Budget Consultation 2020

On behalf of London Borough of Tower Hamlets

December 2020

TOWER HAMLETS

Prepared by
SMSR RESEARCH

Contents

1.0 Headline Findings

1.1 Headline findings

Overall, residents, businesses, and community groups across Tower Hamlets value Public Health Services the most (41%), followed closely by Community Safety (38%). This is understandable, given the event of the recent Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent issues triggered by the outbreak. More than a third value Children's Services and Education (34%) and Services for the Elderly and Vulnerable Adults (33%) the most. Culture, libraries, and Parks (22%) and Highways and Transport Services (14%) were deemed to be the least valuable services in the borough at this time.

Businesses in the borough placed similar levels of importance on Public Health (38%) but, perhaps instinctively, placed more value on Economic Growth and Job Creation (39%), however, considered Community Safety to be most valuable (41%).

When considering business priorities, Economic Growth and Job Creation (38%) and Community Safety were ranked slightly higher than Public Health (36%), reinforcing initial trends found amongst this cohort.

When contemplating the areas in which additional savings could be made, half (50%) said they would prefer the Council to reduce spending on temporary agency staff. Almost half (45%) felt there are opportunities to reduce costs by delivering more services using digital technology and two-fifths (40%) thought the Council could generate more commercial income and maximise use of its assets (although it was highlighted in the options this may be problematic in the current circumstances). Just a tenth (10%) felt that savings could be made by reducing spending on frontline services.

A slim majority (52%) believed that the impact of further savings would make the Council more efficient, although more than three-quarters (78%) predicted that fewer services would be available and nearly three-fifths (58%) expected service quality to be reduced as a result.

More than half (54%) felt that, in order to mitigate the impact of savings the Council is required to make by the Government, it should investigate better use of assets and other ways to generate income – an action highlighted as preferable earlier in the survey. More than two-fifths (45%) said it is important to work closely with organisations in the voluntary and community sector and partner organisations such as the NHS to deliver more joined up services and share services with neighbouring boroughs to make council services more efficient through greater use of digital technology (44%). Less than a fifth (18%) deemed it important to outsource services to the private sector.

Respondents were more inclined to support a proposal to increase council tax with 47% approving of the action and 43% in opposition – a tenth (10%) said they did not know. Furthermore – of those who did support an increase in council tax, a quarter (26%) revealed they would support a rise of up to 2%, more than a tenth (12%) said they would support an increase between 2% and 3%. Less than a tenth (4%) stated they would support an increase in council tax between 3% and 4% or above 4% (5% of respondents).

Overall, the majority (56%) said, if permitted, they would support an adult social care precept in order to support adult social care. A quarter (28%) opposed this proposal with 16% of respondents stating they did not know.

Almost three quarters (74%) agreed that the council should expand its approach to income generation such as using its unique assets for events and filming, as well as through fees and charges. Less than a fifth (14%) did not support this policy and a tenth did know (11%).

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Background

Tower Hamlets Council has worked hard to make £200m in savings since 2010, its budget has been cut by the Government and squeezed by additional demand. The additional pressures that have now been experienced because of the pandemic means the Council will now have to save a further £30m by 2024.

The required savings are subject to significant uncertainty as this will depend on both the extent to which the Government provides additional funding for Covid-19 pressures, and the impact of the pandemic on income from council tax and business rates.

The Council has made a number of tough choices to minimise the impact on those services residents have said that they rely on the most. The Council has reduced its own running costs, been more efficient in how services are delivered, and reduced its workforce by a third since 2010.

The Council has to make the most of the money it has, as well as continuing to look at innovative ways to generate income and have asked residents, businesses, and community groups to get involved in the conversation and provide their opinions.

In addition to an online consultation, hosted on the council's Let's Talk Tower Hamlets consultation hub, SMSR Ltd, an independent research company was commissioned to undertake a telephone survey with residents and businesses from across the borough to help the council understand priorities and the impact savings may have on people living and working in Tower Hamlets.

2.2 Report structure

This report includes headline findings for each question combined with insight based on demographic trends. It should be noted that when the results are discussed within the report, often percentages will be rounded up or down to the nearest one per cent. Therefore, occasionally figures may add up to 101% or 99%. Due to multiple responses being allowed for the question, some results may exceed the sum of 100%.

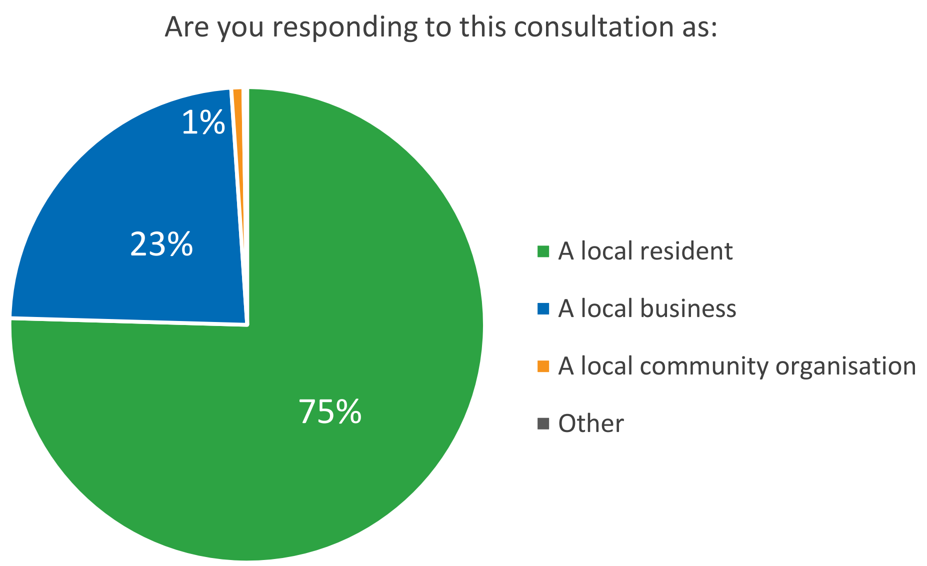
Trends identified in the reporting are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. This means that there is only 5% probability that the difference has occurred by chance (a commonly accepted level of probability), rather than being a 'real' difference. Unless otherwise stated, statistically significant trends have been reported on.

3.0 Sample / Methodology

An interviewer led, CATI telephone questionnaire was designed by SMSR in conjunction with staff from Tower Hamlets Council. The survey script mirrored the online consultation on the Let's Talk Tower Hamlets consultation hub.

Interviews were conducted using random quota sampling to maximise representation across the borough. Sample data was drawn from several, GDPR compliant sources to extend the scope of potential participants as much as possible. Target quotas for age, gender and ethnicity were set using the most recent ONS figures available for the residents' consultation and the sample included representation from each of the ward within the borough. Quotas for business interviews were set by business size.

Respondents were asked to identify as a local resident, a local business, or a community group:



A total of 1,955 residents, businesses and community groups took part in the consultation, overall. A representative sample of 1,138 residents were interviewed by SMSR Ltd using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) methodology. A further sample of 468 businesses were interviewed by SMSR Ltd, using the same methodology. In addition, a total of 349 residents, businesses and community groups responded to an online consultation, hosted on the council's website. Overall, three-quarters responded as a local resident (75%), just under a quarter responded as a business (23%) and 1% via a local community organisation. All responses have been combined in this report.

