



Survey on local government reform – research report



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Executive Summary



Executive Summary (i):

Objectives and method

The research was undertaken to gain an understanding of:

- Whether electors in the Wellington region wish to see reform to local government.
- If they wish to see change, which option do they prefer?
- What are the key drivers for change.

The research involved a telephone survey of 3,300 adults across the Wellington region:

- The sample was designed so that it included 400 in each local authority (500 in Kapiti).
- Fieldwork was 27 June to 26 July.

Overall preference in the Wellington region

- 58% of all respondents want no changes to current local council boundaries
- 31% do want changed boundaries in some form:
 - 12% prefer Option 2 (3 councils for the whole region. These would be a) Wellington City, Porirua and Kapiti, b) Hutt and Upper Hutt, and c) the Wairarapa).
 - 9% prefer Option 3 (2 councils for the whole region. These would be a) Wellington City, Porirua, Kapiti, Hutt and Upper Hutt, and b) the Wairarapa).
 - 9% prefer Option 4 (1 authority for the whole Wellington region).
- 2% prefer another option of their own which was not on the list of options (giving a wide variety of miscellaneous answers).
- 10% are undecided.

Executive Summary (ii):

Views in the Wairarapa

- Wairarapa residents are more likely to want a change to local council boundaries compared with residents elsewhere (46% want change to council boundaries, although only 5% want to be part of a region-wide 'super city' – with the rest, 41%, favouring change towards a single Wairarapa council).
- It should be noted that 22% of Wairarapa residents who did *not* want change, were saying so because they did not want to form part of a single Wellington regional authority – many *are* open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council (see below).
- Further analysis of the results showed that once options for change were explained and respondents were asked for their view if change was inevitable, Wairarapa residents were open to changing boundaries and most preferred a single Wairarapa council even if they first answered 'no change' (those who initially answered don't know were also in favour of a single Wairarapa council). This is reflected in the finding that, when asked to review three possible 'change' options, most chose a single Wairarapa council. When asked to review three change options:
 - 28% preferred more shared services (without local council boundary changes)
 - 60% preferred a single Wairarapa council
 - 8% preferred a single authority for the whole Wellington region
 - 3% said 'other/something else'
 - 1% said 'don't know'

Executive Summary (iii):

Top five reasons given for not changing council boundaries

Combining the reasons that people either chose things should 'stay the same' or 'we should change towards more shared services' shows that (across the region) the most common themes are:

- If it isn't broken, don't fix it (27% said this was their main reason)
- Each local area is distinct with its distinct needs (16%)
- Local areas/community services lose out with amalgamation (9%)
- Local decision making is best (9%)
- And costs/rate increases that could be associated with amalgamation (9%).

Top five reasons given for changing local authority boundaries

Combining respondents' reasons for preferring options which involve change to local authority boundaries shows that (across the region) the most common themes are:

- To save money/reduce rates (22%)
- Local geographies in 'change options' 2 and 3 are logical and lend themselves to merger (19%)
- To achieve more consistent services (8%)
- To achieve economies of scale/increased resources for councils (7%)
- To reduce bureaucracy (7%).

Executive Summary (iv):

The drivers of choice

When prompted for what was important when making decisions about local government reform options, the following factors are viewed as important:

- Delivering services effectively (86% said this was either very important or quite important)
- Cost, efficiency and rates (76%)
- Positioning the area for future economic growth (69%)
- Democracy and representation (67%)
- Having a strong sense of belonging to the locality of the preferred option (65%)
- Removing layers of local government (45%)
- The council/s being able to lobby central government and others (43%).

Delivering services effectively and costs/rates are important to everyone. But, economic growth and removing layers of local government are more important for those favouring boundary change, whereas a sense of belonging to a location, and local representation are more important to those favouring 'no change' to local council boundaries.



Objectives and methodology



Objectives and method

1

The research was undertaken to gain an understanding of:

- Whether electors in the Wellington region wish to see reform to local government.
- If they wish to see change, which option do they prefer?
- What are the key drivers for change.

2

- A telephone survey of 400 adults (aged 18+) in each local authority (500 in Kapiti). Total sample size was 3,300 across the region.
- Fieldwork was 27 June to 26 July.
- Results weighted to be representative of geography, age, ethnicity, gender and household size.
- Local results are subject to margins of error of up to +/- 4.9%.
- Regional results have a margin of error of +/- 2%.

Here is the exact question wording of the governance option questions

After initial introduction...

I'll read you options which include keeping things *the same* or *changing* (towards sharing more services or merging councils together). If you have a preference, even if it's not a strong preference, let me know.

Q1 First of all do you think the way the councils in the Greater Wellington region are organised should *remain the same* or *change*?

Q2 I'm now going to read you out four potential options, but you can also tell me about other options you prefer. These options are only concepts at this stage and not detailed plans. No decisions have been made yet by the councils.

Option One does not involve any change to existing council boundaries. But the councils would agree to share more services such as office-functions, water, and libraries.

Option Two merges the councils into three authorities. These would be a) Wellington City, Porirua and Kapiti, b) Hutt and Upper Hutt, and c) the Wairarapa. (Wairarapa would combine South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton).

Option Three merges the councils into two authorities. These would be a) Wellington City, Porirua, Kapiti, Hutt and Upper Hutt, and b) the Wairarapa.

Option Four merges all the councils into one authority. Similar to Auckland, the new council would set rates and make decisions across the region. 10 local boards would be set up for local services.

Under options two, three and four the Regional Council would be abolished and its functions absorbed by the new authority or authorities.

[Respondents offered definition of GW region and regional/local government functions if required. 'Don't know' is a valid option for all questions. Also note that these questions mirror the Wellington City Council consultation question on local government reform].

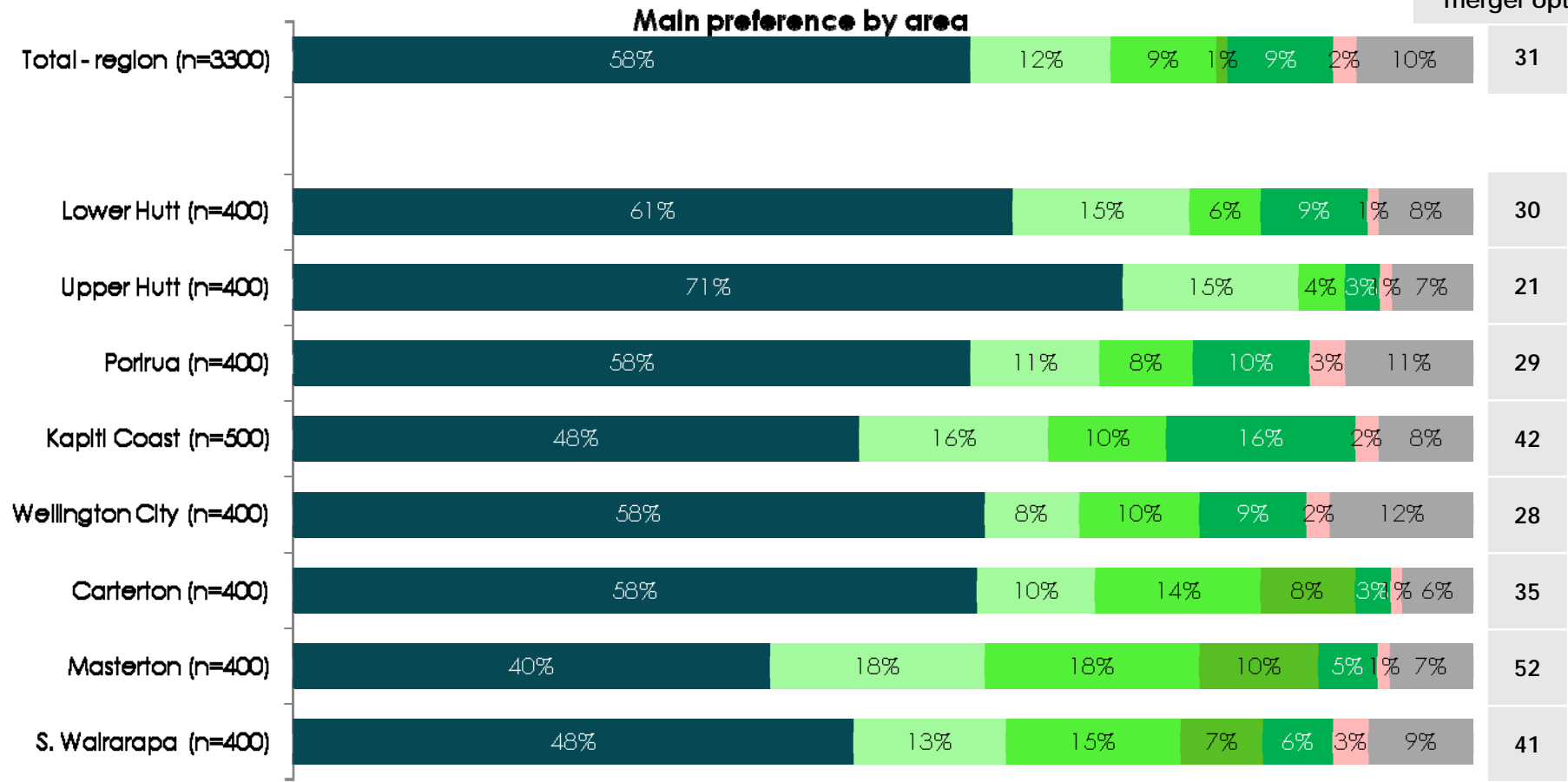


Views on whether or not to change local authority boundaries (preferred option for change, if any)



Looking at 'first choice' 58% of respondents across the region do not favour district/local authority boundary change (this varies by area). [The first dark-blue bar represents those who favour remaining the same and option 1 combined].

% whose first choice was merger option



■ Remain the same or Option 1 (shared services)

■ Option 2 (3 councils)

■ Option 3 (2 councils)

■ Option 4 (1 council)

■ Don't know

■ Option 2 (3 councils)

■ Wairarapa council no view on option 2/3

■ Other

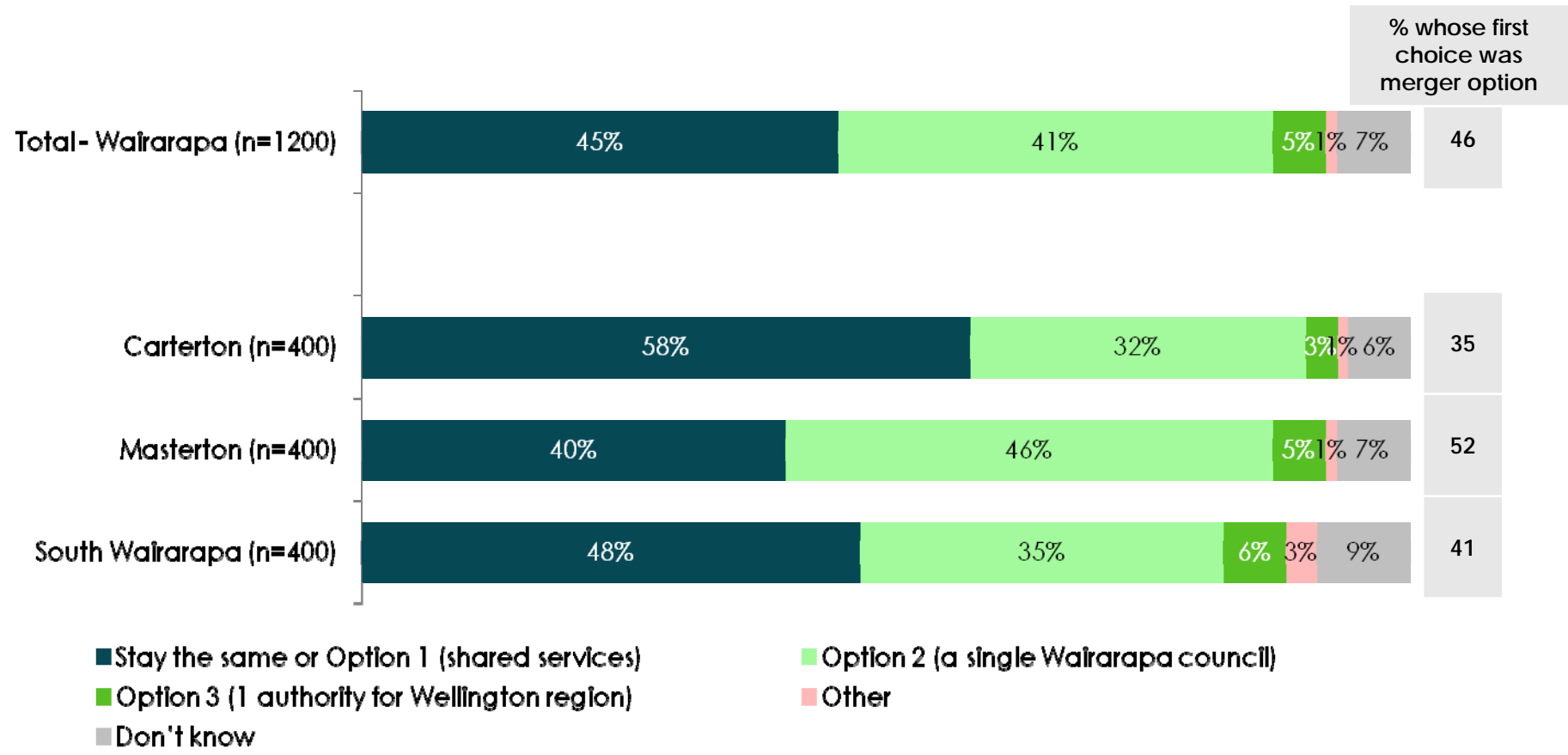
A1: Do you think the way councils in the Greater Wellington region are organised should...

A3: Which is your preferred option?

Base: all respondents (refer to chart for base sizes)

In the Wairarapa as a whole, 45% do not favour any change to local authority boundaries but 46% said merger was one of their first preferences. However, some of those who say things should 'remain the same' said in a follow up question that this was because they did not want to join Wellington. See following slides for more detail.

Main preference in the Wairarapa



A6: Which is your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents who favour remaining the same or are unsure whether they think things should remain the same or should change (refer to chart for base sizes)

Subgroup analysis – who is more likely to favour each option? (All statistically significant differences shown)

The following people are more likely to favour REMAINING THE SAME (data from across the region):

- Females (52% - vs. 47% of males)
- Those aged up to 34 (61% - vs. 48% of those aged 35-54 and 41% of those aged 55+)
- Those who do not pay rates directly to the council (59% vs. 46% of those who do pay rates)
- Asian respondents (67% vs. 48% of NZ European, 53% of Maori, 49% of Pacific, 39% of 'other European' and 39% of 'other' ethnicities).
- Those with household incomes between \$30,000-\$50,000 or \$50,000-\$80,000 (60% and 57% respectively, compared with 53% of those with household incomes up to \$30,000 and 44% of those with household incomes above \$80,000).
- Those with no property in other council areas (67% compared with 40% of people who own property in council areas other than the area they live in).

The following people are more likely to want change towards SHARED SERVICES (data from across the region)

- Females (15% - vs. 9% of males)
- Those aged up to 54 (13% [evenly spread by age up to this age] - vs. 10% of those aged 55+)
- Those who do not pay rates directly to the council (15% vs. 11% of those who do pay rates)
- Maori and Pacific respondents (18% and 25% respectively, compared to 12% of NZ European, 10% of Asian respondents and 8% of all 'other' ethnicities).
- Those with household incomes under \$30,000 (15%, compared with an average of 11% among higher income households – spread evenly by income band above \$30,000).

The following people are more likely to want change towards 3 AUTHORITIES for the region (data analysis excludes Wairarapa)

- Those aged 55+ (16% vs. 12% of respondents younger than this)

[Please note that for subgroup analysis of the change options, we have included people who initially said 'don't know' to remain the same or change, but then gave a preference towards one of the change options. The reason for doing so is to increase the robustness of the subgroup analysis – which would otherwise have lower sub-sample sizes making comparisons between groups more difficult. Doing so does not affect the direction of conclusions for subgroup preference, it simply makes the analysis more robust].

Subgroup analysis – who is more likely to favour each option? (All statistically significant differences shown)

The following people are more likely to favour changing TOWARDS 2 AUTHORITIES (data analysis excludes Wairarapa):

- Those aged 55+ (13% - vs. 4% of those aged up to 34, and 9% of those aged 35-54)
- 'Other Europeans' (21% vs. 9% of other ethnicities – spread evenly across ethnic groups)
- Those with household incomes over \$80,000 (13% vs. 5% of lower income bands – the low score of 5% is spread evenly throughout the lower income bands).

The following people are more likely to favour changing TOWARDS 1 AUTHORITY for the region (data from across the region):

- Males (13% - vs. 8% of females)
- Those who pay rates directly to the council (12% vs. 7% of those who do not pay rates)
- 'Other Europeans' (17% vs. 10% of other ethnicities – spread evenly across ethnic groups)
- Those with household incomes over \$80,000 (13% vs. 7% of those with a household income under \$30,000 and 9% of those with a household income between \$30,000 and \$50,000).
- Those with property in other council areas (12% compared with 3% of people who do not own property in council areas other than the area they live in – please note this particular difference is not statistically significant due to small base sizes).

[Please note that for subgroup analysis of the change options, we have included people who initially said 'don't know' to remain the same or change, but then gave a preference towards one of the change options. The reason for doing so is to increase the robustness of the subgroup analysis – which would otherwise have lower sub-sample sizes making comparisons between groups more difficult. Doing so does not affect the direction of conclusions for subgroup preference, it simply makes the analysis more robust].

Subgroup analysis for Wairarapa only – who is more likely to favour each option? (All statistically significant differences shown)

The following people in the Wairarapa are more likely to favour REMAINING THE SAME:

- Females (45% - vs. 32% of males)
- Those aged up to 34 (45% - vs. 37% of those aged 35-54 and 35% of those aged 55+)
- Those who do not pay rate directly to the council (54% vs. 34% of those who do pay rates)
- Maori respondents (54% vs. 35% of other ethnicities).
- Those with household incomes under \$30,000 or between \$30,000 and \$50,000 (46% and 47% respectively, compared with 37% of those with household incomes between \$50,000-\$80,000 and 29% of those with household incomes above \$80,000).
- Those with no property in other council areas (70% compared with 18% of people who own property in council areas other than the area they live in).

The following people are more likely to favour changing TOWARDS A UNITARY WAIRARAPA COUNCIL:

- Those with household incomes over \$50,000 (25% vs. 18% of lower income bands).

The following people are more likely to favour changing TOWARDS A WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL:

- Males (25% - vs. 15% of females)
- Those aged 55+ (23% vs. 16% of those aged up to 34 and 19% of those aged 35-54)
- Those who pay rates directly to the council (21% vs. 13% of those who do not pay rates)
- Those with household incomes over \$80,000 (26% vs. 15% of those with a household income under \$30,000, 17% of those with a household income between \$30,000 and \$50,00, and 20% of those with a household income of \$50,000-\$80,000).
- Those with property in other council areas (22% compared with 7% of people who do not own property in council areas other than the area they live in).

(Please note there were no significant differences among those favouring 'change towards shared services' nor those who favoured 'change towards 1 Wellington regional authority' within the Wairarapa).

[Please note that for subgroup analysis of the change options, we have included people who initially said 'don't know' to remain the same or change, but then gave a preference towards one of the change options. The reason for doing so is to increase the robustness of the subgroup analysis – which would otherwise have lower sub-sample sizes making comparisons between groups more difficult. Doing so does not affect the direction of conclusions for subgroup preference, it simply makes the analysis more robust].

Before we move on...

The first two charts in this presentation looked at views on whether or not to change local authority boundaries (and preferred option for change, if any).

- The first chart included information on the change options which were asked across the region
- The second chart included data on some specific change options which were asked only in the Wairarapa.

These figures were arrived at through questions about “remaining the same or changing” and preferred “change option”.

The next two sections (entitled ‘views on change vs. remaining the same’ and ‘views on change-options’) move on to examine how we arrived at the data included in the first two charts.

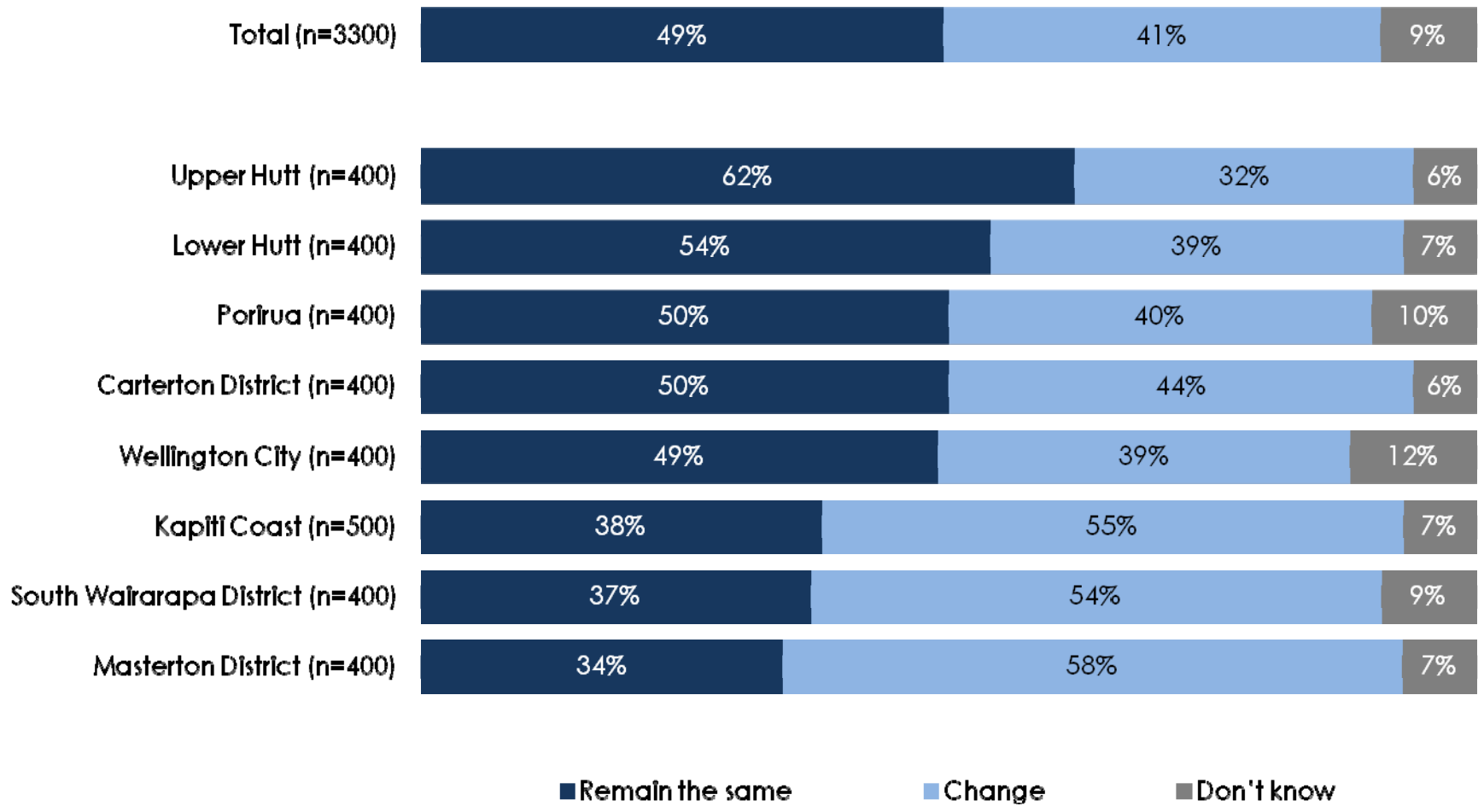


Views on change vs. remaining the same



Views on change vs. remaining the same are reasonably evenly balanced. In Carterton there is no significant difference between same vs. change. Other areas have a slight preference one way or the other, but the difference is marginal (i.e. only *just* significant) in Wellington and Porirua.

