Take 10 for our future

LTP 2024-34 pre-engagement feedback

March 2024

Ashburton
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.ashburtondc.govt.nz

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the *Take 10 for our future* survey was to undertake pre-engagement with our community ahead of drafting the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan later this year.

The survey and workshops aimed to identify the current issues or areas of concern for our community – under the banner of the four well-beings and find actionable next steps that Council could take to improve our community.

The survey was advertised extensively across the district, and available to be completed from 17 July to 13 August 2023. Four workshops were also held with community groups, organisations and businesses during this time.

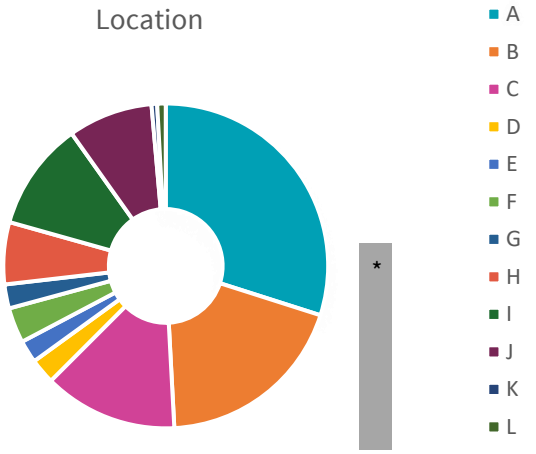
A total of 983 survey responses were received, along with an additional 29 groups and organisations represented across the four workshops.

The following report summarises the responses and themes from the feedback received. The appendices provide additional detail to the report, and the *Survey Response Booklet* contains all of the responses received, along with the *Well-being workshops summary* document created from the feedback provided at the workshops.

The ***Council response*** column on the tables explains what is currently happening and any plans Council has in relation to the suggestion. Due to the number of responses received, not all suggestions are included in these tables, rather they are intended to show examples of the breadth of responses.

Survey respondents





A – Ashburton township west
B – Ashburton township east
C – Tinwald and surrounds
D – Lake Hood
E – Fairton / North Ashburton
F - Rural to the north
G – Rural east
H – Rakaia
I – Methven
J – Rural to the south-west / west
K – Hinds
L – Out of district
* Location not provided – 28%

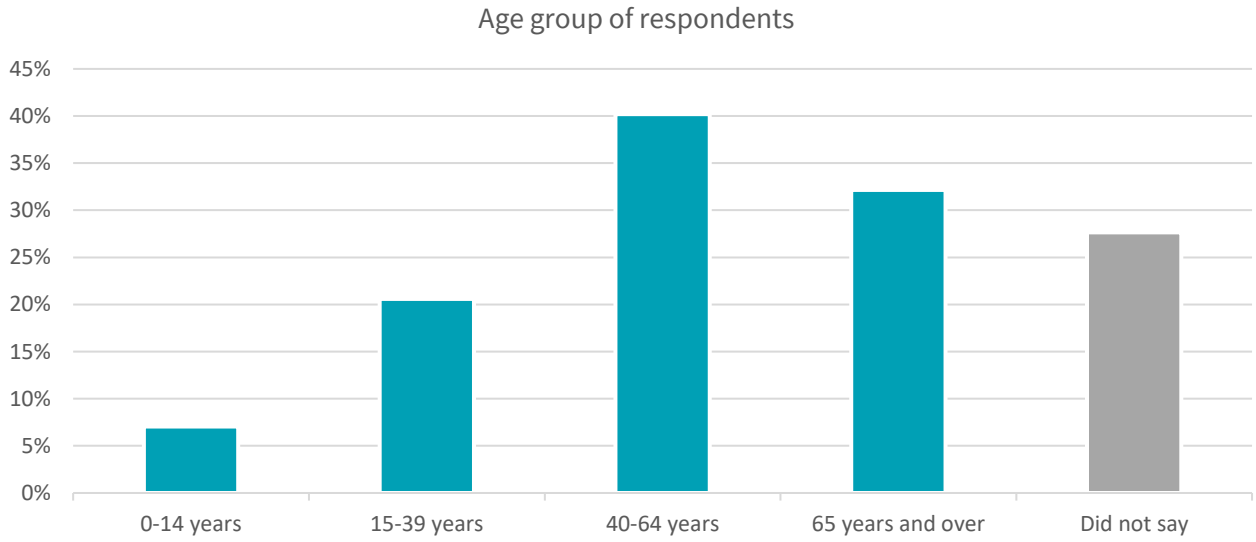
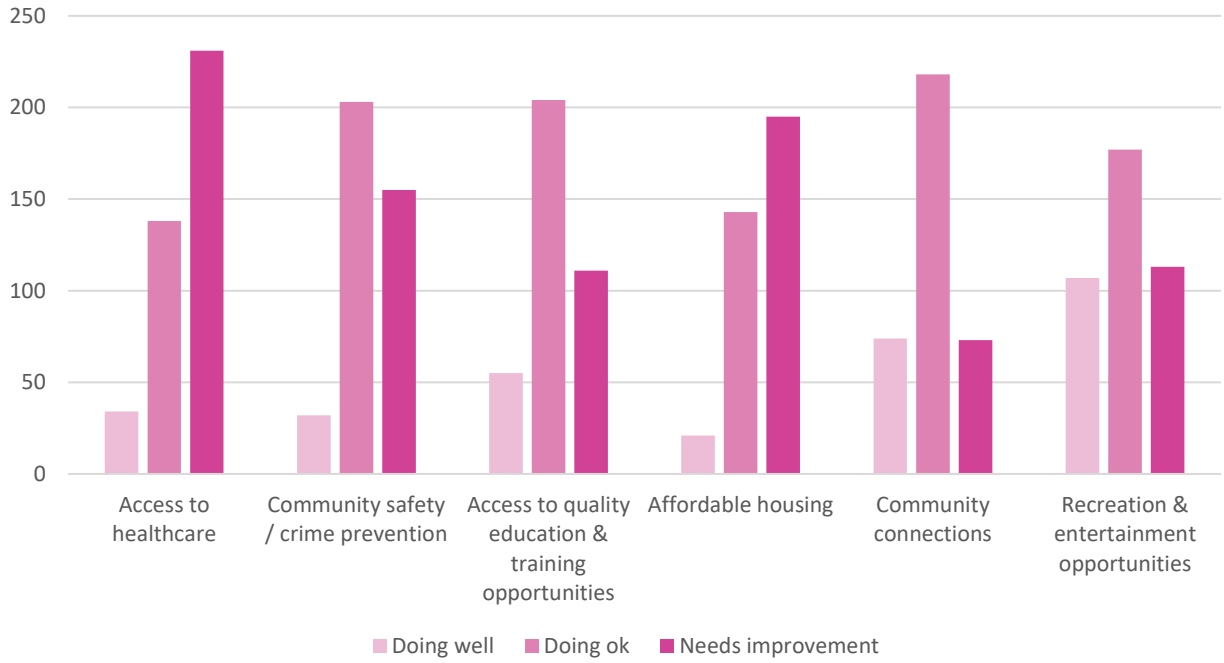


Chart percentages do not include those who did not provide age, gender and/or location.

2. Social well-being

Participants were asked to indicate how well they thought our district was doing in relation to a number of broad areas within social well-being.



Access to healthcare and *affordable housing* are the two areas where more survey respondents indicated 'needs improvement' than either of the other options. This was also reflected by the workshop attendees.

See Appendix A for a summary of the responses received through the survey.

1.1. Access to healthcare

The main issue identified within access to healthcare is the lack of GP doctors available across the district. This is seen by the community as residents being unable to register with a practice along with difficulties getting GP appointments.

