Tower Hamlets
Annual Residents' Survey 2017

72% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things

The **top resident concerns** are lack of affordable housing and crime

58% feel the Council involves residents in making decisions

79% say they trust the Council

68% feel the Council listens to concerns of local residents

65% feel the Council is doing a better job now than a year ago

47% feel the Council was difficult to get through to on the phone

83% of residents are satisfied with their area as a place to live

67% agreed that the council provides good value for the council tax they pay

92% feel people from different backgrounds get on well together

74% think Tower Hamlets is a cycling friendly borough

92% of residents have access to the internet

Tower Hamlets Council
Corporate Strategy and Equality Service | Corporate Research Unit
June 2017

TOWER HAMLETS

Contents

Summary of key findings

This report presents the headline findings from the 2017 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey. The survey captured the views of 967 Tower Hamlets residents during January to March 2017. Key findings include:

- **Overall satisfaction with the Council**: 72 per cent of residents were satisfied with the way the Council runs things - close to last year's rating and a historical high.

- **Trust:** 79 per cent said they trusted the Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' - up 7 points on last year, and well above the trust rating for councils nationally (59 per cent).

- **Transparency**: 59 per cent agreed that the Council is *'*open and transparent about its activities' - up 7 points on last year*.* Just 8 per cent disagreed, while one third were ambivalent about the issue (ie they neither agreed nor disagreed, or didn't know).

- **Image of the Council**: Views about other aspects of the Council's image have also seen marked improvement over the year. Of the 12 different aspects of image explored, seven saw improvement, and five remained on a par with last year. No area saw a decline.

- **Resident engagement:** The biggest improvement was in relation to resident engagement**:** 68 per cent agreed that the Council listens to concerns of local residents - up 11 points since last year. However, just 58 per cent agreed that the Council involves residents in making decisions.

- **Council staff**: 82 per cent agreed that Council staff were friendly and polite, the most positively rated aspect of the Council's image, and up 7 points over the year. A similar proportion (78 per cent) felt the Council was doing a good job, up 6 points over the year.

- **Efficiency:** Three quarters agreed that the Council was efficient and well run, while two thirds felt the Council provides good value for council tax - both up 7 points over the year. Almost two thirds (65 per cent) of residents felt the Council was doing a better job now than one year ago, close to last year's rating, and at a historical high.

- **Responsiveness**: Opinion remains fairly negative on the issue of council responsiveness: 47 per cent felt the Council was 'difficult to get through to on the phone' - no improvement on recent years. However, the percentage who felt that the Council 'responds quickly when asked for help' rose by 7 points up to 62 per cent. Agreement with the statement 'the Council doesn't do enough for people like me' fell by 8 points to 41 per cent. Despite this improvement, this remains one of the most negatively rated aspects of the Council's image.

- **Service ratings:** Views about local services have held up well over the year, with most service ratings on a par with last year. Three areas saw improvement over the year: collection of council tax, road/pavement repairs and policing - just under two thirds of residents now rate these services positively. Of all services monitored, half now have ratings at historical highs.

Summary of key findings

- **Communications:** Telephone remains the predominant method of contact: around three quarters of those who made contact with the Council did so by phone, while just one in five made contact via the website or email.

- **Digital inclusion:** Most (92 per cent) adults surveyed had access to the internet, and of those, 40 per cent had used the internet to pay for Council services. In terms of how residents would like to get information about the Council, there is a strong preference for both online and print sources, as well as face to face contact.

- **Area satisfaction**: The majority (83 per cent) of residents are very or fairly satisfied with their area as a place to live. A similar proportion (80 per cent) agreed that the Council was 'making the local area a better place to live' - both ratings were in line with last year's.

- **Cohesion**: Views about cohesion remain very positive and continue to improve: the majority of residents (92 per cent) feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together – up 5 points on last year and a new high.

- **Volunteering:** 18 per cent of those surveyed said they had undertaken some form of voluntary work in the past year, though only 7 per cent were regular volunteers, who volunteered weekly or monthly.

- **Top concerns**: A lack of affordable housing is now the most pressing resident concern: 34 per cent of residents cited it as one of their top 3 concerns. Concern over crime fell into second place - down 8 points to 31 per cent. Concern about litter and dirt in the street also saw a big fall of 11 points down to 19 per cent. In contrast, residents became more concerned about rising prices/interest rates (up 12 points to 20 per cent).