The demographic and geographic breakdown of residents and businesses was as follows:

Residents

The following tables show the demographic breakdown of all respondents who participated in the research and identified themselves as a local resident (1,475). Please note that not all residents provided demographic information.

Gender	Number	Percentage of sample
Male	721	49%
Female	716	49%
Prefer to self-identify	1	0%
Prefer not to say	37	3%

Age	Number	Percentage of sample
0-15	1	0%
16-24	126	9%
25-34	354	24%
35-44	376	25%
45-54	227	15%
55-64	173	12%
65-74	124	8%
75+	68	5%
Prefer not to say	40	2%

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage of sample
White	781	53%
BAME	641	43%
Prefer not to say	53	4%

Ward	Number	Percentage of sample
Bethnal Green	105	9%
Blackwall & Cubitt Town	66	6%
Bow East	88	8%
Bow West	82	7%
Bromley North	74	7%
Bromley South	39	3%
Canary Wharf	16	1%
Island Gardens	27	2%
Lansbury	47	4%
Limehouse	29	3%
Mile End	95	8%
Poplar	56	5%
Shadwell	63	6%
Spitalfields & Banglatown	77	7%
St Dunstan's	40	4%
St Katharine's & Wapping	36	3%
St Peter's	31	3%
Stepney Green	49	4%
Weavers	50	4%
Whitechapel	67	6%

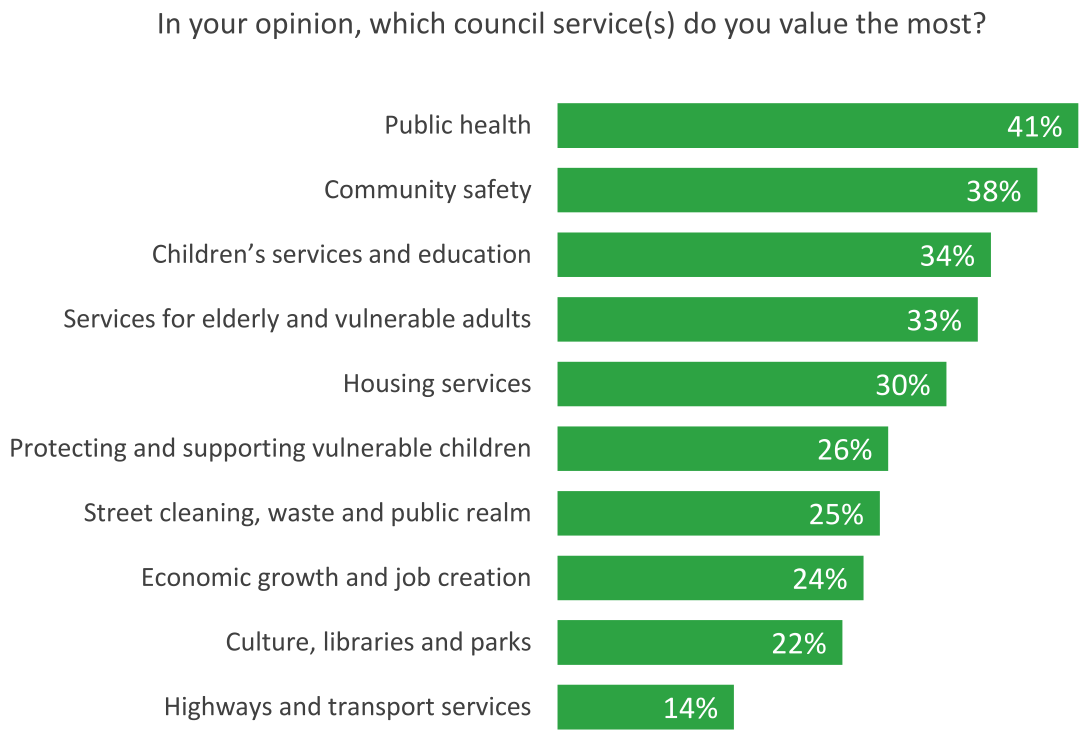
*Please note that no geographical information was collected during the online consultation.

Businesses

Business size	Number	Percentage of sample
Micro (1-10 employees)	248	54%
Small (11-49 employees)	184	40%
Medium (50-249 employees)	21	5%
Large (250+ employees)	3	1%

Ward	Number	Percentage of sample
Bethnal Green	36	8%
Blackwall & Cubitt Town	9	2%
Bow East	11	2%
Bow West	14	3%
Bromley North	54	12%
Bromley South	15	3%
Canary Wharf	24	5%
Island Gardens	4	1%
Lansbury	6	1%
Limehouse	6	1%
Mile End	46	10%
Poplar	16	3%
Shadwell	35	7%
Spitalfields & Banglatown	32	7%
St Dunstan's	6	1%
St Katharine's & Wapping	3	1%
St Peter's	9	2%
Stepney Green	10	2%
Weavers	46	10%
Whitechapel	85	18%
Not known	1	0%