The other main issue seen by respondents was closely linked, with under resourcing at the hospital seen as a significant issue – and one which is exacerbated by the shortage of GPs in the district. Shortage of specialist services at Ashburton Hospital was seen as another issue by many.

Workshop attendees also noted the ageing workforce (and population), retaining local staff, lack of crisis support, lack of diverse health workforce and the need to travel for specialist appointment.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Advocate to central government	• Increased government funding for primary care • Specialised rural funding model	The feedback received will be collated and given to Te Whatu Ora. It was noted that there is already a lot of advocacy done in this space. When opportunities arise, Council will take the opportunity to comment on these issues through submissions.
Advocate to Te Whatu Ora	• Additional GP clinics (such as in Hinds) – Council provide support by providing land / facilities • Hold Te Whatu Ora to account • Increased services (and specialists) and staffing at the hospital	
Economic Development	• Encourage medical staff (nurses, doctors, dentists) to the district • Promote our district as a place to work and live • Work with Te Whatu Ora to find ways to support the attraction and retention of medical staff to the district	These suggestions will be considered as part of the new Economic Development Strategy, which is currently being drafted. It was also noted that Council had recently released a district promotion video.
Communications	• Promote virtual medical services • Promote afterhours and when it's suitable to use alternative services (i.e. pharmacies, physios, Healthline, Plunket Line etc)	Council currently shares Te Whatu Ora posts on the Council Facebook page when they relate to our district. We will continue to do this.
Grants and funding	• Support for groups / organisations providing preventative health services • Continued support for Citizens Advice Bureau	Many of the community grants currently provided could be considered to be to preventative health services – particularly the Community Agency grants.
Public Transport	• Advocate for public transport around the district and to get patients to Ashburton Hospital and to Christchurch for specialist appointments	Public transport is considered to be a regional government function (Environment Canterbury). We regularly advocate to ECan for public transport through the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan processes, and we will continue to do this.
Other	• Resurrect the Health Advisory Group • Social Well-being Strategy • Annual thanks to the health sector	We will investigate whether the Health Advisory Group is needed. Council will consider how it can better recognise the work of the social sector.

1.2. Affordable housing

Over half of respondents noted affordable housing as an issue across the district. The main reasons for this, was that *costs are too high* and that there is a *shortage of suitable rentals*. Rentals that are available, tended to be too expensive or not of good quality.

Comments also noted the need for more social housing – for elderly, the homeless, young families and emergency type housing.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Advocate	• For more social housing, emergency housing to be built in Ashburton	The feedback received will be collated and given to Kainga Ora. When opportunities arise, Council will take the opportunity to comment on these issues through submissions.
Council processes	• Review District Plan to support higher density housing / smaller apartment type houses	The District Plan currently allows for high density in the town centre. The issue tends to be more in the uptake (i.e. social acceptance).
	• Work to approve tiny homes	Tiny homes are allowed – we follow the legislation for approval and provide a guidance booklet produced by MBIE. The issue for approval often lies within the District Plan – in that only one dwelling (defined by 1 kitchen) is allowed per residential site. Often people are wanting to put a Tiny Home on a site with another dwelling already in place.
	• Keep rates and building consent costs low to support affordability	We will continue to work to keep rates and building consents low where possible.
Elderly Persons Housing	• Consider increasing number of Elderly Persons Housing portfolio – including in rural townships	While there is demand for more houses in Ashburton (30+ people on the waitlist), there is currently no waitlist for the houses in Methven or Rakaia. It recently took 5 months to fill a unit in Rakaia. Council may consider increasing its portfolio in future where need is greatest.
Social housing	• Investigate options / need around other social housing types (i.e. those not eligible for EPH due to age), emergency housing – work with housing NZ	Social housing is not currently the role of Council. The feedback received will be collated and given to Kainga Ora, and we will continue to provide support such as the recent partnership with Haven Housing.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Website	• Directory on Council / government housing – how you access, contacts, what's available	Council will develop a webpage that links to other groups and agencies who already have this information available.

1.3. Other areas of social well-being

The majority of respondents indicated, that as a district, we are 'doing ok' in the other areas of focus under social well-being. The following notes the main issues mentioned by those who thought they needed improvement.

1.3.1 Community safety / crime prevention

Increasing levels of crime was the main issue followed by *not enough police* and *town safety*.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Advocate to Police	• Greater local and visible police presence • Increased focus on crime prevention	The feedback received will be collated and given to local Police.
Economic Development	• Encourage local pride in town	This will be considered as part of the new Economic Development Strategy, which is currently being drafted.
Grants & funding	• Youth education and support - to reduce crime • Young parent education programmes • Continue / increased support of neighbourhood support	A number of programs that provide education as described are supported through the community grants. Neighbourhood Support was provided a $10,000 grant for 2023/24.
Plan & resource	• Increased CCTV cameras • Increased street and car park lighting	Council considers CCTV requests on a case-by-case basis, however it is noted that CCTV does not prevent crime to the level commonly believed. There are standards for street lighting that some of our streets don't meet, however we are continually upgrading to meet these standards, undertaking work when EA Networks undertakes power upgrades.

1.3.2 Access to quality education & training opportunities

Lack of options and *bullying* at primary/secondary schools was the top issue, followed by a number of general comments on *education & training*. Other comments focussed on the lack of *tertiary education* in the district.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Advocate (primary / secondary schools)	• Work with education providers / Ministry of Education to improve school environments – bullying, teacher training, acceptance of those with disabilities / special needs.	The Mayor and CE have been having conversations with Ashburton College and the Ministry of Education on this topic. This feedback will be shared with them, and we will continue these discussions while this is an issue.
Library	• Support provision of adult education programmes run at Ashburton library to rural towns	The library does not currently have sufficient staffing available to be able to provide this.
Economic Development	• Work with tertiary education providers to bring the following to the district: o Increased training and education opportunities for all ages – youth through to over 65s o Night classes • Investigate a public space for remote adult learners • Look into programmes for transitional employment for school leavers	This will be considered as part of the new Economic Development Strategy, which is currently being drafted. The Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs provides support for school leavers.

1.3.3 Community connections

The main issue under the community connections topic related to *lack of connections* people felt to others in the community. Other issues mentioned were the need for more events and activities, and the lack of public transport around the district.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Welcoming Communities	• Working with Newcomers Network to further promote (and start up) groups to connect people • Information pack for residents new to the district	Council is currently recruiting for a Welcoming Communities role. These suggestions fit within the programme of work to be undertaken by this role.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Economic Development	• More community events – including in rural towns • Increased promotion of events and community activities happening	This will be considered as part of the new Economic Development Strategy, which is currently being drafted.
Library	• Activities aimed at working people ie afterhours	With the increasing of opening hours at weekends at Te Whare Whakatere, more programmes will be available out of work hours.
Other	• Centre for sports clubs to be based at Rakaia • Community centres in Methven and Rakaia • Public transport e.g. community bus / My Way / minibus between rural towns and Ashburton township	A centre for sports clubs was investigated in Rakaia but didn't work out. This may be something that is on the radar at EA Networks Centre in the future, depending on the need. Memorial Halls function as community centres in our rural towns. Work is under way to improve these facilities. Public transport is considered to be a regional government function (Environment Canterbury). We regularly advocate to ECan for public transport through the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan processes, and we will continue to do this. There is already the Mid Canterbury Connector that travels between rural towns to Ashburton, and home again. More information can be found *here.*