- **Anti-social behaviour:** Drug use remains a significant concern for residents: more than half (56 per cent) felt that people using or dealing drugs was a very or fairly big problem in their local area – up 5 points from last year's level. Levels of concern about vandalism and drunk & rowdy behaviour remained at levels similar to last year's (35 and 39 per cent).

- **New housing developments:** Views about new developments were fairly mixed:
  - 62 per cent were satisfied that new developments were well designed and attractive;
  - 41 per cent were satisfied that new developments cater to the needs of all types of people;
  - 37 per cent felt there were enough opportunities for people to comment on what is built where;
  - 35 per cent were satisfied that new housing being built was affordable for a range of people.

  These issues attracted a relatively high level of ambivalence: the proportion who were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' varied between 24-37 per cent across the four statements, higher than the proportion who said they were dissatisfied.

- **Cycling:** 22 per cent of residents were cyclists: 9 per cent cycled weekly or daily, while 13 per cent were 'occasional' cyclists who cycled less often. Almost three quarters (74 per cent) of those surveyed felt Tower Hamlets was cycle friendly.

About the Survey

The Annual Residents' Survey is designed to collect data on resident perceptions about the Council, local services and the area. The questions are closely tied to service priorities, and form a core component of the Council's performance monitoring. They are also designed to provide context for policy development, service delivery and review. The main topics covered are:

- Views about the image of the Council
- Transparency and trust
- Satisfaction with services
- Personal concerns and worries
- Views about anti-social behaviour
- Satisfaction with the local area
- Cohesion and engagement
- Communication with the Council
- Internet access and use
- Cycling
- Views about new developments
- Volunteering
- Demographic data

Methodology

The survey took place during 12th January – 16th March 2017 and comprised 967 face to face interviews. The methodology is designed to ensure that the sample drawn is representative of the borough's population generally. Residents were interviewed at 123 different sample points across the borough to ensure a good cross section by area. Also, sampling quotas were set on age, gender, ethnicity and working status to ensure that the sample reflected the characteristics of the population.

Survey contractor

The survey is carried out by an independent market research company on behalf of the Council. Following a competitive tendering process in 2015, Westco Trading was commissioned to carry out the survey from 2016 to 2018, in association with Infocorp, their fieldwork partner. Previously, the survey had been carried out by TNS-BMRB from 1999-2015. Despite the change in contractor, the survey design and methodology remains the same as before.

Trend data and potential discontinuities

Where available, trend data are presented in this report. While every effort has been made to minimise potential discontinuities in the survey data over time, inevitably, some may occur (eg due to changes in question wording, order, survey contractor changes). Where changes to question wording (or answer categories) have been substantive over this period, only the latest data are presented.

Statistical significance and interpretation of survey data

All figures presented are survey estimates, not precise measures, and as such, they have a degree of sampling variability attached to them. The concept of 'statistical significance' is used here to highlight those differences that are likely to reflect 'real' changes over time, as opposed to those which may be simply reflecting sampling variability attached to estimates. **Changes over the year that are statistically significant are denoted by arrows ⇧⇩ and highlighted in the narrative.** All figures presented are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Image of the Council

Views about different aspects of the Council's image have seen marked improvement over the year. Of the 12 areas explored, 7 saw improvement and five remained on a par with last year's ratings (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Council staff continue to be one of the most highly rated aspects of the Council's image: 82 per cent of residents agreed ('a great deal' or 'to some extent') that staff were friendly and polite, up 7 points on last year's rating, a new high.

Four out of five residents agreed that the Council was making the local area a better place to live - in line with last year's rating.

