss of institutional knowledge and relationships, commitment to work together.” -
Paraparaumu resident*

*“No - I think we miss out on potential economies of scale because of our small size.” -
Raumati resident*

Theme	n
GENERAL	63
Oppose: No benefits to standing alone	39
Support: General preference to stand alone	14
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	13
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	43
Local decision-making on local priorities	29
Local voice and representation	19
STANDING ALONE	38
Retaining local control as Kāpiti grows	13
Not being a small part on the edge of a large council	11
Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run	9
Too small / lacks scale to be effective	6
Infrastructure funding capacity alone	2
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	31
Distrust of current council / leadership	20
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	10
Accountability for how rates are spent	7
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	29
Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti	16
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	16
Transition and reform costs	6
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	28
Backstop / risk of being forced to amalgamate	10

Theme	n
Lack of information, options analysis and costs	8
Central Government overriding local planning	7
Risk of political isolation if standing alone	6
Rushed timeframe and election timing	2
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	23
Kāpiti water services and strong delivery record	11
Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record	9
Focus on tourism specific to Kāpiti	3
Local roads and traffic congestion	2
Retaining Paraparaumu airport	2
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	20
Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington	14
Preference for Horowhenua / looking north	10
RATES & COST	18
Rates increases and affordability	12
Council overspending / waste	9
LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER	14
District identity and special character	14
AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS	11
Consider: Benefits could be retained under a well-managed amalgamation	7
Auckland super city and past amalgamation failures	4
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	9
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	6
Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed	4
IWI & TE TIRITI	9
Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti	9
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	4
Loss of regional oversight if GWRC dissolved	4
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	3

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 24: Other benefits of standing alone – themes

7.7 Concerns about standing alone

The leading concerns about standing alone are financial: limited ability to fund major infrastructure and the potential rates impact. “No major concerns” also ranks prominently on first preferences for this question.

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Limited ability to fund major infrastructure	806	1,567	10,801	1,826
2	Potential rates impact	630	1,269	9,445	1,740
3	No major concerns	539	581	4,214	750
4	Missing opportunities for shared services or collaboration	308	986	7,835	1,618
5	Reduced influence in regional decision-making	267	971	7,284	1,440
6	Capacity constraints (staffing, expertise, resources)	122	601	5,305	1,206
7	Slower progress on large or complex projects	86	638	5,751	1,296

Items ordered by the number of respondents ranking them first (actual votes). * items tied on first-preference votes (order within ties set by top-3 count, then rank-points score). Score = rank points (rank 1 = 7 ... rank 7 = 1) summed over respondents who ranked the item. Base: respondents who ranked the question.

Table 25: Biggest concerns about standing alone: first-preference votes

7.8 Other concerns about standing alone

Survey question: “Do you have any other concerns, not listed, about Kāpiti standing alone?”

Overview

Not everyone who answered this question (n=345) raised a concern: 70 used it to restate a general preference for independence and 34 to argue Kāpiti is well run and can manage alone. The genuine concerns cluster around process and scale: the risk of being forced into an unwanted amalgamation later, or stand-alone not being a permitted option at all (71 raised process and Central Government themes), the district being too small to fund major infrastructure or retain skilled staff (34), rates pressure if standing alone (85 raised rates themes), and missed efficiencies from shared services (64). Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

GENERAL (93 respondents, 27%)

Three-quarters of this category (70) is not concern but advocacy: respondents using the box to say leave Kāpiti alone. The remainder split between general support for amalgamation (16) and general opposition (14).

““If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”. Let’s leave well alone.” - Waikanae resident

“Kāpiti doesn’t need Wellington, developments are trending north.” - Ōtaki resident

STANDING ALONE (85 respondents, 25%)

Where the ranked concerns put limited infrastructure funding capacity first, the comments add the human version of the scale problem: a small authority struggles to attract and keep skilled staff, carries fixed governance costs across a small ratepayer base, and may lack the borrowing power for the big projects

ahead (34 raised scale concerns, 23 funding capacity). It sits directly against the well-run-district confidence expressed by others in the same category (34) - both views are held in this sample, sometimes by the same respondent.

“Standing alone would reduce the ability to attract or retain skilled staff.” - Waikanae resident

“Small scale local authorities cannot fund or manage the development and infrastructure projects that are needed for the future.” - Ōtaki resident

RATES & COST (85 respondents, 25%)

The affordability concern applied to independence: rates already feel unsustainable (46) and overspending unresolved (41), so standing alone means carrying those pressures without relief from scale.

“Current cost model unsustainable. We have to reduce rates costs.” - Waikanae resident

“KCDC wasting money in the way they have been in recent years.” - Waikanae resident

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (71 respondents, 21%)

This concern was not on the ranked list at all - respondents wrote it in. The fear is that choosing to stand alone is not a durable choice: that Central Government’s backstop provisions could later force Kāpiti into an amalgamation it did not pick (30), that stand-alone may not be permitted at all (20), and that resisting now means worse terms later (11). It connects directly to the preferred-scenario result in the next chapter, where “Let Central Government decide” finished last on first preferences.

“I would be concerned about the risk of being forced to amalgamate with a council we don’t want to join with.” - Waikanae resident

“With government wanting to amalgamate if KCDC tries to stand alone it will get bulldozed to the ratepayers’ detriment.” - Te Horo resident

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (64 respondents, 19%)

The measured version of the scale concern: standing alone forgoes shared services and economies (27), though slightly more (31) argued collaboration with neighbours can capture most of the gains without amalgamating.

“Standing alone does not limit the potential for project or policy specific co-operation.” - Paekākāriki resident

“Missing opportunity for reducing running costs eg one mayoral salary and one ceo salary shared.” - Ōtaki resident

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (51 respondents, 15%)

Distrust of the current council (35) reframes the question for some - standing alone means staying with leadership they doubt - while a smaller group (13) points to the district’s evident success as reassurance.

“This is how it is right now - we can literally see Kapiti’s success.” - Paraparaumu resident

"KCDC has zero credibility and accountability that's why the govt want change." -

Paraparaumu resident

REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (44 respondents, 13%)

A practical worry given the reform would also dissolve the regional council: who runs the trains (22), flood protection and the other GWRC functions (18) if Kāpiti stands outside a new regional entity.

"I'd be concerned that we might not have enough influence in relation to train services." -

Waikanae resident

"how do you cover services such as flood management which are provide by regional council." - Waikanae resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (39 respondents, 11%)

An inversion of the usual argument: some worry a stand-alone Kāpiti would have less voice - overlooked by Central Government and absent from the regional table.

"We need to have a stronger voice in the district. I am not in favour of Kapiti going alone at all." - Ōtaki resident

"I am happy to see proper shared back office services put in place, but major decisions must be local based." - Waikanae resident

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (30 respondents, 9%)

Mostly the familiar position restated as a reason to stand alone: money raised here should stay here (9), and joining others means paying their bills (16).

"I would rather our money stays on the coast, for Kapiti coasters." - Waikanae resident

"We should not pay for other districts infrastructure costs." - Ōtaki resident

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (26 respondents, 8%) and WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (23 respondents, 7%)

Service concerns centred on whether a stand-alone council could fund future needs - schools, health, water, roads - while the partner-minded suggested these concerns dissolve under a northward alignment with Horowhenua.

"Would we have sufficient funds to maintain parks: to provide transport: Roothing." -

Written submission, Paraparaumu

"I wonder if many of these concerns might be ameliorated by aligning with Horowhenua." - Paraparaumu resident

LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER (11 respondents, 3%) and ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE (7 respondents, 2%)

The tail: Kāpiti as a cluster of villages whose small-scale nature is worth keeping, and environmental work that crosses council boundaries whoever holds them.

“We are not a region or town or city. We are a cluster of villages. We want to keep its relative small-scale nature: keeping its integrity!” - Written submission, Paraparaumu

“Our environment does not ‘fit neatly’ into the local government boundaries, there are environmental and social impacts across different regions that need to be addressed collaboratively.” - Raumati resident

Theme	n
GENERAL	93
Support: General preference to stand alone	70
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	16
Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo	14
RATES & COST	85
Rates increases and affordability	46
Council overspending / waste	41
Staff numbers and bureaucracy	21
STANDING ALONE	85
Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run	34
Too small / lacks scale to be effective	34
Infrastructure funding capacity alone	23
Growing population supports standing alone	5
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	71
Backstop / risk of being forced to amalgamate	30
Stand-alone may not be a permitted option	20
Lack of information, options analysis and costs	18
Opposition to Central Government deciding / 'done to us'	16
Distrust of Central Government motives	15
Being forced later without early influence	11
Central Government overriding local planning	2
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	64
Shared services / collaboration without amalgamation	31
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	27
Reducing duplication of roles and services	13
Risk of self-interest over greater good	4
Geographic separation makes amalgamation impractical	3
Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed	2
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	51
Distrust of current council / leadership	35

Theme	n
Satisfaction with current council performance	13
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	9
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	44
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	22
Loss of regional oversight if GWRC dissolved	18
Regional influence / lobbying Central Government	17
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	39
Local voice and representation	39
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	30
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	16
Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti	9
Assuming other councils' debt and deficit burden	7
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	26
Kāpiti water services and strong delivery record	8
Future needs: schools, health, water and sewage	7
Local roads and traffic congestion	5
Provisions for older / aging population	3
Council filling gaps Central Government should fund	2
Kāpiti airport ownership, retention and future	2
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	23
Preference for Horowhenua / looking north	16
Wider Wellington regional unitary authority	9
LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER	11
Cluster of villages / distinct township identities	11
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE	7
Environmental protection	7

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 26: Other concerns about standing alone - themes

8 Preferred scenario

Respondents ranked four potential scenarios for the future of local government in Kāpiti. This is the engagement’s headline question, and results are reported using the top-frequency method: scenarios are ordered by the number of respondents who ranked them first (actual votes).

On first preferences, **going it alone** leads: 1,186 respondents ranked it first, ahead of looking at opportunities north with Horowhenua (999), joining a wider Wellington regional unitary authority (498), and letting Central Government decide (75).