The way councils in the region are organised should remain the same vs. change?



A1: Do you think the way councils in the Greater Wellington region are organised should...
 Base: all respondents (refer to chart for base sizes)

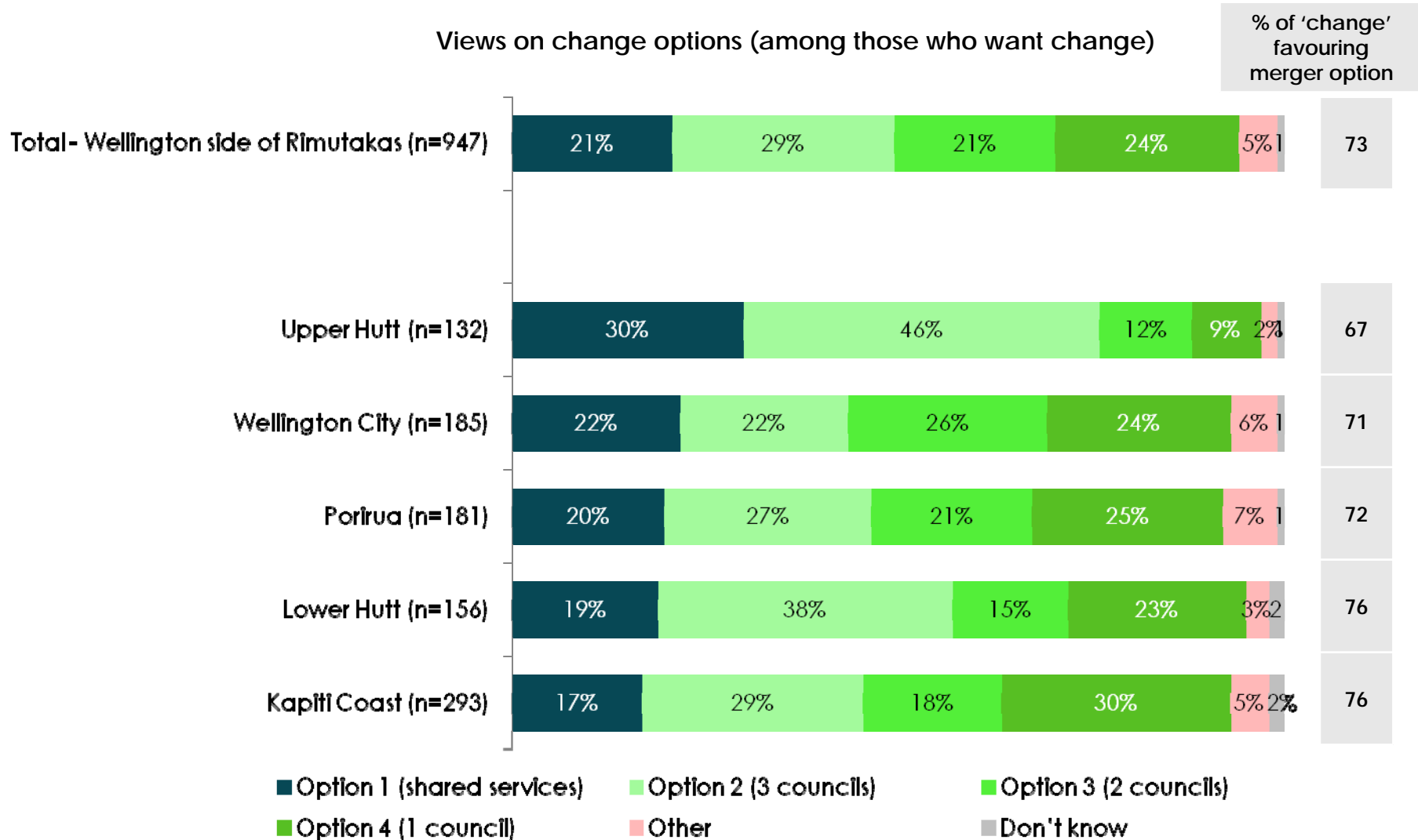


Views on change-options



There is a spread of opinions on what change would look like (among those who want change)

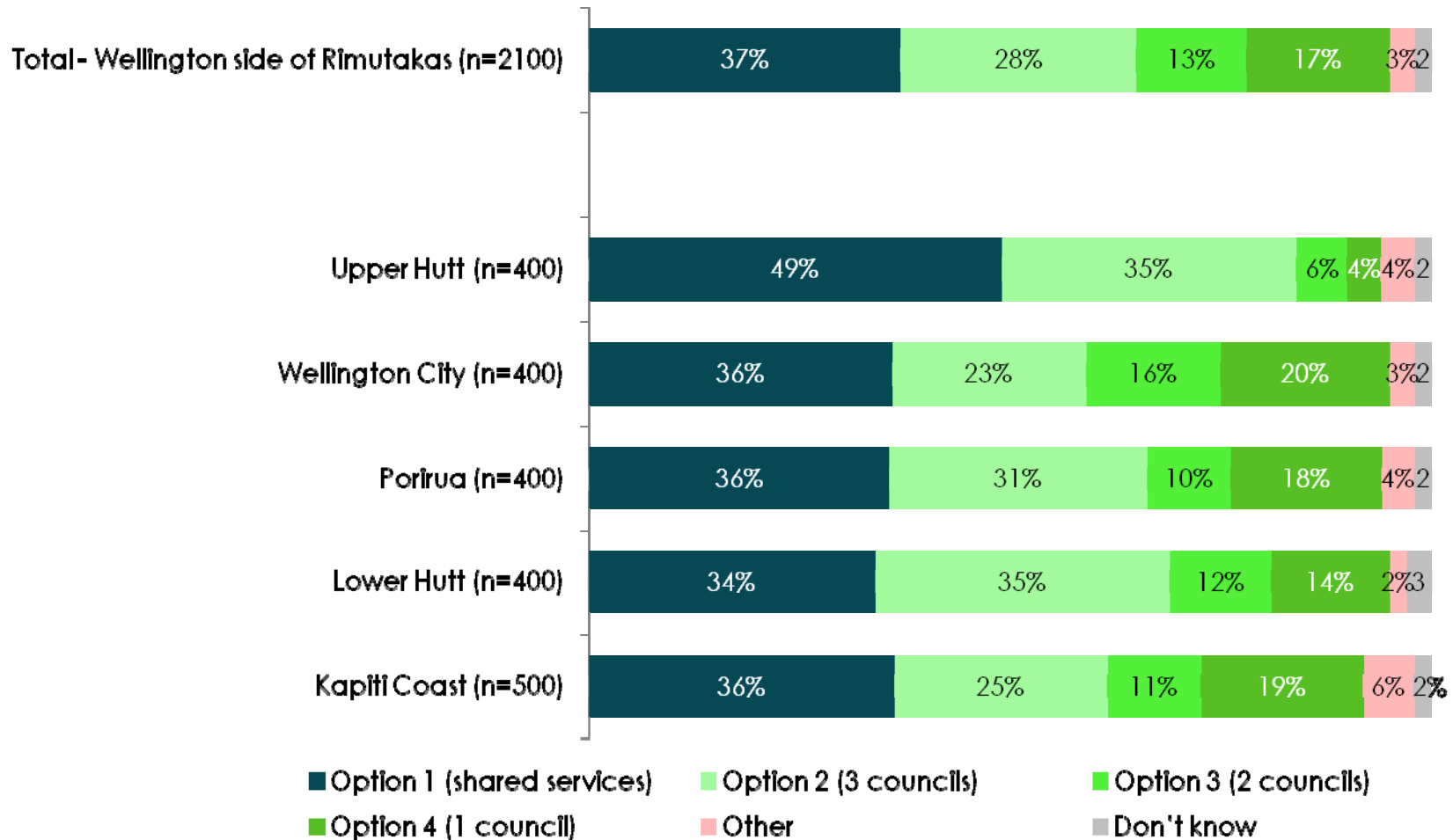
Views on change options (among those who want change)



A3: Which is your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents who favour change (refer to chart for base sizes)

If change was inevitable, here are views on the change options from all respondents (including those who do not favour change). Option 1 – shared services – is the most popular of the change options (among the population in the region)

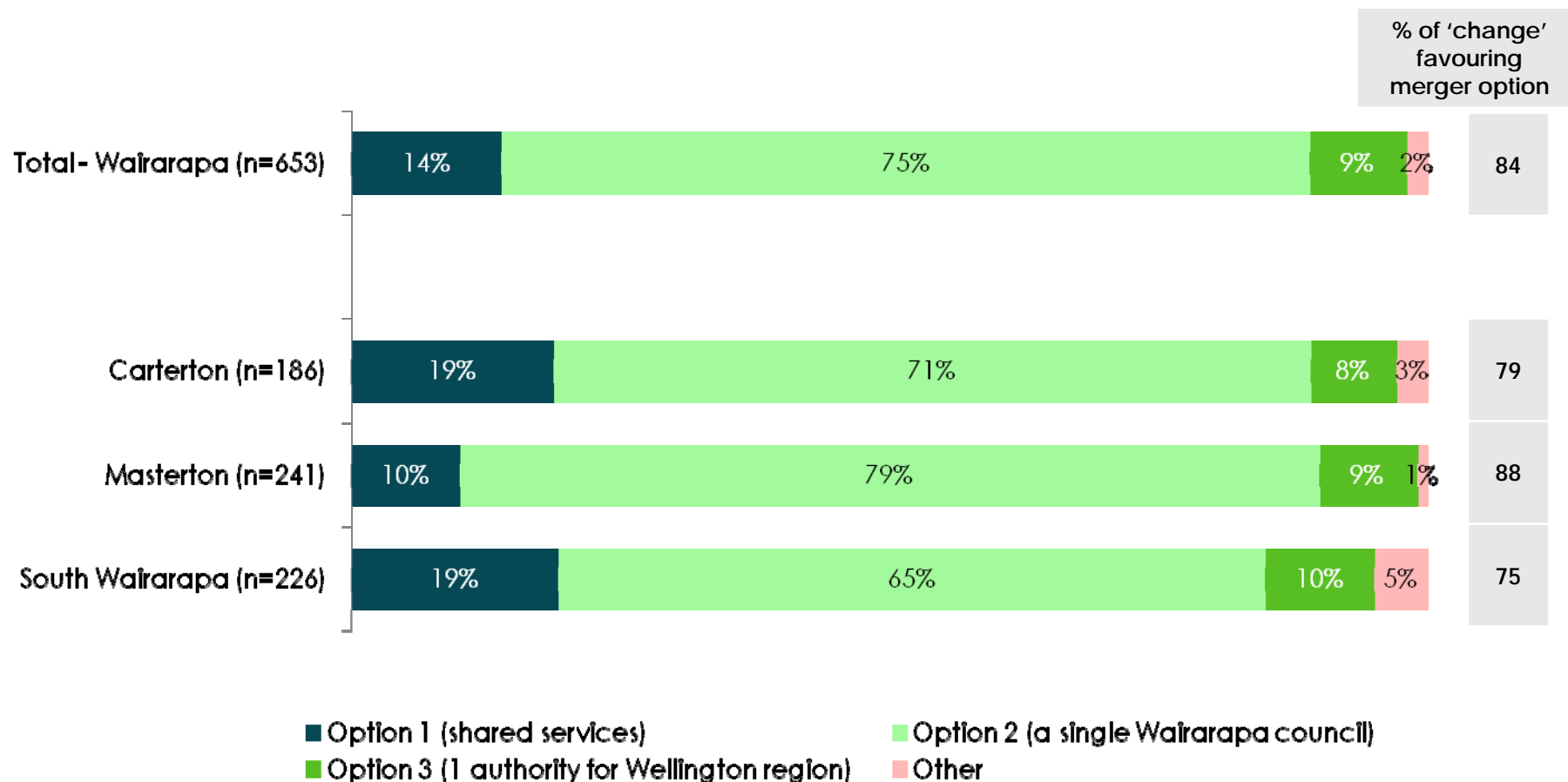
Views on change options – regardless of whether respondent wants change or not



A3: Please imagine a scenario where local government had to re-organise and could not remain the same. This scenario may not occur, but if it did, [insert council] would be interested to see what your preferred reform option might be, if any?
 Base: all respondents, including those who want to remain the same (refer to chart for base sizes)

A single Wairarapa council is the favoured change option (among those who favour change in the Wairarapa) – next slide shows views on the unitary authority option

Views on change options – among those who want change



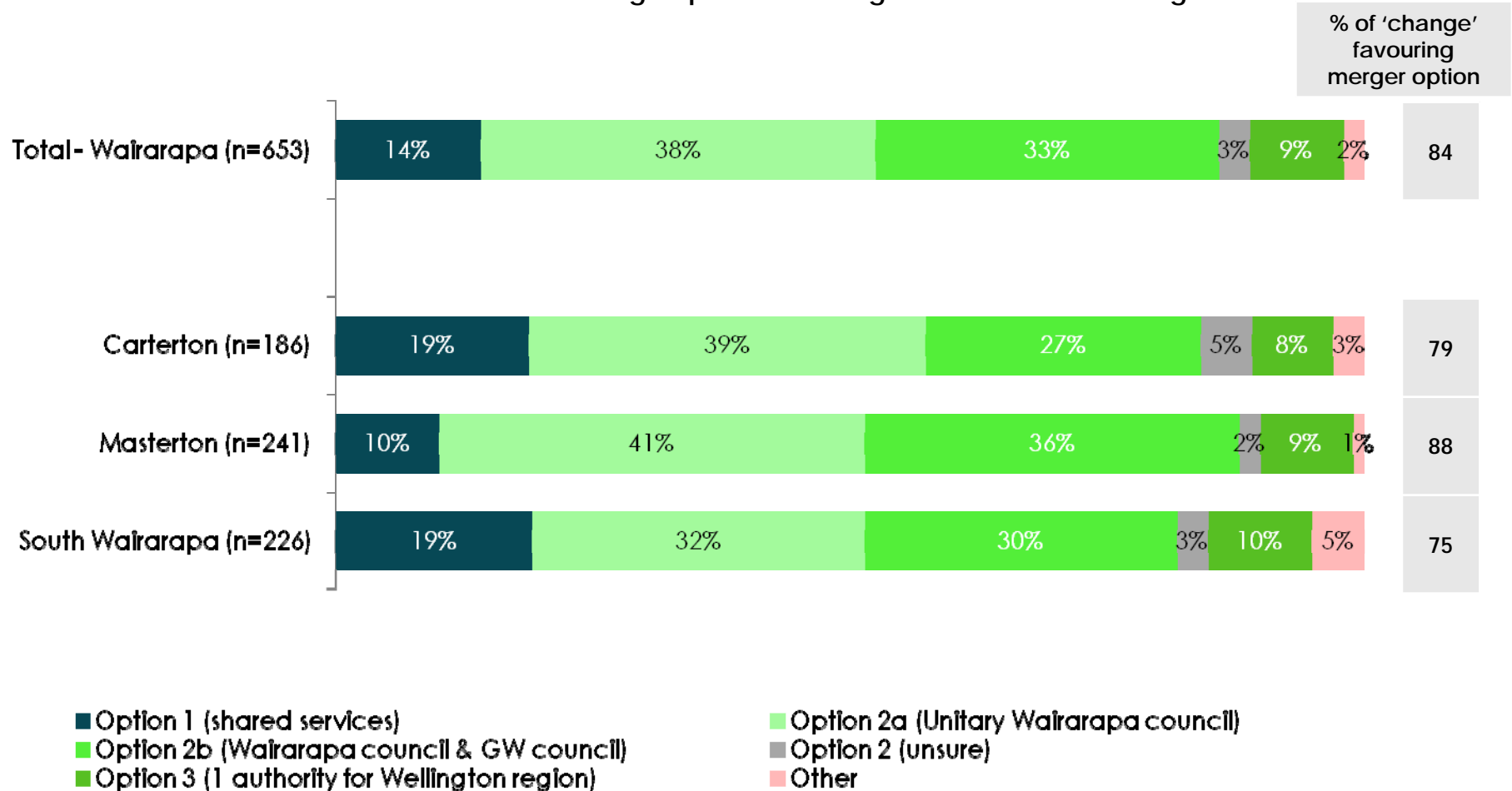
■ Option 1 (shared services)
 ■ Option 2 (a single Wairarapa council)
 ■ Option 3 (1 authority for Wellington region)
 ■ Other

A6: Which is your preferred option?

Base: all respondents who favour change (refer to chart for base sizes)

Among those favouring change towards a single Wairarapa council, views are mixed about whether this should be a unitary authority or not

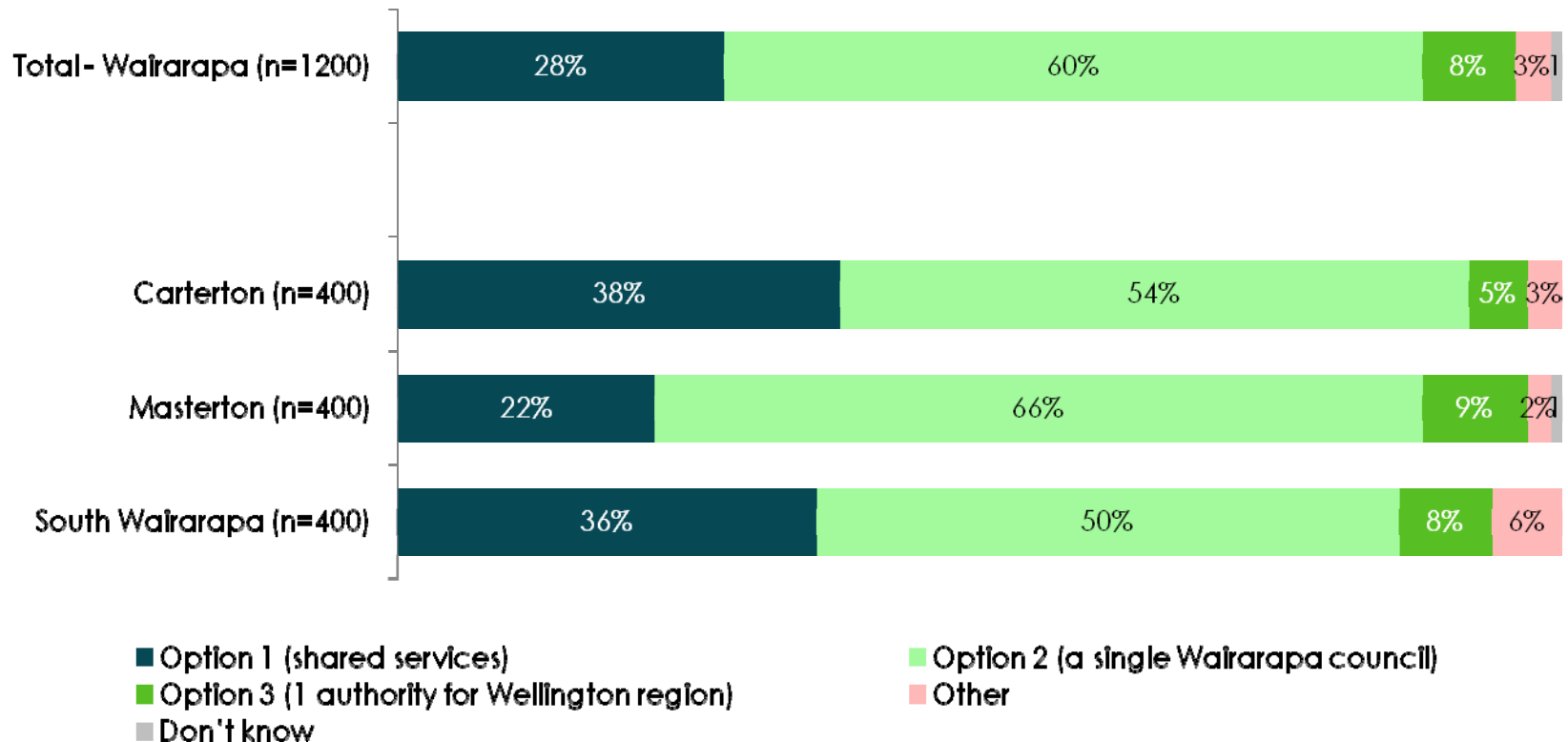
Views on change options – among those who want change



A6: Which is your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents who favour change (refer to chart for base sizes)

If change was inevitable, then a single Wairarapa council would be the preferred option among *all* survey respondents (including those who want to remain the same) – next slide shows views on the unitary authority option