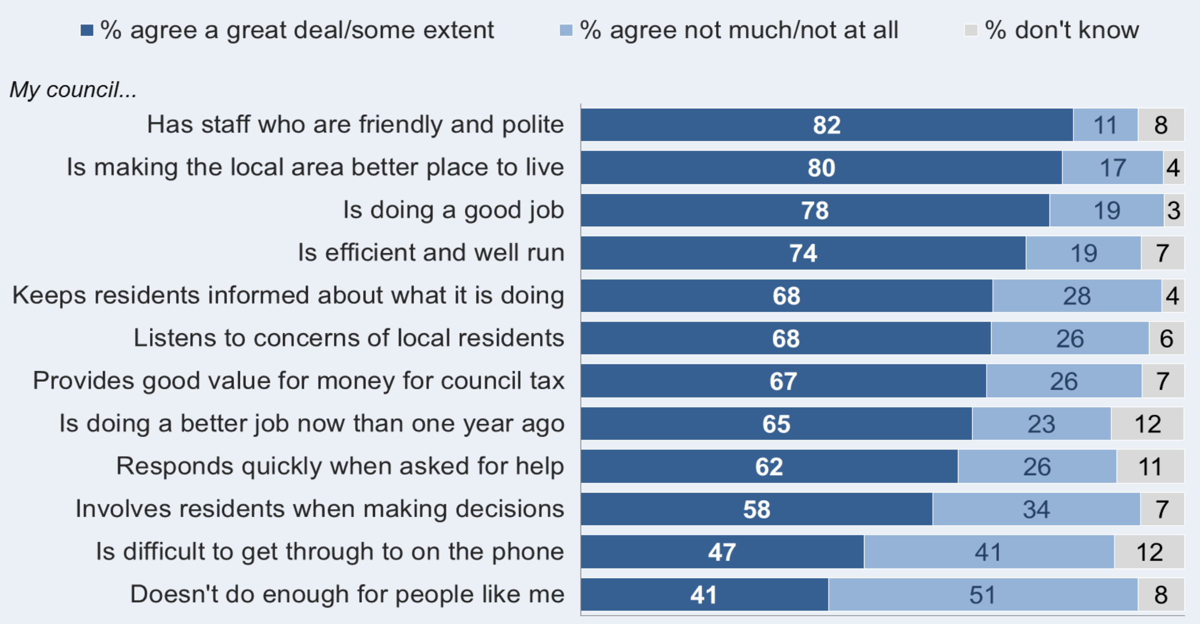
A similar proportion (78 per cent) felt the Council was doing a good job - up 6 points over the year. Three quarters felt the Council was 'efficient and well run', also an improvement over the year (+7 points).

Around two thirds (67 per cent) felt the Council provides good value for money for the Council tax they pay, up 7 points over the year.

The percentage who feel the Council is doing a better job now than a year ago remains relatively high (65 per cent). This is close to last year's rating and is now a historical high.

Views about resident engagement are improving: 68 per cent felt the council listens to the concerns of local residents, up 11 points over the year. This is most improved aspect of the Council's image, and a new historical high. The same proportion (68 per cent) agreed the Council keeps residents informed about what it was doing – similar to last year.

Figure 1: Views about image of the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2017



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2017, Westco Trading, (sample size=967)

Image of the Council

However, just 58 per cent felt the Council involves residents in making decisions while one third disagreed. This is consistent with responses to a question asked later in the survey (see page 19) which asks residents whether they could ‘influence decisions’ affecting their local area: 58 per cent agreed they could - though on this measure, there was improvement over the year (a rise of 9 points over the year).

Opinion remains fairly negative on the issue of council responsiveness: 47 per cent felt the Council was ‘difficult to get through to on the phone’ - no improvement on last year, and well above the historical low on this measure (36 per cent in 2012). However, the percentage of residents who felt that the Council responds quickly when asked for help rose by 7 points this year up to 62 per cent.

Agreement with the statement ‘the Council doesn’t do enough for people like me’ fell by 8 points to 41 per cent. However, despite this improvement, this remains one of the most negatively rated aspects of the Council’s image.

Of the 12 aspects of image monitored, nine now have ratings at historical highs (since the survey began in 1999). Appendix A shows long term trends for ratings across all 12 measures.