	Item	Ranked 1st (votes)	Ranked in top 3	Score	No. who ranked it
1	Kāpiti Coast District Council should go it alone as a single authority	1,186	2,370	8,197	2,752
2	Look at opportunities north (e.g. Kāpiti Coast District Council and Horowhenua District Council)	999	2,652	8,686	2,750
3	Joining with councils in the wider Wellington region to form a regional unitary authority (potentially all or a combination of Wellington, Porirua, Hutt City, Upper Hutt, South Wairarapa, Carterton, Masterton and Kāpiti)	498	2,361	6,656	2,744
4	Let Central Government decide	75	856	3,943	2,736

*Items ordered by the number of respondents ranking them first (actual votes). * items tied on first-preference votes (order within ties set by top-3 count, then rank-points score). Score = rank points (rank 1 = 4 ... rank 4 = 1) summed over respondents who ranked the item. Base: respondents who ranked the question.*

Table 27: Preferred scenario: first-preference votes (top-frequency method)

8.1 Reading this result

The choice of summary method matters more for this question than any other in the engagement. On first-preference votes, going it alone leads. However, the Kāpiti-Horowhenua option was ranked in the top two by more respondents overall, so under a rank-points score (which credits every rank an option receives, weighted by position) the ordering of the top two reverses. Both readings are visible in the table above (the Ranked 1st and Score columns). The first-preference count answers “which single option did most people put first”; the score answers “which option had the broadest overall support across everyone’s full rankings”. Council should be aware of this sensitivity when drawing on the headline result.

8.2 Other scenarios and comments

Survey question: “Other (please specify) - any other scenario or comment on the future structure of local government in Kāpiti.”

Overview

The scenario comments (n=547) reinforce the ranking. The largest category concerns which councils Kāpiti should partner with (301 respondents): opposition to joining Wellington City or the wider Wellington region (148), preference for Horowhenua and looking north (121), and arguments about geographic and cultural fit (91). Process themes follow (181), led by opposition to Central Government deciding Kāpiti’s future (105), alongside calls to pause until proper information on rates and services is available. Cost-

sharing concerns (95) - inheriting Wellington's water problems and debt - underpin much of the opposition. Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (301 respondents, 55%)

The comments put reasoning behind the ranked order - Horowhenua second on first preferences and ahead on score, the Wellington unitary option well back. Two cases run through the comments:

- **The case for north** is fit: shared coastline, similar towns, similar lifestyle.
- **The case against Wellington** is financial and cultural at once - its water and debt problems, and the fear of becoming a remote suburb of a city-focused council.

Porirua recurs as the acceptable southern partner (38). Others argued the opposite: that Kāpiti's real economic ties run south, and an urban partnership with Wellington, Porirua and the Hutt is the sensible shape (37 backed a wider Wellington unitary authority, 19 joining Wellington City outright).

"We are more aligned to the lifestyle of horowhenua so that makes sense." - Raumati resident

"Don't join with the Wairarapa councils, make an urban council with Wellington, Porirua and the Hutt." - Paekākāriki resident

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (181 respondents, 33%)

Consistent with "Let Central Government decide" finishing last in the ranking, 105 respondents objected outright to the decision being made for Kāpiti - reform experienced as something done to the district, not with it. Distrust of Central Government motives (42), the lack of costed options (44) and the backstop risk (33) fill out the category, with calls for the process to pause until after the election or until real numbers are on the table.

"I am against this because I think there's too much over-reach by Central Govt." - Written submission, Ōtaki

"Keep government out of decisions. This needs to be decided by local ratpayers" - Paraparaumu resident

GENERAL (149 respondents, 27%)

Straight restatements of position: a preference for standing alone (62), general opposition to amalgamation (54), and general support for change (38) - roughly the proportions the ranking itself produced.

"Change needs to happen and we should choose what that looks like" - Waikanae resident

"Neither of the options to join others align with our community." - Paraparaumu resident

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (95 respondents, 17%)

Behind the scenario preferences sits the same ledger: not subsidising Wellington's water (62), not inheriting others' debt (38), keeping Kāpiti's money in Kāpiti (24). For these respondents the partner question is a liability question.

“Kapiti does not want to inherit the cost of other region’s problems.” - Paraparaumu resident

“A big concern for joining with wellington would be water issues” - Ōtaki resident

REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (65 respondents, 12%)

The constructive detail in this category: if amalgamation happens, 13 wanted regional council functions folded into it rather than left orphaned, while others’ priority was keeping the southward connections - hospital, trains - that daily life relies on (39 raised the Wellington connection).

“Unitary authority, ie taking over GWRC responsibilities in the area” - Paekākāriki resident

“I would not want to lose access to wellington hospital and associated services.” - Paraparaumu resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (54 respondents, 10%)

Local decision-making (43) as the test any scenario must pass, with a pragmatic strand (18) sketching safeguards - local boards, devolved teams - that could preserve voice inside a unitary authority.

“Rather than joining with other councils, can you not just be mates? Work together, common goal, but have your own say” - Raumati resident

“God spare us from becoming part of a wider regional unitary authority. Kapiti’s voice would count for nothing!” - Raumati resident

RATES & COST (50 respondents, 9%)

Rates as the decision rule: these respondents would accept whichever scenario demonstrably lowers them, and none without seeing the numbers first (41 raised affordability).

“Nothing should change without more information on the cost to the Kapiti ratepayer” - Paraparaumu resident

“I don’t want to amalgamate with Wellington etc, rates will explode.” - Paraparaumu resident

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (42 respondents, 8%)

Views here ran the whole range: shared services without amalgamation (25) at one end, maximum scale for maximum benefit (15) at the other.

“Closer inter-operation with other local councils (sharing of services etc), but remain independent” - Paraparaumu resident

“What matters is scale. Go as big as possible to maximise the benefits.” - Ōtaki resident

LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER (27 respondents, 5%) and SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (26 respondents, 5%)

Identity comments insisted Kāpiti is not a suburb of Wellington; service comments made any amalgamation conditional on services improving, with the three-waters record as the benchmark.

“Again, Kāpiti is NOT Wellington or a suburb of Wellington. We are a unique community best served by those who know Kāpiti.” - Paraparaumu resident

“Amalgamation with Horowhenua makes sense if there are some benefits from this but if none stay standalone” - Ōtaki resident

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (22 respondents, 4%), STANDING ALONE (14 respondents, 3%) and AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS (9 respondents, 2%)

The remainder: distrust of both local and central decision-makers, confidence the district can function alone, and a considered suggestion of a staged approach - stand-alone now, revisit amalgamation once Wellington’s problems are resolved.

“Kapiti Coast District Council is more than well equipped to stand and function with excellence alone.” - Waikanae resident

Theme	n
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	301
Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington	148
Preference for Horowhenua / looking north	121
Geographic, cultural fit and sensible boundaries	91
Porirua / northern Wellington grouping option	38
Wider Wellington regional unitary authority	37
Support: Joining Wellington City / supercity	19
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	181
Opposition to Central Government deciding / 'done to us'	105
Lack of information, options analysis and costs	44
Distrust of Central Government motives	42
Backstop / risk of being forced to amalgamate	33
Central Government overriding local planning	3
GENERAL	149
Support: General preference to stand alone	62
Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo	54
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	38
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	95
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	62
Assuming other councils' debt and deficit burden	38

Theme	n
Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti	24
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	65
Maintaining connection with the wider Wellington region	39
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	21
Consider: Include regional council functions in any amalgamation	13
Consider: Retain or reform a regional council rather than devolve functions	5
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	54
Local decision-making on local priorities	43
Consider: Local representation safeguards within a unitary authority	18
RATES & COST	50
Rates increases and affordability	41
Staff numbers and bureaucracy	13
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	42
Shared services / collaboration without amalgamation	25
Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation	15
Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed	3
LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER	27
District identity and special character	27
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	26
Kāpiti water services and strong delivery record	11
Consider: Amalgamate only if services would improve	8
Local roads and traffic congestion	4
No loss of current services in any change	4
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	22
Distrust of current council / leadership	20
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	6
STANDING ALONE	14
Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run	14
AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS	9
Consider: Staged / phased amalgamation approach	9

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 28: Preferred scenario - other comments - themes

9 Qualitative themes

The engagement included nine open-text questions. Where a comment box sat alongside a ranked question, the themes from those responses are reported with the relevant question in the preceding chapters. This chapter covers the two stand-alone open questions: what should change in local government in Kāpiti, and what should remain unchanged.

The open-text responses are coded against a framework generated from the responses themselves, styled to each question and grouped under categories. Sentiment tags (Support, Concern, Oppose, Consider) appear only where a comment runs against the question's frame. Each table reports the count of distinct respondents raising each theme, across the online survey and written submissions combined; because a respondent can raise more than one theme, counts do not sum to the number of respondents.

9.1 The themes across the engagement

The categories below recur across all nine open-text questions - the same framework codes every comment, so a category like RATES & COST can surface in a concern about amalgamating and in a view on what should change. Each summary describes what respondents raising that category were talking about, across the whole engagement, with the number of distinct respondents raising each topic shown in brackets. Categories are ordered by the number of distinct respondents raising them. Because respondents often raised more than one topic, the topic figures within a summary overlap and do not sum to the category total; a glossary of the individual themes within each category is in Appendix B.

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (*raised by 1,058 respondents*). Focus on core services and infrastructure dominated the category (751). The themes respondents raised were:

- Praise for Kāpiti's water services and delivery record (192), and its infrastructure investment and asset-management record (140).
- Local roads and traffic congestion (78), proactive maintenance and asset upkeep (50), and better contract oversight and quality of work (43).
- Core services weighed against "nice to haves": 35 wanted more spending on infrastructure over arts and culture, though 62 valued arts, culture and community services and 52 valued local libraries.
- Smaller groups raised provision for an ageing population (43), long-term value for money as infrastructure keeps pace with growth (27), the Kāpiti airport - its ownership, retention and future (9) - and 16 who said what mattered was the quality and cost of services, not who delivers them.

RATES & COST (*raised by 880 respondents*). Respondents were predominantly ratepayers (97%), so these affordability views reflect a property-owning base. The themes raised were:

- Rates increases and affordability, the leading theme (524).
- Council overspending and waste (472), and staff numbers and bureaucracy (263).
- Sixty respondents went further and called for rates caps or zero-increase targets, and 29 tied lower rates directly to reduced council costs.

- Smaller strands raised affordable rubbish collection and recycling (21) and, conversely, 8 who wanted the council to keep the ability to set its own rates without a cap.