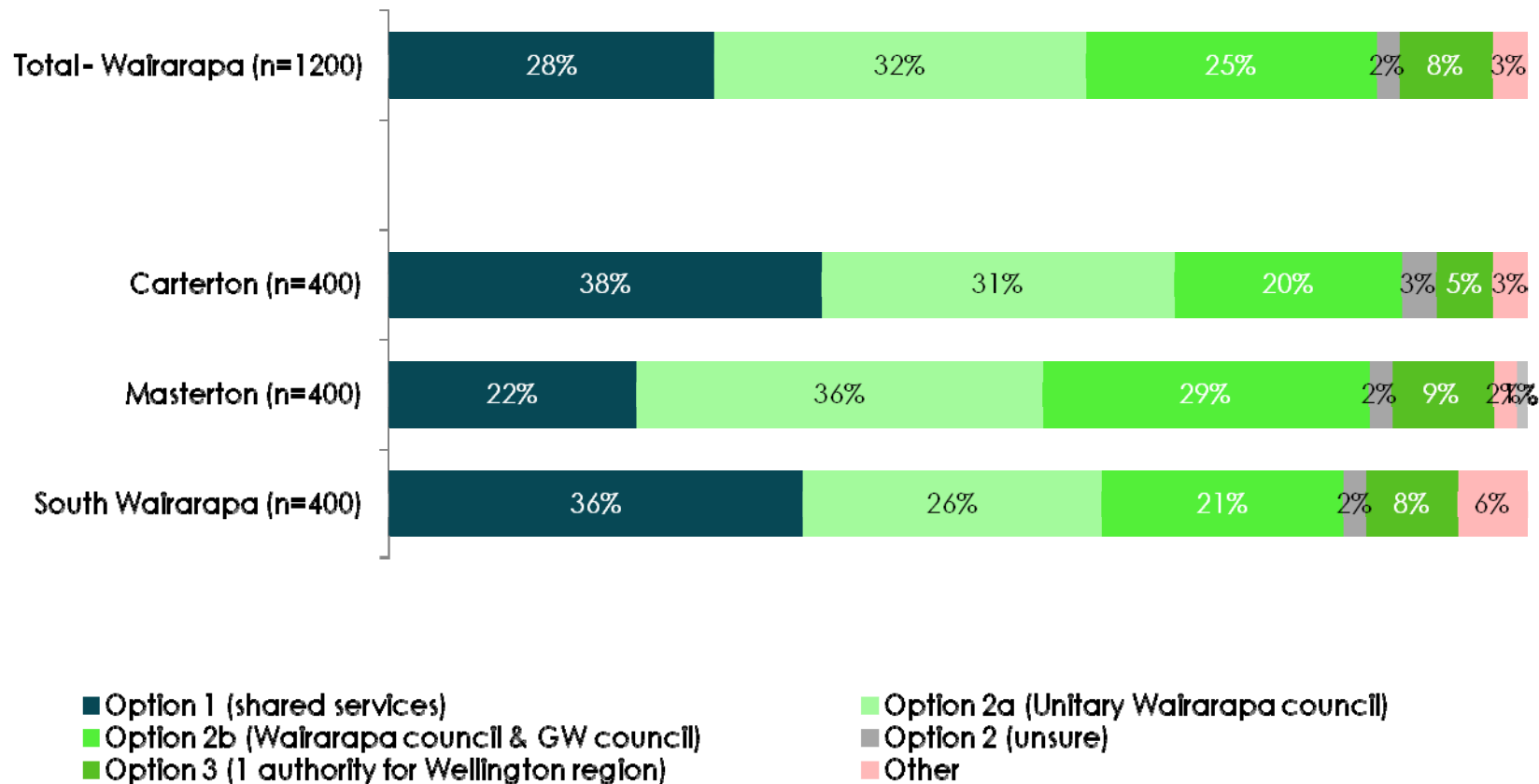
Views on change options (among all respondents regardless of whether or not they wish to remain the same or change)



A6: Which is your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents including those who prefer remaining the same (refer to chart for base sizes)

If change was inevitable, views are mixed about whether this should be a unitary authority or not (with a slight tendency to support Wairarapa as a District council)

Views on change options – including Wairarapa Council being a unitary vs. district council (among all respondents regardless of whether or not they wish to remain the same or change)



A6: Which is your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents including those who favour remaining the same (refer to chart for base sizes)

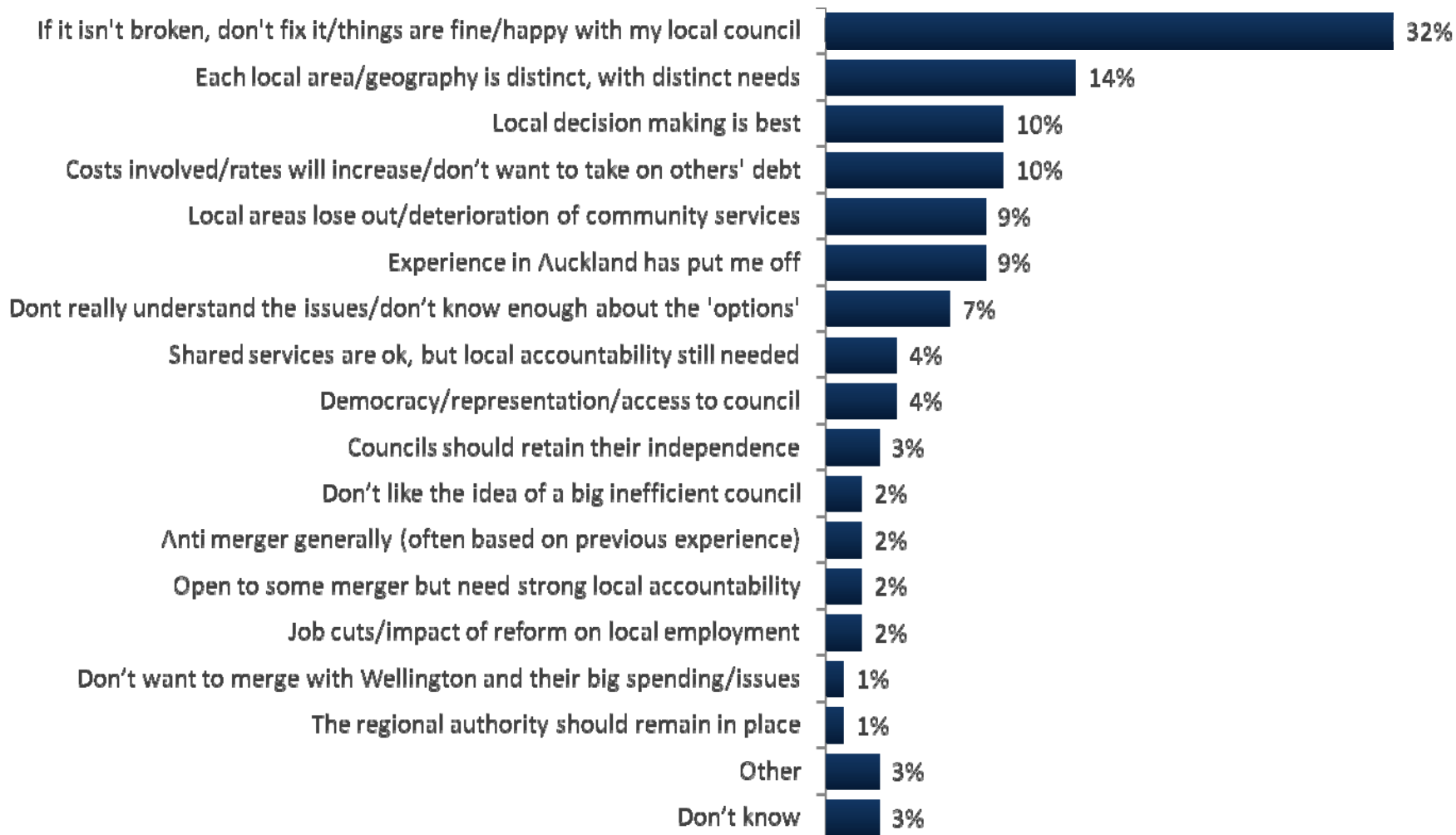
Reasons why people chose to 'remain the same'

It should be noted that the following results are from an open ended question ('why?') which has been coded (most people gave one reason, but some people gave more than one reason).



People saying 'things should stay the same' were asked for their 'main reason' – this was an open ended question and results have been coded (some people gave more than one reason). Across the region the most common reason was simply 'if it is not broke, don't fix it' (these people often specifically mentioned that their local council does a good job), other themes include local decision making, costs, and negative aspects of the Auckland experience.

Main reason for 'keeping things the same' across the region



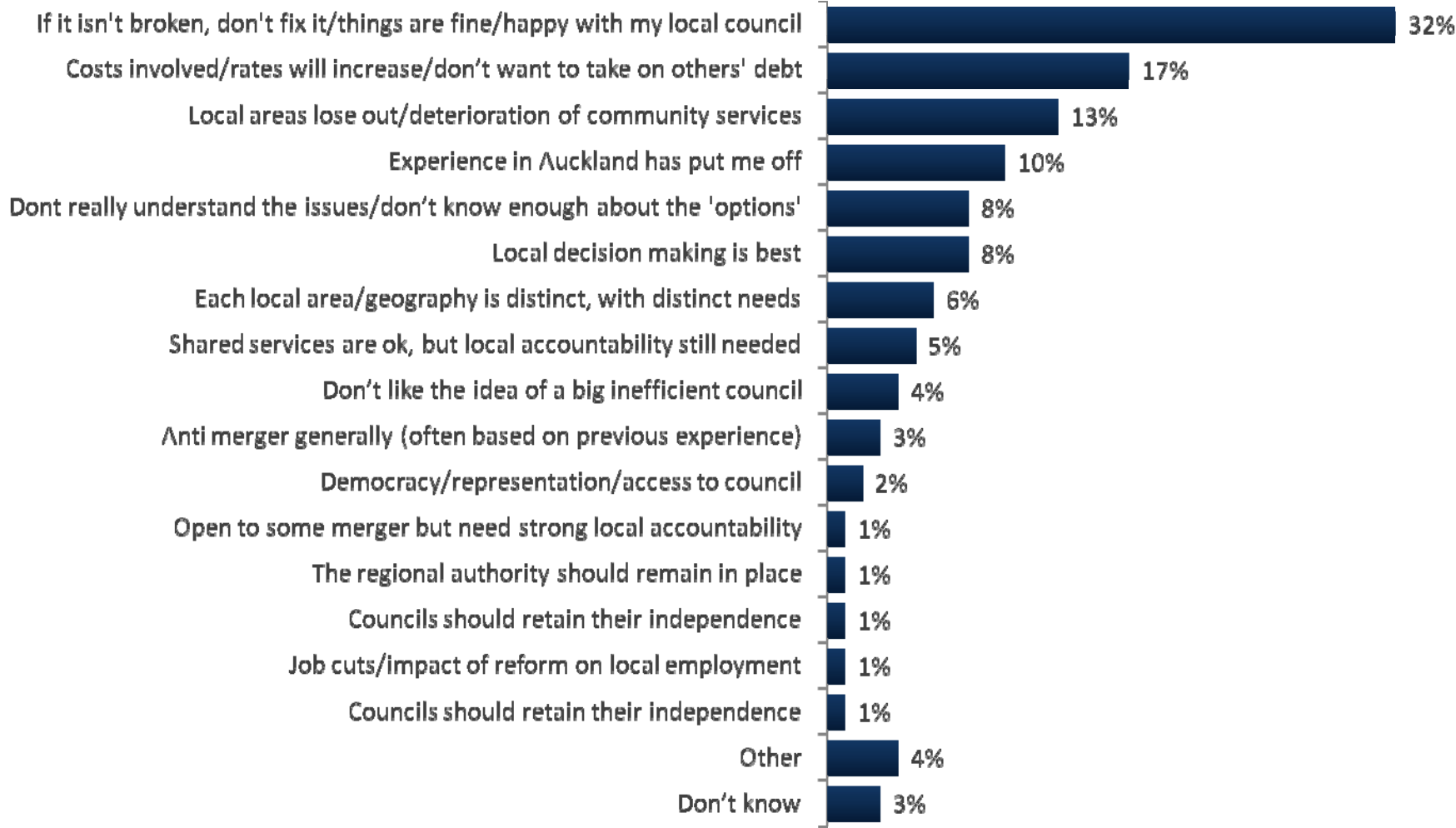
B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents who favour remaining the same (n=1,470)

Because so many people opted for 'remain the same' – we can break down results by local authority region. See the following slides for details.

[Unfortunately the sample sizes for other 'change' options are too small to allow local authority analysis, although later in the report we do provide separate analysis of the change options in the Wairarapa as a whole].

'Stay the same' people in Lower Hutt were more likely to quote 'costs' or 'not taking on other areas' debt' as their main reason (compared with 'stay the same' people elsewhere). They were also more likely to say they were concerned about merger reducing local / community services.

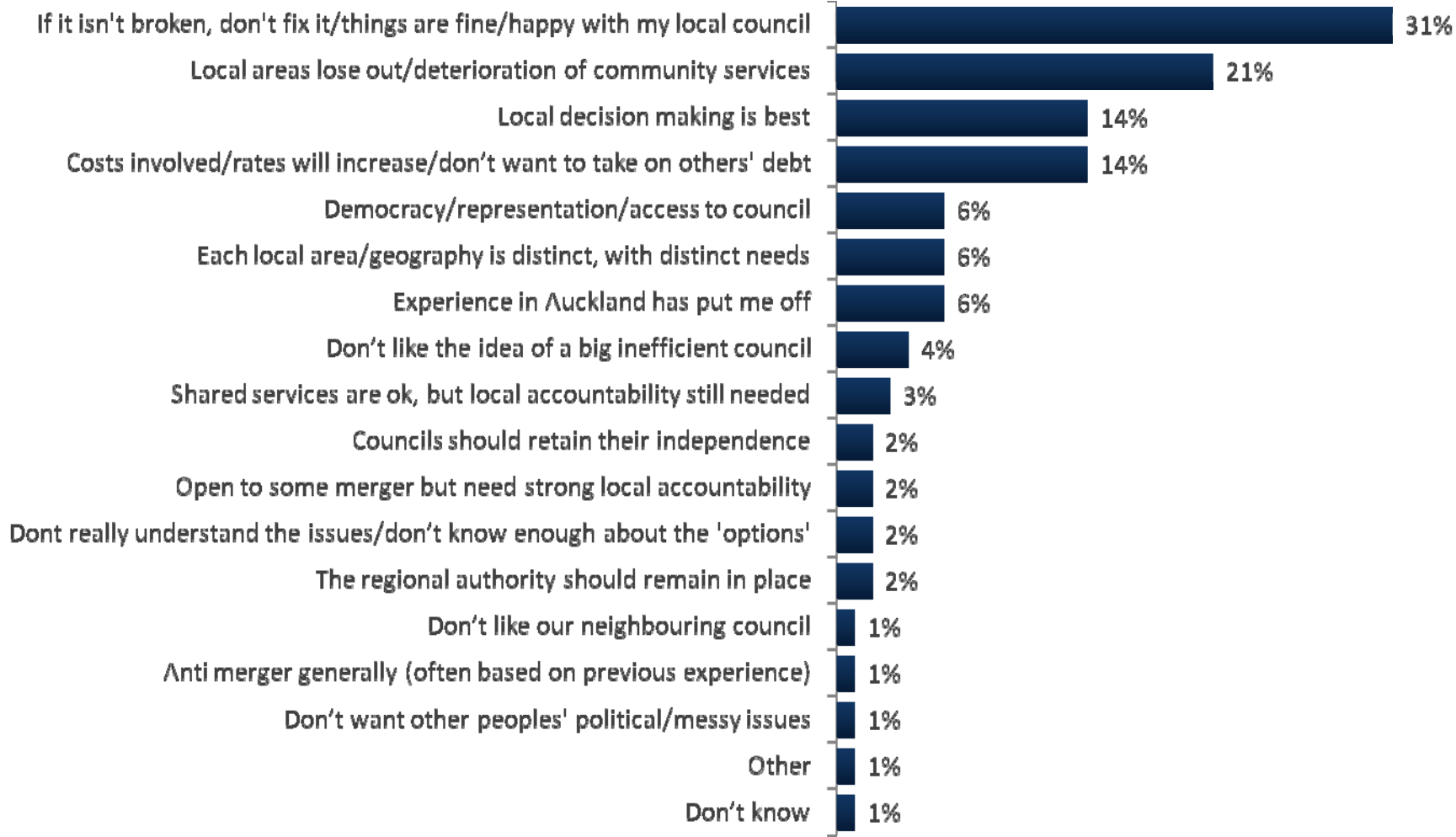
Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in Lower Hutt



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in Lower Hutt who favour remaining the same (n=213)

'Stay the same' people in Upper Hutt were more likely to quote 'costs' or 'not taking on other peoples' debt' as their main reason. They were also more likely to say they were concerned about merger reducing local / community services.

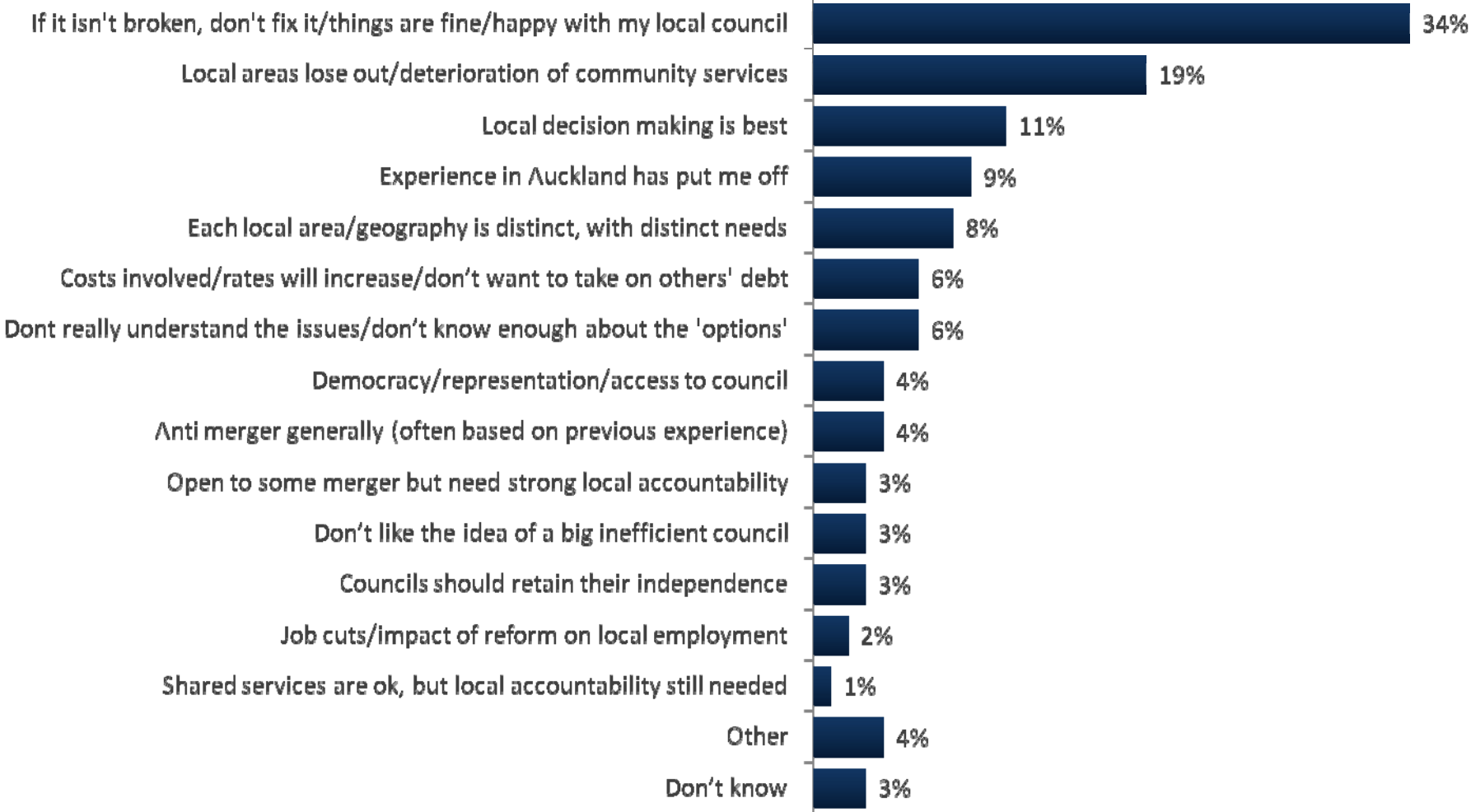
Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in Upper Hutt



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in Upper Hutt who favour remaining the same (n=246)

'Stay the same' people in Porirua were more likely to quote concerns about local/community services missing out due to merger.

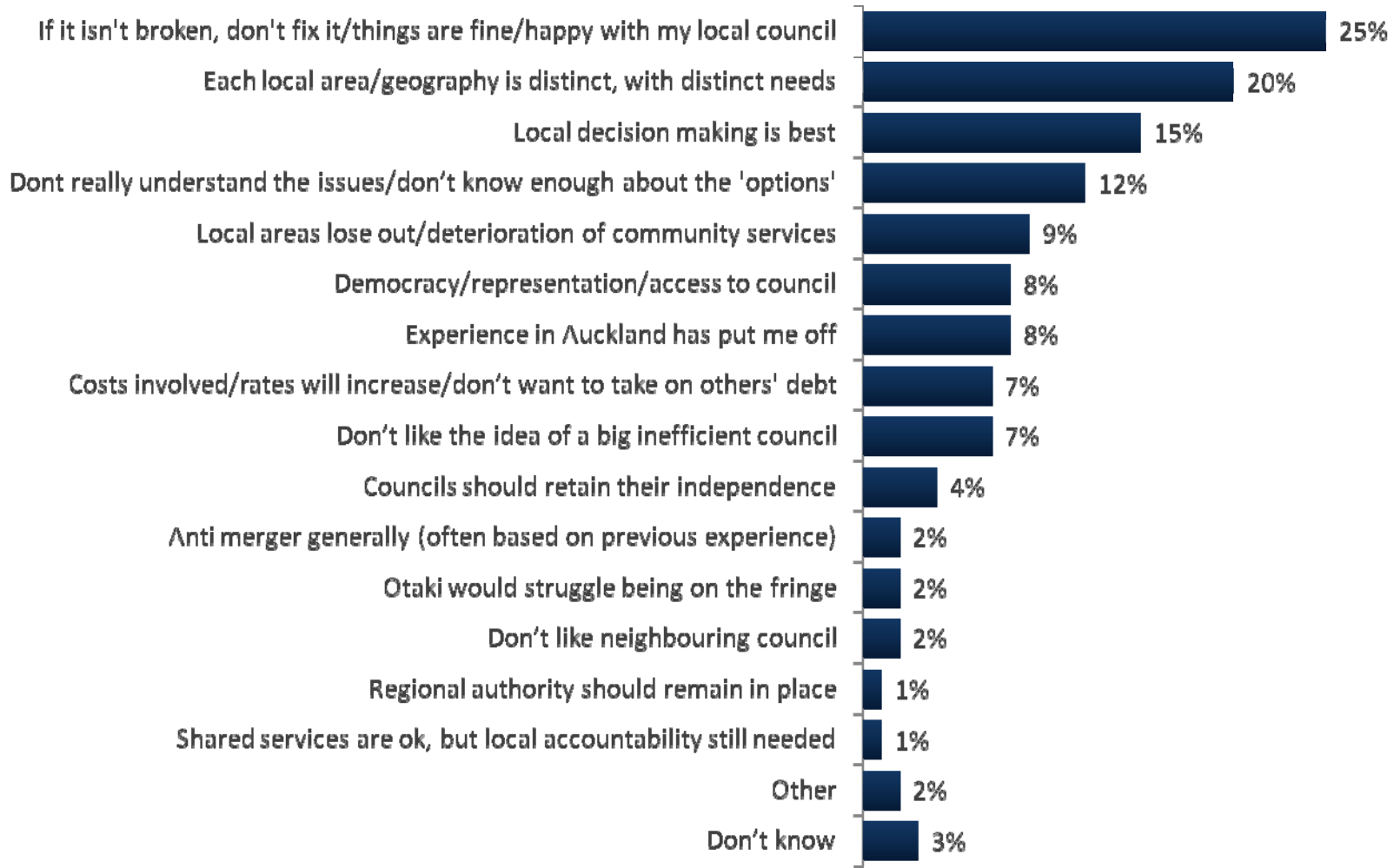
Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in Porirua



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
Base: all respondents in Porirua who favour remaining the same (n=190)

'Stay the same' people in Kapiti quoted a number of reasons. They were more likely to say: each local area is distinct with distinct needs; local decision making is better; they don't really understand the issues nor the change options; that democracy and access to the local council is important; or that they did not like the idea of a large inefficient council.