1.3.4 Recreation & entertainment opportunities

Entertainment for youth and teenagers was the main issue brought up in this section, followed by *recreation opportunities*.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Economic Development	• Meet with activity and entertainment businesses to encourage them to the district • More events • Promotion of Ashburton as a place to live	This will be considered as part of the new Economic Development Strategy, which is currently being drafted.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Recreational Facilities	• Add additional entertainment features – hydro slide, clip & climb, wave pool, bigger play area, extend pool • EANC - Extend opening hours, green prescription free sessions • Continue support of art gallery & museum and other community hubs	Council is considering additional entertainment features as part of the Long-Term Plan 24-34 budgeting process, however, these all come at a cost. EANC has recently launched their *Couch to Wellness* program which was developed to take the place of the green prescription program.
Ashburton Domain	• Update paddling pool • Update skills park • Update Pavilion Domain • Parking by hockey turf	The Ashburton Domain Development Plan (ADDP) includes replacing the existing paddling pool with a new water play & paddling pool re-located near the children's playground area, in the years 2024-27. This is being considered for inclusion in the Long-Term Plan 24-34. Open Spaces are currently working with service clubs on the development plan for upgrading this. We do not currently own the Ashburton Oval Pavilion, however, work for this to come into Council ownership is underway. Once Council-owned, there are plans and budget to undertake refurbishments. Parking is not currently within the ADDP and would require reducing sports fields to support parking nearby.
Parks & Open Spaces	• Bigger / better / wheel-chair friendly playgrounds e.g. Margaret Mahy playground • Playground, recreational space and toilet in the east of Ashburton • Bigger skate park with picnic area • Update pump track and playground at Lake Hood • Make other bike tracks • Support volunteers / service clubs to improve access to walking and cycling tracks • Upgrade Tinwald tennis courts	Accessible features have recently been installed in the Ashburton Domain playground. New toilets are currently being installed in Digby Park. Playgrounds and recreational spaces for the East of Ashburton will be considered as part of the development of the Long-Term Plan 24-34. We currently have no plans involving a bigger/new skate park, upgrades at Lake Hood or to make other bike tracks. We currently work with service clubs and community groups on this. This would be a project for the Tinwald Domain Reserve Board – this feedback will be shared with them.
Grants & funding	• Provide funding for sports grounds / club facilities to help lower costs to increase participation	Sports clubs are currently able to apply for funding through our community grants & funding to support their grounds and facilities. Several sports clubs have been

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
		successful in receiving grants in recent years.

1.3.5 Other areas where social well-being could be improved

Suggested actions Council could take

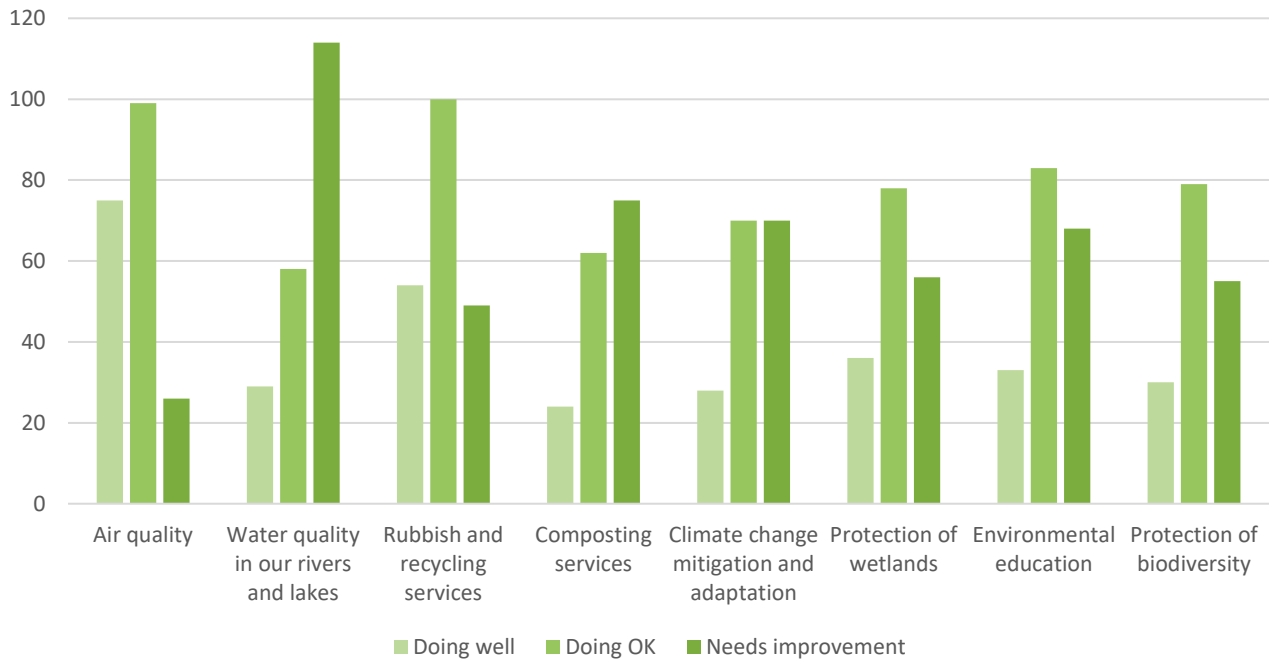
	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Emergency Management	• Increase education of public to increase the community's preparedness for AF8 and increased flooding events etc. • Tap into the national alert text service that testing has rolled out	This is currently underway and will be ongoing. We are a part of this service already.
Strategy development	• Develop a Social Well-being Strategy	Council considered this request but decided not to undertake this at this time.
Communications	• Communicate implications of new policies once adopted	Press releases are currently published when a new policy / bylaw / strategy has been adopted. We are constantly working on ways to better communicate with the community and affected parties.
Library / Art Gallery & Museum	• Continue to provide education sessions to the community, and consider including courses on budgeting, family violence and Māori cultural courses. • Provide spaces for community collaboration in the new library – such as community meeting spaces that are free of charge for charities	Education courses will continue to be provided through our different activities, but namely our Library and Art Gallery & Museum facilities. Similar courses to these suggestions have been held in the past and can be taken on board when undertaking future planning. Te Kete Tuhinga in Te Whare Whakatere will have meeting rooms that are available to be booked by the public. They will be free of charge to groups or individuals whose focus is social well-being or providing learning opportunities. Community groups charging an attendance charge or service providers meeting a community need will receive a 50% discount on fees.
Grants & funding	• Continue financial support of social services • Change the grants policy to extend the grants criteria to include Early Childhood Centres	Just under $900k of grants were given out in the 2022/23 financial year. This is in the budget for the next 10 years. The grants and funding policy is due for review in 2025. Currently Council does not fund any education providers.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Advocate to ECAN	• Public transport	Public transport is a regional government function (Environment Canterbury). We regularly advocate to ECan for public transport through the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan processes, and we will continue to do this.
Advocate to central government	• For limits on vaping shops	New Government legislation has been released earlier this year that will limit the location and number of vaping shops, as well as the amount of nicotine in vaping liquids.
Welcoming Communities	• Work with Newcomers Network to expand into rural towns • Work with social agencies and alternative education providers to support their promotion and awareness to the community • Work with social sector to bring more services to rural towns	Council is currently recruiting for a Welcoming Communities role. These suggestions will be considered within the programme of work to be undertaken by the Welcoming Communities role, subject to resourcing within the role and within the social sector.
Develop policy / bylaw	• Develop an animal welfare policy to register all cats and set local rules – neuter, maximum numbers, expected care	Cat control (regarding registration, de-sexing and microchipping etc) is a developing space nationally – a select committee recently submitted a recommendation to central government for a nationally consistent approach. Council is not currently planning to develop an animal welfare policy, or require cat registrations, however this feedback can be considered during the next Dog Control Policy & Bylaw review.
Parks & Open Spaces	• Develop more areas for dogs to be off lead	We currently have three dog parks (Ashburton, Rakaia and Methven). We also have several dedicated off-leash areas, listed in the Dog Control Bylaw. Feedback shows the parks and off leash areas are well used, but don't tend to be overcrowded, therefore there are no plans to introduce more dog parks at this time.
Transportation	• Encourage active transport through development of bike lanes (from schools to shops)	Our *Walking & Cycling Strategy* encourages active transport and we are working towards implementing the actions, including: *confirm an Ashburton urban cycling network and develop a business case for funding*.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Other	• Community Car Scheme – Council-owned vehicles that are rentable by the public • Meet regularly and work closely with disabled advocates on community projects • Increase relationship between social agencies and staff / Council – meet regularly and develop closer relationships to work together and be involved in community issues / solutions • Recognise the work of the social sector through an annual 'Mayor's morning tea' • Resurrect the Health Advisory Group	Community House have a van that can be hired. Council also supply a vehicle to the Salvation Army for the Learning to Drive program. We worked with the Total Mobility group on the CBD upgrades, and also use such groups to test pedestrian crossings when they are to be upgraded. This is intended to continue. Council will consider how it can increase its relationship with social agencies, and better recognise the work of the social sector. We will investigate whether the Health Advisory Group is needed.