GENERAL (*raised by 825 respondents*). This catch-all category was closely split on amalgamation: 292 voiced general opposition or a preference for the status quo, against 277 who supported amalgamation or change. A further 159 were sceptical that amalgamation offered any clear advantage, and 150 stated a general preference to stand alone (with 39 seeing no benefit in standing alone). Separately, 158 said all the listed services and amenities mattered and were hard to rank.

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (*raised by 816 respondents*). Local decision-making on local priorities (483) and a strong local voice and representation (420) led this category by a wide margin, followed by access to elected members and councillors (92) and retaining community boards (70). 58 respondents framed it as “true democracy”, opposing unelected members holding voting rights, and 36 wanted fewer councillors or reduced wards. 21 asked the council to listen to Kāpiti ratepayers specifically, 18 sketched safeguards to preserve local representation within a unitary authority, and 13 raised representation for younger residents.

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (*raised by 795 respondents*). The largest single strand was positive: 278 expressed satisfaction with the council’s current performance. Alongside this ran calls for accountability for how rates are spent (239), better communication and consultation with residents (205) and financial transparency across departments (70). On the other side, 140 expressed distrust of the current council and leadership, 83 held a negative or indifferent view of elected members, and 84 wanted the council to listen to community needs rather than just business interests.

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (*raised by 588 respondents*). Opposition to joining Wellington City or the wider Wellington region was the dominant position (367), while 229 preferred looking north to Horowhenua and 172 argued from geographic and cultural fit and sensible boundaries. Support for a southern option was much smaller: 59 backed a wider Wellington regional unitary authority, 45 pointed to a Porirua or northern-Wellington grouping, and 24 supported joining Wellington outright. Seven raised hospital and health-catchment ties.

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (*raised by 488 respondents*). Respondents were predominantly ratepayers (97%), which is directly relevant to these rating-impact and cross-subsidy concerns. The central fear was subsidising other councils’ infrastructure, above all Wellington’s water (317), followed by keeping rates and resources spent in Kāpiti (171) and not assuming other councils’ debt and deficits (153). Smaller numbers raised the transition and reform costs of change itself (35) and paying for projects outside Kāpiti’s area (32).

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (*raised by 480 respondents*). Views divided over how to capture scale. Reducing duplication of roles and services (171) led, closely followed by those who saw efficiencies and economies of scale in amalgamation itself (159) and those who wanted shared services or collaboration without amalgamation (156). A further 95 pointed to access to expertise, capacity and deeper pockets, and 45 thought some services are better delivered regionally. Scepticism was also present: 37 felt New Zealand is over-governed with too many councils, while 31 warned the promised benefits are not guaranteed and depend on who ends up in control.

PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (*raised by 341 respondents*). Opposition to Central Government deciding Kāpiti’s future - reform “done to us” - was the leading theme (153), alongside

frustration at the lack of information, options analysis and costs needed to judge (104). Concerns about Central Government overriding local planning (67), distrust of its motives (58) and the backstop risk of being forced to amalgamate later (61) followed, with 28 objecting to the rushed timeframe and election timing and 20 questioning whether standing alone was even a permitted option.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES (*raised by 301 respondents*). Respondents valued recreation facilities and amenities (153), services that support mental and physical wellbeing (100) and provision for families and young people (57), along with libraries valued across the district (51). Smaller numbers highlighted access to health services and hospital links (40) and protecting the most vulnerable (21).

STANDING ALONE (*raised by 294 respondents*). Most in this category were confident Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run (202). The main counter-current was scale: 64 felt Kāpiti may be too small to be effective alone, and 25 questioned its capacity to fund major infrastructure on its own. Smaller numbers valued retaining local control as the district grows (13), not becoming a small part on the edge of a larger council (11), and pointed to a growing population as reason to stand alone (5).

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE (*raised by 291 respondents*). Climate resilience and coastal protection (159) and environmental protection of parks, reserves and biodiversity (149) were the leading concerns, with 22 emphasising disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness. A dissenting strand pushed the other way: 15 argued climate and emissions are a national rather than a council responsibility, 13 were sceptical about funding coastal protection, and 2 wanted a reduced focus on climate change.

LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER (*raised by 255 respondents*). This category was concentrated in one theme: 236 wanted to protect Kāpiti's distinct identity and special character, most often framed as opposition to being absorbed into Wellington, the Hutt or Porirua and losing their voice. A further 44 emphasised the district's cluster of villages and distinct township identities, from Paekākāriki to Ōtaki.

REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (*raised by 194 respondents*). Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington (92) and maintaining the district's connection with the wider Wellington region (66) led this category, reflecting Kāpiti's commuter ties south. Others focused on regional influence and lobbying Central Government (36), stronger regional decision-making and planning (30), and the risk of losing regional oversight if Greater Wellington Regional Council were dissolved (23). 13 wanted regional council functions folded into any amalgamation rather than left orphaned.

GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING (*raised by 176 respondents*). Long-term, anticipatory governance over short-termism was the leading call (80), with 44 wanting less talk and more action and 16 asking for more capable, better-qualified elected members. A distinct strand of 41 wanted the council to withdraw from LGNZ and reduce its focus on Māori interests.

AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS (*raised by 142 respondents*). The recurring argument was that amalgamation makes a council too big to care about places like Kāpiti (55), often backed by the Auckland "super city" and other past amalgamation failures (44). A further 37 proposed alternative governance models and safeguards, 9 suggested a staged or phased approach, and 7 accepted the benefits could be retained under a well-managed amalgamation.

LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY & CONTROL (*raised by 112 respondents*). Two themes carried this category: 82 wanted infrastructure and service delivery kept under local control, arguing KCDC understands Kāpiti's needs better than a larger or Wellington-based entity, and 31 focused on water security as the population grows.

GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & CHARACTER (*raised by 105 respondents*). 61 respondents wanted growth and development to avoid stagnation - getting core infrastructure right to support business, tourism and younger residents - while 46 opposed intensification and “shoebox” townhouse development outpacing infrastructure, doctors and schools.

IWI & TE TIRITI (*raised by 99 respondents*). This category maps to a single coded theme, mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti, raised by all 99 respondents in it. Most emphasised retaining and strengthening relationships with iwi, hapū and mana whenua, the value of Māori wards and iwi representation, and Tiriti-centred decision-making, and feared these could be diluted or lost through amalgamation; a smaller number within the same theme pushed back against iwi involvement, arguing unelected representatives should not hold decision-making or voting rights. The coding does not separately count the two positions.

FUNDING & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (*raised by 92 respondents*). Most in this category looked to new income rather than rates: 51 wanted the council to raise income by promoting business and tourism, and 33 called for Central Government funding when it devolves new responsibilities. Eight specifically proposed retaining GST or tax revenue in Kāpiti.

CORE SERVICES & PRIORITIES (*raised by 71 respondents*). Of the 71 respondents, 41 said the council should not fund tourism and business promotion and should stick to core services, while 30 named safety and security as the first priority.

TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY (*raised by 50 respondents*). Two themes split this category evenly: 27 valued footpaths but questioned cycleways - a recurring gripe being that cycleways had been bundled unfairly with footpaths and were expensive for the benefit - and 27 prioritised roading and rural access.

REGULATION (*raised by 41 respondents*). 29 respondents wanted faster, simpler consenting and regulatory processes - consents seen as slow, officious and costly - and 13 wanted District Plan and consenting rules standardised nationally to simplify processes and cut bureaucracy.

9.2 What changes are needed

Survey question: “In your view, what changes are needed in local government in Kāpiti?”

Overview

This was the most answered open question in the engagement (n=1,587), and the message is financial discipline.

Rates and cost is the largest category (626 respondents): council overspending and waste (359), rates increases and affordability (260), and staff numbers and bureaucracy (193).

Trust and accountability themes follow (555) - accountability for how rates are spent, communication and consultation with residents, and financial transparency - though this category also holds 156 respondents satisfied with current performance.

Service delivery (497) carries the single most-raised topic in the whole engagement: focus on core services and infrastructure (397 on this question; 751 across all nine).

Local voice (234) and efficiency through shared services (228) round out the leading categories.

Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

RATES & COST (626 respondents, 39%)

The change most often asked for is spending restraint. Overspending and waste (359) is the biggest single target - “vanity projects”, consultants and gold-plating are the recurring examples - with rates affordability (260) framed around fixed incomes and the cost of living, and staff numbers and bureaucracy (193) close behind. Sixty respondents went further and asked for rates caps or zero-increase targets. This is the same affordability pressure that ranked second among the engagement’s overall priorities.

“More concentration on core services, and keeping rates more affordable.” -

Paraparaumu resident

“Stop overspending and prioritise critical infrastructure projects only.” - Otaihangā resident

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (555 respondents, 35%)

Accountability for how rates are spent (167) leads, but the category is broader than money: communication and consultation with residents (133), listening to the community rather than louder interests (84), and financial transparency (70) all describe a wish to be brought into decisions before they are made, not after. The category also carries the counter-voice: 156 respondents expressed satisfaction with how the council performs - the same current of goodwill visible in the “what should stay” question below.

“Downsize, reduce duplication, ensure better accountability for use of our rates” -

Raumati resident

“Community consulting before Council decisions are made and not after.” - Raumati resident

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (497 respondents, 31%)

Focus on core services and infrastructure (397) is the single most-raised topic anywhere in the engagement (751 respondents across all nine questions), and here it is framed as the change wanted: put water, roads and maintenance ahead of everything discretionary. Proactive maintenance and asset upkeep (50), better contract oversight (43) and community wellbeing activities (40) follow. For a portion of these respondents it is less a demand for upheaval than a request to keep doing the basics well.

“Mostly working well , just need to keep doing the basics with no frills.” - Paraparaumu resident

“More focus on important infrastructure less spending on the nice to haves.” - Otaihangā resident

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (234 respondents, 15%)

Change requests aimed at the machinery of representation: better engagement and participation in decisions (119 raised local decision-making), a leaner elected body (36 wanted fewer councillors or wards), easier access to elected members (19) and younger voices (13). The category also contains one of the engagement’s sharper divides: 58 respondents wanted voting rights restricted to elected members.