4.0 Findings



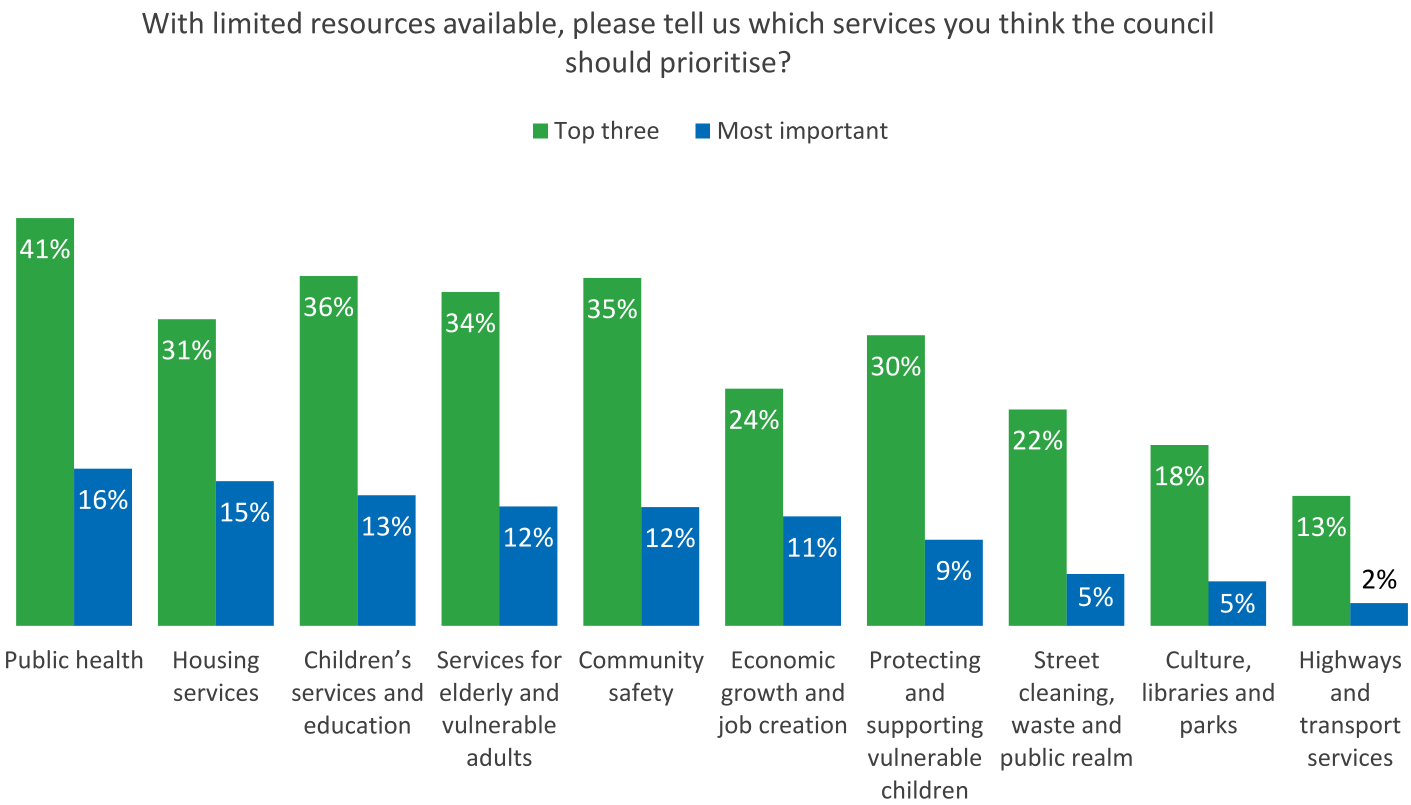
Respondents were asked to choose which council services they valued the most from a list. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, given the current Covid-19 Pandemic, Public Health services were valued the most by more than two-fifths (41%) of residents. This service was closely followed by Community Safety (38%) with a third of residents stating they values Children's Services and Education (34%) and Services for Elderly and Vulnerable Adults (33%) the most. Respondents valued these more pertinent services amidst the current circumstances over Culture, Libraries and Parks and Highways and Transport services, both which less than a quarter found valuable (22% and 14% respectively).

Public Health and Community Safety were found to be universally, very valuable across demographic subgroups, however, females tended to place more value upon children's services compared to males (37% vs 31%) together with services for the elderly (37% female vs 29% male). The value of Services for the Elderly generally increased with age with more than half (58%) of respondents aged 65+ stating this service was most valuable whereas children's services tended to be more valuable to younger residents, particularly those aged 25 to 44.

BAME respondents also felt Children's Services were more valuable compared to White participants (37% vs 32%) with this cohort also placing more value on Housing Services (36% BAME vs 26% White) and Economic Growth (28% BAME vs 20% White).

Nearly three-fifths of respondents in Stepney Green (58%) and St Peter's (58%) considered Public Health to be most valuable compared to a third in Bow West (34%) and Island Gardens (35%).

When considering the most valuable services to those who responded as a local resident, Public Health was considered to be the most valuable service, with nearly half of this opinion (47%). This was followed by Children's Services (42%) and Services for the Elderly (38%). Those responding as a business placed most value on community safety (41%) and Economic Growth (39%) – slightly higher than Public Health (38%).



Participants were asked to contemplate, with limited resources available, which council services should be prioritised. Respondents were asked to rank the options including the service they believed was most important to prioritise. The chart above shows respondents' top three priorities together with the service ranked most important.

As with the previous question, Public Health (41%) was considered to be most important to prioritise alongside Children's Services (36%), Community Safety (35%), Services for the Elderly (35%). Although Housing Services was deemed a 'mid-table' priority amongst respondents top three choices, this service was seen to be the second most important priority, behind Public Health when reviewing respondents' most important choice.

Furthermore, similar patterns were found between value and priorities when exploring age and gender subgroups. Public Health services were prioritised universally amongst demographic groups whereas females tended to be more inclined to prioritise Children's Services compared to males (37% vs 31%) and Services for the Elderly (39% vs 33%). Males tended to prioritise Economic Growth more prominently than females (29% vs 19%).

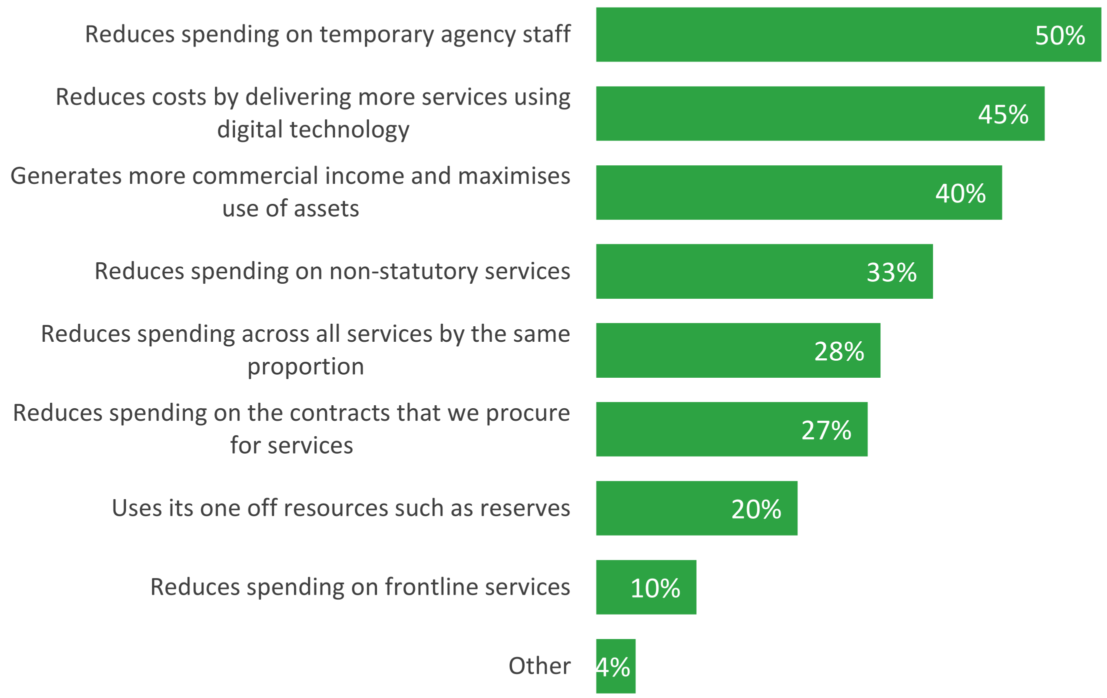
Similar trends were also found throughout age categories with older people more likely to prioritise Services for the Elderly with quarter of those under 25 (24%) considering this service a priority compared to three-fifths of those over 65 (58%). Prioritisation of Children's Services revealed a reverse in this trend with younger respondents more likely to emphasise this service as a priority (41% under 24 vs 33% 65+).

BAME respondents were more likely to prioritise Housing Services compared to White respondents (38% vs 26%) and also saw Economic Growth as a more critical priority (27% BAME vs 22% White).