3. Environmental well-being

Respondents were asked to indicate how well they thought our district was doing in relation to several broad areas within environmental well-being.



Water quality in our rivers and lakes, *composting services*, and *climate change mitigation and adaptation* are the three areas where the most survey respondents indicated '*needs improvement*'. This was also reflected in the workshop.

See Appendix B for a summary of the responses received through the environmental well-being survey.

1.4. Water quality in our rivers and lakes

The main concern of the survey respondents with the water quality in our rivers and lakes is the inability to be able to undertake recreational activities due to things like algal blooms and the impact the water quality has on the species that inhabit the rivers and lakes.

Many people were also concerned with levels of nitrogen and impacts from agriculture on the waterways. Another theme noted was the amount of rubbish in the rivers, and the need for regular shingle removal.

The workshop attendees noted similar concerns, as well as that there could be an improvement in Manawhenua involvement.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	**Council response**
Advocate to Environment Canterbury	• Reduce discharge into rivers, address nitrates and over stocking • Monitoring of waterways • Improve / regulate river flows • Move nesting birds / sea gulls	It is not considered valuable to advocate to Environment Canterbury on these topics, as their role is to regulate rather than to set rules. Therefore, the feedback received will be collated and given to the Ministry for the Environment.
Environment Canterbury	• Regular maintenance and shingle removal	Council is aware that Environment Canterbury are working on shingle removal, however we will pass this feedback on to them.
Mana whenua	• Advocate for greater mana whenua involvement	Council staff currently meet with Aoraki Environmental Consultancy every six weeks to discuss council projects that are of importance to mana whenua.
Council	• Strict enforcement of septic tanks at Lake Clearwater • Support pragmatic legislative change medium to long term at Ō Tū Wharekai • Influence through zone land use rules • Improve plantings around waterways • Install more rubbish bins around popular rivers and lakes	There are no long-drops left at the Lake Clearwater settlement. Water quality protection at Ō Tū Wharekai is already at the forefront of Council's Lake Camp & Clearwater 30 Year Plan. Council is also a partner in the multi-agency Ō Tu Wharekai working group. The promotion of ecologically suitable riparian buffers is being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Action 2.1E). Planting around waterways is also dependent on the purpose of the watercourse, as access may be required. Council sees merit in maintaining the status quo regarding rubbish bins, as less bins encourage people to take their waste home with them rather than leaving it behind.

1.5. Composting services

The most mentioned issue across the district was the lack of composting or green waste bin service. Respondents had an issue with the amount of household and garden waste going to landfill.

A few comments noted that some people may have the intention of disposing of their green waste at the resource recovery park but don't have the ability to (e.g. they are elderly and don't have the means, don't have a trailer etc.).

A key theme that also came across is the suggestion that Council should focus on education and awareness.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	**Council response**
Bin collections services	• Introduce a green waste bin to the collection services • Consider sending green waste to a local compost facility	The current Waste Management & Minimisation Plan adopted in July 2022 includes an action to introduce a household kerbside food waste collection, and to extend the service to businesses on a user-pays basis. This is to be considered as part of the Long-Term Plan 24-34 development. It is noted that there are individual companies that do currently offer green waste collection, and Council provides green waste disposal at our Ashburton and Methven facilities. There is currently no Council green waste processing facility in Ashburton. The nearest facility is in Timaru.
Waste management	• Consider making compost available to be sold back to community • Consider allowing free green waste drop-off, up to a maximum amount • Educate people about personal responsibility and how to compost at home • Lead the move to a circular economy	Allowing free green waste drop-off, up to a maximum amount is not commercially viable unless rates are used to subsidise collection costs. Council currently does quite a bit of education on waste management and has resources on the ADC website with many links to sites. These sites cover home composting, worm farms etc. We can look at providing further information and education campaigns with funding from the waste levy that we receive back from national government.

1.6. Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Many respondents felt that Council is not doing enough in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation because climate change is not taken seriously or prioritised enough.

Comments noted that more could be done in terms of agricultural impacts, public transport, solar energy, flood management and biodiversity protection.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	**Council response**
Advocate	• Advocate nationally • Lobby Environment Canterbury and central government for funding for continued river maintenance • Advocate for more pest control and biodiversity protection	Council will continue to lodge submissions on climate change topics at a national level. This feedback received will be collated and given to Environment Canterbury.
Public infrastructure	• Investigate installation of more EV charging • Investigate possibility of public transport • Ensure water storage is fit for purpose	We are aware of the national move by central government and private companies to install more EV charging infrastructure across the country. Public transport is considered to be a regional government function (Environment Canterbury). We regularly advocate to ECan for public transport through the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan processes, and we will continue to do this. We are regularly assessing whether water storage is fit for purpose. We are currently considering the inclusion of additional water storage for both Methven and Rakaia water supplies through the 24-34 Long-Term Plan process.
Council – lead by example	• Revisit Climate Change Policy • Transition to electric fleet • Increased funding for resilience (e.g. major infrastructure) • Education and awareness • Influence – use language that takes as many people with us as possible • Investigate how we can improve flexibility of land use consents	Council's Climate Change Policy was reviewed in 2022 and is next due for review in 2025. Some of the suggested actions are included as part of the Climate Resilience Plan that was adopted in August 2022, and others may be included in the Council's Emissions Reduction Plan that is due to be developed in the medium term. Purchase of hybrid cars are currently under consideration. It is unclear what is meant by improving flexibility of land use consents, however Council will remain guided by the legislation.

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
	• Enable planning for renewable energy, install solar panels	Our District Plan already anticipates and enables renewable energy installation. We are currently investigating the economic viability of solar panels at EA Networks Centre.

1.7. Other areas of environmental well-being

The majority of respondents indicated, that as a district, we are 'doing ok' in the other areas of focus under environmental well-being. The following notes the main issues mentioned by those who thought they needed improvement.

1.7.1 Air quality

Farm burn offs was the main issue followed by *non-compliant household fires*.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
Advocate to Environment Canterbury / central government	• Stop/ban farm burn offs • Air quality monitoring during burn-off times • Provide education on proper wood burning practices and types of fires	This feedback received will be collated and given to Environment Canterbury and Federated Farmers. Education is currently provided on proper wood burning practices.