“Better community engagement and participation in decisions.” - Paraparaumu resident

“More fiscal responsibility. Fewer elected representatives.” - Waikanae resident

EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES (228 respondents, 14%)

The efficiency agenda: reduce duplication of roles and services (113), share services with neighbouring councils (91), and pool expertise (60) - much of it achievable, respondents noted, with or without amalgamation.

“Remove overlap and confusion about region and more local.” - Te Horo resident

“Better coordination and consistency with neighbouring councils.” - Waikanae resident

GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING (176 respondents, 11%)

How decisions get made: long-term, anticipatory governance over short-termism (80), less talk, more action (44) - faster decisions, fewer consultants - and 16 wanting more capable, better-qualified councillors. A further 41 wanted the Council to withdraw from LGNZ or reduce its focus on Māori interests, a view that sits against the mana whenua partnership themes below.

“Quicker decision making and no time wasting on consultants.” - Paraparaumu resident

“More action. We are too risk averse. SPEND THE BUDGET!!!” - Ōtaki resident

GENERAL (134 respondents, 8%)

On the structural question itself this box leaned toward change: 75 supported amalgamation against 45 preferring the status quo and 15 restating the stand-alone case.

*“Explore amalgamation with other local councils to reduce costs of duplication.” -
Waikanae resident*

*“We do seem to manage on our own, just have concerns about moving away from that.” -
Paraparaumu resident*

FUNDING & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (92 respondents, 6%)

The revenue side of the affordability equation: grow income from business and tourism promotion rather than rates (51), and have Central Government fund the responsibilities it hands down (33).

*“To keep costs low and focus on other forms of income other than rates.” - Paraparaumu
resident*

*“More focus on growing the Kāpiti coast brand and building a local job market for skilled
workers.” - Waikanae resident*

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (86 respondents, 5%)

The same pattern as elsewhere in the engagement: Horowhenua preferred (54), Wellington opposed (33), with cooperation short of amalgamation a recurring middle path.

*“Merging with Horowhenua would be fine. But not with Wellington.” - Paraparaumu
resident*

“Increased cooperation with Horowhenua without full amalgamation.” - Paekākāriki resident

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE (84 respondents, 5%)

Climate resilience and coastal protection (83) drew calls in both directions - most wanting stronger adaptation work, a smaller number wanting less spent on it.

“Better action on adaptation and climate change - making the region fit for the future.” - Raumati resident

“Keep it local and stop wasting money on a climate emergency that isn’t an emergency!” - Paraparaumu resident

STANDING ALONE (58 respondents, 4%)

For these respondents the change needed is none: the district is well run (35), though 23 took the opposite view that Kāpiti is too small for the duplication it carries.

“I believe the council is well run and want it to stay that way” - Paraparaumu resident

“Compared to Wellington CC, Kapiti is a model of financial management.” - Raumati resident

REGULATION (41 respondents, 3%) and AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS (35 respondents, 2%)

Regulatory relief and structural alternatives: faster, simpler consenting and regulatory processes (29) and nationally standardised District Plan rules (13) on one side, and constructive alternatives - unitary models, regional roles, safeguarded local representation (35) - on the other.

“More efficiencies, and the same rules across the country for building regulations, roading and infrastructure.” - Waikanae resident

“As a unitary council Kapiti could stand alone, take on the regional role for our region and provide the services needed.” - Raumati resident

GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & CHARACTER (30 respondents, 2%), PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (28 respondents, 2%) and COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES (26 respondents, 2%)

Three smaller currents: opposition to intensification and townhouse development (30), resistance to Central Government overriding local planning (28), and calls for more focus on community wellbeing - access to health services and hospital links (15) chief among them.

“Spend money wisely on things that matter to the community the most. Stop these big housing projects going up in suburbs” - Waikanae resident

“Kāpiti is a model for good local governance, community consultation, and equitable delivery of services. Central Government is ‘fixing’ a problem we don’t have.” - Waikanae resident

IWI & TE TIRITI (18 respondents, 1%) and REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY (14 respondents, <1%)

The remaining asks: deepen the application of Te Tiriti in local decision-making, and improve public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington (14).

“A stronger, more consistent understanding and application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in local decision making.” - Waikanae resident

“Better transport costs with trains (costs and reliability are not great getting to Wgtn)” - Paraparaumu resident

Theme	n
RATES & COST	626
Council overspending / waste	359
Rates increases and affordability	260
Staff numbers and bureaucracy	193
Rates caps and zero-increase targets	60
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	555
Accountability for how rates are spent	167
Satisfaction with current council performance	156
Communication and consultation with residents	133
Listen to community needs not just business interests	84
Financial transparency across departments	70
Distrust of current council / leadership	66
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	23
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	497
Focus on core services and infrastructure	397
Proactive maintenance and asset upkeep	50
Better contract oversight and quality of work	43
More community-centred activities for wellbeing	40
Local roads and traffic congestion	35
More spending on infrastructure over arts and culture	35
Provisions for older / aging population	9
Kāpiti airport ownership, retention and future	6
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	234
Local decision-making on local priorities	119
True democracy / no unelected members with voting rights	58
Fewer councillors / reduce wards	36
Access to elected members / councillors	19
Youth / younger generation representation	13
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	228

Theme	n
Reducing duplication of roles and services	113
Shared services / collaboration without amalgamation	91
Access to expertise, capacity and deeper pockets	60
Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed	15
GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING	176
Long-term, anticipatory governance over short-termism	80
Less talk, more action	44
Withdraw from LGNZ / reduce focus on Māori interests	41
Calibre, skills and qualifications of elected members	16
GENERAL	134
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	75
Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo	45
Support: General preference to stand alone	15
FUNDING & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	92
Raise income via business and tourism promotion	51
Central Government funding for new responsibilities	33
Retaining GST / tax revenue in Kāpiti	8
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	86
Preference for Horowhenua / looking north	54
Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington	33
Wider Wellington regional unitary authority	17
Porirua / northern Wellington grouping option	8
Support: Joining Wellington City / supercity	6
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE	84
Climate resilience and coastal protection	83
Disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness	2
STANDING ALONE	58
Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run	35
Too small / lacks scale to be effective	23
REGULATION	41
Faster, simpler consenting and regulatory processes	29
Standardise District Plan rules nationally	13
AMALGAMATION MODELS & PRECEDENTS	35
Alternative governance models and safeguards	35
GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & CHARACTER	30

Theme	n
Opposition to intensification and townhouse development	30
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	28
Central Government overriding local planning	28
COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES	26
Access to health services and hospital links	15
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	7
Services and facilities for families and young people	7
IWI & TE TIRITI	18
Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti	18
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	14
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	14

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 29: What changes are needed in local government in Kāpiti - themes

9.3 What should remain unchanged

Survey question: “In your view, what should remain unchanged in local government in Kāpiti?”

Overview

What respondents want kept (n=1,164) is, above all, localness.

Local voice and representation is the largest category (405 respondents): local voice (228), local decision-making on local priorities (193), community boards (64) and access to elected members (61).

Service delivery follows (344), led by the water services and delivery record respondents repeatedly singled out as something Kāpiti does well (121).

Trust themes (255) here skew positive - satisfaction with current council performance (130) and good communication with residents - and 115 respondents argued Kāpiti is well run and can stand alone.

The district’s identity and character (116) completes the picture of a community that values what it has.

Because a comment can raise several themes, the categories below overlap.

LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION (405 respondents, 35%)

The engagement’s top-ranked priority - protecting a strong local voice - reappears here as the thing most worth keeping. Respondents named the machinery of it: locally elected representatives making local decisions (193), community boards (64) and being able to reach councillors directly (61). The pattern is consistent: local voice tops the priorities ranking, leads the concerns about amalgamating, and leads what should stay unchanged.

“Local representation and local priorities focused on and funded locally.” - Paraparaumu resident

*"I think the community boards are useful to ensure local voices are heard." -
Paraparaumu resident*

SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES (344 respondents, 30%)

Kāpiti's water services (121) are the most-named thing to protect - the same water services that topped the ranked list of most important Council services. Respondents treat the district's investment record in water and infrastructure (67) as an asset that a merger would dilute, and the focus on core services (138) here reads as "keep it up" rather than "fix it". Arts, culture and community services (57) and local libraries (52) also drew explicit protection.

*"Keep going with the investment in water - you have done a great job here." - Ōtaki
resident*

*"Water services, waste and storm water services, parks etc they all do a great job." -
Paraparaumu resident*

GENERAL (256 respondents, 22%)

Position statements split roughly 3:2 - 148 opposed to amalgamation or preferring the status quo, 108 supporting change - a wider spread than the go-it-alone lead in the scenario ranking might suggest.

"I don't see any apparent benefit in Kapiti amalgamating." - Paekākāriki resident

"Nothing - change is long overdue and urgently needed!!!!" - Waikanae resident

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION (255 respondents, 22%)

The engagement's most positive category: satisfaction with current performance (130) and communication and consultation worth keeping (82) - the counterweight to the accountability demands in the previous section, and evidence the discontent is not universal.

"Communication and information on the website is great :)" - Paraparaumu resident

"Local representation through community boards, consultation." - Paekākāriki resident

RATES & COST (116 respondents, 10%)

Even here rates intrude: most want stability protected (83 raised affordability), while a dissenting few argued the status quo is precisely what is unaffordable.

"Overall fine but would be good if rates stayed more stable." - Waikanae resident

"Nothing. Maintaining the status quo is likely unaffordable." - Waikanae resident

LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER (116 respondents, 10%)

The district's identity and special character (106) - its name, its sense of community, its cluster-of-villages nature (18) - named as things no restructure should erase.

"Sense of community and local knowledge used in decision-making." - Ōtaki resident

"Our name Kāpiti. Level of representation per population." - Reikōrangi resident

STANDING ALONE (115 respondents, 10%)

One topic, one message: Kāpiti is well run and can manage its own affairs (115) - keep it that way.

“Independence and autonomy - maintain healthy separation.” - Ōtaki resident

“Leave as it is. Why try to fix something that isn’t broken.” - Waikanae resident

COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY (95 respondents, 8%)

Keep local rates spent locally (68) and keep clear of others’ infrastructure bills (44) - the protective framing of the engagement’s biggest financial worry.