Around three-fifths of respondents in Island Gardens (61%), Stepney Green (58%) and Limehouse (57%) felt that Public Health was a priority compared to just a third in Bow West (34%). More than half in Bromley North and Bromley South (both 54%) felt that Housing Services should be prioritised compared to less than a fifth of those in Island Gardens (19%), Lansbury (17%) and Limehouse (14%). Residents of Bow west were most likely to prioritise Children's Services (50%) with St Dunstan's and Poplar more focussed on Services for the Elderly (48% and 46% respectively).

Nearly half of residents (47%) felt that Public Health should be prioritised compared to 36% of businesses. Residents also believed Children's Services (41%) and Services for the Elderly (38%) were also important priorities. Although Public Health was still a top three priority amongst businesses, Economic Growth (38%) and Community Safety (38%) were slightly higher concerns.

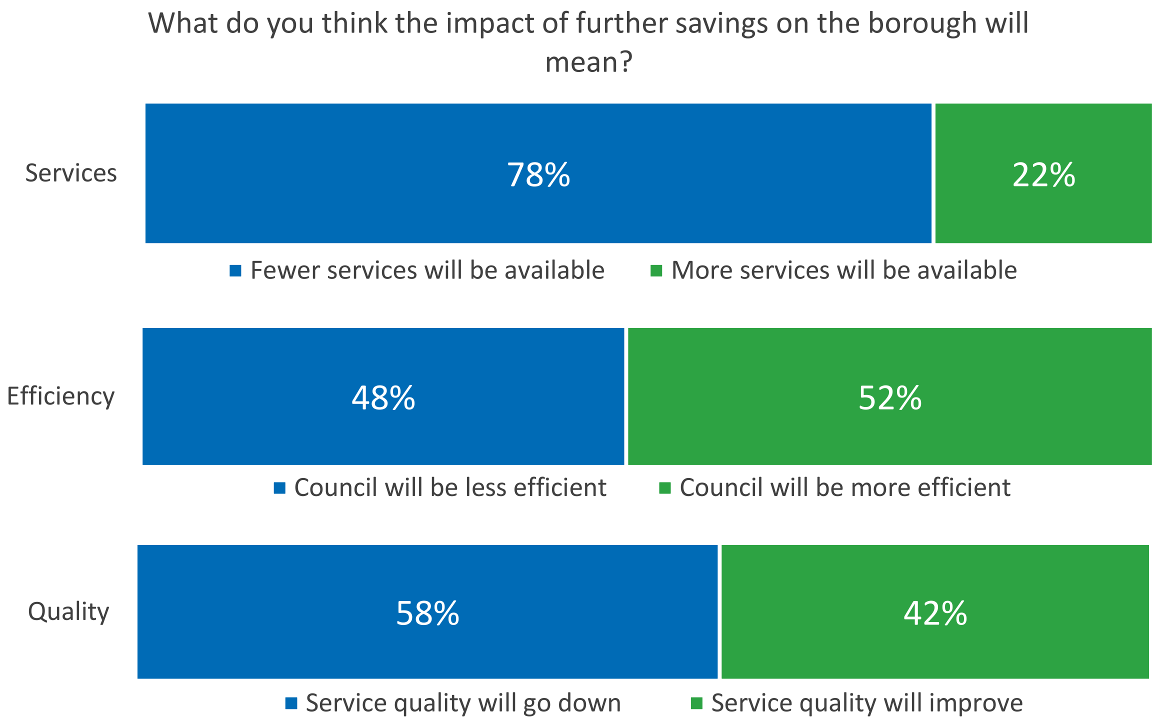
We have made savings in the following areas, but as we have to make additional savings, would you prefer that the council:



As core government funding continues to fall and the Council have to make further savings, respondents were asked where they would prefer Tower Hamlets Council to make additional savings. Exactly half of respondents felt that additional savings could be made by reducing spending on agency staff. More than two-fifths (45%) thought that savings could be made by delivering services using digital technology – an action no doubt accelerated by the current pandemic – and two-fifths (40%) would prefer the Council to generate income and maximise the use of its assets (albeit a difficult task under current conditions). Only a tenth (10%) said they would prefer the Council to reduce spending on frontline services.

Perhaps naturally, respondents aged under 45 were more likely to view the use of digital technology as a driver of additional savings with more than half of those aged under 24 (52%) and 25-34 (54%) advocating this action compared to less than a third of those aged 65+ (31%).

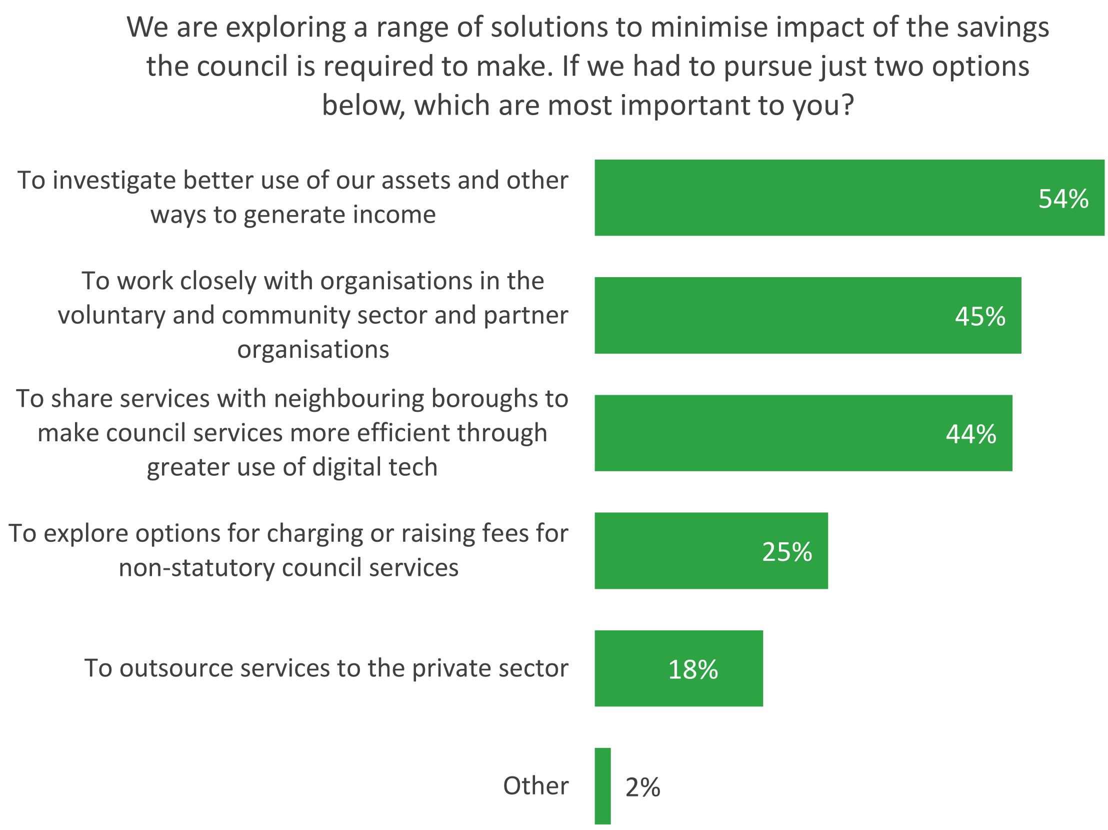
Both residents and businesses in Tower Hamlets agreed that savings should be made by reducing spending on temporary agency staff (54% and 47% respectively). More than two-fifths of residents stated they would prefer to reduce costs by generating more commercial income (43%) or delivering services digitally (41%). Businesses were more inclined to favour a reduction in procurement (32%) compared to residents (22%). Both cohorts were least likely to prefer to reduce spending on frontline services.