1.7.2 Rubbish and recycling services

More recycling options was the top issue, followed by *lack of green waste bins*. There was also a number of comments on *illegal dumping.* Other comments included topics such as *recycling education, collection services,* and *bin sizes.*

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
Plan & resource	• More types of plastic to be recycled – investigate drop off bins for soft plastics and lids etc	Phasing out of and use of plastics are now regulated. Any activity regarding plastics must comply with existing and future regulations. There will be a uniform plastic collection regulation coming out in the next year, and all councils will be required to collect the same type of plastics.
	• More public rubbish bins and more regular clearing of bins	More public rubbish bins, more regular clearing of bins, and use of electric rubbish collection trucks all have budget

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
	• Investigate electric rubbish trucks • Introduce green waste collection service • Improve rural rubbish and recycling services • Better education	implications – Council decided not to undertake this, but rather encourage the community to take their rubbish home. The current Waste Management & Minimisation Plan adopted in July 2022 includes an action to introduce a household kerbside food waste collection, and to extend the service to businesses on a user-pays basis. Extending this to green waste will be considered as part of the Long-Term Plan 24-34 development. Service delivery is being considered as part of the LTP 2024-34. Council currently does quite a bit of education on waste management and has resources on the ADC website with many links to sites. These sites cover home composting, worm farms etc. Further information and education campaigns can be carried out and are funded by the waste levy that we receive back from national government.

1.7.3 Protection of wetlands

Not enough being done was the top issue, including concerns about *wetland importance for flood mitigation*, *biodiversity* and *sediment control.* Some respondents were concerned about *wetland clearing/draining* and the link with *agriculture*.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
Plan & resource	• Prohibit further drainage of wetlands • Identify and reverse degradation of remaining wetlands • Replant / plant natives	The National Environmental Standards for Freshwater passed by the Government aims to restrict the draining of wetlands in New Zealand. Council will also continue to work in collaboration with Environment Canterbury who also have a responsibility in this area. The promotion of collaborative response to the Ō Tū Wharekai degradation is being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Action 1.4A). Council does not currently have guidelines when considering what type of vegetation to plant, however, the National Policy

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
	• Provide education and publicity of where the wetlands are and what is being done	Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity sets targets of a minimum of 10% indigenous vegetation cover and requires local authorities to promote the increase of indigenous vegetation cover in policy statements and plans. We will share information from Environment Canterbury, with the support of the Ecologist / Biodiversity Officer about the Wetlands within our district and what is being done to protect them.
Support	• Support other agencies being proactive in this space	We currently provide support to several groups/agencies through our biodiversity grant and the Ashburton District Biodiversity Advisory Group.

1.7.4 Environmental education

Not enough being done was the top issue, including concerns about *a lack of understanding about the state of our environment, being unprepared for climate change,* and *not collaborating with existing groups*. Some respondents believe that this is *not Council's role.*

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
Plan & resource – Lead the conversation	• Increase advertising/publicity (incl. info on how to recycle and compost, Enviro-Waste hours etc) • Run clinics/workshops/drop-in days to educate people and discuss / display what is happening	Council currently does quite a bit of education on waste management and has resources on the ADC website with many links to sites. These sites cover home composting, worm farms etc. Further information and education campaigns can be carried out and are funded by the waste levy that we receive back from national government. We are also able to support community groups to provide education, through our community grants if they need financial support to do so. We will look to increase the promotion of this to encourage others to apply.
Advocate – education	• Advocate to increase education for schools, teachers and students / make education more available	There are several organisations that provide environmental education to schools. This feedback received will be collated and given to the Ministry of Education.

1.7.5 Protection of biodiversity

Not enough being done was the top issue, including concerns about *a lack of enforcement of the District Plan, clearance of vegetation,* and *a lack of native birds.*
Some respondents were concerned that there is a *lack of plantings* and *a lack of diversity in agriculture.*
Workshop attendees noted that this area needs to be *properly resourced given the significance* and the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	**Council response**
Plan & resource – Lead the conversation	• Enforce provisions of the District Plan regarding vegetation clearance / disincentivise vegetation clearance	Council currently enforces the rules of the District Plan which already disincentivises vegetation clearance. A review of Council's vegetation clearance rules for Rural Zones is also being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Action 1.4B).
	• Provide more education • Increase and protect native plantings – more native flowering trees to encourage return of native birds • Employ additional biodiversity staff	The restoration and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity, and further gathering and sharing of knowledge are being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Goals 2 & 3). Council considers that our service in this area has already increased with the employment of a Biodiversity Advisor.
	• Provide more bins at parks and playgrounds	Council sees merit in maintaining the status quo regarding rubbish bins, as less bins encourage people to take their waste home with them rather than leaving it behind.
Advocate	• Advocate to Environment Canterbury for more pest control • Advocate to central government for funding	This feedback will be given to Environment Canterbury. Support of pest management approach with other stakeholders is also currently being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Action 1.3A). Funding support for indigenous biodiversity and specifically to implement the NPS-IB has currently been secured from Budget 22.
Support	• Support the work of Department of Conservation and Environment Canterbury • Collaborate with private parties, groups and landowners	The support of and collaboration with Department of Conservation and Environment Canterbury in terms of pest management, assessing the district's ecological values, and responding to the Ō Tū Wharekai degradation is currently being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Actions 1.3A, 1.1A and 1.4A).

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
		Increased collaboration and participation among Council, Rūnaka and stakeholders in the wider community is also being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Goal 4).

1.7.6 Other areas

Other areas that respondents mentioned where environmental well-being could be improved included *agriculture, planting, transportation networks, council's role, waste management,* and *flood / river management.*