“Local rates spent locally, focus on what’s best for Kapiti.” - Raumati resident

“Access to our water which we have funded through our rates.” - Paraparaumu resident

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE (76 respondents, 7%)

Environmental protection (39), climate and coastal work (32) and emergency preparedness (16) as programmes to continue - often tied explicitly to water care.

“Focus on the environment, coastal planning, watercare etc.” - Raumati resident

“Continue with good water management and care for the future.” - Peka Peka resident

IWI & TE TIRITI (65 respondents, 6%)

The largest showing for this category anywhere in the engagement: existing mana whenua partnerships - Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti, the ART confederation relationships - named as things to carry forward intact.

“The partnerships with community stakeholders, IWi, should remain.” - Ōtaki resident

“Iwi representation partnership, specifically ART confederation.” - Paekākāriki resident

WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH (49 respondents, 4%), **COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES** (12 respondents, 1%), **PROCESS** (11 respondents, <1%) and **EFFICIENCY** (4 respondents, <1%)

The remaining comments restate the position - keep clear of Wellington (49) - name the recreation facilities and amenities residents value (12), and insist the decision stays local.

“Keep Kapiti Coast local government, don’t amalgamate with Wellington.” - Waikanae resident

“The KCDC makes the decisions which affect the area. Not government.” - Waikanae resident

Theme	n
LOCAL VOICE & REPRESENTATION	405
Local voice and representation	228
Local decision-making on local priorities	193
Retaining community boards	64
Access to elected members / councillors	61
SERVICE DELIVERY & PRIORITIES	344
Focus on core services and infrastructure	138
Kāpiti water services and strong delivery record	121
Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record	67
Arts, culture and community services	57
Local libraries	52
Local roads and traffic congestion	24
Housing development and design character	15
Kāpiti airport	4
GENERAL	256
Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo	148
Support: General support for amalgamation / change	108
TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & SATISFACTION	255
Satisfaction with current council performance	130
Communication and consultation with residents	82
Accountability for how rates are spent	47
Negative / indifferent view of elected members	13
Living wage and supporting the workforce	12
LOCAL IDENTITY & CHARACTER	116
District identity and special character	106
Cluster of villages / distinct township identities	18
RATES & COST	116
Rates increases and affordability	83
Staff numbers and bureaucracy	35
Ability to set own rates / no rates cap	8
STANDING ALONE	115
Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run	115
COST-SHARING & INFRASTRUCTURE LIABILITY	95
Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti	68
Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water)	44

Theme	n
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE	76
Environmental protection	39
Climate resilience and coastal protection	32
Disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness	16
IWI & TE TIRITI	65
Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti	65
WHICH COUNCILS TO PARTNER WITH	49
Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington	49
COMMUNITY WELLBEING & AMENITIES	12
Recreation facilities and amenities valued	12
PROCESS, TIMEFRAME & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	11
Central Government overriding local planning	11
EFFICIENCY, SCALE & SHARED SERVICES	4
Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed	4
REGIONAL FUNCTIONS & CONNECTIVITY	3
Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington	3

n = count of distinct respondents raising each theme (online survey and written submissions combined). Topics raised by fewer than 2 respondents overall are omitted. Open-text question; respondents may raise more than one theme.

Table 30: What should remain unchanged - themes

Appendix A: The engagement questions

The engagement questions are summarised below. The same questions were asked online (on the Council's Have Your Say platform) and on the paper feedback form; the paper form presented 24 service options where the online survey listed 26 (see Methodology).

9.4 Ranked questions

- **What matters most** - Rank what matters most to you about how local government works in Kāpiti (7 options, 1 = most important): protecting a strong local voice and local decision making; affordability and potential cost efficiencies; quality of infrastructure and services; locally delivered infrastructure and services; protecting our district's identity and character; coordination across the Greater Wellington region; coordination up the West Coast.
- **Most important services** - What services that Council delivers are most important to you? (ranking of 26 services, from water services through to cemeteries).
- **Concerns about amalgamating** - What concerns you most about Kāpiti amalgamating with other councils? (8 options, including "No major concerns").
- **Concerns about standing alone** - What would concern you most about Kāpiti standing alone? (7 options, including "No major concerns").
- **Advantages of amalgamating** - What do you see as the biggest advantages of Kāpiti amalgamating? (6 options, including "No clear benefits").
- **Advantages of standing alone** - What do you see as the biggest advantages of Kāpiti standing alone? (9 options, including "No clear benefits of standing alone").
- **Preferred scenario** - Rank the potential scenarios (4 options): go it alone as a single authority; look at opportunities north (e.g. Kāpiti Coast District Council and Horowhenua District Council); join with councils in the wider Wellington region to form a regional unitary authority; let Central Government decide.

9.5 Open-text questions

- Is there anything we've missed? (after the priorities question)
- Please explain why these services are important to you.
- Do you have any other concerns? (after each concerns question)
- Any advantages / benefits we have missed? (after each advantages question)
- What changes are needed in local government in Kāpiti?
- What should remain unchanged in local government in Kāpiti?
- Preferred scenario - other (please specify).

9.6 Demographics

Age group, whether the respondent lives in or owns a property in Kāpiti, suburb (or where the respondent is from), Kāpiti ratepayer status, and whether the response was made as an individual or on behalf of an organisation (with organisation name).

Appendix B: Glossary of qualitative themes

This appendix is a glossary of the qualitative coding framework: every theme (topic) used in the theme tables, grouped under its category, with a short definition of what the theme covers. Categories are ordered by the number of distinct respondents raising them across all nine open-text questions; n is the number of distinct respondents raising the theme across all questions.

9.7 Service delivery & priorities (n = 1,058)

Focus on core services and infrastructure (n = 751) - Council should concentrate on core services and infrastructure ahead of nice-to-haves; includes calls to cut non-essential spending.

Kāpiti water services and strong delivery record (n = 192) - Value placed on Kāpiti's in-house water services, water meters and reliable supply/wastewater management as a model to protect.

Kāpiti's infrastructure investment and asset management record (n = 140) - Kāpiti's record of prudent, ongoing infrastructure investment and asset management - raised as something done well and to maintain.

Local roads and traffic congestion (n = 78) - Local roading quality, maintenance and traffic congestion within the district, including operational issues such as traffic-signal phasing and local transport planning.

Arts, culture and community services (n = 62) - Continued commitment to arts, culture and community needs.

Local libraries (n = 52) - Keeping local libraries.

Proactive maintenance and asset upkeep (n = 50) - More proactive rather than reactive service delivery - regular maintenance of trees, gutters, footpaths and pre-emptive action ahead of weather events.

Better contract oversight and quality of work (n = 43) - Greater attention to detail in contracts and oversight of quality of roading, public facilities and ongoing maintenance.

Provisions for older / aging population (n = 43) - Housing, services and provisions for Kāpiti's older and aging population.

More community-centred activities for wellbeing (n = 40) - More community-centred activities to build community wellbeing.

More spending on infrastructure over arts and culture (n = 35) - Prioritise practical spending on basic infrastructure ahead of arts and culture.

Long-term value for money and infrastructure matching growth (n = 27) - Long-term value for money and avoiding past mistakes of development without matching infrastructure.

Quality and cost of services over who delivers them (n = 16) - View that the quality, affordability and competent management of services matters more than whether they are delivered locally.

Housing development and design character (n = 15) - Retaining housing / retirement village design and community housing focus.

Inability to access services when needed (n = 10) - Concern about reduced or slower access to services needed when needed, and services going down after merger.

Kāpiti airport ownership, retention and future ($n = 9$) - References to the Kāpiti airport - keeping it open, council purchase or management, or its role as a disaster/emergency lifeline.

Consider: Amalgamate only if services would improve ($n = 8$) - Willingness to amalgamate only if it demonstrably improves services that could not be delivered by standing alone.

Future needs: schools, health, water and sewage ($n = 7$) - Standing alone must account for future needs including schools, health facilities, water and sewage.

No loss of current services in any change ($n = 6$) - Insistence that amalgamation must result in no loss of services currently enjoyed, including district-wide libraries and regional services.

Local amenities: parking and rubbish collection ($n = 5$) - Practical local service gaps such as insufficient parking at Paraparaumu Beach/Ihakara St and rubbish bins/collections.

Kāpiti airport ($n = 4$) - Keeping the airport.

Access to Greater Wellington libraries ($n = 3$) - Worry about losing access to libraries across the Greater Wellington Region.

Focus on tourism specific to Kāpiti ($n = 3$) - Tourism being more important to Kāpiti than to other cities and needing local focus.

Local emergency management system ($n = 3$) - Going north would lose Kāpiti's investment in a regionally consistent emergency management system and preparedness benefits.

Council filling gaps Central Government should fund ($n = 2$) - Concern council becomes financially bogged down providing services and mandates that government should fund.

Retaining Paraparaumu airport ($n = 2$) - Protecting the local Paraparaumu airport as vital to the region.

9.8 Rates & cost ($n = 880$)

Rates increases and affordability ($n = 524$) - Concern about high and above-inflation rates rises, affordability, cost-of-living pressure and being priced out of the district.

Council overspending / waste ($n = 472$) - Perception that council wastes money on unnecessary or 'nice-to-have' projects and should spend only on needs.

Staff numbers and bureaucracy ($n = 263$) - View that council has too many staff/managers or that amalgamation adds bureaucracy; calls for leaner administration and reduced overhead.

Rates caps and zero-increase targets ($n = 60$) - Wanting formal rate caps or a zero rate-increase goal reflected in decision-making, goal-setting and staffing.

Lower rates and reduced council costs ($n = 29$) - Expectation that reduced duplication and better contract prices would significantly lower Kāpiti's high rates.

Affordable rubbish collection and recycling ($n = 21$) - Affordable, effective waste collection and recycling matters to residents.

Ability to set own rates / no rates cap ($n = 8$) - Retaining council's ability to set its own rates rather than being subject to a rates cap.

9.9 General (n = 825)

Oppose: General opposition to amalgamation / prefer status quo (n = 292) - Outright rejection of amalgamation or general preference for no structural change, with no specific reason given.

Support: General support for amalgamation / change (n = 277) - General endorsement that amalgamation or reform is overdue, sensible or the only way forward, without specific detail.

Oppose: No advantages / sceptical of claimed benefits (n = 159) - Sees no real advantages, doubts claimed benefits will materialise or be felt (cost savings redistributed to Central Government, rates rise regardless).