Respondents were asked to contemplate the impact of further savings on the borough, specifically in relation to service availability, council efficiency and service quality. More than three quarters believed that fewer services will be available in the borough as a result of further savings whereas a more even divide was observed for council efficiency - just over half stating they thought the council would become more efficient as a result of savings. Nearly three-fifths (58%) felt the quality of services would be reduced as a result of savings made. So, although a very slim majority expected the council to be more efficient as a result of savings made, many felt that services could be adversely impacted at the same time.

Around 9 in every 10 respondents in Island Gardens felt that fewer services would be available compared to just over half in Bow East (56%). More than three-fifths of residents in Limehouse (71%) and Spitalfields and Banglatown (68%) believed savings would make the council more efficient with the same percentage of the opinion the Council would be less efficient in Stepney Green (61%) and Weavers (61%). Respondents in Stepney Green also were most likely to predict the quality of services would be reduced (78%) compared to 28% in Blackwall and Cubitt Town (28%).

Residents (77%) were slightly more inclined to believe that fewer services would be available due to savings, compared to businesses in the borough (71%).

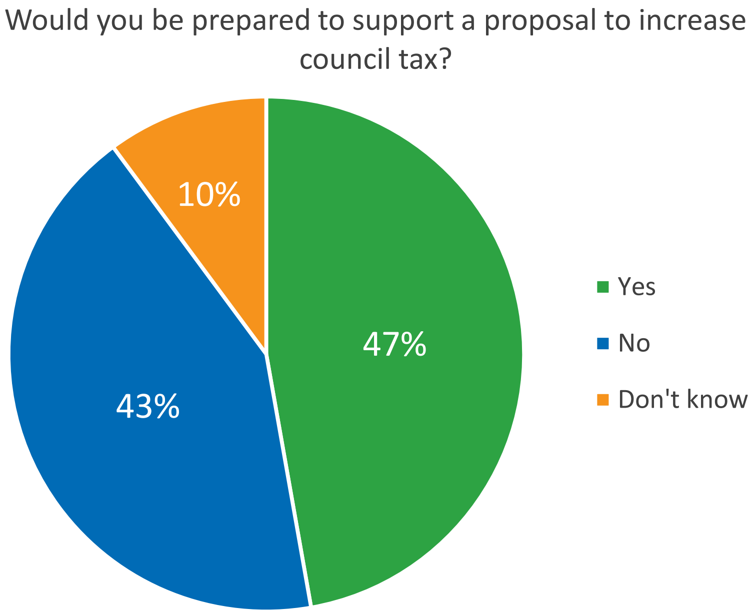


Tower Hamlets Council is exploring a range of options to minimise the impact of the savings the council is required to make. Respondents were asked to choose two options which they thought were most important for the council to pursue.

More than half (54%) identified better use of assets and other ways to generate income as the most important action to minimise the impact of savings. More than two-fifths felt that working more closely with organisations to provide joined up services (45%) and a shared service approach with neighbouring boroughs (44%) were most important in mitigating the impact of savings the council is required to make. Less than a fifth (18%) thought outsourcing services to the private sector was important in combatting the impact in increased savings.

More than two-thirds of residents and businesses in Blackwall and Cubitt Town (71%), Lansbury (70%) and Bow West (70%) felt the council should investigate better use of assets to minimise the impact of savings whereas just a quarter in St Peter's (25%) felt this was the most important action. More than half of those in St Katherine's and Wapping (56%), Island Gardens (52%), Limehouse (51%) and Lansbury (51%) believed that working closely with other organisations would reduce impact, compared to 27% based in Weavers.

Both residents (57%) and businesses (51%) thought that better use of Council assets and other ways to generate income was the most important action in the list of options with over half supporting this solution.

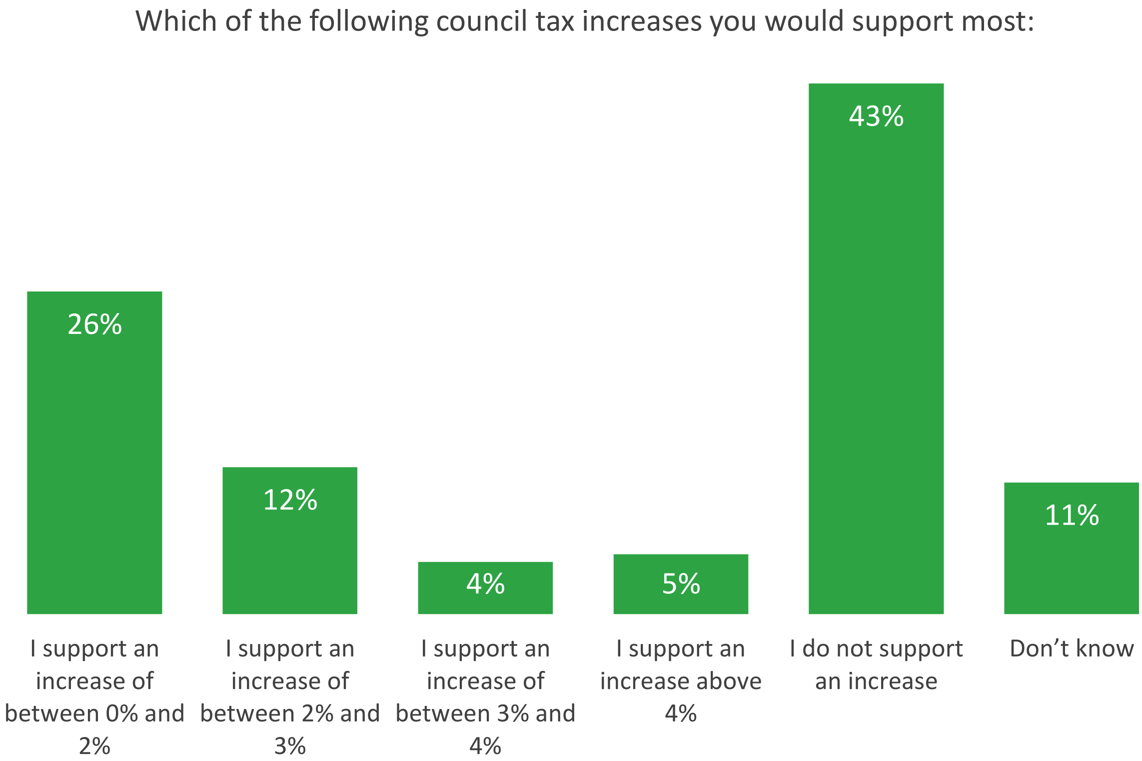


In light of rising costs and demand for services, respondents were asked if they would be prepared to support a proposal to increase council tax, in order to protect services. Respondents were marginally more inclined to support a proposal to increase council tax – 47% yes compared to 43% no. A tenth said they did not know.