Table 1: Views about the image of the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2013-2017

% agree 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'	2013	2014	2015	2016	**2017**	Change over year*	
'My council…'							
Has staff who are friendly and polite	77	74	75	75	**82**	7	⇧
Is making the local area a better place to live	74	74	76	77	**80**	3	-
Is doing a good job	76	73	75	72	**78**	6	⇧
Is efficient and well-run	66	66	67	67	**74**	7	⇧
Keeps residents informed about what they are doing	73	69	73	71	**68**	-3	-
Listens to concerns of local residents	56	56	55	57	**68**	11	⇧
Provides good value for the Council Tax I pay	50	51	53	60	**67**	7	⇧
Is doing a better job now than one year ago	42	48	44	61	**65**	4	-
Responds quickly when asked for help	51	51	52	55	**62**	7	⇧
Involves residents when making decisions	49	47	53	55	**58**	3	-
Is difficult to get through to on phone	*38*	*44*	*41*	*49*	***47***	*-2*	-
Doesn’t do enough for people like me	*40*	*42*	*43*	*49*	***41***	*-8*	⇩

Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco (2016, 2017 data), TNS-BMRB (previous years).

Notes: Figures *in italics* are negative statements - so a fall in the percentage is an improvement.

*Changes that are statistically significant are denoted by arrows.

Overall level of satisfaction with the Council

After residents had been asked a range of questions about individual services, they were then asked: ‘Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Tower Hamlets Council runs things’.

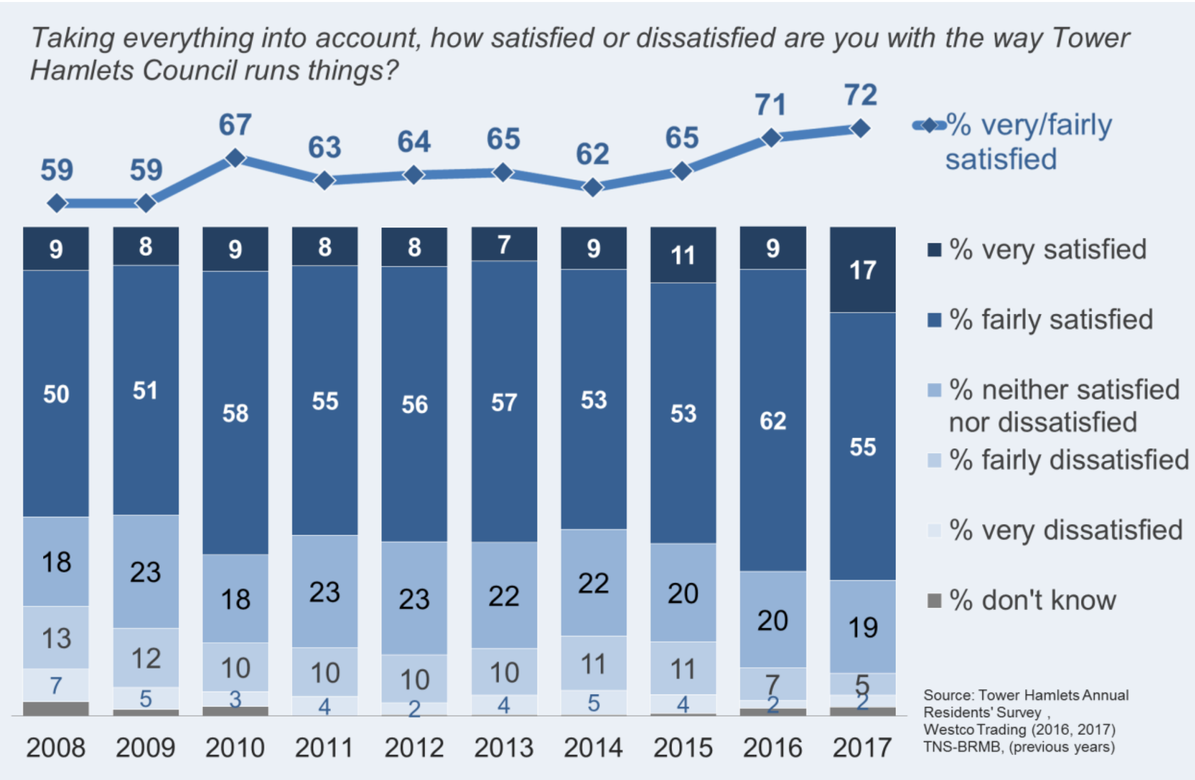
In response, 72 per cent said they were very, or fairly, satisfied with the way the Council runs things, on a par with last year’s rating for 71 per cent and now at a historical high (Figure 2).