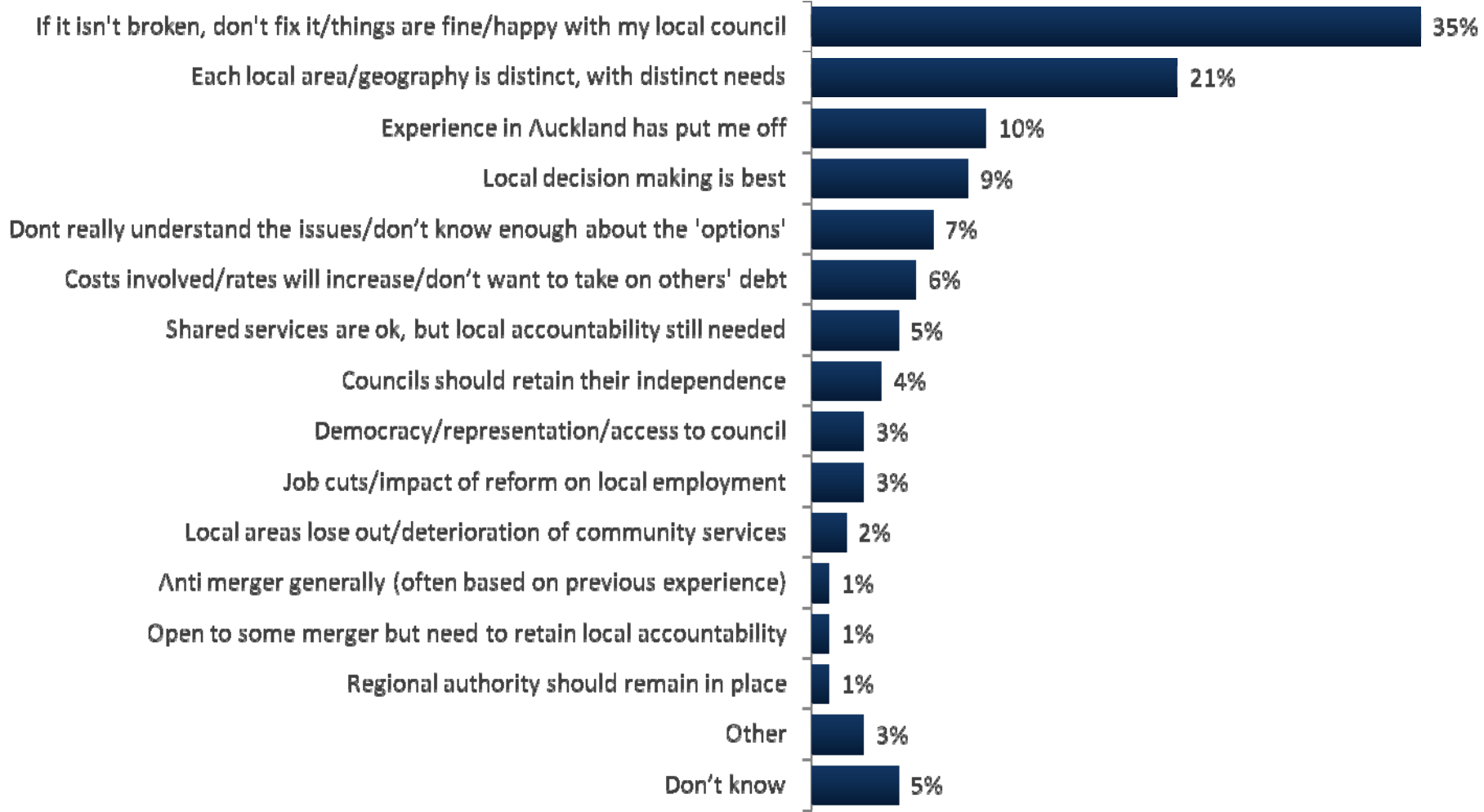
Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in Kapiti



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in Kapiti who favour remaining the same (n=177)

'Stay the same' people in Wellington City were more likely to say each local area is distinct with distinct needs, and that they were concerned about the impact of merger on local employment. (People in Wellington City were less likely to mention the impact on local/community services).

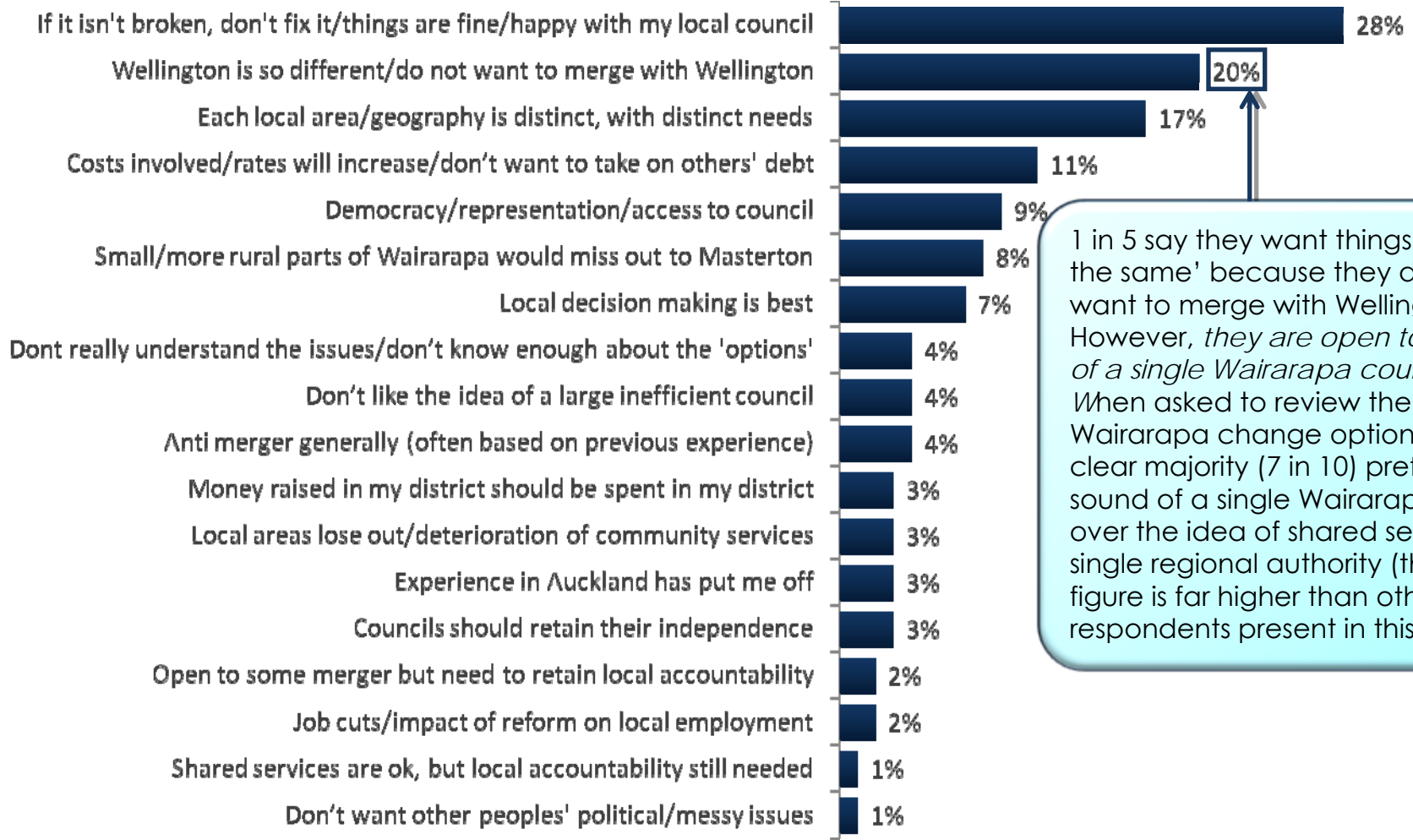
Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in Wellington City



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in Wellington City who favour remaining the same (n=175)

'Stay the same' people in Carterton were more likely than those elsewhere in the Wairarapa to say that small parts of the Wairarapa would miss out to Masterton. Please see note below - some people in Carterton are saying 'stay the same' mainly because they do not wish to merge with Wellington, this does not mean they are not open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council.

Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in Carterton

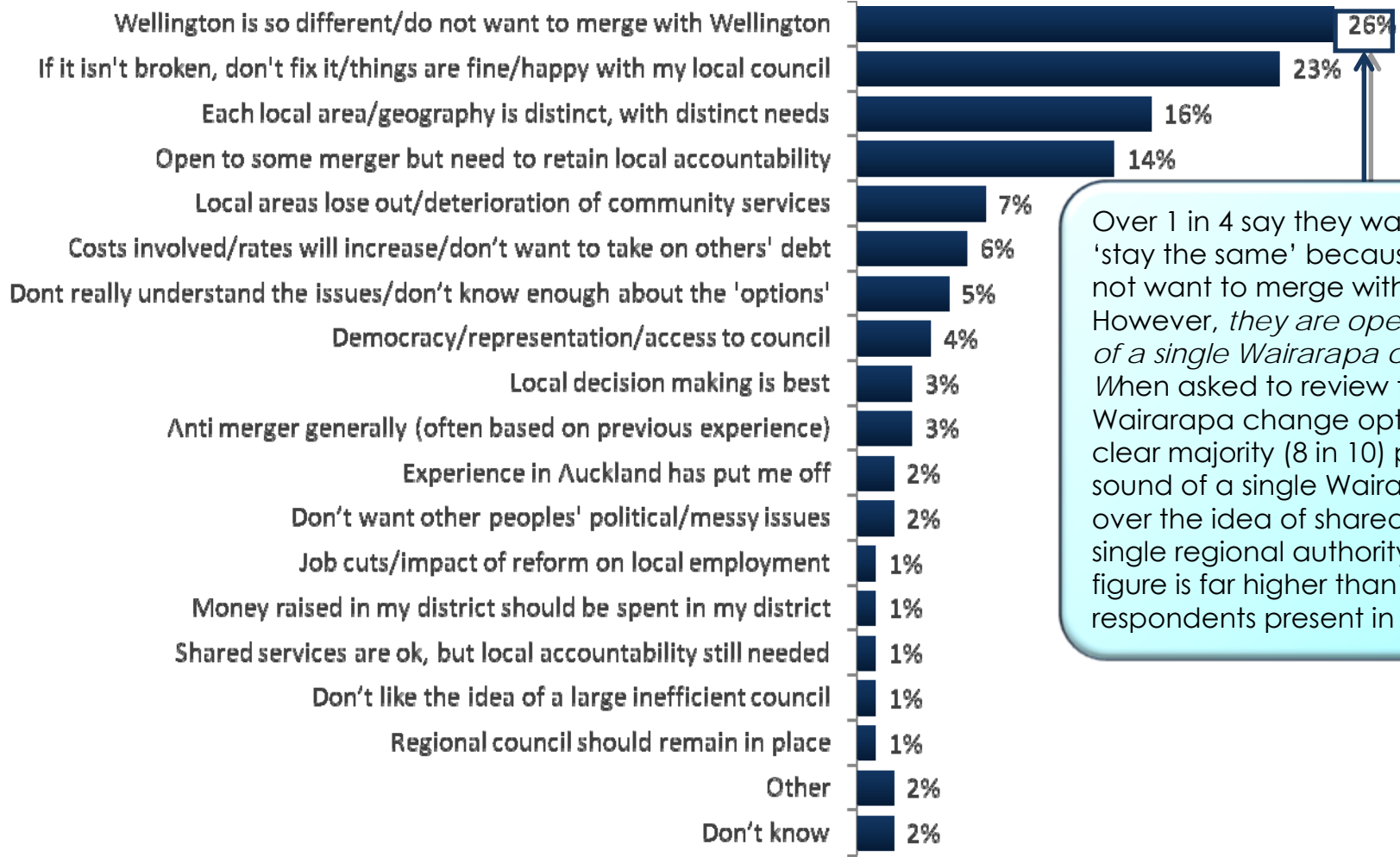


1 in 5 say they want things to 'stay the same' because they do not want to merge with Wellington. However, *they are open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council.* When asked to review the Wairarapa change options the clear majority (7 in 10) preferred the sound of a single Wairarapa council over the idea of shared services or a single regional authority (this 7 in 10 figure is far higher than other respondents present in this graph).

B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in Carterton who favour remaining the same (n=190)

'Stay the same' people in Masterton were more likely than those elsewhere in the Wairarapa to say they were open to some form of merger as long as there was local accountability. Please see note below - some people in Masterton are saying 'stay the same' mainly because they do not wish to merge with Wellington, this does not mean they are not open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council.

Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in Masterton

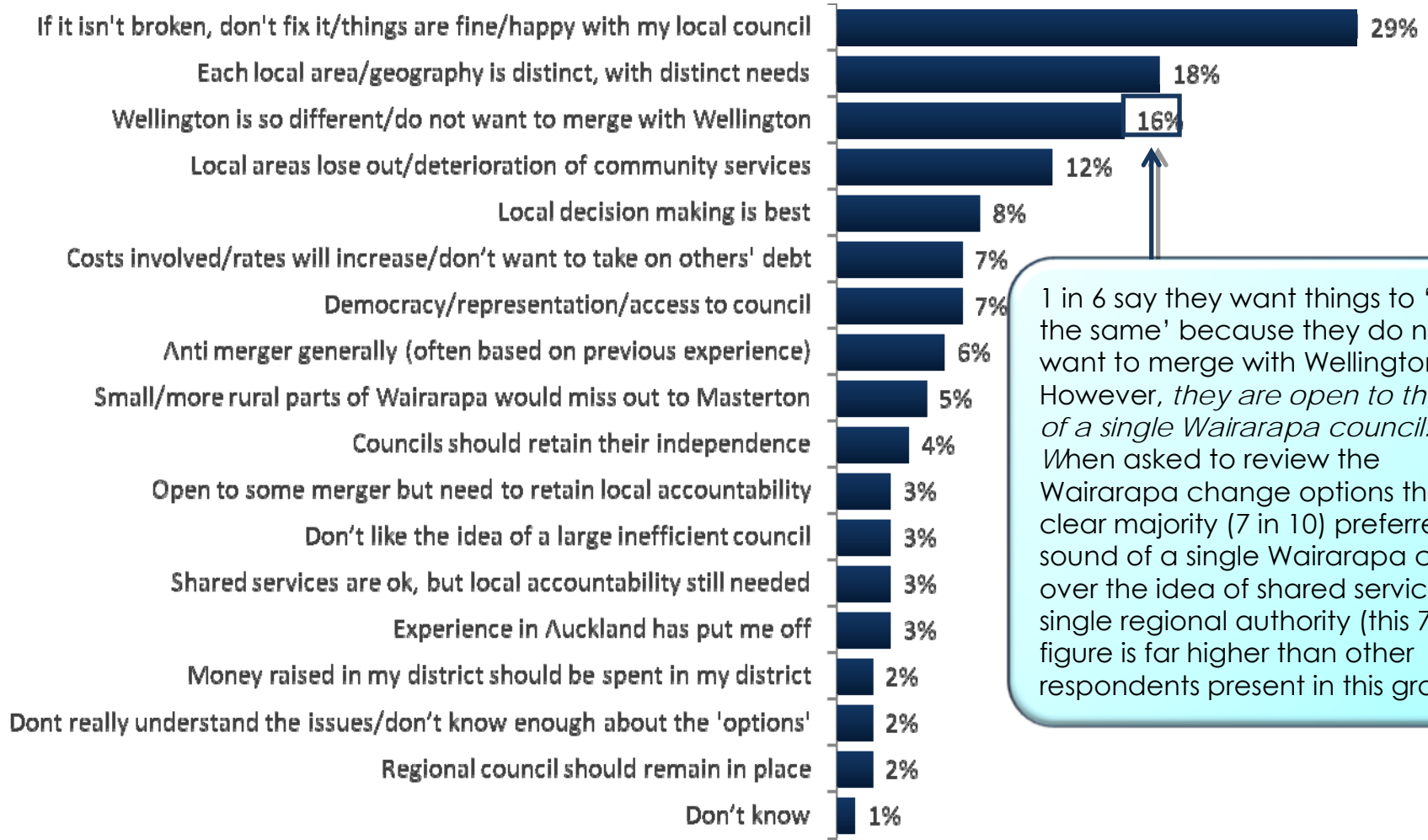


Over 1 in 4 say they want things to 'stay the same' because they do not want to merge with Wellington. However, *they are open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council.* When asked to review the Wairarapa change options the clear majority (8 in 10) preferred the sound of a single Wairarapa council over the idea of shared services or a single regional authority (this 8 in 10 figure is far higher than other respondents present in this graph).

B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in Masterton who favour remaining the same (n=133)

'Stay the same' people in South Wairarapa were more likely than those elsewhere in the Wairarapa to say that local/community services would miss out under merger. Please see note below - some people in South Wairarapa are saying 'stay the same' mainly because they do not wish to merge with Wellington, this does not mean they are not open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council.

Main reason for 'keeping things the same' in South Wairarapa



1 in 6 say they want things to 'stay the same' because they do not want to merge with Wellington. However, *they are open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council.* When asked to review the Wairarapa change options the clear majority (7 in 10) preferred the sound of a single Wairarapa council over the idea of shared services or a single regional authority (this 7 in 10 figure is far higher than other respondents present in this graph).

B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in South Wairarapa who favour remaining the same (n=146)

Over a fifth of Wairarapa residents are saying 'stay the same' because they do not want to join in a Wellington style super-city

As noted in the previous three slides a number of those saying 'stay the same' are doing so because they do not want to join in a Wellington style super city. Across the Wairarapa this counts for 22% of respondents.

And when asked for their views on the 3 change options in the Wairarapa, 70% of them preferred a single Wairarapa council (instead of a shared services model or a single authority for the whole Wellington region).

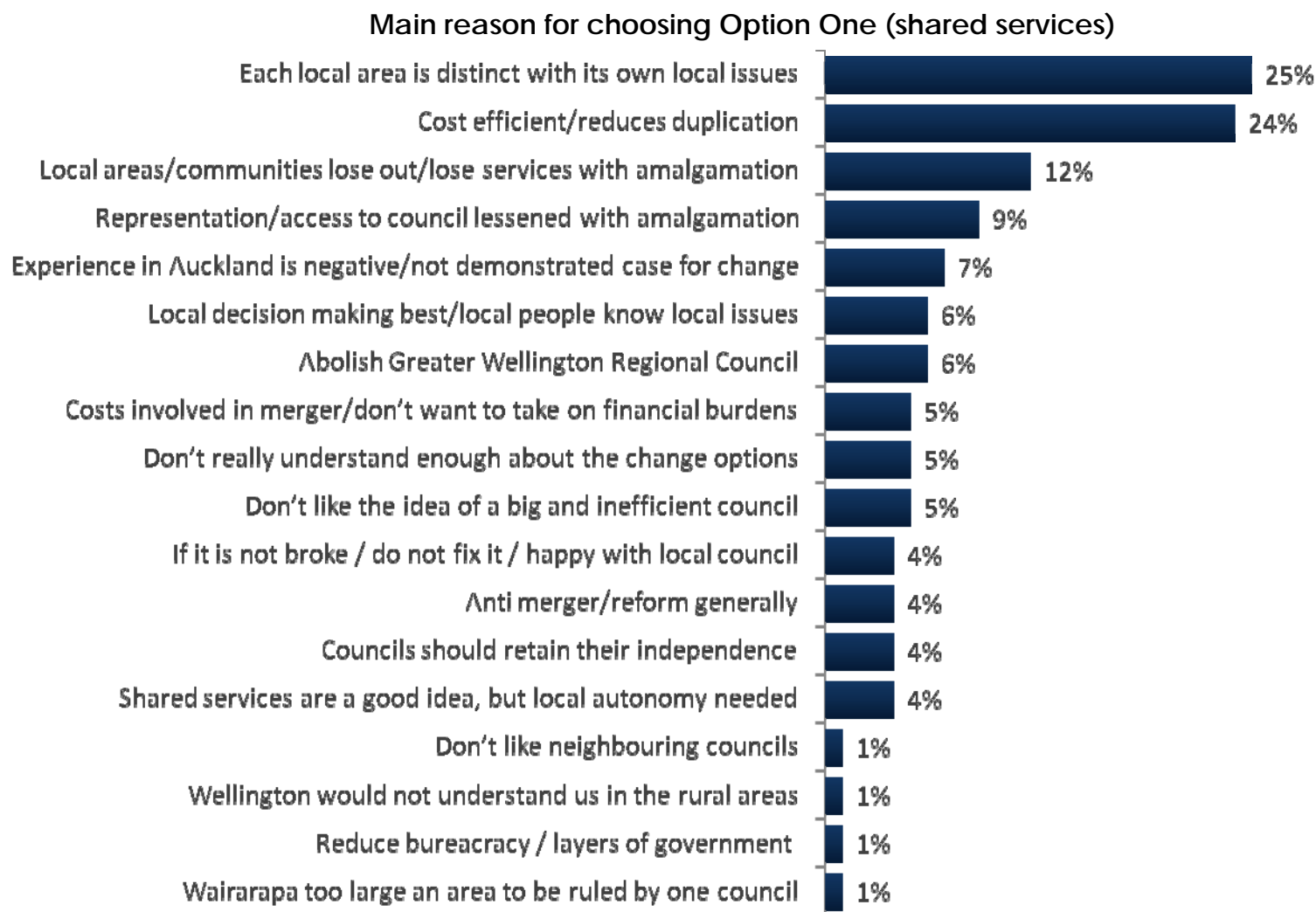


Reasons why people chose the change options

It should be noted that the following results are from an open ended question ('why?') which has been coded (most people gave one reason, but some people gave more than one reason). Data in this section is only available at the regional level (this section includes data from all 8 authorities).