Those aged between 25 and 44 were more likely to support the proposal with half of 25-34-year olds (50%) and 35-44-year olds (50%) advocating a rise in council tax compared to two-fifths of those aged under 24 (41%) and over 65 (42%). Furthermore, white respondents (53%) were found to be more inclined to support an increase than BAME respondents (42%).

Residents and businesses in Stepney Green (64%) and Weavers (64%) were most agreeable to an increase in council tax whereas less than a third in Bow West (31%), Bromley North (30%), Lansbury (30%) and Island Gardens (29%) supported this action.

Residents were found to be more supportive towards a proposal to raise council tax compared to businesses (45% vs 39%).

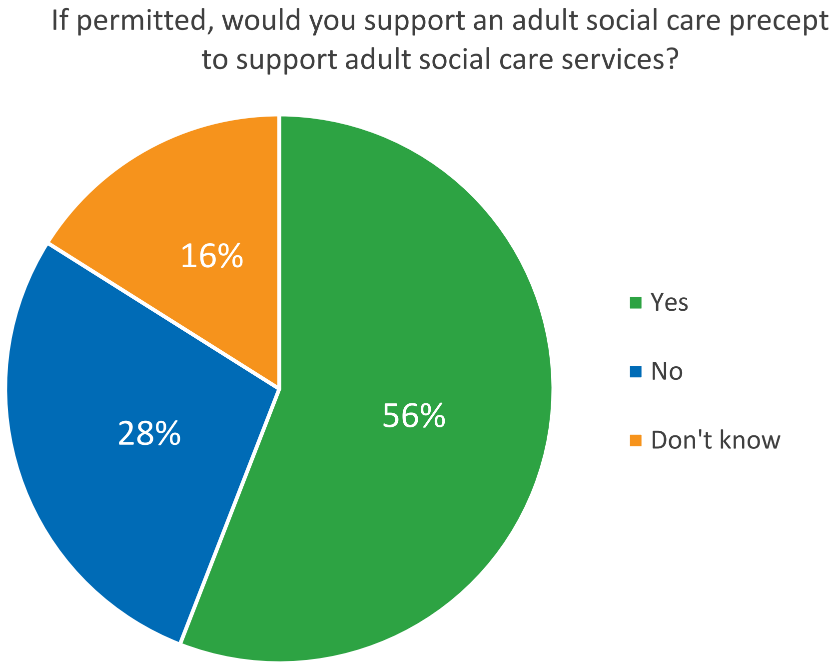


Respondents were then asked to indicate the level of council tax increase they would support most. Consistent with the previous question which asked respondents if they would advocate any increase at all in council tax, 43% repeated they would not. The highest percentage of respondents who would support a rise in council tax, a quarter (26%), said they would favour an increase of between 0% and 2%. Just over a tenth (12%) said they would support an increase of between 2% and 3% with fewer supporting an increase of between 3% and 4% (4%) and an increase above 4% (5%). A tenth said they did not know (11%).

There was little difference when examining trends between age and gender in relation to support for an increase, however, White respondents were more inclined support each increment of increase compared with BAME respondents – 15% White vs 10% BAME for an increase between 2% and 3%, 6% White vs 3% BAME for an increase between 3% and 4% and above 4%).

Respondents in Weavers (51%) were most supportive of the smallest increase (0-2%) with just 13% of those in Bow West (13%) and Island Gardens prepared to agree to this action. Those in Bethnal Green (8%) were most sympathetic to the largest increase of more than 4%

with no respondents in Weavers, Spitalfields and Banglatown, Whitechapel, Bromley South, Canary Wharf, and Island Gardens supportive of this increase.

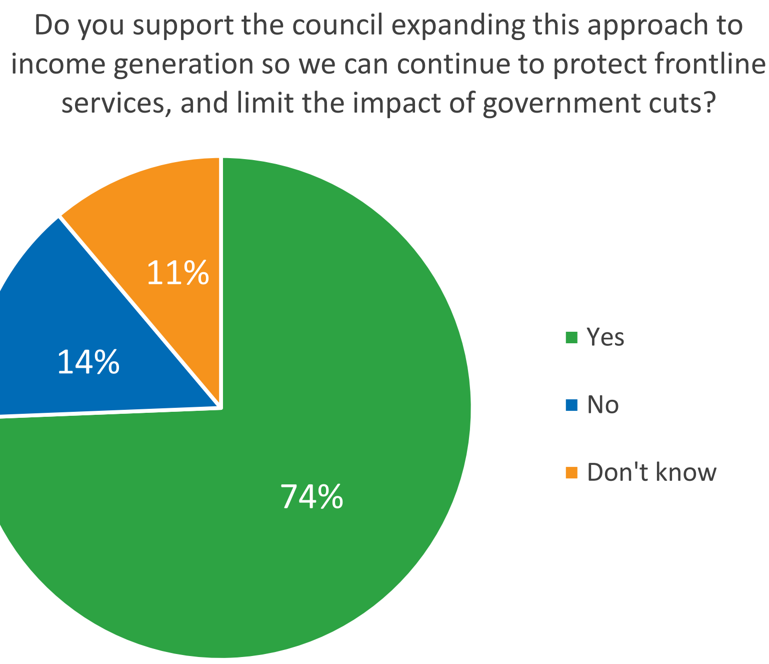


Based on an estimate that additional cost pressures to Tower Hamlets Council for adult social care services in 2021/22 will be £3.5m, respondents were asked, if permitted would they support an adult social care precept to support adult social care services.

Overall, the majority (56%) said they would support an adult social care precept to support adult social care services. Over a quarter (28%) said they would not support this proposal and 16% said they did not know.

Female respondents (58%) tended to be more supportive of the measure compared to males (55%) and three-fifths (60%) of White residents agreed with this action compared to just over half of BAME respondents (53%).

Respondents in Poplar (85%) and Spitalfields and Banglatown (69%) were most supportive of an adult social care precept compared to a third in Limehouse (37%) and St Peter's (33%). Trends were generally consistent between residents and businesses in the borough.



One of the ways Tower Hamlets Council already generates income is by hiring out unique council-owned assets such as parks for events and filming, and the use of venues for ceremonies and sporting activities. Its fees and charges are also compared against other councils, and the council is exploring more innovative ways to raise income. Respondents were asked if they support the council expanding this approach to income generation so they can continue to protect frontline services and limit the impact of government cuts.

Nearly three quarters (74%) agreed the council should expand on this approach to income generation. Less than a fifth (14%) felt they could not support this action and a tenth did not know (11%).

Those aged 55-64 (78%) were most inclined to support this proposal, an increase of nearly 10% when compared to young people, under 25 (69%). White respondents (77%) were more supportive of expanding this approach compared to BAME residents (72%).