All listed services are important (n = 158) - Non-specific endorsement that all or most of the ranked services matter.

Support: General preference to stand alone (n = 150) - General preference for Kāpiti standing alone as the best option without specific reasoning.

Oppose: No benefits to standing alone (n = 39) - Statements that there are no benefits to standing alone because amalgamation is inevitable or preferable.

9.10 Local voice & representation (n = 816)

Local decision-making on local priorities (n = 483) - Wanting decisions about local priorities made locally and responsive to local needs rather than by a distant or metropolitan-dominated body.

Local voice and representation (n = 420) - Kāpiti's voice and representation in decision-making - raised as a potential loss under amalgamation or as something to protect and retain (the question carries the direction).

Access to elected members / councillors (n = 92) - Value of knowing and being able to access councillors with specific knowledge of local communities; fear of reduced access in a larger entity.

Retaining community boards (n = 70) - Importance of community boards (several per district) as local input, grass-roots engagement and a safeguard if part of a larger council.

True democracy / no unelected members with voting rights (n = 58) - Opposition to unelected community representation with voting rights; only directly elected members should sit at the table.

Fewer councillors / reduce wards (n = 36) - View that Kāpiti is overserved by elected people and wards; suggestions to have fewer councillors.

Listen to Kāpiti ratepayers and heed their views (n = 21) - Calls for the council to genuinely listen to and act on the views of Kāpiti Coast ratepayers.

Consider: Local representation safeguards within a unitary authority (n = 18) - Condition that a regional unitary authority must properly incorporate local perspectives, community representation and voice in key discussions, and that this be consulted on.

Youth / younger generation representation (n = 13) - Calls for more young people and future-focused voices in council decision-making roles.

9.11 Trust, accountability & satisfaction (n = 795)

Satisfaction with current council performance (n = 278) - Performance judgement: satisfaction with how the current council performs day-to-day - NOT a statement about which structural option to choose.

Accountability for how rates are spent (n = 239) - Demand for greater transparency and accountability for rates spending, priorities and decision-making before and after any change.

Communication and consultation with residents (n = 205) - Council communication and consultation with residents - calls for better communication, and satisfaction with current communication/website and consultation practice (the question carries the direction).

Distrust of current council / leadership (n = 140) - Distrust of current councillors, management and leadership, including perceptions of being out of touch and unaccountable to ratepayers.

Listen to community needs not just business interests (n = 84) - Council should listen to the whole community, not just affluent business people.

Negative / indifferent view of elected members (n = 83) - Dismissive, cynical or indifferent views of councillors and elected members generally (distinct from access to them).

Financial transparency across departments (n = 70) - Full financial transparency across all departments and spending, with no preferential payments not voted on by ratepayers.

Living wage and supporting the workforce (n = 12) - Continued commitment to the living wage and supporting workers.

9.12 Which councils to partner with (n = 588)

Opposition to joining Wellington City / wider Wellington (n = 367) - Rejection of merging with Wellington City or a wider Wellington region, citing mismanagement, different priorities and water/cost problems.

Preference for Horowhenua / looking north (n = 229) - Preference for amalgamating or aligning north with Horowhenua (and Manawatu) as a more natural geographic, cultural and operational fit.

Geographic, cultural fit and sensible boundaries (n = 172) - Argument that mergers should follow geography, topography (Tararuas), iwi rohe and shared community interests rather than dissimilar demographics.

Wider Wellington regional unitary authority (n = 59) - Commentary on forming a region-wide unitary authority (Wellington, Porirua, Hutt, Upper Hutt, Wairarapa, Kāpiti), for or against.

Porirua / northern Wellington grouping option (n = 45) - Interest in combining with Porirua and forming a northern Wellington grouping able to stand up to metropolitan Wellington.

Support: Joining Wellington City / supercity (n = 24) - The change wanted is joining Wellington City / the wider Wellington grouping (southwards) - support for that direction.

Hospital and health service catchment concerns (n = 7) - Worry that merging north would refer Kāpiti residents to Palmerston North Hospital, as Ōtaki residents currently are.

Shared values with potential partner councils (n = 1) - Partner councils should share values on climate, Te Tiriti, environment and commitments such as the living wage.

9.13 Cost-sharing & infrastructure liability (n = 488)

Subsidising other councils' infrastructure (Wellington water) (n = 317) - Strong concern about paying for other councils' neglected infrastructure, especially Wellington's water/sewerage mess and cost blowouts.

Rates and resources staying / spent in Kāpiti (n = 171) - Wanting local rates and resources ring-fenced to benefit Kāpiti communities and not diverted to projects or areas elsewhere.

Assuming other councils' debt and deficit burden (n = 153) - Risk of taking on higher debt or infrastructural deficit from partner councils through amalgamation.

Transition and reform costs (n = 35) - Concern that transition costs and downstream impacts of reform are unknown, unpublished and could burden ratepayers.

Paying for projects outside Kāpiti's area (n = 32) - Fear of paying for big projects way outside Kāpiti's geographic area with no benefit to local ratepayers.

9.14 Efficiency, scale & shared services (n = 480)

Reducing duplication of roles and services (n = 171) - Removing duplicate roles (mayors, CEOs, back-office) and avoiding duplication of services across councils to save cost.

Efficiencies and economies of scale from amalgamation (n = 159) - Belief that a larger entity spreads admin costs, delivers economies of scale and could lower rates or improve delivery.

Shared services / collaboration without amalgamation (n = 156) - Support for shared services, regional collaboration, centres of excellence or joint arrangements as an alternative to full structural merger.

Access to expertise, capacity and deeper pockets (n = 95) - Value of scale for accessing expert resources, capacity and borrowing/funding power for major projects.

Some services better delivered regionally (n = 45) - Facilities like stadiums, large recreation, theatres, emergency management, flood protection and transport seen as more efficiently provided regionally or by a single Wellington-region body.

Too many councils nationally / NZ over-governed (n = 37) - New Zealand has too many councils / layers of government overall; consolidation makes sense nationally.

Benefits not guaranteed / depend on who is in control (n = 31) - Doubt that promised savings or benefits will materialise; outcome depends on leadership, could be 'more of the same'.

Ease of dealing with council / consents process (n = 9) - More effective and efficient delivery of processes such as consents, where Kāpiti is seen as difficult to deal with.

Improved planning, quicker consents and lower building costs (n = 6) - Consolidated decision-making leading to better urban planning, quicker building consents and reduced building costs.

Shared community assets affordable across many people (n = 5) - Important to pay collectively for community assets shared across a wide population to keep them affordable.

Risk of self-interest over greater good (n = 4) - Concern that self-interest could take priority over options better for the wider region.

Geographic separation makes amalgamation impractical ($n = 3$) - Economies of scale not feasible given geographic separation from partners even Horowhenua.

9.15 Process, timeframe & Central Government ($n = 341$)

Opposition to Central Government deciding / 'done to us' ($n = 153$) - Strong preference that local government decisions not be imposed by Central Government; reform should be done 'with' communities not 'to' them.

Lack of information, options analysis and costs ($n = 104$) - Difficulty responding without full options analysis, financial detail, transition costs or post-implementation evidence to make an informed choice.

Central Government overriding local planning ($n = 67$) - Central Government overriding local planning decisions and district plans (e.g. housing intensification directives).

Backstop / risk of being forced to amalgamate ($n = 61$) - Awareness that standing alone may not be a real option and that Central Government could impose a structure via the backstop anyway.

Distrust of Central Government motives ($n = 58$) - Distrust of Central Government's amalgamation agenda, tactics and consultation, including claims it undermines localism and Māori/Treaty rights.

Rushed timeframe and election timing ($n = 28$) - Concern about unrealistic Government timeframes, lack of enabling legislation, and preference to pause until after the 2026 election.

Stand-alone may not be a permitted option ($n = 20$) - Belief that legislation or the government does not actually allow the stand-alone option, making the question moot.

Being forced later without early influence ($n = 11$) - Concern about ending up in a structure with unwanted partners if not at the early decision-making stage; better to take the wheel.

Council leadership and engagement on reform ($n = 9$) - Questions about the council's leadership, discussions with adjoining councils and its slowness to respond on reform.

Risk of political isolation if standing alone ($n = 6$) - Concern that in the current political climate Kāpiti could suffer damaging political isolation by standing alone.

Impact on KCDC business-as-usual work ($n = 5$) - Risk that the reform process impedes key ongoing KCDC BAU work.

9.16 Community wellbeing & amenities ($n = 301$)

Recreation facilities and amenities valued ($n = 153$) - Swimming pools, sports grounds, parks, reserves, walkways, bridleways, festivals and events actively used and valued.

Services support mental and physical wellbeing ($n = 100$) - Amenities and outdoor facilities important for the mental and physical wellbeing of residents of all ages.

Services and facilities for families and young people ($n = 57$) - Need for more services, facilities and support for families, children and young people.

Libraries valued across the district ($n = 51$) - District-wide library services valued, seen as superior to neighbouring areas and used regularly.

Access to health services and hospital links (*n* = 40) - Concern about limited services and reliance on charities for hospital transport / access.

Protecting the most vulnerable (*n* = 21) - Where trade-offs are needed, protect the most vulnerable first and balance the four wellbeings.

9.17 Standing alone (*n* = 294)

Kāpiti can stand alone and is well run (*n* = 202) - Structural preference/viability: Kāpiti is capable of standing alone as a council - about the stand-alone option, NOT a judgement of day-to-day performance.

Too small / lacks scale to be effective (*n* = 64) - Concern that Kāpiti is too small to achieve economies of scale, cope with major disasters or fund large infrastructure alone.

Infrastructure funding capacity alone (*n* = 25) - Concern about ability to fund major future infrastructure upgrades without joint borrowing power, dependent on Central Government allocation.

Retaining local control as Kāpiti grows (*n* = 13) - Keeping local control over the district's direction given expected growth, climate and transport advantages, rather than others driving decisions.

Not being a small part on the edge of a large council (*n* = 11) - Value in not becoming a tiny, peripheral part of a much larger authority where community interests are diluted.

Growing population supports standing alone (*n* = 5) - Population growth in the district makes remaining stand-alone more realistic / a growing region should be left alone.