The two main themes for choosing option 1 (shared services) relate to councils needing to be local because each local area is distinct with its own issues and cost efficiencies to be gained through shared services. [Note data on this slide is from the whole region].

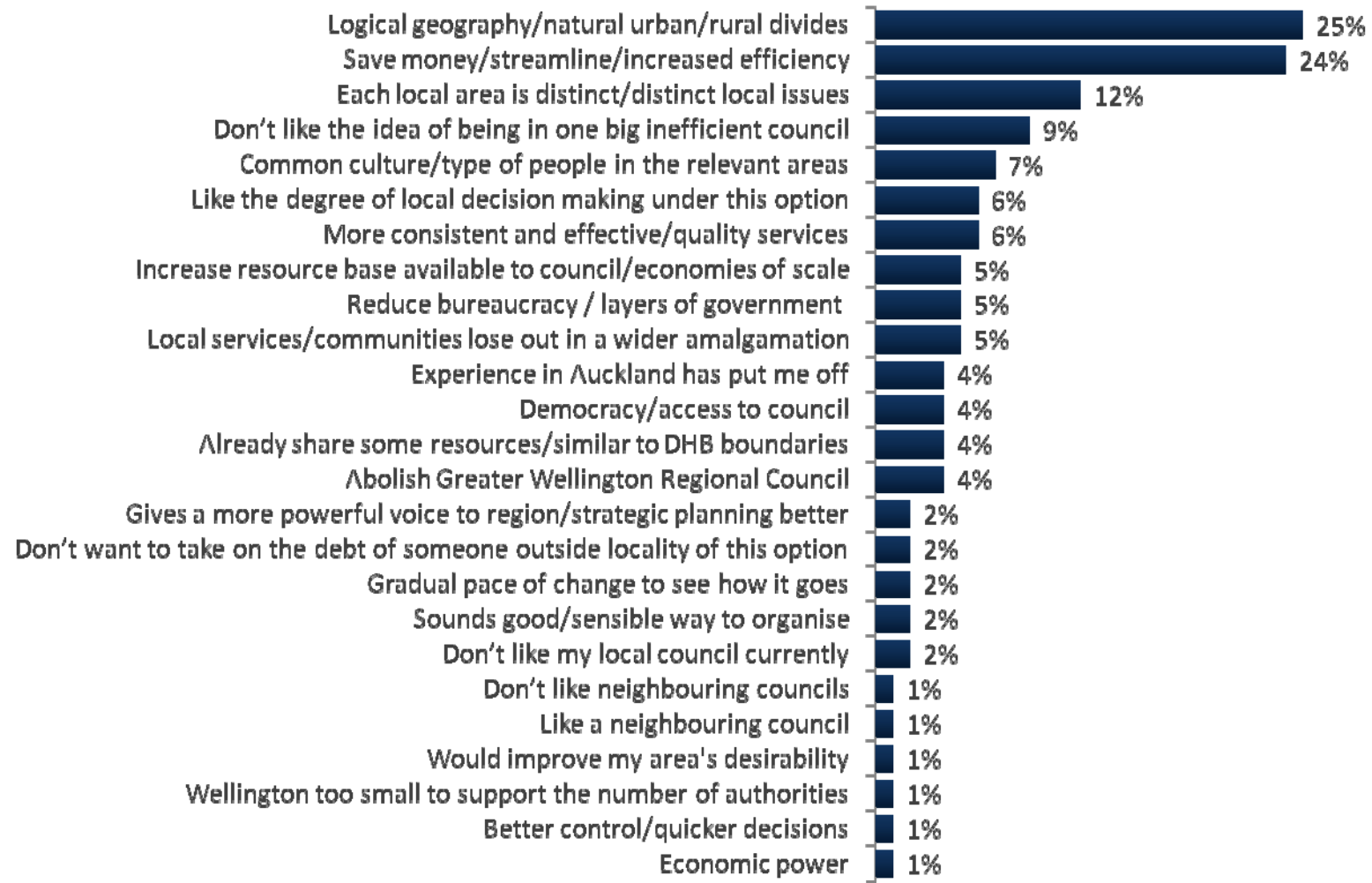


B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?

Base: all respondents in region who prefer change (or are unsure about change/staying the same) and chose Option 1 (shared services) (n=366)

Most people choosing option 2 (3 councils) mainly did so because it seems like each proposed area has a common geography and urban/rural split. The other big factor is to save money by streamlining the councils. (Please note this data does not cover the Wairarapa because they were asked for their reasons for preferring a Wairarapa council rather than their reasons for preferring 'option 2').

Main reason for choosing Option 2 (3 authorities for the region) – data excludes Wairarapa

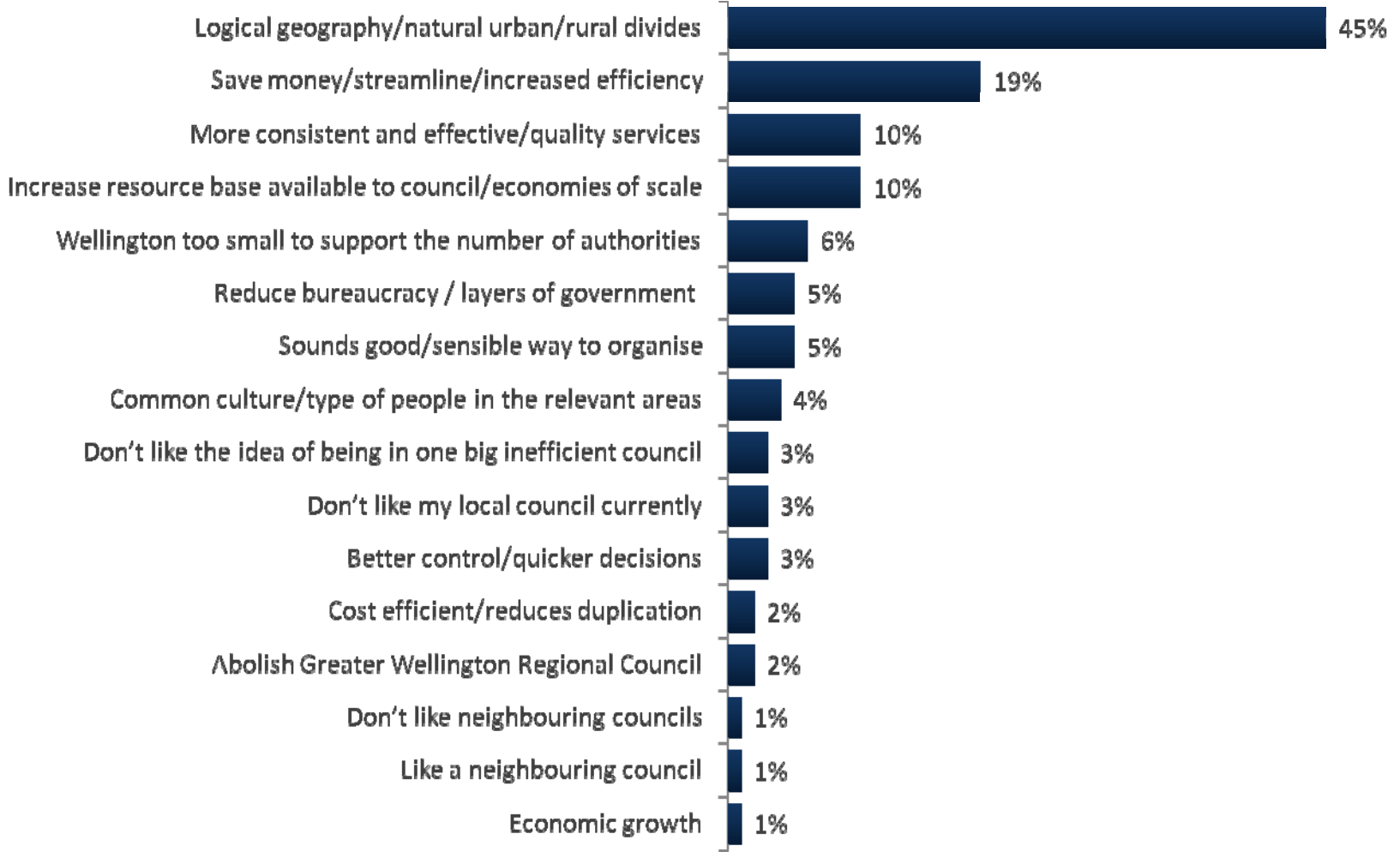


B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?

Base: all respondents in the region (excluding Wairarapa) who favour change (or are unsure whether they want change or not) and prefer Option 2 (n=336)

Similar to Option 2, most people choosing option 3 (2 authorities) did so because it seemed like a logical geographical division. The other big factor is to save money by streamlining the councils. (Please note this data does not cover the Wairarapa because they were asked for their reasons for preferring a Wairarapa council rather than their reasons for preferring option 3).

Main reason for choosing Option 3 (2 authorities for the region) – data excludes the Wairarapa

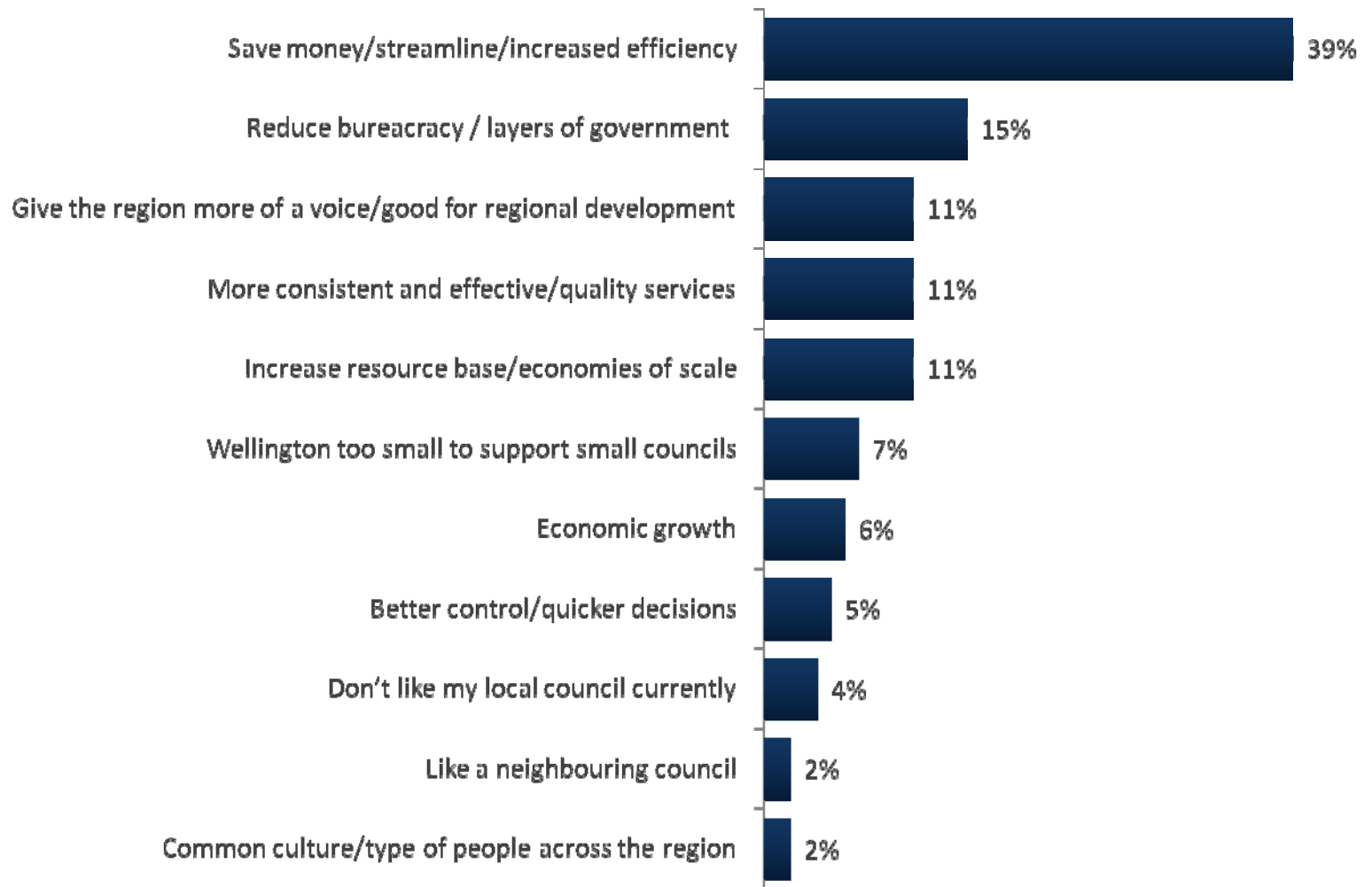


B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?

Base: all respondents in the region (excluding Wairarapa) who favour change (or are unsure whether they want change or not) and prefer Option 3 (n=201)

The main reason for choosing option 4 (one authority for the whole region - or option 3 in the Wairarapa) was to save money by increasing efficiency (39%). [Data on this slide is from whole region].

Main reason for choosing Option 4 (option 3 in the Wairarapa) (1 authority for the region)



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?

Base: all respondents in the region who favour change (or are unsure whether they want change or not) and prefer Option 4 (n=300)

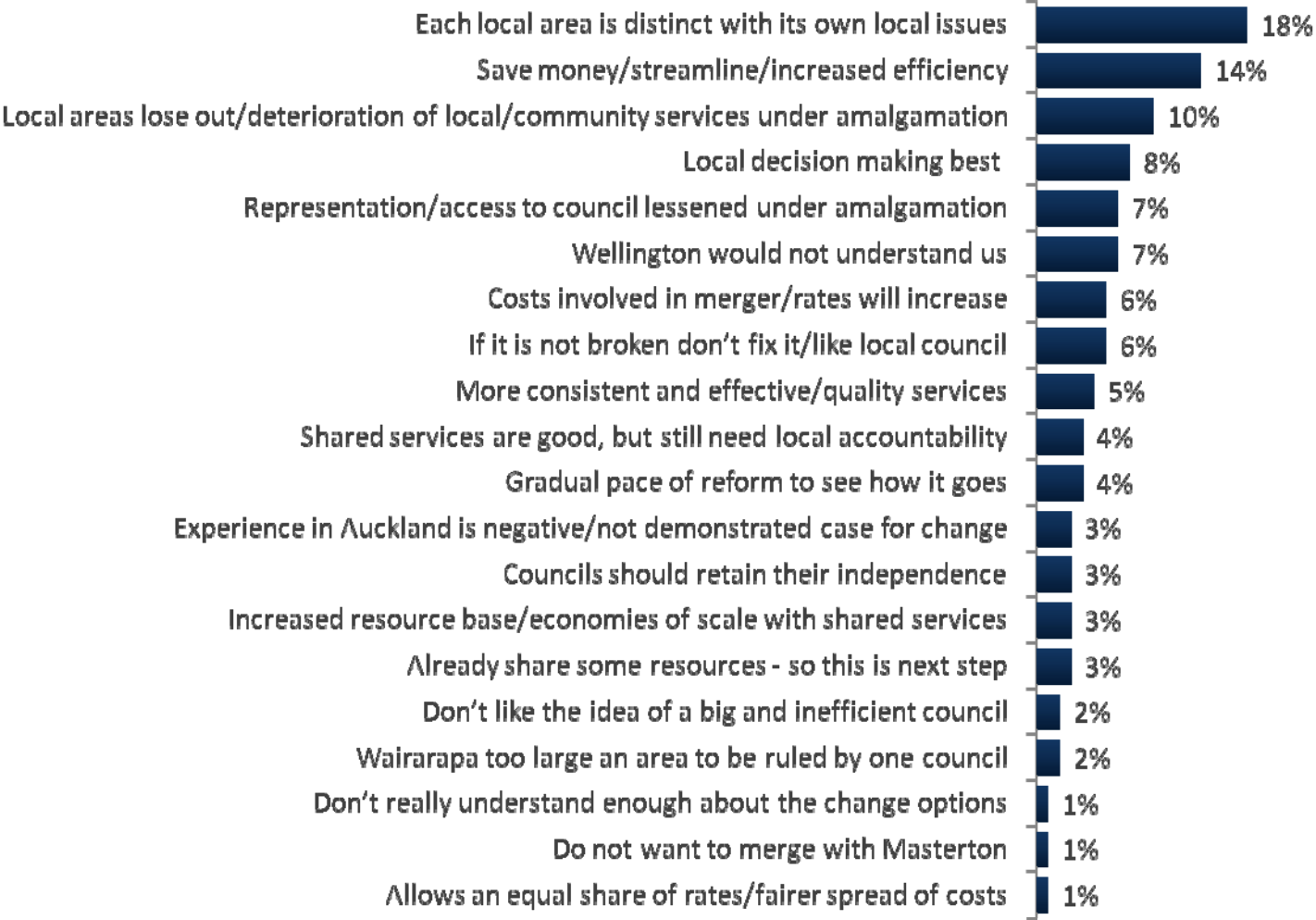
Reasons why people chose the Wairarapa change options

It should be noted that the following results are from an open ended question ('why?') which has been coded. Data in this section is only available at the total Wairarapa level.



The two main themes for choosing Option 1 in the Wairarapa (shared services) relate to councils needing to be local because each local area is distinct with its own issues, and also cost efficiencies to be gained through shared services.

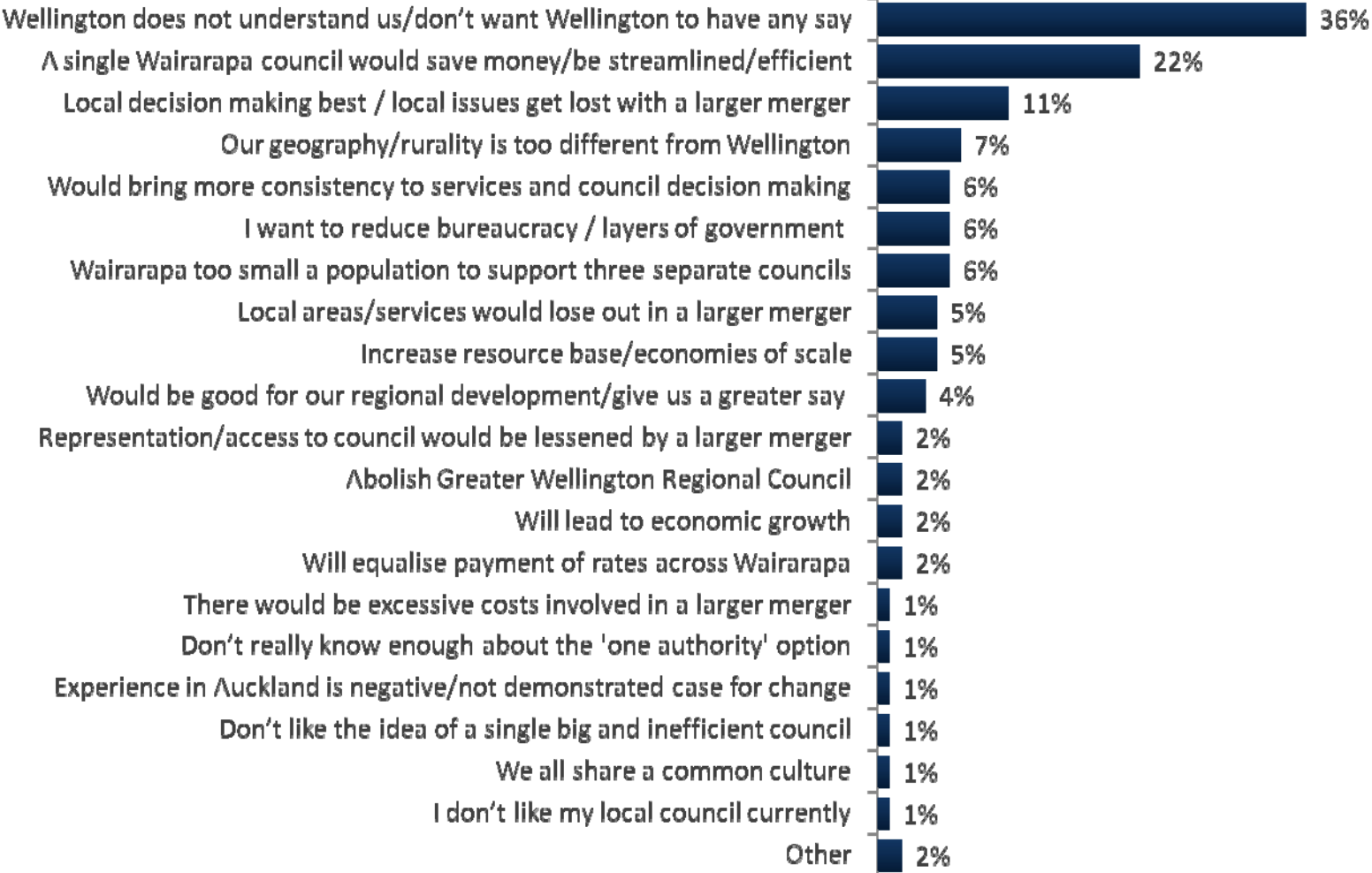
Main reason for choosing Option 1 in the Wairarapa (more shared services)



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: Base: all respondents in the Wairarapa who prefer change (or are unsure about change/staying the same) and chose Option 1 (shared services) – (n=128)

Many selected a single Wairarapa unitary authority because they do not want any influence from Wellington, or believe that Wellington is too different from the Wairarapa. Streamlining services and local decision making were also big factors.