While the overall proportion who are satisfied showed no significant change over the year, the proportion who said they were ‘very satisfied’ almost doubled from 9 to 17 per cent. Correspondingly the proportion who said ‘fairly satisfied’ fell from 62 to 55 per cent.

Benchmarking

The LGA run a regular telephone poll[1] to assess satisfaction with local councils nationally (Great Britain). The latest survey for February 2017 found that 65 per cent of those polled were very or fairly satisfied with their local council - 7 points lower than the Tower Hamlets rating. Note: the two surveys are different in terms of their methodology - so comparisons should be viewed as ‘indicative’ only (See Appendix C for more information on benchmarking data).

Figure 2: Council satisfaction, Tower Hamlets, 2008-2017



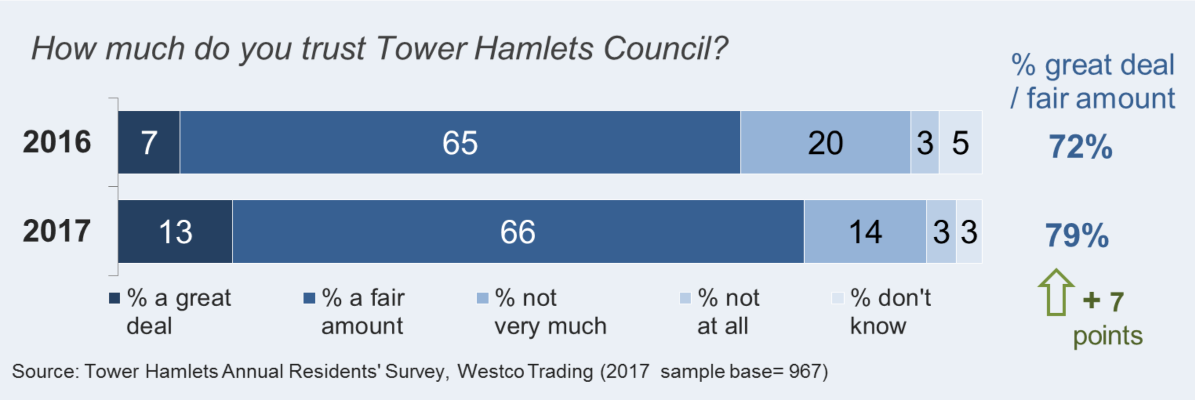
[1] LGA, Polling on resident satisfaction with councils, February 2017
http://www.local.gov.uk/polling-resident-satisfaction-councils-february-2017

Trust

Two new questions were put on the survey last year to explore perceptions around trust and transparency. The latest data show an improving picture (Figure 3).

When asked how much they trusted the Council, 79 per cent of respondents surveyed said they trusted the Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount', - up 7 points on last year. The trust rating in Tower Hamlets is far higher than the trust rating recorded in the LGA's national poll. Nationally, 59 per cent of those surveyed said they trusted their local council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' - 20 points lower than the rating for Tower Hamlets Council.

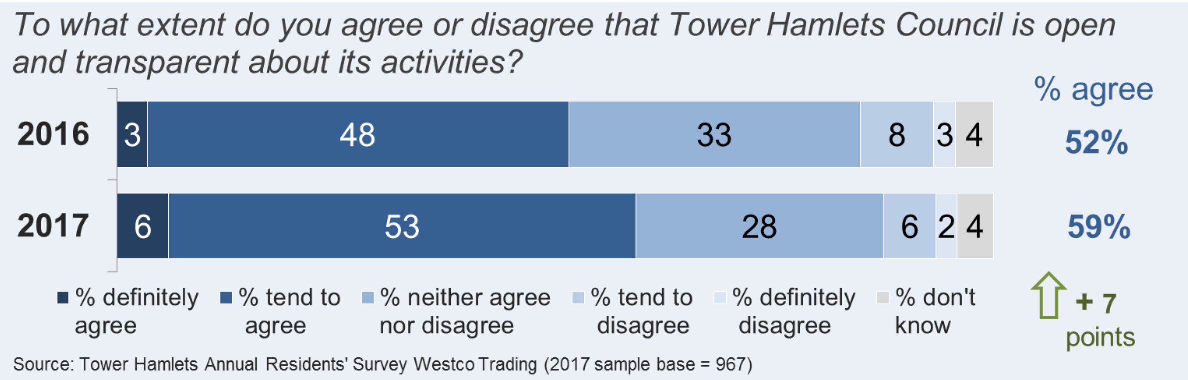
Figure 3: Trust in the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2016-2017



Transparency

Views about transparency also showed significant improvement over the year. When asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'Tower Hamlets Council is open and transparent about its activities' 59 per cent agreed - up 7 points on last year. Just 8 per cent disagreed, while one third were ambivalent about the issue - they neither agreed nor disagreed (or didn't know).