9.18 Environment & climate (*n* = 291)

Climate resilience and coastal protection (*n* = 159) - Concern for climate change adaptation, coastal erosion protection, seawalls and building resilience to severe weather.

Environmental protection (*n* = 149) - Value on protecting the natural environment and addressing environmental impacts that cross regional boundaries.

Disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness (*n* = 22) - Keeping a focus on disaster mitigation and local capacity in an emergency.

Climate and emissions as a national responsibility (*n* = 15) - Climate mitigation and emissions reduction seen as national undertakings beyond local council capacity or funding.

Scepticism about funding coastal protection (*n* = 13) - Doubt about compensating or protecting coastal properties given long-known climate risk.

Reduced focus on climate change (*n* = 2) - Preference for a reduced focus on 'climate change' and its perceived implications.

9.19 Local identity & character (*n* = 255)

District identity and special character (*n* = 236) - Kāpiti's identity and special character - raised as a potential loss under amalgamation or as something to protect and retain (the question carries the direction).

Cluster of villages / distinct township identities ($n = 44$) - Framing of Kāpiti as a network of townships/villages (Paekākāriki, Waikanae, Ōtaki etc.) each with unique identity that must be protected, not homogenised.

9.20 Regional functions & connectivity ($n = 194$)

Public transport and rail connectivity to Wellington ($n = 92$) - Importance of maintaining and strengthening trains/buses, the Kāpiti line and commuter links to Wellington and the metro region.

Maintaining connection with the wider Wellington region ($n = 66$) - Value of retaining connectivity with Wellington for work, services, amenities, whānau and regional decisions that affect Kāpiti.

Regional influence / lobbying Central Government ($n = 36$) - Argument that a larger body has greater weight to lobby Central Government on funding, roading and national infrastructure.

Stronger regional decision-making and planning ($n = 30$) - Potential for consolidated, stronger regional decision-making and focus on important items.

Loss of regional oversight if GWRC dissolved ($n = 23$) - Concern that removing Greater Wellington leaves a gap in regional planning, catchment/water oversight and emergency management that a small council may not fill.

Consider: Include regional council functions in any amalgamation ($n = 13$) - View that regional council services should be included within any amalgamation or unitary authority.

Consider: Retain or reform a regional council rather than devolve functions ($n = 5$) - Scepticism about devolving regional council functions downwards, and suggestions to reform/rename GWRC (e.g. as a Tararua bioregional council) rather than dissolve it.

Cross-subsidy currently favouring Kāpiti ($n = 1$) - Note that Kāpiti already benefits from Greater Wellington cross-subsidy, with more spent on Kāpiti than flows the other way.

9.21 Governance & decision-making ($n = 176$)

Long-term, anticipatory governance over short-termism ($n = 80$) - Wanting proactive, forward-looking governance and less influence by short-term business interests, drawing on governance experts.

Less talk, more action ($n = 44$) - Calls for council to act rather than deliberate.

Withdraw from LGNZ / reduce focus on Māori interests ($n = 41$) - Withdraw from Local Government NZ, seen as ideologically captured and prioritising Māori interests and unelected appointees.

Calibre, skills and qualifications of elected members ($n = 16$) - Wanting more capable, skilled or qualified councillors and mayor - better candidates and informed decision-making; a positive ask, distinct from general negativity about current elected members.

9.22 Amalgamation models & precedents ($n = 142$)

Amalgamation means too big to care ($n = 55$) - Concern a larger council becomes remote, a political circus, and 'too big to care' about Kāpiti residents.

Auckland super city and past amalgamation failures ($n = 44$) - Citing Auckland super city and 1980s Hutt/Tawa amalgamations as evidence that promised savings failed and smaller communities lost out.

Alternative governance models and safeguards ($n = 37$) - Proposals for coordinated regional governance, joint committees or hybrid models with statutory safeguards that avoid full centralisation.

Consider: Staged / phased amalgamation approach ($n = 9$) - Suggestion of a staged approach, amalgamating first with Horowhenua and later with Porirua/Wellington to let communities transition more slowly.

Consider: Benefits could be retained under a well-managed amalgamation ($n = 7$) - View that local identity, community boards, accountability and needs could be preserved if amalgamation is done well, and shouldn't be blocked by desire to retain control.

Concern: Race to lowest common denominator on cost and services ($n = 1$) - Worry that amalgamation triggers a downward spiral of higher costs and lower services.

9.23 Local service delivery & control ($n = 112$)

Keeping infrastructure and service delivery under local control ($n = 82$) - Value in KCDC keeping services in-house and locally managed; not wanting to lose control of local water, sewage and asset management.

Water security with population growth ($n = 31$) - Water services becoming a priority issue as population grows - where it is drawn from and how usage is managed.

9.24 Growth, development & character ($n = 105$)

Growth and development to avoid stagnation ($n = 61$) - Without growth and development areas stagnate and decline; support for attractions and development to draw people and business.

Opposition to intensification and townhouse development ($n = 46$) - Wanting to limit new subdivisions and townhouse developments (e.g. Waikanae Beach / Eruini St), keeping backyards and space for children.

9.25 Iwi & Te Tiriti ($n = 99$)

Mana whenua partnerships and Te Tiriti ($n = 99$) - Importance of retaining and strengthening iwi/mana whenua relationships, Māori wards and Tiriti-centred partnership in governance.

9.26 Funding & Central Government ($n = 92$)

Raise income via business and tourism promotion ($n = 51$) - Raise council income by promoting business and tourism rather than only cutting or raising rates.

Central Government funding for new responsibilities ($n = 33$) - Central Government exploring different funding streams and providing funding when councils are given new responsibilities.

Retaining GST / tax revenue in Kāpiti ($n = 8$) - GST collected in Kāpiti should stay for KCDC use, with council lobbying Central Government.

9.27 Core services & priorities ($n = 71$)

Council should not fund tourism and business promotion ($n = 41$) - Tourism, destination promotion and business growth seen as no business of council, better left to the ventures concerned.

Safety and security as the first priority ($n = 30$) - A safe, secure, functional community comes first before other services.

9.28 Transport & connectivity (n = 50)

Footpaths valued but cycleways questioned (n = 27) - Footpaths seen as needed while cycleways viewed as expensive and benefiting only a small group; objection to ranking them together.

Roading and rural access priorities (n = 27) - For rural residents, roading and access are the key council services alongside library, parks and emergency management.

9.29 Regulation (n = 41)

Faster, simpler consenting and regulatory processes (n = 29) - Resource and building consents seen as slow, officious or over-engineered; wants streamlined regulation and quicker approvals.

Standardise District Plan rules nationally (n = 13) - District Plan rules should be standardised throughout the country.

Appendix C: Ranked preferences by demographic group

This appendix breaks each ranked question down by demographic group using the report's rank-points score, standardised for group size: the group's score for each item as a share of the maximum that group could give, on a 0-100 scale (rank 1 of K options scores K points, rank K scores 1, unranked scores 0, so 100 would mean every respondent in the group ranked the item first). This is the same scoring system used in the body tables - standardising simply removes the effect of group size, so groups are directly comparable, and each table's item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Cells are shaded from white to light blue, scaled within each table, so relative patterns can be read at a glance; the group's base is shown in each column header.

Age is reported in five bands and area in all ten localities; the engagement form did not collect gender. Reikōrangī (n=24) and Hautere (n=18) have small bases and those columns should be read with care. Further breakdowns - decade age bands, ratepayer and property status and response channel - are available in the accompanying cross-tabs workbook. As with the report body, these are unweighted figures describing the people who took part; differences between groups should be read as descriptions of this self-selected sample, not population estimates.

9.30 What matters most

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Quality of infrastructure and services	76	79	80	76	77	74
Affordability and potential cost efficiencies	74	75	76	76	76	72
Protecting a strong local voice and local decision making	70	69	67	67	68	75
Locally delivered infrastructure and services	57	62	58	58	54	58
Protecting our district's identity and character	55	55	55	54	56	56
Coordination across the Greater Wellington region	34	36	38	36	35	32
Coordination up the West Coast	31	24	26	32	32	33

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 7 scores 7 points ... rank 7 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher.

Table 31: What matters most - standardised score by age band

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n= 86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangī (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Quality of infrastructure and services	76	76	77	77	75	73	75	78	82	74	72
Affordability and potential cost efficiencies	74	74	76	75	73	68	77	74	70	79	83

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Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n=86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangī (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Protecting a strong local voice and local decision making	70	70	70	69	72	78	69	67	68	74	68
Locally delivered infrastructure and services	57	57	59	56	57	57	58	60	50	56	56
Protecting our district's identity and character	55	57	54	56	54	56	50	50	56	60	54
Coordination across the Greater Wellington region	34	34	33	37	36	36	33	37	33	30	33
Coordination up the West Coast	31	30	31	29	32	31	38	35	40	27	34

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 7 scores 7 points ... rank 7 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher. Small bases (Reikōrangī n=24; Hautere n=18) - read those columns with care.

Table 32: What matters most - standardised score by area

9.31 Most important Council services

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Water services (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water)	82	81	81	79	83	84
Roads	64	60	64	65	65	63
Parks and reserves	56	65	61	58	58	49
Emergency management	53	50	55	54	54	51
Footpaths and cycleways, walkways and bridleways	51	53	57	53	52	46
Districtwide planning (including strategies, policies and bylaws)	48	41	39	45	50	56
Local amenities	48	54	50	46	51	44
Libraries	46	48	48	42	44	47
Coastal protection	43	43	45	42	46	42
Playgrounds and sports fields	42	57	51	39	41	37
Waste minimisation	37	33	36	37	39	37
Business growth and development	37	33	35	41	39	35
Consenting and building services	35	35	34	33	37	35
Public toilets	34	36	39	36	32	32
Governance, planning and reporting	33	23	24	29	34	41
Aquatics facilities	31	45	38	30	30	25
Events, arts and culture	27	34	32	30	28	23
Communications and engagement	26	20	18	24	27	31
Community development and grants	25	32	28	26	23	23
Community halls	23	28	23	22	23	23
Community advocacy	22	27	18	23	22	21
Older persons housing	21	15	17	22	21	24

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Tourism and destination promotion	19	23	19	20	23	14
Compliance	18	18	15	18	19	20
Emissions reduction	18	21	19	17	17	19
Cemeteries	17	17	16	19	18	16

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 26 scores 26 points ... rank 26 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher.