More than 8 in every 10 respondents located in Spitalfields and Banglatown, St Dunstan's, Stepney Green and Poplar believed the council should expand this approach to income generation with Bromley North (56%) and Bow East (54%) less supportive. Furthermore, trends were generally consistent between residents and businesses in the borough.

5.0 Appendices

5.1 Questionnaire

Tower Hamlets Council

Budget Consultation 2020

Introduction

Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is .... and I am calling / speaking to you on behalf of Tower Hamlets Council from SMSR Ltd, an independent reseach company.

We are speaking to residents in the borough to get their views on the Council's budget for next year.

Do you have a few minutes to get your thoughts on this today and help shape the budget in your local area?

In compliance with GDPR you are able to withdraw your consent at any point during or after the interview and we can provide contact details for both Tower Hamlets Council and SMSR at any point if you so wish. The data is being collected in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct and will only be used by SMSR and Tower Hamlets Council. Data collected will not be used for marketing purposes and the interview will take around 10 minutes.

Your responses will remain strictly confidential and anonymous, and your personal details will not be forwarded to a third party. It should take approximately 10 minutes, and anonymised responses will be used by SMSR Ltd and Tower Hamlets Council.

If respondent wishes to check validity of research, offer the following contact details: SMSR Ltd - Freephone 0800 1380845 and speak to Amy Collier (Office Manager) or call the Market Research Society freephone on 0800 975 9596.

Q1 Are you responding to this consultation as:

- a local resident ☐ 1
- a local business ☐ 2
- a local community organisation ☐ 3
- other (please specify) ☐ 4

Please specify other:

INTERVIEWER PREAMBLE

This year Tower hamlets Council is spending £1.2 billion gross expenditure (£354.5 million net expenditure budget) on public services to support people and improve lives. Over half of its net budget is spent on supporting children and vulnerable adults.

Covid-19 has of course had a huge impact on the Council's services and finances and the budget was set in this context. The Council have worked hard to make £200m in savings since 2010, as their budget has been cut by the Government and they have been squeezed by additional demand.

The additional pressures that have now been experienced because of the pandemic means the Council will now have to save a further £30m by 2024.

The required savings are subject to significant uncertainty as this will depend on both the extent to which the Government provides additional funding for Covid-19 pressures, and the impact of the pandemic on income from council tax and business rates.

Despite challenges from budget cuts, increases in demand from vulnerable residents and a rising population, the Council are proud to have continued to invest in frontline services and have the seventh lowest council tax in London.

Tower Hamlets Council have made a number of tough choices to minimise the impact on those services residents have told us that they rely on the most. They have have reduced running costs, been more efficient in how we deliver services, and reduced our workforce by a third since 2010.

The Council has to make the most of the money they have, as well as continuing to look at innovative ways to generate income.

This consultation is your chance to get involved in the budget conversations and to help the Council shape the future for all.

You may have recieved a budget booklet from the Council, which you can refer to during this consultation, if you wish

Q2 In your opinion, which council service(s) do you value the most?

(select up to three)

- Services for elderly and vulnerable adults ☐ 01
- Children's services and education ☐ 02
- Protecting and supporting vulnerable children ☐ 03
- Housing services ☐ 04
- Public health ☐ 05
- Culture, libraries and parks ☐ 06
- Community safety ☐ 07
- Highways and transport services ☐ 08
- Street cleaning, waste and public realm ☐ 09
- Economic growth and job creation ☐ 10

Q3a With limited resources available, please tell us which services you think the council should prioritise?

(select up to three)

- Services for elderly and vulnerable adults ☐ 01
- Children's services and education ☐ 02
- Protecting and supporting vulnerable children ☐ 03
- Housing services ☐ 04
- Public health ☐ 05
- Culture, libraries and parks ☐ 06
- Community safety ☐ 07
- Highways and transport services ☐ 08
- Street cleaning, waste and public realm ☐ 09
- Economic growth and job creation ☐ 10

Q3b Please tell us which of the options you think is most important to prioritise?

- Services for elderly and vulnerable adults ☐ 01
- Children's services and education ☐ 02
- Protecting and supporting vulnerable children ☐ 03
- Housing services ☐ 04
- Public health ☐ 05
- Culture, libraries and parks ☐ 06
- Community safety ☐ 07
- Highways and transport services ☐ 08
- Street cleaning, waste and public realm ☐ 09
- Economic growth and job creation ☐ 10

Q4 As core government funding continues to fall, the Council have to save a further £30m by 2024.

We have made savings in the following areas, but as we have to make additional savings, would you prefer that the council:

(select up to three)

- reduces spending across all services by the same proportion ☐ 1
- reduces spending on frontline services ☐ 2
- reduces spending on temporary agency staff ☐ 3
- reduces spending on the contracts that we procure for services ☐ 4
- reduces spending on non-statutory services (services the council is not legally required to provide) ☐ 5
- reduces costs by delivering more services using digital technology ☐ 6
- generates more commercial income and maximises use of assets (currently reduced due to impact of Covid-19) ☐ 7
- uses its one off resources such as reserves ☐ 8
- Other ☐ 9

Please specify other:

What do you think the impact of further savings on the borough will mean?

Q5 **Services.** Do you think the impact of further savings on the borough will mean:

- Fewer services will be available ☐ 1
- More services will be available ☐ 2

Q6 **Efficiency.** Do you think the impact of further savings on the borough will mean:

- Council will be less efficient ☐ 1
- Council will be more efficient ☐ 2

Q7 **Quality.** Do you think the impact of further savings on the borough will mean:

- Service quality will go down ☐ 1
- Service quality will improve ☐ 2

Q8 We are exploring a range of solutions to minimise the impact of the savings the council is required to make.

If we had to pursue just two options below, which are most important to you?

(select up to two)

- to work closely with organisations in the voluntary and community sector and partner organisations such as the NHS to deliver more joined up services ☐ 1
- to share services with neighbouring boroughs to make council services more efficient through greater use of digital technology ☐ 2
- to outsource services to the private sector ☐ 3
- to investigate better use of our assets and other ways to generate income ☐ 4
- to explore options for charging or raising fees for non-statutory council services (services we are not legally required to provide) ☐ 5
- Other (please specify) ☐ 6

Please specify other:

Council Tax currently funds around a third of our total budget (excluding schools) so it's a significant funding source for the services we provide. The Government has said it expects councils to increase their council tax rate by an amount every year to cover inflation. This increase partly helps to meet rising costs and demand for our services but will not be enough to fully cover the rising costs we have for 2021 -22. Even with an increase in council tax, savings will still be needed to balance our budget.

In 2020/21, Tower Hamlets Council increased council tax by 1.99% and charged an adult social care precept of 2% so overall an increase of 3.99% which was the case in most other boroughs. The council has retained a local council tax reduction scheme that fully protects those residents on the lowest income from any council tax payment.

Every 1% increase in council tax that the council raises generates circa £1 million, which can be used to protect services. Each 1% rise in council tax costs households an average of 19p extra per week.

Q9 Would you be prepared to support a proposal to increase council tax?

- Yes ☐ 1
- No ☐ 2
- Don't know ☐ 3

Q10 Any council that wishes to raise council tax higher than a threshold set by central government will have to hold a local referendum.