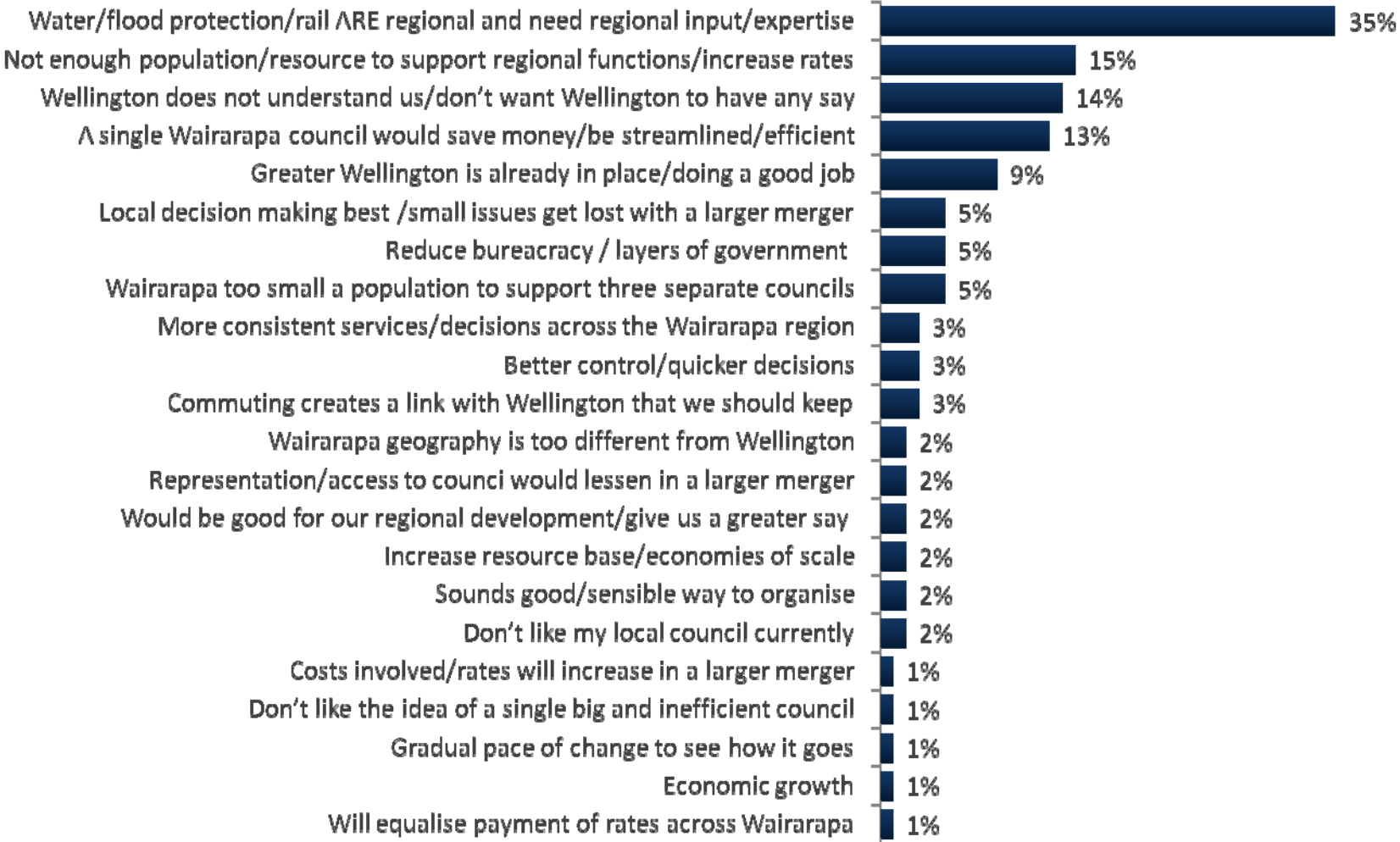
Main reason for choosing a Wairarapa unitary authority



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in the Wairarapa who favour change (or are unsure whether they want change or not) and prefer Option 2 with Wairarapa being a unitary authority (n=257)

Most selected a single Wairarapa District council because they believe that rail/flood protection etc are best dealt with at a regional level, or because taking on regional functions could increase rates.

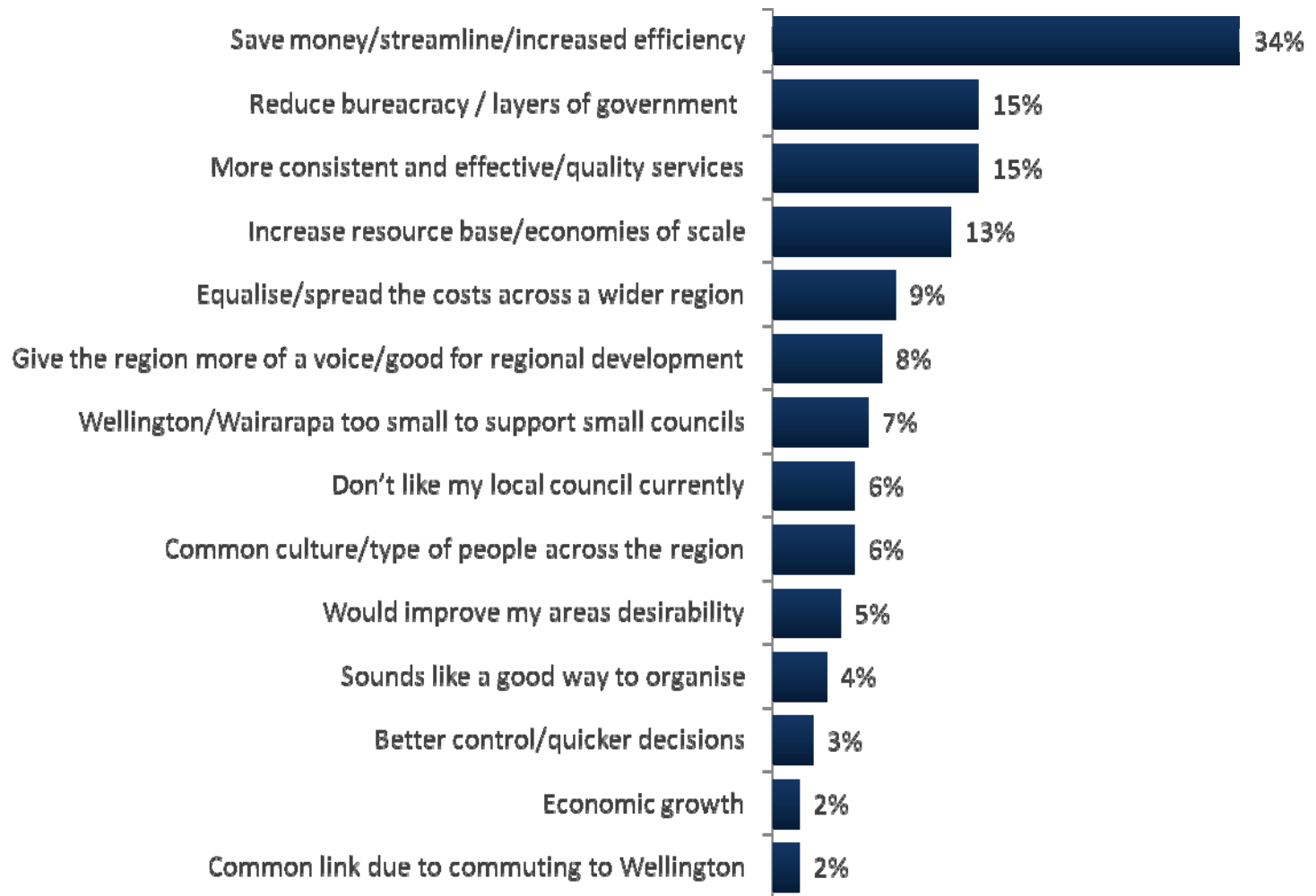
Main reason for choosing a Wairarapa District authority



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?
 Base: all respondents in the Wairarapa who favour change (or are unsure whether they want change or not) and prefer Option 2 with Wairarapa being a district authority (n=230)

In the Wairarapa, the main reasons for choosing a single authority for the Greater Wellington region are to save money through increased efficiency, or to reduce bureaucracy, and/or achieve a more consistent service across the whole region.

Main reason for choosing one authority for the region (from Wairarapa respondents only)



B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?

Base: all respondents in the Wairarapa who favour change (or are unsure whether they want change or not) and prefer a single authority for the whole Wellington region (n=67)

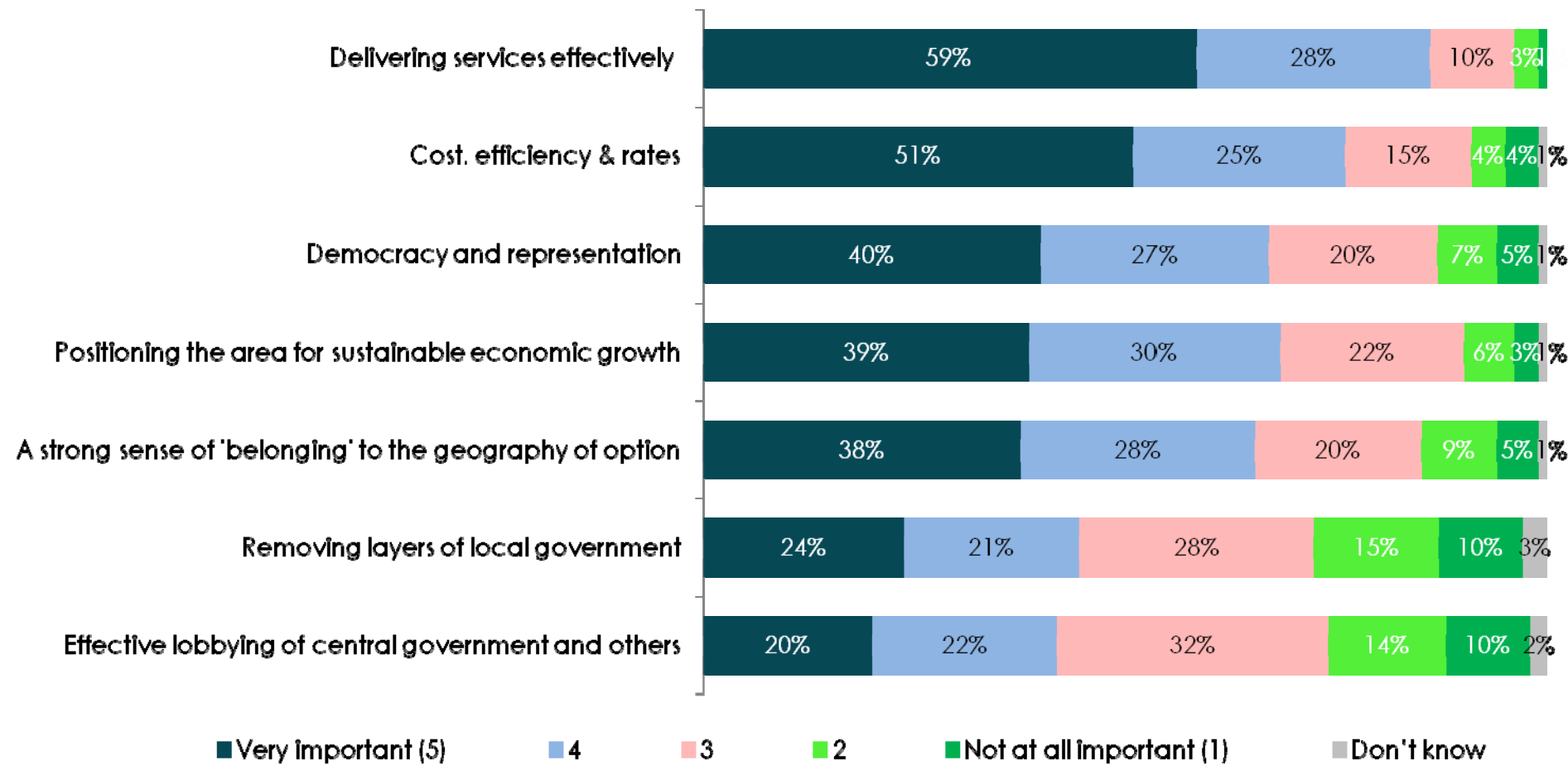
Analysis of the drivers of preference

The previous section dealt with peoples' unprompted reasons. This section uses prompted data (i.e. everyone prompted with the same question and response lists) to show how the different preferences stack up against each other on particular drivers. This is useful for comparing the importance of different factors across the options.



At an overall level (regardless of option chosen), effective delivery of services is the most important factor for people considering the topic of local government reform. Cost, efficiency and rates is a close second. The drivers vary depending on peoples' preferences (see next set of slides for details)

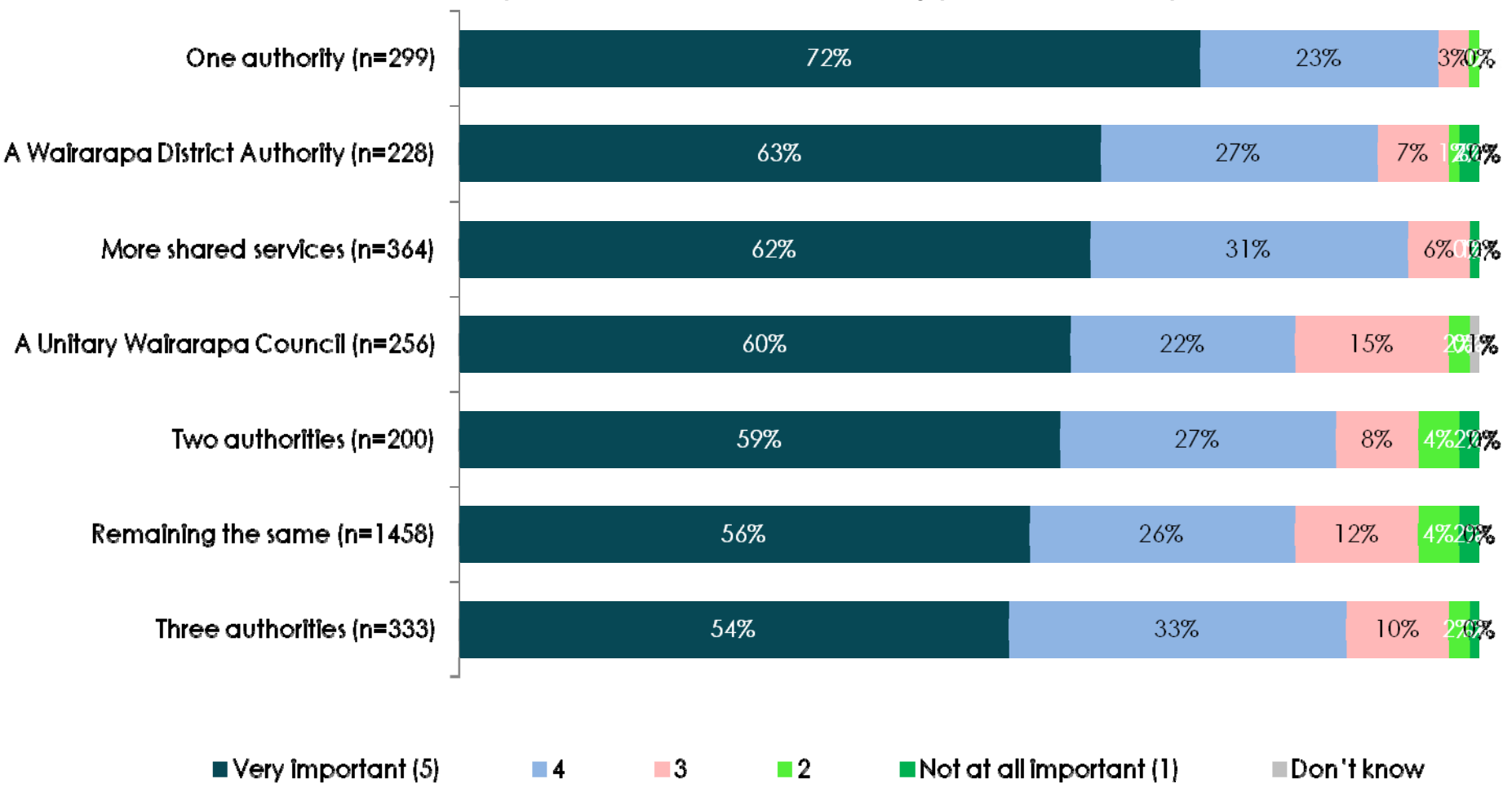
Drivers for people making a decision about their preferred option



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.
 Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Delivering effective services was important to all respondents, but it was most important to those choosing 'one authority' for the whole region. It was also very important for over 60% of those choosing the single Wairarapa council options (and was similarly important for those choosing the shared services model).

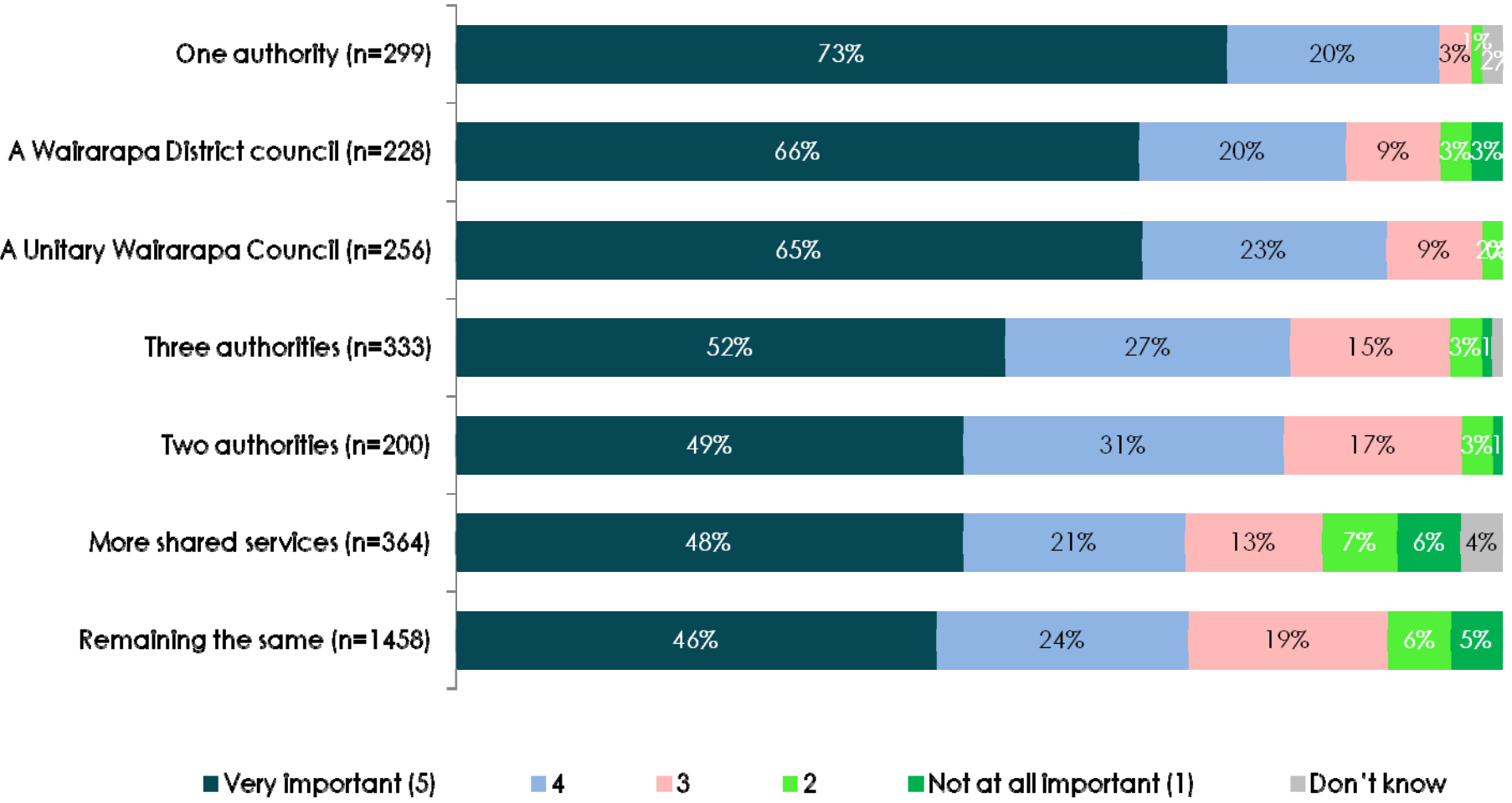
The importance of 'effective services' by preferred reform option



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.
 Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Costs, efficiency and rates were important to all respondents, but were bigger drivers for those choosing amalgamation options (compared with 'no boundary change' options)

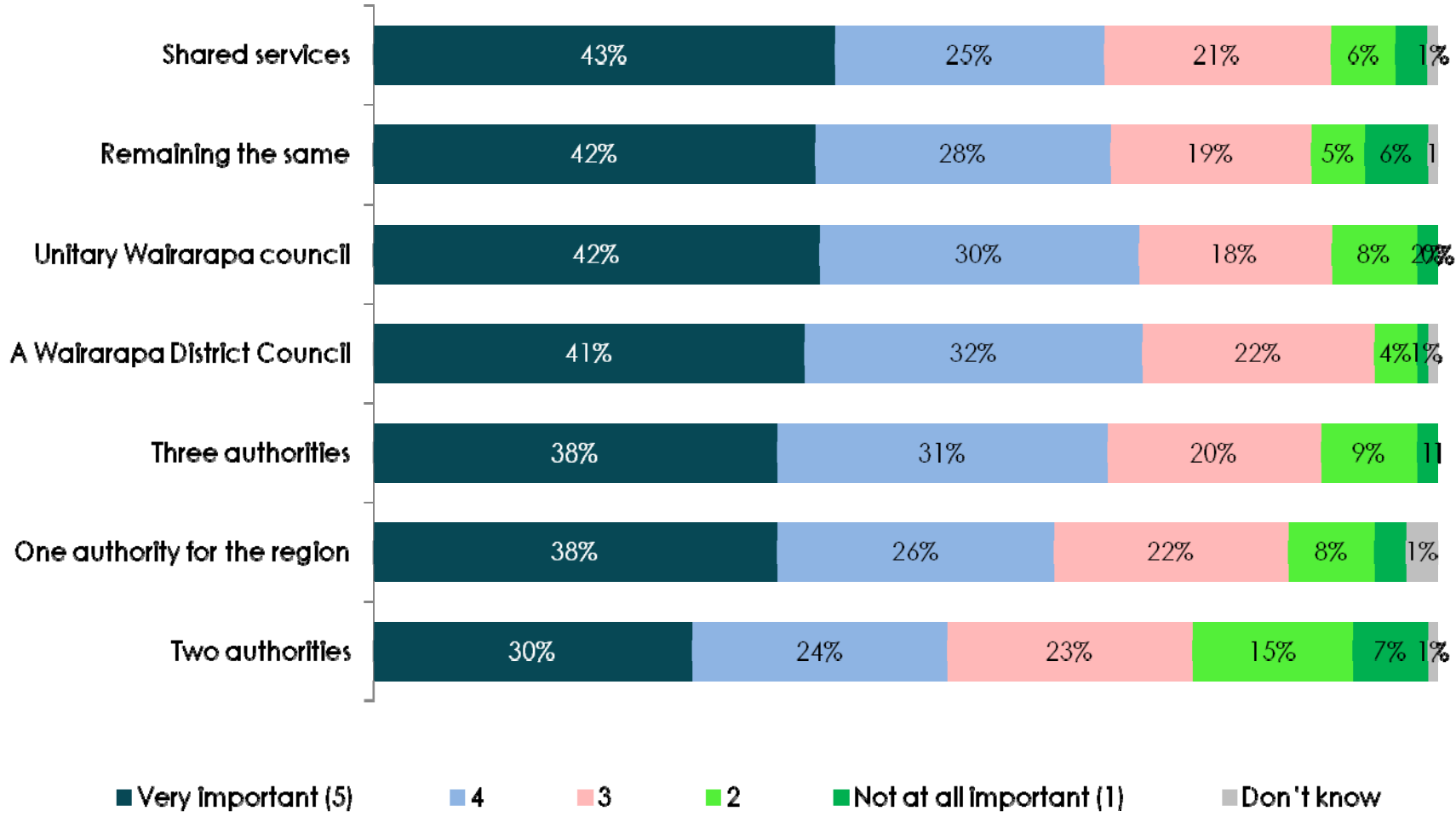
The importance of 'cost, efficiency and rates' by preferred reform option