Figure 4: Views about transparency, Tower Hamlets, 2016-2017



Satisfaction with services

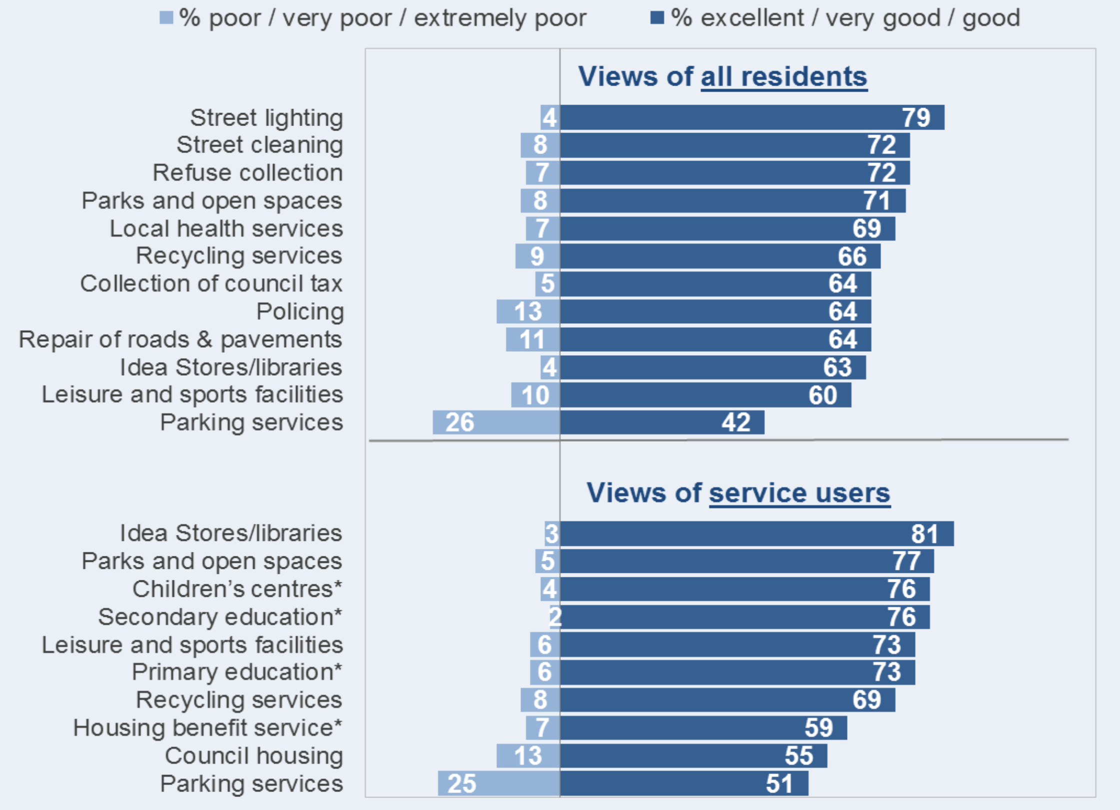
Service satisfaction ratings are monitored for 17 different service areas. Residents were asked: '*I would like to ask you about local services in this area. I would like your opinion of these services even if you yourself have not had direct experience of them. I would like to ask you your opinion of…?'* Respondents were asked to rate each service on a 7 point scale: excellent, very good, good, average, poor, very poor, extremely poor. Two different measures are presented:

- **'All resident' ratings:** these relate to general perceptions about services from all residents, regardless of whether they use the service or not. These cover 12 services and are monitored for universal services and services used by a significant proportion of residents.

- **User ratings**: these provide views of service users and are monitored for 10 services. These offer a more informed assessment of services for non-universal services. For five service areas *all resident* and *user* ratings are both reported.