At this stage it is unclear what the government threshold may be, but we would like to seek your view on which of the following council tax increases you would support most:

I support an increase of between 0% and 2%	☐	1
I support an increase of between 2% and 3%	☐	2
I support an increase of between 3% and 4%	☐	3
I support an increase above 4%	☐	4
I do not support an increase	☐	5
Don't know	☐	6

Q11 The government has allowed councils in the last four years to add an additional charge to their council tax for adult social care to support some of their most vulnerable residents. This is called the adult social care precept.

At this stage in the same way as for general council tax increases it is unclear whether, and if so at what level, any adult social care precept will be permitted.

We estimate that the additional cost pressures to the council for adult social care services in 2021/22 will be £3.5m.

The council has to meet these costs whether or not it increases council tax or other income, therefore if it doesn't increase its income, savings have to be found elsewhere.

If permitted, would you support an adult social care precept to support adult social care services?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2
Don't know ☐ 3

Q12 The council is looking at ways it can generate income to contribute towards the budget shortfall and minimise the impact of cuts on our services.

One of the ways the council already generates income is by hiring out its unique council-owned assets such as parks for events and filming, the use of venues for ceremonies and sporting activities. We also continually compare our fees and charges against other councils and look at how we can be more innovative in raising income.

Do you support the council expanding this approach to income generation so we can continue to protect frontline services, and limit the impact of government cuts?

Yes ☐ 1
No ☐ 2
Don't know ☐ 3

Demographics

Q13 How old are you?

- 0-15 .... ☐ 01
- 16-24 .... ☐ 02
- 25-34 .... ☐ 03
- 35-44 .... ☐ 04
- 45-54 .... ☐ 05
- 55-64 .... ☐ 06
- 65-74 .... ☐ 07
- 75-84 .... ☐ 08
- 85+ .... ☐ 09
- Prefer not to say .... ☐ 10

Q14 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months (include any problems related to old age)?

- Yes .... ☐ 1
- No .... ☐ 2
- Prefer not to say .... ☐ 3

Q15 Please state the type of health problem or disability that applies to you?

(People may experience more than one type of disability or health problem, in which case you may indicate more than one. If none of the categories applies, please mark 'Prefer to self-describe ' and specify the type of health problem or disability.)

- Sensory impairment (such as being blind / having a visual impairment or being deaf / having a hearing impairment) .... ☐ 1
- Physical impairment (such as using a wheelchair to get around and / or difficulty using your arms) .... ☐ 2
- Learning disability (such as Downs syndrome or dyslexia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism or head-injury) .... ☐ 3
- Mental health condition, (such as depression or schizophrenia) .... ☐ 4
- Long-standing illness or health condition (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy) .... ☐ 5
- Prefer not to say .... ☐ 6
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify): .... ☐ 7

Please specify other:

Q16 Which best describes your gender?

- Male .... ☐ 1
- Female .... ☐ 2
- Prefer not to say .... ☐ 3
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify): .... ☐ 4

Please specify:

Q17 Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned to at birth?

- Yes .... ☐ 1
- No .... ☐ 2
- Prefer not to say .... ☐ 3

Q18 Which of the following describes your sex?

- Man .... ☐ 1
- Woman .... ☐ 2
- Intersex .... ☐ 3
- Prefer not to say .... ☐ 4
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify): .... ☐ 5

Please specify:

Q19 Which of the following describes your sexual orientation?

- Gay / lesbian .... ☐ 1
- Bi (attracted to more than one gender) .... ☐ 2
- Heterosexual / straight .... ☐ 3
- Prefer not to say .... ☐ 4
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify): .... ☐ 5

Please speify:

Q20 Are you legally married or in a civil partnership?

- Yes ☐ 1
- No ☐ 2
- Prefer not to say ☐ 3

Q21 Which best describes your current marital, civil partnership or cohabitation status?

- Single (never married or never registered a civil partnership) ☐ 01
- Married ☐ 02
- In a registered civil partnership ☐ 03
- Separated, but still legally married ☐ 04
- Separated, but still in a registered civil partnership ☐ 05
- Divorced ☐ 06
- Formerly in a registered civil partnership which is now dissolved ☐ 07
- Widowed ☐ 08
- Surviving partner from a registered civil partnership ☐ 09
- Cohabitating with a partner ☐ 10
- Prefer not to say ☐ 11

Q22 Are you currently pregnant or did you give birth in the last twelve months?

- Yes ☐ 1
- No ☐ 2
- Not applicable ☐ 3
- Prefer not to say ☐ 4

Q23 How would you describe your ethnic group?

White: British	☐	01
White: Irish	☐	02
White: Traveller of Irish heritage	☐	03
White: Gypsy / Roma	☐	04
Any other White background	☐	05
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	☐	06
Mixed: White and Black African	☐	07
Mixed: White and Asian	☐	08
Mixed: Any other Mixed background	☐	09
Asian / Asian British: Indian	☐	10
Asian / Asian British: Pakistani	☐	11
Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi	☐	12
Chinese	☐	13
Vietnamese	☐	14
Any other Asian background	☐	15
Black / Black British: Somali	☐	16
Black / Black British: Other Africa	☐	17
Black / Black British: Caribbean	☐	18
Any other background	☐	19
Prefer not to say	☐	20
Any other Black background	☐	21

Q24 What is your religion or belief system?

- Agnostic 01
- Buddhist 02
- Hindu 03
- Humanist 04
- Christian 05
- Jewish 06
- Muslim 07
- Sikh 08
- Prefer not to say 09
- No religion or belief 10
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify) 11

Please specify other:

Q25 Do you have caring or parenting responsibilities? (for example, childcare or dependent adults)

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Prefer not to say 3

Pcode Please may I take your postcode?

Q26 Tower Hamlets residents' e-newsletter contains the latest news, events, competitions and special offers from across Tower Hamlets. Would you like to sign up to our residents newsletter?

- Yes 1
- No 2

Q26 Thank you. Please can I take your name and email address?

Name

Email

Bus1 How many employees work in your organisation?

- 1-10 .... ☐ 1
- 11-49 .... ☐ 2
- 50-249 .... ☐ 3
- 250 or more .... ☐ 4

Bus2 What type of business do you operate?

- Financial or insurance .... ☐ 01
- Professional, scientific or technical .... ☐ 02
- Business administration and support services .... ☐ 03
- Information and communication .... ☐ 04
- Health .... ☐ 05
- Education .... ☐ 06
- Accommodation and food services .... ☐ 07
- Public administration and defence .... ☐ 08
- Retail .... ☐ 09
- Arts, entertainment and leisure .... ☐ 10
- Wholesale .... ☐ 11
- Construction .... ☐ 12
- Property .... ☐ 13
- Transport, storage and postage .... ☐ 14
- Manufacturing .... ☐ 15
- Motor trades .... ☐ 16
- Other (please specify): .... ☐ 17

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

READ OUT:

If respondent wishes to check validity of research, offer the following contact details: SMSR Ltd - Freephone 0800 1380845 and speak to Amy Collier (Office Manager) or call the Market Research Society freephone on 0800 975 9596.

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