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.
 Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Democracy and representation were important to all, but were bigger drivers for those choosing the 'no boundary change' options

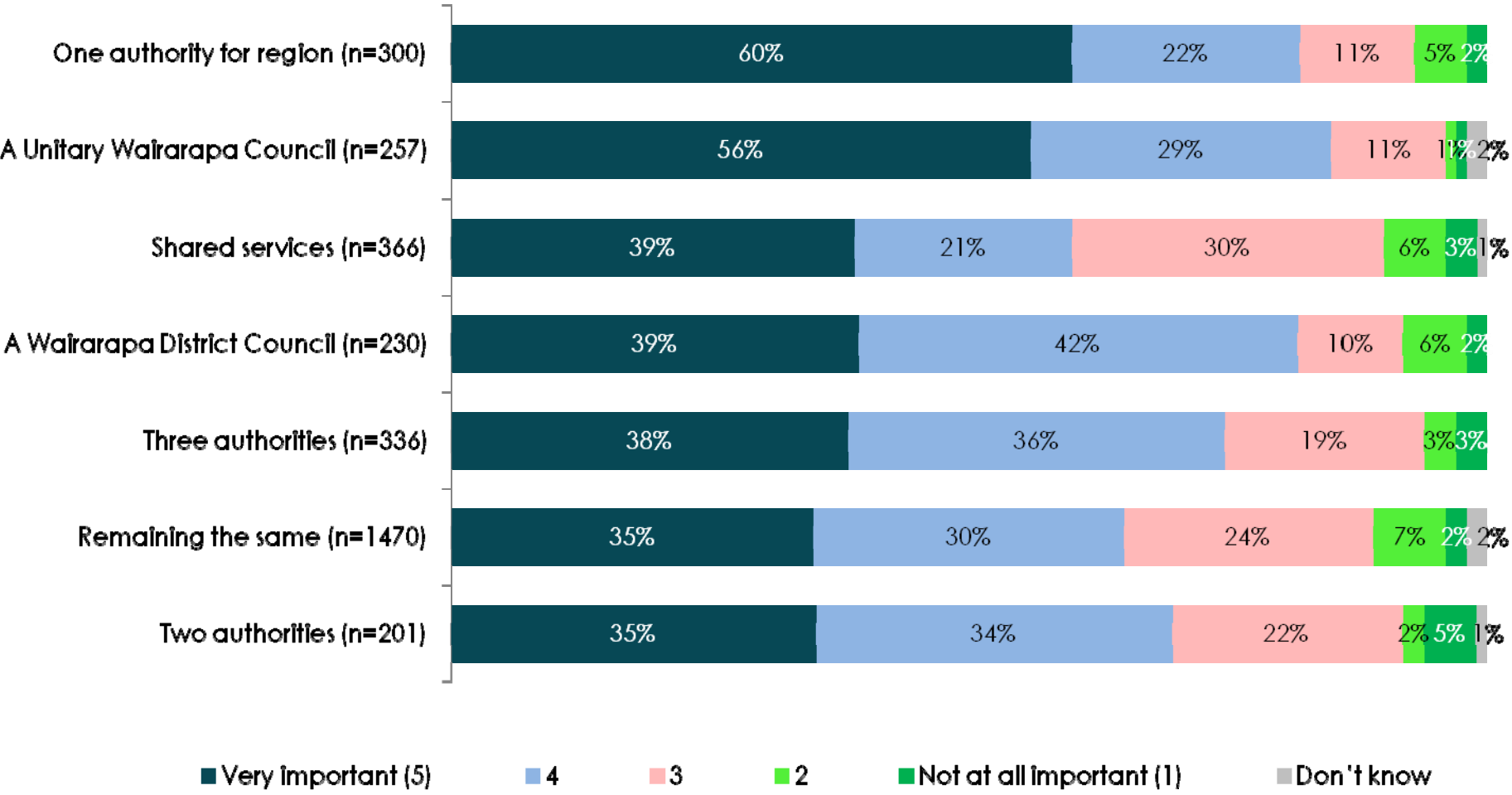
The importance of 'democracy and representation' by preferred reform option



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.
 Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Economic growth was very important to over half who chose one authority for the region, or a unitary Wairarapa council.

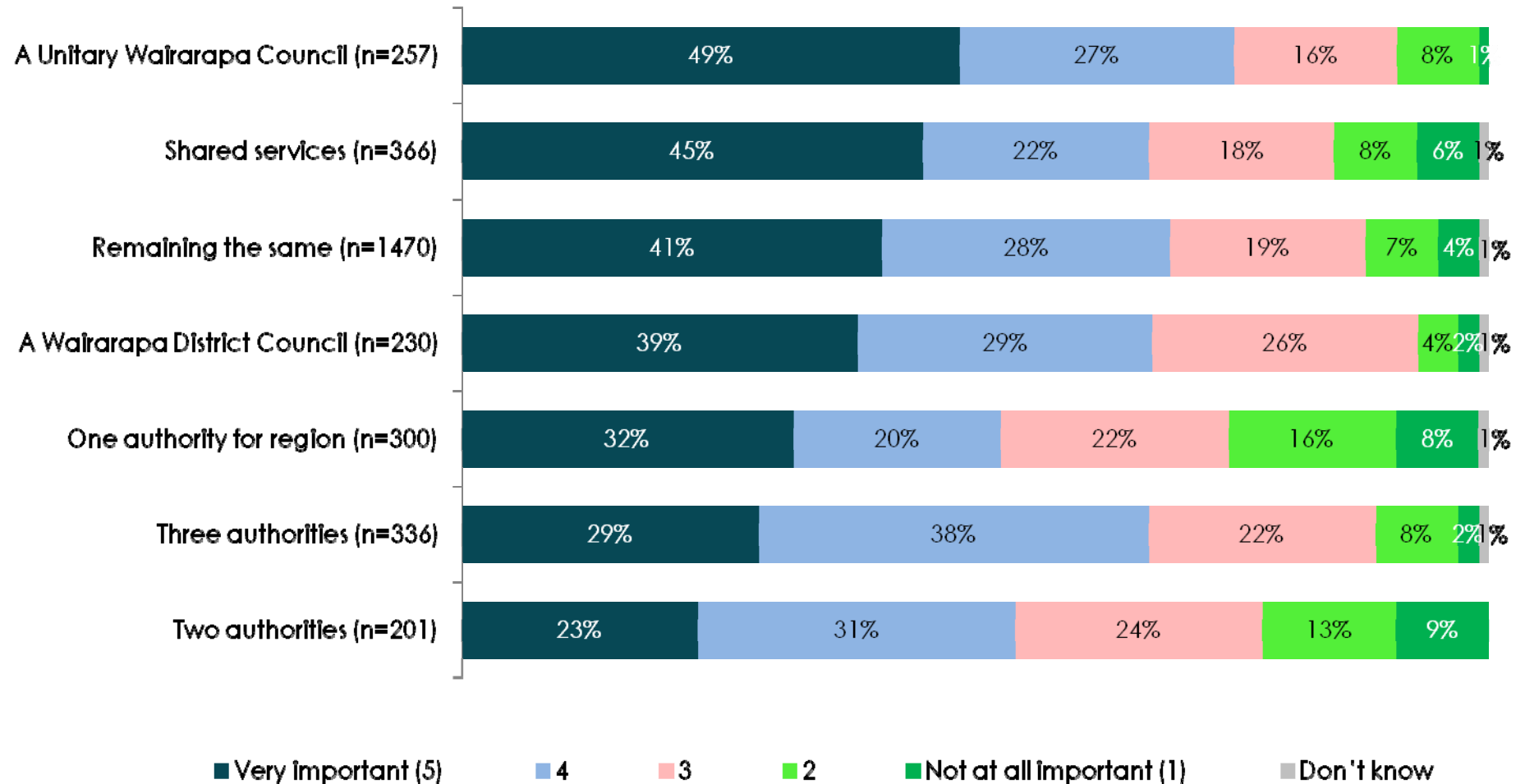
The importance of 'positioning the area for sustainable economic growth' by preferred reform option



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.
 Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Having a strong sense of belonging to the location of the preferred option was more important to people who chose the 'no boundary change' options – a sense of belonging to the area was also important to those choosing a single Wairarapa council.

The importance of 'strongly identifying with the local geography' by preferred reform option

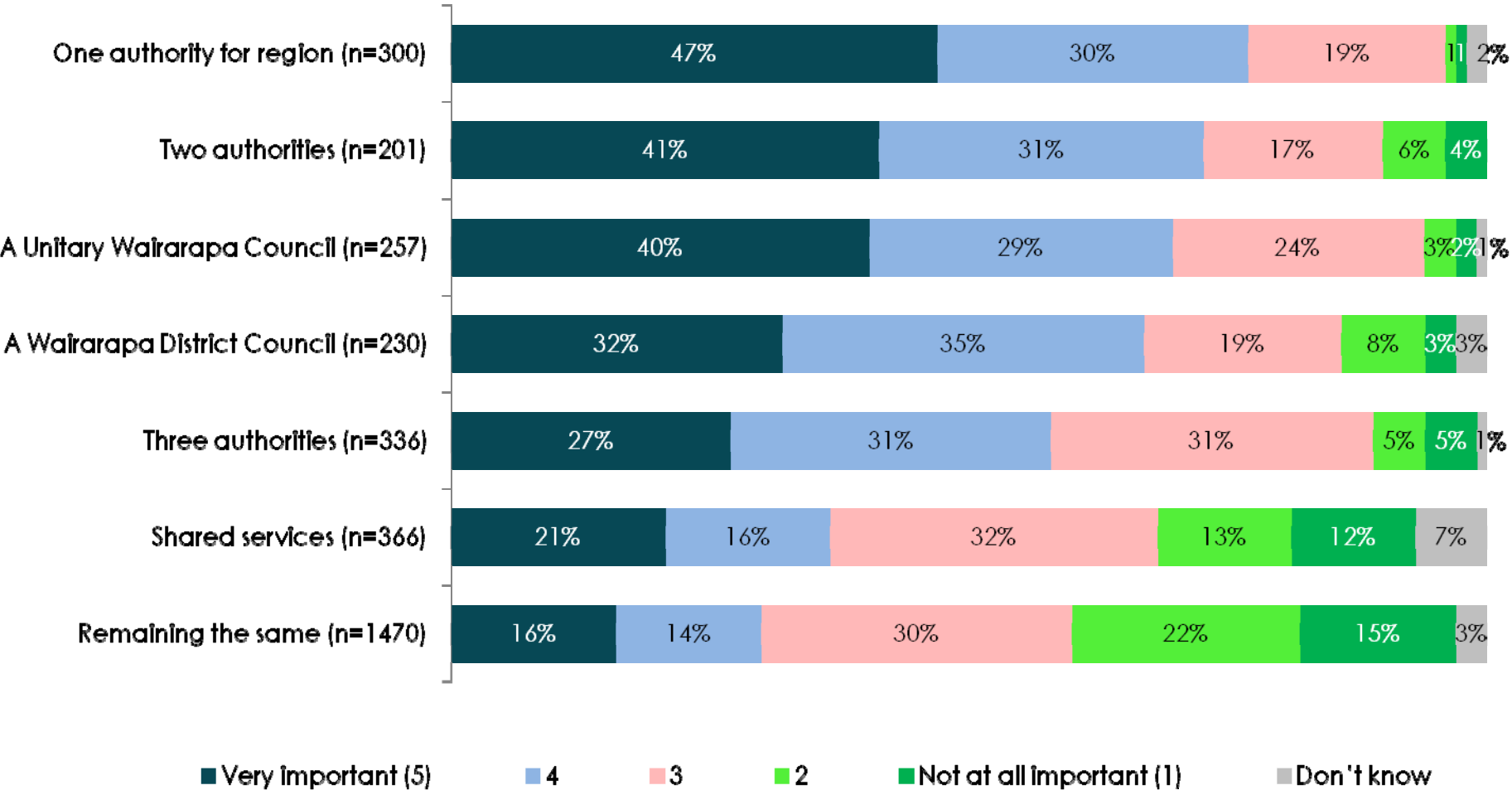


B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.

Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Removing layers of local government was more important to people who chose one or two authorities for the whole region

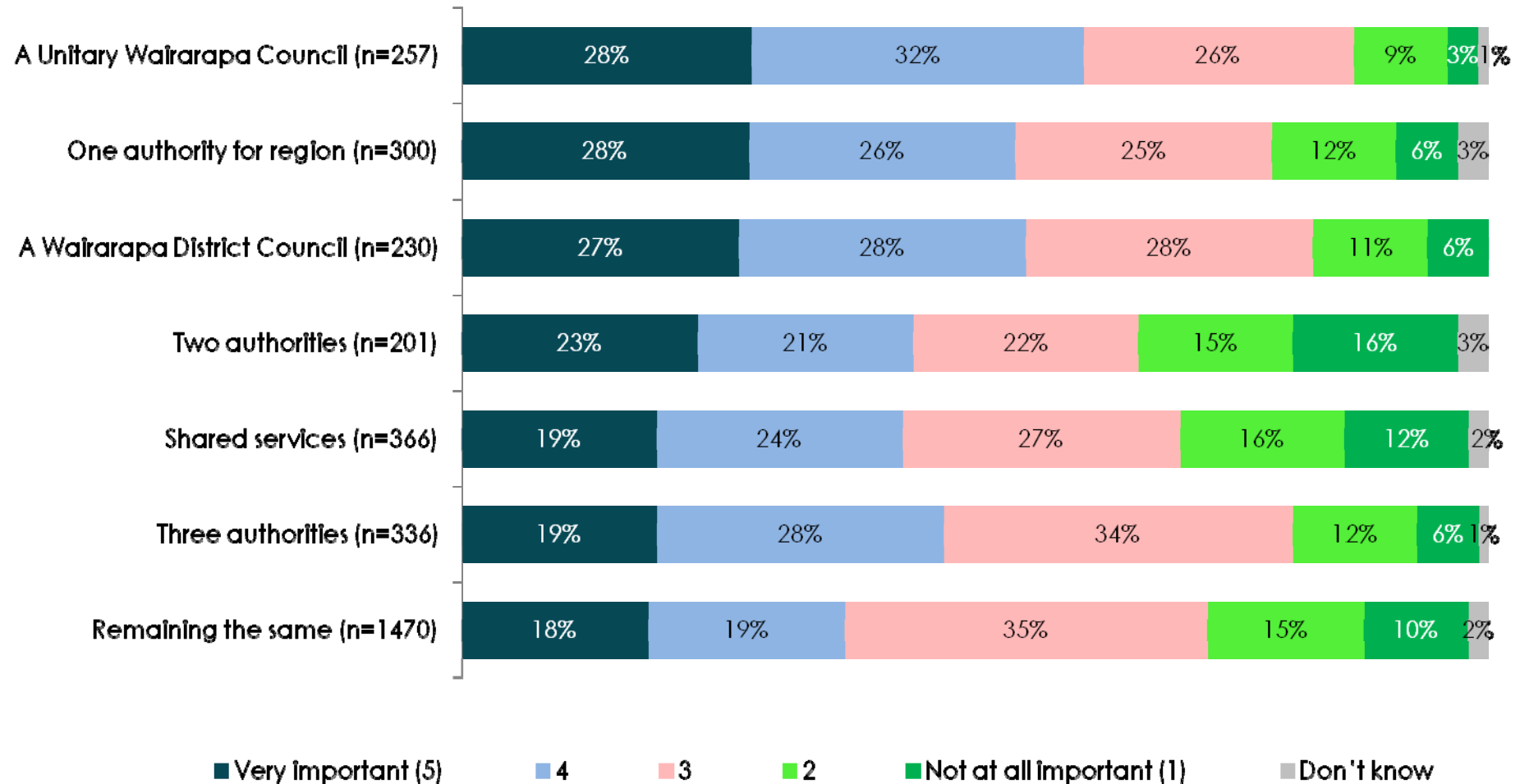
The importance of 'removing layers of local government' by preferred reform option



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.
 Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Effective lobbying of central government and others was a less important issue for most people. It was more important to people who chose a unitary Wairarapa council or one authority for the whole region

The importance of 'effective lobbying' by preferred reform option



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.

Base: all respondents with a preference (n=3241)

Some additional information on people who chose either 'remain the same' or 'Option 1' (shared services) vs. those who prefer boundary change (options 2, 3 or 4)

The previous sections have looked at:

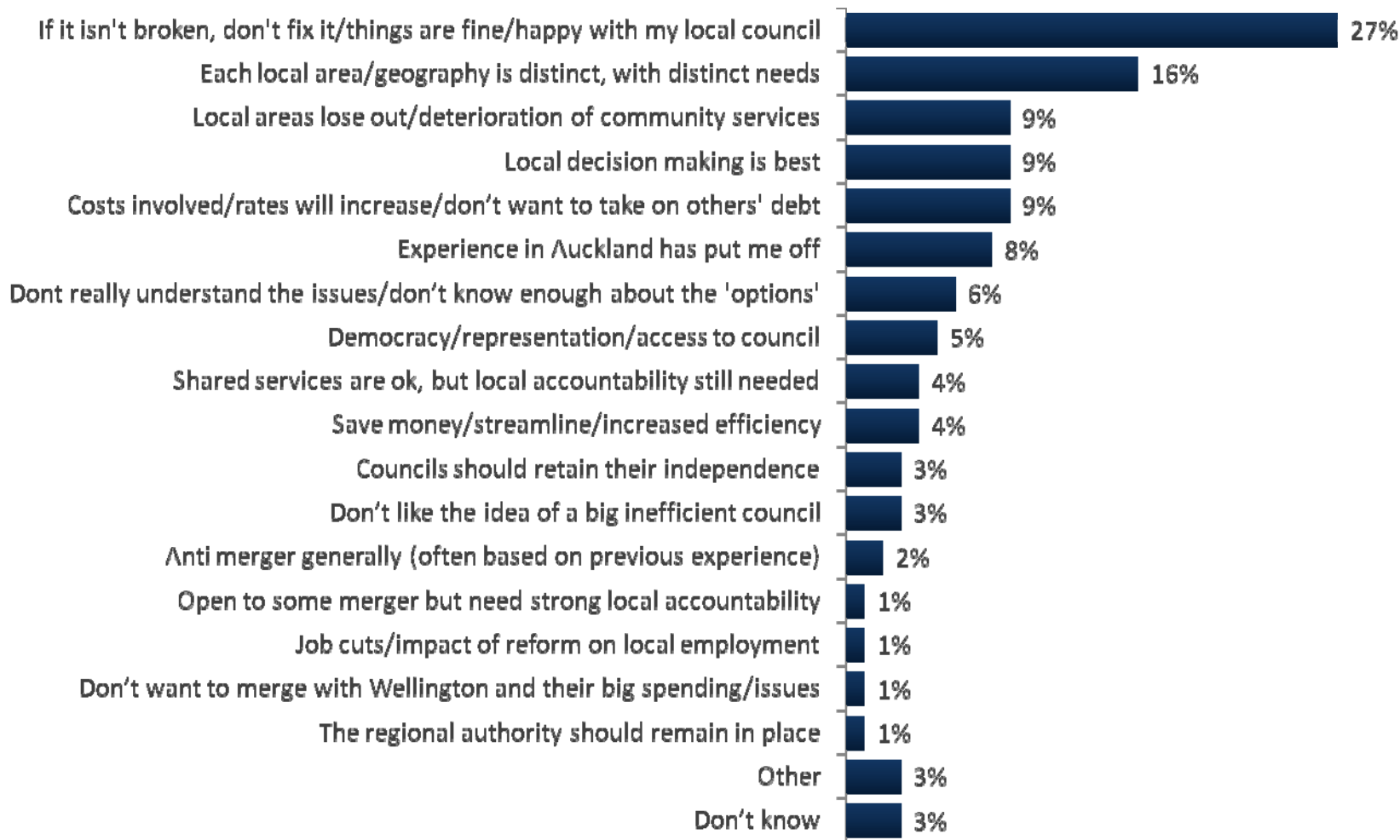
- the reasons why people chose their particular preference
- the drivers of their choice
- subgroup analysis of the 'type' of people choosing each preference.

This section combines those who said 'stay the same' and 'option 1' and provides information on the three variables above. Similar analysis is conducted for those who chose an option that involved boundary change (that is they favoured changing a City/District council boundary).



Combining the reasons that people either chose things should 'stay the same' or 'we should change towards more shared services' shows that (across the region) the most common themes are 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it', 'each local area is distinct with its distinct needs', and 'local areas lose out with amalgamation'. (These themes are similar to those quoted by the 'remain the same' people analysed earlier in the report).