Table 33: Most important Council services - standardised score by age band

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n= 86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangi (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Water services (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water)	82	83	83	84	81	81	66	91	71	66	80
Roads	64	64	66	59	66	58	66	68	58	66	75
Parks and reserves	56	59	54	58	53	59	53	54	49	43	46
Emergency management	53	54	52	52	53	56	56	47	61	40	56
Footpaths and cycleways, walkways and bridleways	51	51	52	56	46	49	43	57	43	53	40
Districtwide planning (including strategies, policies and bylaws)	48	49	48	45	55	47	44	60	52	52	32
Local amenities	48	48	48	48	49	46	49	52	29	66	40
Libraries	46	48	44	46	46	48	49	39	32	43	40
Coastal protection	43	40	43	52	41	61	36	45	49	30	18
Playgrounds and sports fields	42	41	44	43	43	37	39	44	30	35	46
Waste minimisation	37	36	36	39	39	41	35	43	27	31	46
Business growth and development	37	34	39	39	37	29	38	47	33	47	44
Consenting and building services	35	35	33	34	40	30	35	43	43	50	38
Public toilets	34	33	34	32	37	36	33	43	23	32	42

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Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n=86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangī (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Governance, planning and reporting	33	33	31	32	38	36	36	48	31	39	31
Aquatics facilities	31	28	32	33	35	29	32	26	23	27	17
Events, arts and culture	27	25	27	30	32	32	26	31	21	29	18
Communications and engagement	26	26	25	24	30	25	25	38	31	30	25
Community development and grants	25	23	25	25	32	37	22	24	16	31	12
Community halls	23	24	20	22	25	34	25	27	16	46	27
Community advocacy	22	21	21	19	27	29	22	21	10	33	20
Older persons housing	21	19	22	19	25	30	21	24	13	31	30
Tourism and destination promotion	19	17	20	21	20	15	19	30	20	28	12
Compliance	18	17	18	17	22	16	20	27	20	27	25
Emissions reduction	18	17	16	22	21	30	18	20	7	12	13
Cemeteries	17	16	18	16	20	19	24	17	10	22	19

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 26 scores 26 points ... rank 26 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher. Small bases (Reikōrangī n=24; Hautere n=18) - read those columns with care.

Table 34: Most important Council services - standardised score by area

9.32 Biggest advantages of amalgamating

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Better coordination of infrastructure and planning	40	40	40	39	41	42
Potential for cost savings	39	39	40	39	42	36
No clear benefits	37	39	35	37	36	40
Improved consistency in regional planning and decision making	33	29	29	30	34	36
More efficient use of rates	32	29	33	34	34	29
Stronger regional decision-making	27	26	23	26	27	30

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 6 scores 6 points ... rank 6 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher.

Table 35: Advantages of amalgamating - standardised score by age band

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n= 86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangī (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Better coordination of infrastructure and planning	40	40	38	43	45	41	34	40	54	28	60
Potential for cost savings	39	38	40	39	40	34	38	50	41	31	40
No clear benefits	37	37	40	35	37	40	36	31	16	65	22
Improved consistency in regional planning and decision making	33	34	33	32	37	29	33	35	48	21	32
More efficient use of rates	32	31	31	34	32	27	30	43	33	26	49
Stronger regional decision-making	27	29	27	24	30	23	28	28	45	19	18

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 6 scores 6 points ... rank 6 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher. Small bases (Reikōrangī n=24; Hautere n=18) - read those columns with care.

Table 36: Advantages of amalgamating - standardised score by area

9.33 Biggest concerns about amalgamating

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Potential rates impact, and cross-subsidising rates for services across a larger area	69	72	68	66	69	70
Services becoming less responsive or decrease in existing service levels	55	60	54	50	57	57
Investment in Kāpiti may not be prioritised	55	63	58	56	56	52
Services becoming less locally focussed	53	58	51	48	51	56
Loss of local voice	53	51	45	50	50	60
Unclear future of community boards representation	21	20	19	18	19	26
Reduced access to elected members	16	17	13	13	14	22
No major concerns	12	7	12	16	14	10

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 8 scores 8 points ... rank 8 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher.

Table 37: Concerns about amalgamating - standardised score by age band

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n= 86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangi (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Potential rates impact, and cross-subsidising rates for services across a larger area	69	70	70	71	68	59	66	65	57	79	61
Services becoming less responsive or decrease in existing service levels	55	56	54	56	58	59	52	52	57	64	51
Investment in Kāpiti may not be prioritised	55	54	57	58	51	50	56	57	49	69	44
Services becoming less locally focussed	53	53	53	50	54	56	48	52	44	59	65
Loss of local voice	53	52	52	51	58	63	50	51	45	46	48
Unclear future of community boards representation	21	19	21	20	25	32	24	23	19	24	22
Reduced access to elected members	16	16	15	14	21	22	18	18	13	22	28
No major concerns	12	13	12	11	12	9	13	18	21	8	11

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n=86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangī (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
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Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 8 scores 8 points ... rank 8 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher. Small bases (Reikōrangī n=24; Hautere n=18) - read those columns with care.

Table 38: Concerns about amalgamating - standardised score by area

9.34 Biggest advantages of standing alone

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Protection of local rates being spent within Kāpiti	56	67	55	51	55	58
Decisions better reflect Kapiti's unique needs and priorities	55	58	55	50	54	58
Local decision-making and community voice retained	53	56	48	49	50	61
Avoidance of transition costs and disruption from amalgamation	35	40	35	32	33	36
Stronger community identity and sense of place	33	36	30	30	32	35
Greater accountability and visibility of elected members	28	25	22	23	28	33
Existing relationships with iwi, community groups, and stakeholders maintained	27	30	29	29	26	28
No clear benefits of standing alone	18	10	19	21	22	17
Certainty of ongoing community board representation	16	18	12	12	14	20

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 9 scores 9 points ... rank 9 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher.

Table 39: Advantages of standing alone - standardised score by age band

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n= 86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangi (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Protection of local rates being spent within Kāpiti	56	56	59	55	56	51	53	55	42	68	58
Decisions better reflect Kapiti's unique needs and priorities	55	54	56	58	55	56	48	48	53	56	40
Local decision-making and community voice retained	53	53	53	53	57	57	52	50	43	51	61
Avoidance of transition costs and disruption from amalgamation	35	35	36	33	34	32	38	41	22	46	31
Stronger community identity and sense of place	33	32	33	30	38	34	27	31	29	31	33
Greater accountability and visibility of elected members	28	28	28	25	30	26	27	27	21	36	31

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n=86)	Otaihanga (n= 43)	Peka Peka (n= 39)	Reikōrangī (n= 24)	Hautere (n= 18)
Existing relationships with iwi, community groups, and stakeholders maintained	27	26	26	28	34	41	21	29	21	34	13
No clear benefits of standing alone	18	20	18	17	18	12	20	25	31	8	11
Certainty of ongoing community board representation	16	15	15	14	21	26	17	14	7	14	27

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 9 scores 9 points ... rank 9 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher. Small bases (Reikōrangī n=24; Hautere n=18) - read those columns with care.

Table 40: Advantages of standing alone - standardised score by area

9.35 Biggest concerns about standing alone

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Limited ability to fund major infrastructure	56	53	52	50	58	59
Potential rates impact	49	47	47	52	49	49
Missing opportunities for shared services or collaboration	40	40	39	38	41	42
Reduced influence in regional decision-making	38	32	32	36	38	42
Slower progress on large or complex projects	30	34	31	29	30	29
Capacity constraints (staffing, expertise, resources)	27	28	29	26	27	28
No major concerns	22	25	20	22	22	22

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 7 scores 7 points ... rank 7 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher.

Table 41: Concerns about standing alone - standardised score by age band

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n=86)	Otaihanga (n=43)	Peka Peka (n=39)	Reikōrangī (n=24)	Hautere (n=18)
Limited ability to fund major infrastructure	56	55	55	58	57	51	55	61	73	51	71
Potential rates impact	49	48	51	49	50	41	47	57	44	39	69
Missing opportunities for shared services or collaboration	40	40	40	40	43	43	38	43	45	26	52
Reduced influence in regional decision-making	38	36	37	39	43	39	31	40	53	20	21
Slower progress on large or complex projects	30	28	30	32	34	24	23	36	34	24	41
Capacity constraints (staffing, expertise, resources)	27	27	26	29	30	29	20	28	28	19	44
No major concerns	22	23	24	18	16	25	23	20	5	46	6

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 7 scores 7 points ... rank 7 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher. Small bases (Reikōrangī n=24; Hautere n=18) - read those columns with care.

Table 42: Concerns about standing alone - standardised score by area

9.36 Preferred scenario

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Under 40 (n=251)	40-49 (n=339)	50-59 (n=470)	60-69 (n=779)	70+ (n=913)
Look north (e.g. with Horowhenua)	78	73	76	78	80	81
Go it alone as a single authority	74	79	73	72	72	77
Wider Wellington regional unitary authority	60	61	63	60	62	58
Let Central Government decide	36	37	37	39	36	33

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 4 scores 4 points ... rank 4 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher.

Table 43: Preferred scenario - standardised score by age band

Item	Total (n=2,770)	Waikanae (n=871)	Paraparaumu (n=857)	Raumati (n=407)	Ōtaki (n=282)	Paekākāriki (n=112)	Te Horo (n=86)	Otaihanga (n=43)	Peka Peka (n=39)	Reikōrangi (n=24)	Hautere (n=18)
Look north (e.g. with Horowhenua)	78	79	78	79	77	76	81	83	85	79	83
Go it alone as a single authority	74	74	75	74	74	74	73	69	65	80	69
Wider Wellington regional unitary authority	60	60	59	61	63	62	59	62	62	51	58
Let Central Government decide	36	35	37	35	36	34	37	37	37	40	39

Standardised score: the report's rank-points score (rank 1 of 4 scores 4 points ... rank 4 scores 1; unranked 0) as a share of the maximum the group could give, on a 0-100 scale, so groups of different sizes are directly comparable (100 = every respondent in the group ranked the item first). Item ordering matches the body table's Score column. Shading is scaled within this table - darker blue = higher. Small bases (Reikōrangi n=24; Hautere n=18) - read those columns with care.

Table 44: Preferred scenario - standardised score by area