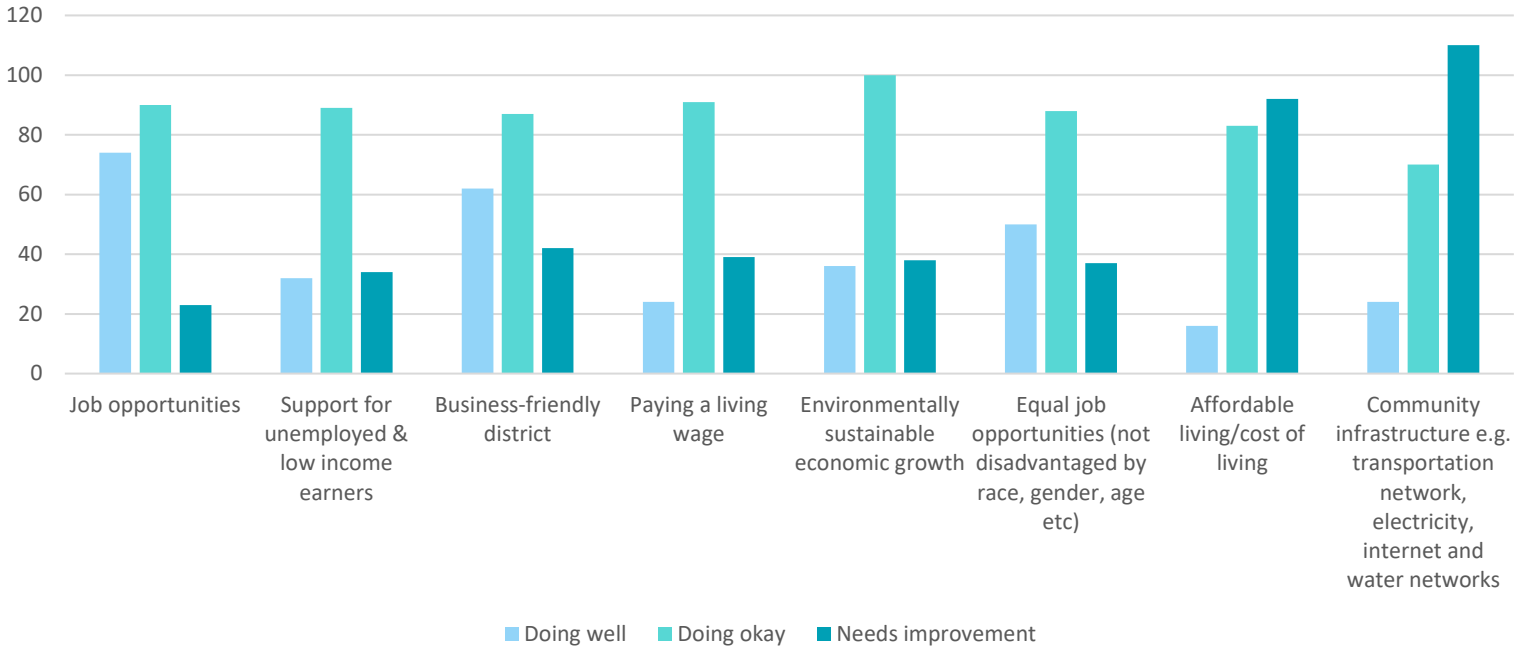
Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
Plantings / biodiversity	• Increase native plantings	The restoration and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity is being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Goal 2).
	• Add more diverse and functional gardens	This is something we continually look to do. The Ashburton Domain has a butterfly garden, is looking to construct a herb garden and the Ashburton Domain Development Plan proposes an expanded wildlife garden with a focus on profiling biodiversity, plant life and pollinators. The CBD has rain gardens which filter stormwater.
	• Improve weed and pest control	Further pest management is also being considered as part of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Objective 1.3).
Transportation	• Increase roading, footpath and pothole improvements	We currently have a large programme in place in terms of roading, footpaths and pothole improvements. We have applied for increased funding from Waka Kotahi for 2024/25 onwards for this type of work and will find out the result of this request later in 2024.
Council's role	• Advocate more to central and regional government	We can continue to advocate through submissions and discussions with central government and Environment Canterbury.
	• Support and work with other groups / stakeholders	We currently provide support through our Biodiversity Grant, Ecologist/Biodiversity Officer and the AD Biodiversity Action Working Group. We will continue to do so.
	• Offer testing for drinking water sources.	We currently provide testing for E. Coli to private supplies. Further testing is the

	Suggestion from survey/workshop	Council response
		consent holder's responsibility, and we have a list on our website of private companies that can be used. We do issue semi-regular press releases reminding private supplies to test their water.
Waste management	• Provide education on recycling, composting • Install more rubbish bins, including dog walking areas, Methven Skate Park • Increase fines for illegal dumping • Improve wastewater treatment and disposal	Council sees merit in maintaining the status quo regarding rubbish bins, as less bins encourage people to take their waste home with them rather than leaving it behind. However, rubbish bins have already been installed at dog parks across the district and at the Methven Skate Park. Council's fees and charges already lists the maximum fine permitted under the Litter Act 1979 ($400). Several projects to improve our wastewater services will be considered through the Long-Term Plan 24-34 process.
River/flood management	• Provide community with updates on river management • Have a stronger role / advocate more for river management (e.g. removal of shingle) • Investigate taking steps to safeguard houses as well as walkways and cycleways • Better management of water races and streams	River/flood management is Environment Canterbury's responsibility, and Council's role here is advocacy. We will continue to convey the community's concern on these issues during discussions with Environment Canterbury. Where appropriate, these comments can also be included in submissions made by Council to ECan.
Sustainability	• Hold seminars on composting, self-sustaining gardening, carbon reducing endeavours, safety in neighbourhood, first aid courses etc. • Investigate a reusable product rebate scheme (nappies, sanitary products etc) – would save money from the volume of products no longer going to landfill	Education sessions are held regularly by Eco-Educate. Funding support may be available through community grants if other groups / organisations wished to hold such events. This feedback will be given to Eco-Educate.

4. Economic well-being

Respondents were asked to indicate how well they thought our district was doing in relation to a number of broad areas within economic well-being.



Affordable living / cost of living and *community infrastructure* are the two areas where more respondents to the survey indicated 'needs improvement' than either of the other options. These two topics were also identified by workshop attendees as areas needing improvement, alongside *equal job opportunities* and *environmentally sustainable economic growth*.

See Appendix C for a summary of the responses received through the economic well-being survey.

1.8. Affordable living / cost of living

The main issues identified here related to the current *high cost of living* and *housing*. Workshops attendees noted these issues as well, along with *rural transport*, *rural isolation* and *attracting staff*.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Governance / Council-wide	• Limit rate rises	This is always an aspiration for Council, but it is always a juggle between limiting rate rises and providing the level of service expected by our community.
	• Pay living wage to employees – lead from the front	Most waged employees that don't receive the current living wage are those in roles that don't require previous experience or any qualifications. We then invest significantly in

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
		their training, which then supports wage increases to meet/exceed the living wage.
Advocate to central government	• To reduce living costs / increase benefits and salaries	Council will consider including this in submissions and any other opportunities that arise.
Social housing	• Public / private partnerships to build more social housing • Expand Elderly Persons Housing portfolio	This occurred recently with the partnership with Haven Housing. Council is open to discussions if the opportunity for more partnerships arises. There is around 30 people on the waitlist in Ashburton so we acknowledge there is some need for extra housing, however we are not currently seeing a need to expand the portfolio in Methven or Rakaia.
Other	• Free vege planting giveaways / community gardens • Provide education sessions on budgeting / not using afterpay / credit cards etc	Community gardens are difficult to resource and get buy-in, however there are other initiatives in place such as the seed swap desk and plant exchange at the Ashburton Public Library, and the herb garden proposed for the Ashburton Domain. Council understands that there is a budget advice service at Presbyterian Support. The Library has also hosted budget advisory services in the past and will consider running these sessions again in the future.

1.9. Community infrastructure

The *transportation network* was the most commonly mentioned issue, followed by the *lack of public transport*. Workshop attendees noted the *Tinwald corridor*, *parking spaces,* and *accessibility for less mobile people* as other challenges.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Advocate to ECAN	• River maintenance to protect SH1 bridge	This feedback will be given to Environment Canterbury.
Advocate to central government / Waka Kotahi	• For greater funding of roads • Fund the second Ashburton River bridge	We have applied for increased funding from Waka Kotahi for 2024/25 onwards and will find out the result of this request later in 2024. The second Ashburton River bridge is currently part of the Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024/25 – 33/34 and listed as a strategic project. Both parties have suggested support for the project but the funding

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
	• Overhead cycle and pedestrian bridge over SH1 • For better cell phone coverage • For better / cheaper rural broadband	approach is yet to be confirmed. If confirmed it would likely become a Waka Kotahi project, with funding largely from central government. We have advocated in the past and will continue to do so for these requests.
Public Transport	• My Bus style transport • Public transport from Ashburton to Christchurch	Public transport is a regional government function (Environment Canterbury). We regularly advocate to ECan for public transport through the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan processes, and we will continue to do this. There are commercial operators offer cross regional travel.
Work with contractors	• Ensure roading KPIs hold contractors to a high standard of work	Our roading contracts have KPIs – the KPIs are set at the work we can afford to pay for. If the KPI isn't met, the work is redone at the contractor's cost.
Other	• Car park on the east side / Balmoral Hall • Look at time restrictions on Wills / East / Cass streets – 120 not 60 minutes requested	The future of Balmoral Hall will be considered through the Long-Term Plan 24-34. This will be undertaken - the Parking Strategy has signalled that 12 months following the opening of Te Whare Whakatere parking spaces and limits will be investigated and changes potentially considered.