Main reason for 'keeping things the same' or 'option 1' (shared services) across the region

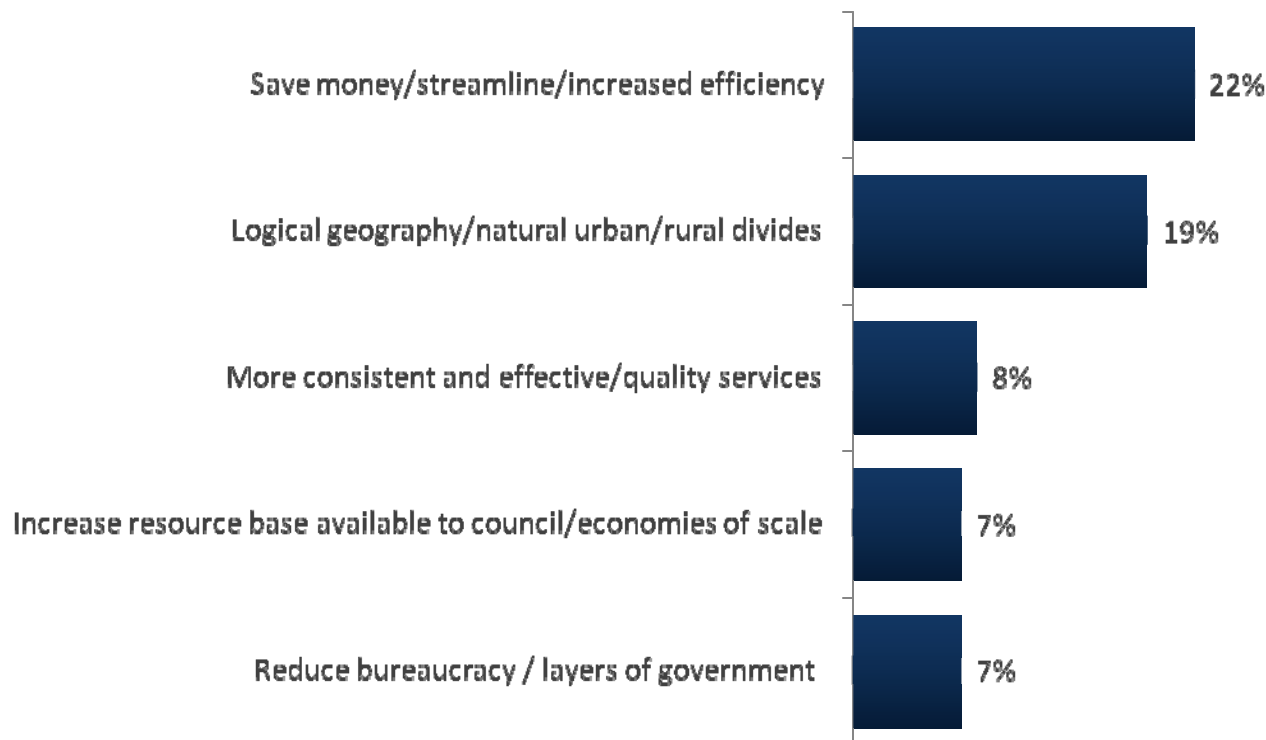


B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?

Base: all respondents who favour remaining the same or all respondents who prefer shared services (the latter group includes those who said 'change' or 'don't know' to the first question on remaining the same or changing) (n=1,836)

The top five answers given for those who favour a city/district council boundary change option are: to save money, local geography lends itself to merger (please note this was stated by those choosing options 2 or 3, rather than option 4), more consistent services, economies of scale for councils, and to reduce bureaucracy.

Main reason for choosing options 2, 3 or 4 combined (and combined with Wairarapa respondents favouring any kind of merger)



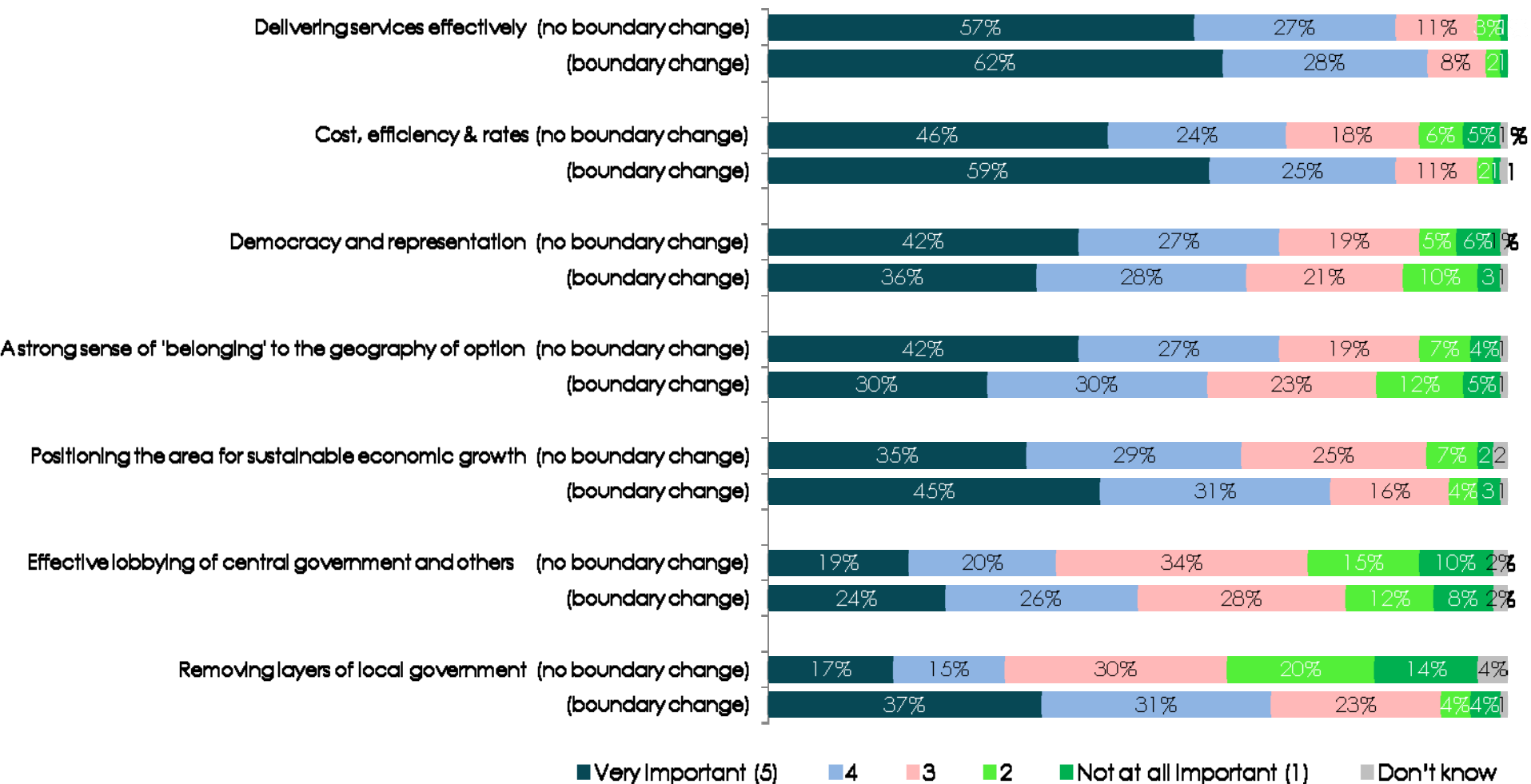
Please note - we have not presented the results for answers which account for 4% or less because they are often conflicting (as this data pulls together commentary on a range of different change options – e.g. some of the <4% answers include 'want a large council' and others say 'do not want a large council' - this is simply because the respondent is commenting on different aspects of a particular option – rather than commenting on why they favour boundary change overall).

B1: What is the main reason that you chose this as your preferred option?

Base: all respondents in the region who favour change (or are unsure whether they want change or not) and prefer Options 2, 3 or 4 (and respondents in the Wairarapa who chose either a single Wairarapa council or a single Wellington regional authority) (n=1349)

This chart examines the drivers for those who chose 'remain the same' or 'option 1' (i.e. respondents who do not want boundary change) vs. respondents who prefer boundary change. The top two drivers are the same, namely **effective services** and **costs/rates** (although costs/rates are slightly less important to 'no boundary change' respondents). Beyond this there are some differences - economic growth and removing layers of local government are more important for those favouring boundary change, whereas a sense of belonging to a location, and local representation are more important to those favouring no boundary change.

Drivers – comparing 'no boundary change' with 'boundary change'



B4: I'm going to read out some statements and I'd like to know how important each one was in making your decision (about your preferred option)? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'.

Base: all respondents who chose 'no boundary change' (n=1836) vs 'those who chose boundary change' (n=1349) (respondents who said 'don't know' to remain the same vs. change are allocated to the former group if they went on to select 'Option 1' and the latter group if they want on to select 'Options 2, 3 or 4'.

Subgroup analysis – who is more likely to favour either ‘remaining the same’ or ‘Option 1’ (combined)? (All statistically significant differences shown)

- **Females** (68% - vs. 58% of males)
- **Those aged up to 34** (75% - vs. 61% of those aged 35-54 and 52% of those aged 55+)
- **Those who do not pay rate directly to the council** (75% vs. 58% of those who do pay rates)
- **Maori, Pacific and Asian respondents** (72%, 75% and 77% respectively vs. 62% of NZ European, 51% of other European, and 67% of ‘other’ ethnicities).
- **Those with household incomes under \$30,000 or between \$30,000 and \$50,000 or between \$50,000 and \$80,000** (69%, 71% and 70% respectively, compared with 56% of those with household incomes above \$80,000).
- **Those with no property in other council areas** (71% compared with 54% of people who own property in council areas other than the area they live in).

[Please note that for subgroup analysis of the change options, we have included people who initially said ‘don’t know’ to remain the same or change, but then gave a preference towards one of the change options. The reason for doing so is to increase the robustness of the subgroup analysis – which would otherwise have lower sub-sample sizes making comparisons between groups more difficult. Doing so does not affect the direction of conclusions for subgroup preference, it simply makes the analysis more robust].

Subgroup analysis – who is more likely to favour changing district/city council boundaries? (All statistically significant differences shown)

- **Males** (42% vs. 32% of females)
- **Those aged 55+** (48% vs. 25% of those aged up to 34 and 39% of those aged 35-54)
- **Those who pay rates directly to the council** (42% vs. 25% of those who do not pay rates)
- **Those identifying with an 'other European' ethnicity** (49% vs. 38% of NZ European, 28% of Maori, 25% of Pacific and 23% of Asian respondents).
- **Those with household incomes over \$80,000** (44% vs. 31% of those with a household income under \$30,000, 29% of those with a household income between \$30,000 and \$50,00, and 30% of those with a household income of \$50,000-\$80,000).

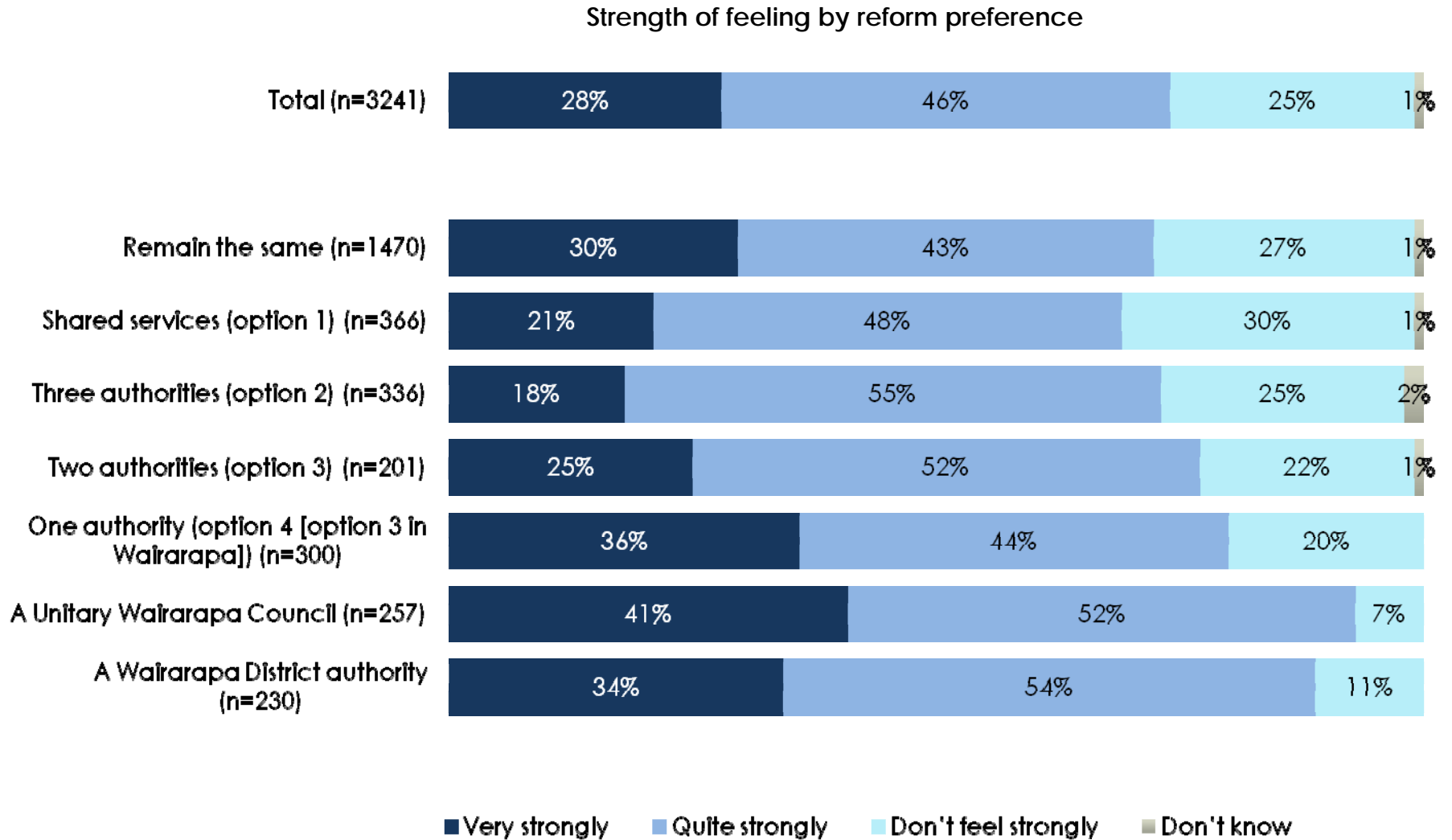
[Please note that for subgroup analysis of the change options, we have included people who initially said 'don't know' to remain the same or change, but then gave a preference towards one of the change options. The reason for doing so is to increase the robustness of the subgroup analysis – which would otherwise have lower sub-sample sizes making comparisons between groups more difficult. Doing so does not affect the direction of conclusions for subgroup preference, it simply makes the analysis more robust].

Follow up questions

- Strength of feeling
- Level of concern
- Views on the regional council remaining in place (among those who did not choose an amalgamation option)



Only 28% of people feel strongly about their preferred local government reform option. Strength of feeling is highest for the one authority option (option 4) and the single Wairarapa council options.



B2: How strongly do you feel that the councils should take-up your preferred option?...
 Base: all respondents excluding those with no preference (refer to chart for base sizes)

Subgroup analysis – who is more likely to feel ‘very strongly’ about their preferred option?

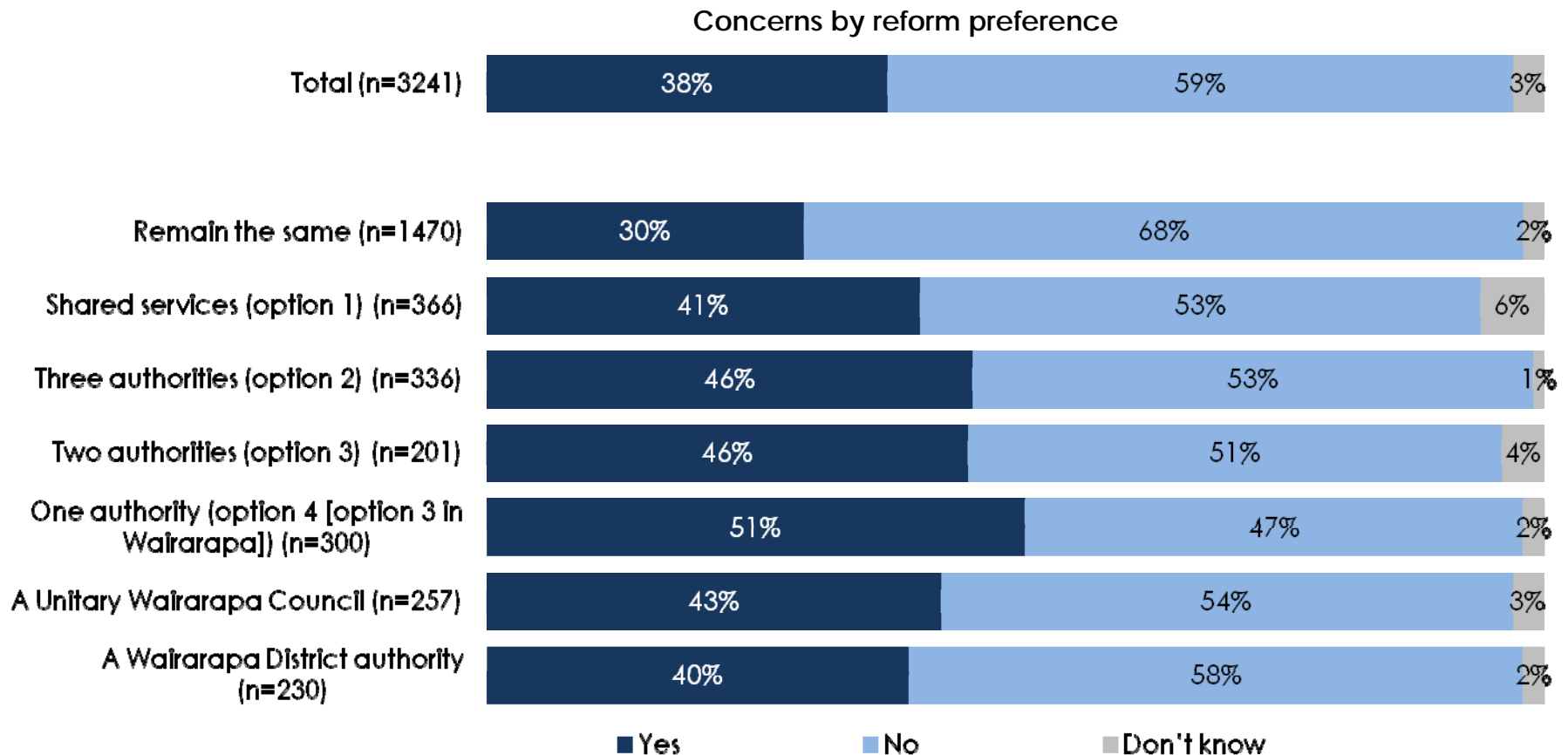
In total, 28% of people felt ‘very strongly’ about their preferred option, the following people are more likely to feel VERY STRONGLY (data from across the region):

- Males (32% - vs. 24% of females)
- Those aged 55+ (39% - vs. 14% of those aged up to 34, and 32% of those aged 35-54)
- Those who pay rates directly to the council (32% vs. 17% of those who do not pay rates)
- Maori respondents (36% vs. 27% of other ethnicities).

In total, 25% of people did not feel strongly about their preferred option, the following people are more likely to say this (data from across the region):

- Females (27% - vs. 22% of males)
- Those aged up to 34 (41% vs. 19% of those aged 35-54 and 15% of those aged 55+)
- Those who do not pay rates directly to the council (35% vs. 20% of those who do pay rates)
- Maori and ‘Other European’ respondents (31% and 36% respectively, compared to 25% of ‘other’ ethnicities).

Overall 38% of people had some concerns that needed addressing when implementing the preferred reform option. Almost half of respondents choosing amalgamation options have concerns that should be addressed should their reform preference be implemented. The list of concerns is wide and varied, and often related to very localised issues. The data is available as a verbatim file (it was not possible to code due to the wide variety of answers). Please note – we also have verbatim data on what people think local boards should be responsible for (for respondents who preferred a ‘one authority for the Wellington region’ – again this data was wide and varied).



B3: Do you have any concerns that the councils should address when implementing your preferred option?...
 Base: all respondents excluding those with no preference (refer to chart for base sizes)

Over two-thirds of those that prefer things to stay the same, or increase shared services, think that the regional council should remain in place. (This question was not asked to those favouring change options because all of the options involve the abolishment of the Greater Wellington Regional Council).

Original preference:	Stay the same and Option 1 combined	'Stay the same' only	'Option 1' (shared services) only
View on GWRC:	(n=994)	(n=691)	(n=303)
Greater Wellington Regional Council should remain in place	69%	74%	61%
Greater Wellington Regional Council should be abolished and its functions absorbed by the existing local authorities	23%	19%	29%
Don't know	8%	7%	10%

Older people were more likely to think the regional council should be abolished (30% of those aged 55+, compared with 22% of 35-54 year olds, and 19% of those aged up to 35).

If the 'no boundary change' people presented here who say the GWRC should be abolished are combined with those who chose one of the boundary change options which involved the removal of the regional council – overall 41% of regional residents thought that the regional council should be removed. This was spread evenly throughout the region (although it was lower in South Wairarapa at 33%).



Conclusions



Colmar Brunton's conclusions:

- Over half do not support boundary change.
- However, there is support for a single Wairarapa council. Although there are many who want things to 'remain the same' in the Wairarapa, this is often due to fear of merging with Wellington, and most who want things to stay the same are open to the idea of a single Wairarapa council (evidenced by the large proportion viewing this as the most positive 'change option' – over and above 'shared services' or a 'single Wellington regional authority').
- Most people do not feel strongly about this issue (although some *do* feel very strongly, they are in the minority). This suggests that people can be influenced by further discussion on local government reform. (For example, almost half of those who prefer things to remain the same would consider one of the boundary change options if change was inevitable).
- Older people – who tend to engage more with local government (compared with younger people) – *are* more likely to feel strongly, and are more likely to support amalgamation (compared with younger people).
- Delivering services effectively and costs/rates are the two most important issues to address in the discussion around local government reform. Other factors are important too...
 - Those favouring amalgamation tend to focus more on costs, removing layers of local government, and increasing collective action for the region (such as economic growth and lobbying central government).
 - Those who do not favour boundary change tend to focus on local democracy/representation, local/community services, and having a strong sense of identity to their locality.