

Briefing title Annual Residents Survey
Prepared for Transformation Advisory Board
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Introduction

Tower Hamlets Council has been running an Annual Residents Survey since the 1990s. It is carried out annually, however this is the first survey since 2019 due to Covid.

There are two important elements to the context in which the survey took place. One is the four years since the last survey, the second is what has happened in that time, both within the council and the wider world, covering the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Given the context within which Tower Hamlets has been operating these results show some real positives as well as giving us insight on areas of improvement for the council.

We are performing at or above LGA benchmarks (Slide 7). The survey is not a statutory requirement to carry out, but provides very helpful information about residents views.

The Borough (Place)

Satisfaction with **local area** is up 8 points on 2019 – 70% to 78%, and above national benchmark (76%). Residents' perception of the **Borough** as a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together increased (78% to 87%).

Thinking about your **local area/neighbourhood** those satisfied with the area as a place to live the Sum satisfied is up 8, net satisfied up 11 meaning fewer are dissatisfied. Residents are **generally positive about their local area**. When asked about their local area, fewer report problems with antisocial behaviour.

The Council (Services)

Despite a challenging period for the public sector, **overall satisfaction with the council** remains about the same compared to 2019 (60% to 63%, not statistically significant).

There have been **increases in user satisfaction with services** (Slide 15). In many areas, even **where there has been a drop in people being positive there has been a marked move to 'don't know' rather than a negative answer** e.g. 20% of residents Don't Know when asked whether the council is doing better than one year ago (Slide 11).

In response to the question 'Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Tower Hamlets run things?' There is a 3 percentage point improvement (6 points on net satisfaction because fewer are dissatisfied).

Areas for improvement – initial draft of proposed actions

This is a very early draft of potential actions which we are still working on with council services and would welcome Transformation Advisory Board members feedback on:

ARS focus	Draft proposed actions for TAB input
<p>Cost-of-living being number one concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The survey highlighted the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on residents. The Annual Resident Survey has been running since the 1990s, and 2023 is only the second time crime has not come top, with	<p>One of the Mayor's key priorities is the cost of living and council has a number of existing schemes. Review if more can be done:</p> <p>The Council runs a food hub that provides food to VCS organisations for distribution, a network of food pantries, the resident support grant scheme and a team of officers who provide direct advice to residents.</p>

<p>concerns about the cost-of-living greatest instead.</p>	<p>Universal free school meals for children in the borough implemented.</p> <p>The council manages schemes such as the DfE funded Holiday Activities and Fun scheme, providing free food and activities across the three main school holidays and the DWP funded Household Support Fund, which is split between direct grants and projects.</p> <p>The Council runs an ongoing comms campaign on cost-of-living support and has dedicated website pages.</p> <p>The Transformation Team is in the process of finalising a review into work across the Council to prevent and alleviate poverty and will be making recommendations as a result of the findings.</p> <p>Impact on other agendas - Head of Communications attended a London Councils meeting which showed climate change has fallen to the bottom of priorities in favour of cost of living, all climate change is now through the prism of cost of living e.g. energy efficiency.</p>
<p>Younger people, those aged 18-34, are generally more positive about the council. Residents aged 35-54 are generally more negative, as are carers, those with health problems, and those living in the Borough for 10 years and more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, residents aged 35-54 are the most likely to disagree that their council is doing a good job and that it is efficient and well-run and that the council listens to residents. • Residents 35-54 have highest levels of concern on education, crime, and quality of healthcare. 	<p>Services to review how they engage with 35-54 year olds and those around them</p> <p>Services to work with corporate research team to understand the issue in greater depth, the differences in opinion, the needs of residents aged 34-54 and what is therefore driving their responses.</p> <p>A review of support for carers.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked about their overall satisfaction with the council, just 9% of those aged 18-34 are dissatisfied, but the figure is 19% for those aged 55+.. This finding may be impacted by the close of one stop shops. 	
Trust in the council	<p>Review and strengthen Strategic Plan Priority 8: A Council that listens and works for everyone as part of Strategic Plan refresh.</p> <p>The Customer Experience Strategy supports this as well. The Strategy action plan will help improve this further.</p>
Perceptions of the council i.e. my council is doing a better job than a year ago	Review communications – media consumption survey or LGA review of comms?
My council listens to the concerns of local residents	Community Engagement Strategy being drafted
My council involves residents when making decisions	Community Engagement Strategy being drafted
My council responds quickly when asked for help	Customer Experience Strategy is live, the action plan is being developed. Information on whether staff are friendly and polite till be included in all surveys.
My council has staff who are friendly and polite	<p>Customer Experience Strategy being drafted</p> <p>Internal comms.</p> <p>Review training offer.</p> <p>More mystery shopping and further work to understand this.</p>
More 'Don't knows'	Review communications – media consumption survey or LGA review of comms?

All findings	Brief all staff
All findings	Host a session for staff
All findings	Review and discuss how results plug into the strategic plan.

Next Steps

1. Briefing staff at all levels
2. Ensuring that the Mayor's office, cabinet members and their directors, and services get bespoke briefings about their service areas.
3. Assigning SRO to actions and timeline for reporting back on draft Annual Residents Survey Action Plan above.
4. Reviewing this along with the LGA CPC improvement plan, performance data, benchmarking as part of council's continuous improvement.
5. Preparing for next Annual Resident Survey so we can compare year to year following the gap caused by the pandemic.