As Figure 5 illustrates, the majority of services attract a high positive net rating (where the percentage rating the service as good to excellent well outweighs the percentage rating it as poor). The remainder rate the service as average (or they say 'don't know'). As in previous years, the main exception is parking services where opinion is a bit more divided.

Figure 5: Service ratings: all residents and users, Tower Hamlets, 2017



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2017 (Westco Trading).
Notes: Residents were presented with a 7 point answer scale, which also included 'average', not shown.
* Denotes service ratings based on small sample size (<300) - these have larger confidence intervals.

Across universal services, street lighting is the most highly rated service area, rated positively (good, very good or excellent) by 79 per cent of residents - just 4 per cent rated street lighting as poor. Street cleaning, refuse collection and parks & open spaces, also attract relatively positive ratings: 71-72 per cent of residents rate these services positively. Similarly, local health services were rated as good through to excellent by just over two thirds of residents (69 per cent).

The services which attract the highest user satisfaction ratings are: Idea Stores and libraries (81 per cent); parks and open spaces (77 per cent), Children's Centres and secondary schools (both 76 per cent). As in previous years, user ratings remain lowest for parking services and council housing (51 and 55 per cent).

All resident and *user* ratings are both reported for five service areas: Idea Stores and libraries; parks and open spaces; leisure and sports facilities; recycling and parking services. In all cases, those who use these services rate the service more highly compared with the population generally - the gap is largest for Idea Stores/libraries (81 vs. 63 per cent).

Service ratings: trend data

Table 2 shows trends in service ratings over the last five years. The latest data for 2017 show that ratings have held up well over the year, with most services on a par with last year, and some showing improvement. Of all the services monitored, half now have ratings at historical highs (since the survey began in 1999).

On the 12 'all resident' ratings measures, 9 service areas had ratings similar to last year, and three saw a significant improvement in ratings:

- Collection of council tax (up 7 points);
- Road/pavement repairs (+ 6 points);
- Policing (+ 5 points).

User satisfaction trends

Trends in user satisfaction are also presented in Table 2. Of the 10 service areas monitored, 8 had ratings on a par with last year (ie no significantly significant differences) and 2 areas saw a significant change:

- Views about council housing improved over the year by 9 points: 55 per cent of council tenants now rate council housing has good through to excellent.
- The user rating for primary schools fell to 73 points - a fall of 9 points - returning it down to its level in 2013-2015.

However, trends in user ratings need careful interpretation. Many of the service ratings are based on relatively small samples of users - this means they have larger margins of error and are prone to more volatility than the 'all resident' ratings. For this reason, longer term trend data may provide a better picture of change for user trends. Appendix B provides longer term trend data back to 1999 for all services.

Table 2. Service satisfaction ratings 2013-2017

	% rating service good, very good or excellent					*Change over year**		*Sample size (2017)*
	2013	2014	2015	2016	**2017**			
Views of all residents								
Street lighting	67	70	69	78	**79**	1	-	967
Refuse collection	65	62	65	70	**72**	2	-	967
Street cleaning	59	55	58	70	**72**	2	-	967
Parks and open spaces	60	61	64	69	**71**	2	-	967
Local health services	63	59	60	69	**69**	0	-	967
Recycling services	64	61	64	66	**66**	0	-	967
Road/pavement repairs	40	43	45	58	**64**	6	⇧	967
Policing	49	50	49	59	**64**	5	⇧	967
Collection of council tax	62	53	60	57	**64**	7	⇧	967
Idea Stores/libraries	62	61	**63**	62	**63**	1	-	967
Leisure & sports facilities	49	48	50	61	**60**	-1	-	967
Parking Services	25	29	28	42	**42**	0	-	967
Views of service users								
Idea Stores/libraries	81	79	79	83	**81**	-2	-	*378*
Parks and open spaces	66	66	70	77	**77**	0	-	*686*
Children's centres**	77	72	73	67	**76**	9	-	*102*
Secondary education**	69	65	75	82	**76**	-6	-	*169*
Primary education**	74	72	75	82	**73**	-9	⇩	*180*
Leisure & sports facilities	66	63	64	78	**73**	-5	-	*414*
Recycling services	71	67	70	73	**69**	-4	-	*624*
Housing Benefit service**	54	56	57	55	**59**	4	-	*254*
Council Housing	42	42	44	46	**55**	9	⇧	*359*
Parking Services	29	38	35	54	**51**	-3	-	*389*

Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco (2016, 2017 data), TNS-BMRB (previous years).
*Changes that are statistically significant are denoted by arrows.
** These service ratings are based on smaller sample sizes (below 300), so confidence intervals attached to these estimates are larger than for other services (around ± 7-9 percentage points). For this reason, apparently large swings in user ratings are often not statistically significant.