1.10. Other areas of economic well-being

The majority of respondents indicated, that as a district, we are 'doing ok' in the other areas of focus under economic well-being. The following notes the suggestions provided by those who thought these other areas needed improvement.

Suggested actions Council could take

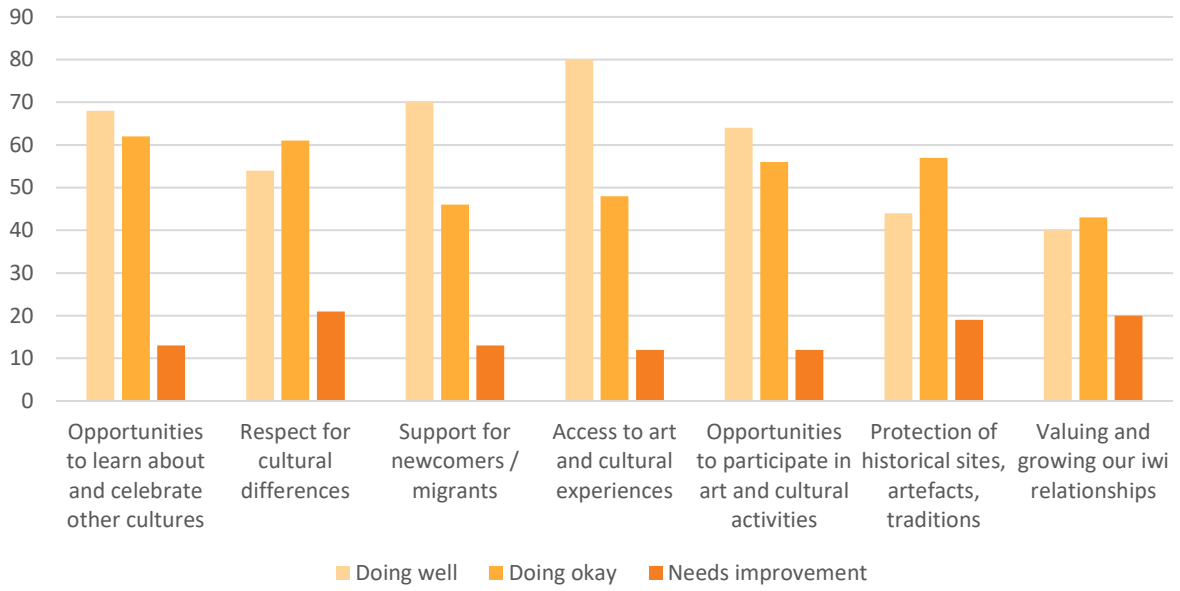
	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Economic Development	• Encourage more / business from different industries to the district	The Economic Development Manager currently works with businesses to support them to come to the district.
	• Increase support of small businesses across the district	Support of small businesses is partly covered by the proposed Economic Development Strategy, but the Chamber of Commerce or a local business association would support this more – we will continue to advocate for their involvement.
	• Improve relationships and collaboration between business and Council	We are continually working on improving relationships and collaboration with businesses.
	• Hold more networking events for business community (business owners and also professionals)	There are plans in place for this to happen – both by Council and the Chamber of Commerce.
	• Hold job opportunity forums	Council has been exploring the possibility of holding a careers expo but currently have limited budget for doing so.
	• Educate employers and employees on their rights / responsibilities to prevent employees being taken advantage of	This information is currently provided by the Chamber of Commerce to employers. Employees can access information through the Citizens Advice Bureau.
	• Work with education providers to get free training, training to support employees progress in jobs, general upskilling	This is covered by the draft Economic Development Strategy, although the training is unlikely to be free.
	• Support for school leavers to get training and employment – support in volunteering roles	The Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs provides this support. The Learning Hub proposed within the draft Economic Development Strategy would provide additional support.
	• Support for older and socially disadvantaged people looking for employment	Many of these people may be able to access the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs programme.
	• Support training providers to come to the district, and provide courses such as: o training in arable skills for Filipino workers, practical skills (such as forklift licences) for female workers	This is covered by the proposed Learning Hub in the draft Economic Development Strategy. There are also lots of groups across the district already providing courses such as those described.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Regulatory processes	• Provide additional support / facilitation to businesses through the regulatory process	This is part of the proposed Economic Development Strategy currently being drafted. The Economic Development Manager also meets with potential developers to find out what support they need, as part of current practice.
	• Look to simplify compliance / streamline processes / remove duplications	We are always looking for ways to make improvements. Central Government is also currently consulting on ways to do this - which we provided feedback on.
Council	• Pay the living wage at a minimum – lead by example	Most waged employees that don't receive the current living wage are those in roles that don't require previous experience or any qualifications. We then invest significantly in their training, which then supports wage increases.
Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs	• Ensure participants are a diverse group	Anyone who is 'at risk' can attend this program. At risk is defined by MBIE who provide part of the funding. The program is generally promoted through social agencies.
Public transport	• Advocate and investigate public transport within Ashburton and between rural towns	Public transport is a regional government function (Environment Canterbury). We regularly advocate to ECan for public transport through the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan processes, and we will continue to do this. There is already the Mid Canterbury Connector that travels between rural towns to Ashburton, and home again. More information can be found *here.*
Other	• Council lead by example by showcasing the diversity of employees and encouraging others to do the same	The diversity of our employees is reported on in our Annual Report. Depending on work priorities, this could also be extended by the Welcoming Communities role once filled.
	• Lead by example and offer internships / work experience for long-term unemployed	Anyone who has been out of work for 2 years or more is able to attend the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs program to gain employment.
	• Support for driving programmes • Support getting to driving lessons / testing	There are multiple driving programs in the community – some of which will go to your home to pick you up and support you through the program. We also provide a vehicle for the Salvation Army to support Learn to Drive.
	• Install district wide drinking water meters	We will consider this through the Long-Term Plan process.
	• Install 'Welcome to Ashburton signs'	This project will be considered through the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 process.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
	• Advocate for more breakfasts / lunches in schools • Reduce rate rises and regulatory costs	This can be undertaken through our advocacy role. This is always an aspiration for Council, but it is always a juggle between limiting rate rises and providing the level of service expected by our community.

5. Cultural well-being

Respondents to the community survey were asked to indicate how well they thought our district was doing in relation to a number of broad areas within cultural well-being.



The majority of survey respondents indicated our district was *doing well* or *doing ok* for all aspects of cultural well-being. Those attending the workshops, however, differed in view, with all but two topics (*access to art and cultural experiences* and *opportunities to participate in art and cultural activities)* falling into the *needs improvement* category by at least some, if not all, the attendees.

See Appendix D for a summary of the responses received through the cultural well-being survey and Section 4 of the well-being workshops summary document for the feedback gathered at the workshop.

1.11. Opportunities to learn about and celebrate other cultures

The main issue noted by survey respondents was that more needs to be done. The workshop attendees noted the lack of resources within existing organisations as a challenge to success.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Across Council services (led by Comms and Welcoming Communities)	• Celebrate language weeks – Te Reo Māori, Pasifika languages, Chinese, and include Tagalog • Celebrate a different culture each month	Council is currently recruiting for a Welcoming Communities role. These suggestions may fit within the programme of work to be undertaken by the Welcoming Communities role. Council currently celebrates Te Reo Māori week – this year through sharing the

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
		programs held at our facilities and by promoting the Tūwhana App.
Grants & funding	• Increase financial support for events celebrating culture, such as Multicultural Bite • Support more cultural events • Support a Matariki event	Groups holding such events can apply for a grant through our Event Grant. In 2023 we provided a $4,000 grant to the Hakatere Māori Komiti to support their Matariki event.

1.12. Respect for cultural differences

The main issue noted through the survey was that there is *a lack / no respect for different cultures* in the community along with requests for Council to *do more / be more proactive*.

The workshop attendees noted the following challenges:

- The community being welcoming and inclusive, along with a lack of understanding
- Migrant education / integration – particularly if have no English – difficult to integrate into school system
- Lack of resources for existing organisations – including facilities / venues

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Communications / Welcoming Communities	• Promote the Tūwhana App • Connect groups (newcomers) with free activities in town – ie Art Gallery & Museum events • Encourage use of Council facilities	Council is currently recruiting for a Welcoming Communities role. These suggestions may fit within the programme of work to be undertaken by the Welcoming Communities role, subject to the development of a Welcoming Communities Plan.
Grants & funding	• Continue to support Community House	Council has been a long-term supporter of Community House in a variety of different ways, including funding.
Other	• Provide support for driving lessons for newcomers	There are multiple driving programs in the community – some of which we have provided funding support for in the past.

1.13. Support for newcomers / migrants

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Strategy development	• Develop a Migrants and Newcomers Strategy	While a good suggestion, it was seen as a double up with the Welcoming Communities Plan which is due to be updated.
Welcoming Communities	• Welcoming Communities advisor a full-time role • Support newcomers to get in touch with the Newcomers Network • Support workplaces to understand different cultures • Set up a migrant group – where established immigrants can be the go between for new migrants • Education for newcomers to protect from exploitation, understand how to get a job / house etc • Work to ensure there are clear communication / awareness about the services available	Council is currently recruiting for a Welcoming Communities Advisor part-time role. These suggestions may fit within the programme of work to be undertaken by the Welcoming Communities role, subject to an update of the Welcoming Communities Plan.
Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs	• Ensure participants are from culturally diverse backgrounds	Anyone who is 'at risk' can attend this program. At risk is defined by MBIE who provide part of the funding. The program is generally promoted through social agencies.
Other	• Support youth programmes and support services such as YMCA • Translation services	Youth programmes and support services are all able to apply for our community grants – and many do with success. Council does have access to translation services when required.

1.14. Protection of historical sites, artefacts, traditions

Most survey respondents wanted more work to embrace our historical sites. Workshop attendees noted a challenge for this area as the lack of information and awareness by the general community.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Property	• More sympathetic repairs undertaken at the Chinese Market Garden	The repairs are now all but complete, and Council has worked closely with the property owners and Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga on these repairs. The landscaping and information boards are planned to be installed over the coming year.
Strategy development	• Develop an Arts & Culture Strategy	This is currently in Year 4 (2024/25) of the current Long-Term Plan.
District Planning	• Create a register of historic sites and buildings – discuss with Arowhenua including those of importance to Māori • Work with Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga to identify and preserve historic sites • Review heritage listed trees in the District Plan • Improve communication between Council and experts / community when historic sites are to be removed from the District Plan	The District Plan contains a list of historic sites which are developed in conjunction with the community. Early discussions have recently begun with Rūnanga to discuss areas of cultural importance. This work is in its early days but will be ongoing. These processes are managed through legislative processes and best practice. Removing historic sites from the District Plan would be subject to public consultation through the regulatory processes.
Other	• Communicate with the public where historic sites are and why they need protecting – raise awareness of history • Acknowledge and increase the presence of information, on why the lakes area are important to Māori	This is happening and ongoing through several avenues, including the installation of blue plaques on historic sites by Historic Places Mid Canterbury, placards have been installed in the: Ashburton town centre, Ng King Bros Chinese Market Garden Settlement, and Rakaia Salmon site. Council has worked on increasing awareness regarding the importance of the Ōtuwharekai area since the adoption of our Lakes Camp & Clearwater 30-Year Plan in 2022. Since adopting the plan we have created a webpage with relevant information, including acknowledgement of the importance of the lakes area to Māori.

1.15. Valuing and growing our iwi relationships

The main comment provided by survey respondents was that there was *room for improvement*. Workshop attendees noted the need to support iwi to build capacity.

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	**Council response**
Welcoming Communities	• Welcoming Communities position full-time • Promote the Tūwhana App • Organise / host Māori culture classes for the public	Council is currently recruiting for a Welcoming Communities Advisor part-time role. These suggestions are likely to fit within the programme of work to be undertaken by the Welcoming Communities role, subject to updating of the Welcoming Communities Plan.
Governance / across Council departments	• Build the relationship between local iwi and Council • Appoint a councillor and staff member to the relationship with Hakatere Marae • Clarify roles between Arowhenua and Hakatere	Council has a solid relationship between local iwi and Council and is continuing to mature this relationship. The Democracy & Engagement group has reached out to Hakatere Marae to establish regular meetings to discuss local issues and opportunities for collaboration. We continue to look to enhance our relationship with both Te Runaka o Arowhenua and Hakatere Marae. Arowhenua have Manawhenua in the District, so much of our relationship with them is focused on issues of kaitiakitanga (environmental guardianship) within the context of the Resource Management Act and Local Government Act. We work closely with Arowhenua on issues of this type, as well as other matters of mutual importance. While the Hakatere Marae is not a Ngai Tahu marae, it is a marae for people from all iwi, a marae for all members of the community. This means we can connect and work together on areas of mutual importance for our residents. As our relationship matures, so too will the definition of roles.
Other	• Promote learning opportunities about other cultures, including Māori through understanding of Te Tiriti, field trips to marae, co-governance, language etc. • Support iwi to connect with the community	These suggestions are likely to fit within the programme of work to be undertaken by the Welcoming Communities role, subject to updating of the Welcoming Communities Plan.

1.16. Other areas of cultural well-being

1.16.1 Access to art and cultural experiences

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Strategy development	• Develop an Arts & Culture Strategy that incorporates Māori art and history	This is planned for Year 4 (2024/25) of the current Long-Term Plan 21-31.
Grants & funding	• Support for venues such as Community House, Ashburton Seniors Centre, and private venues offering art and cultural experiences • Financial support for small museums run by volunteers e.g. paid help for 2 hours per week	Council resources are limited, and decisions are made based on the applications received at the time. These groups are eligible to apply for Council's community grants and may also be able to apply for a Creative Communities grant which Council administers. Financial support for small museums would fit within the criteria for our Community Agencies grant. We will look to promote the grants to these groups when they next open.
Other	• Increased frequency of showing Māori heritage	This is part of the Ashburton Art Gallery & Museum's ongoing work programme.

1.16.2 Other areas where cultural well-being could be improved

Suggested actions Council could take

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
Welcoming Communities	• Full-time position	Council is currently recruiting for a Welcoming Communities Advisor part-time role.
Grants & funding	• Increased funding of Hakatere Multicultural Council and Newcomers Network • Increased support of Hakatere Marae • Increased support of sports clubs • Continue support of ATEC	Council resources are limited, and decisions are made based on the applications received at the time. These groups all receive community grants and can continue to do so.
Property	• Upgrade Balmoral Hall – keep as a dance venue	This is pending a decision through the development of the Long-Term Plan 24-34.
Events	• Continue to support events on Council land	We intend to continue this support.

	Suggestion from survey / workshop	Council response
	• Additional cultural events / festivals e.g. kapa haka, dance showcase etc.	Council supports cultural events through the Community Event fund and the Creative Community fund that we administer.
Other	• Increased education on local Māori history • Increased involvement with different cultures / cultural groups • Increased proactiveness encouraging the acceptance of diversity	This is part of the Ashburton Art Gallery & Museum ongoing work programme. These suggestions fit within the programme of work to be undertaken by the Welcoming Communities role, currently in recruitment.