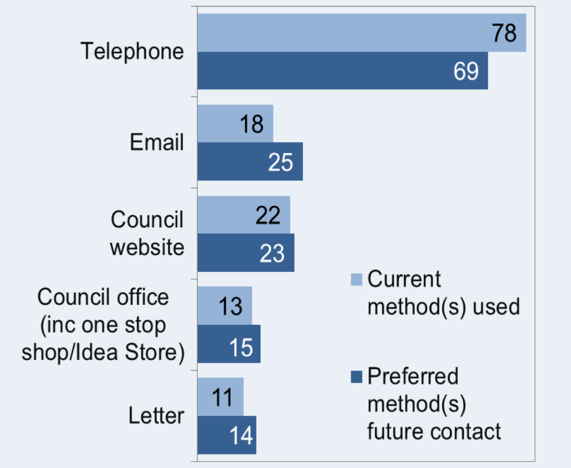
Communication with the Council

Around two-thirds of those surveyed had made contact with the Council over the last year. When asked about ease of contact, the majority (80 per cent) said they found it very or fairly easy to contact the Council, similar to last year.

Telephone remains, by far, the most popular method of contact, used by 78 per cent of those who had contacted the Council over the last year. It is also the most popular preferred future method of contact (69 per cent).

Just over one in five residents (22 per cent) had made contact using the Council's website and around 18 per cent said they had used email. A significant proportion (13 per cent) of residents continue to make contact in person - by visiting a council office (or one stop shop/Idea Store/library), and a similar proportion would prefer to do so in the future.

Figure 6: Current and preferred methods of contacting the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2017



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2017, Westco Trading. Current method figures relate to percentage of those who had contacted council (base 656), while future contact relate to all respondents (base 967).

Preferred ways to get Council information

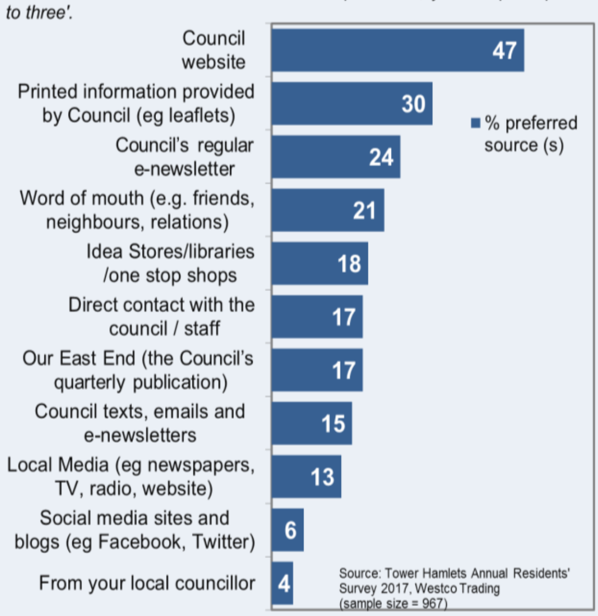
Residents were asked to identify their top three ways to get information about the Council. While the results show a strong preference for online sources, there is also still a strong interest in getting information via print methods and face to face contact (Figure 7).

Almost one half said they would like to source information via the Council website and one quarter (24 per cent) said they would like to get information via a regular e-newsletter.

However, 30 per cent favoured printed information provided by the Council. Around one in six residents favoured getting information from Idea Stores/libraries/one stop shops and a similar proportion said they would like to get information through direct contact with Council staff (including meetings and events).

Figure 7: Preferred ways to get Council information, 2017

Thinking about ways you get information about the Council, which of these sources of information would you prefer to use to find out about Tower Hamlets Council and the services it provides?, you can pick up to three'.



Internet access and use

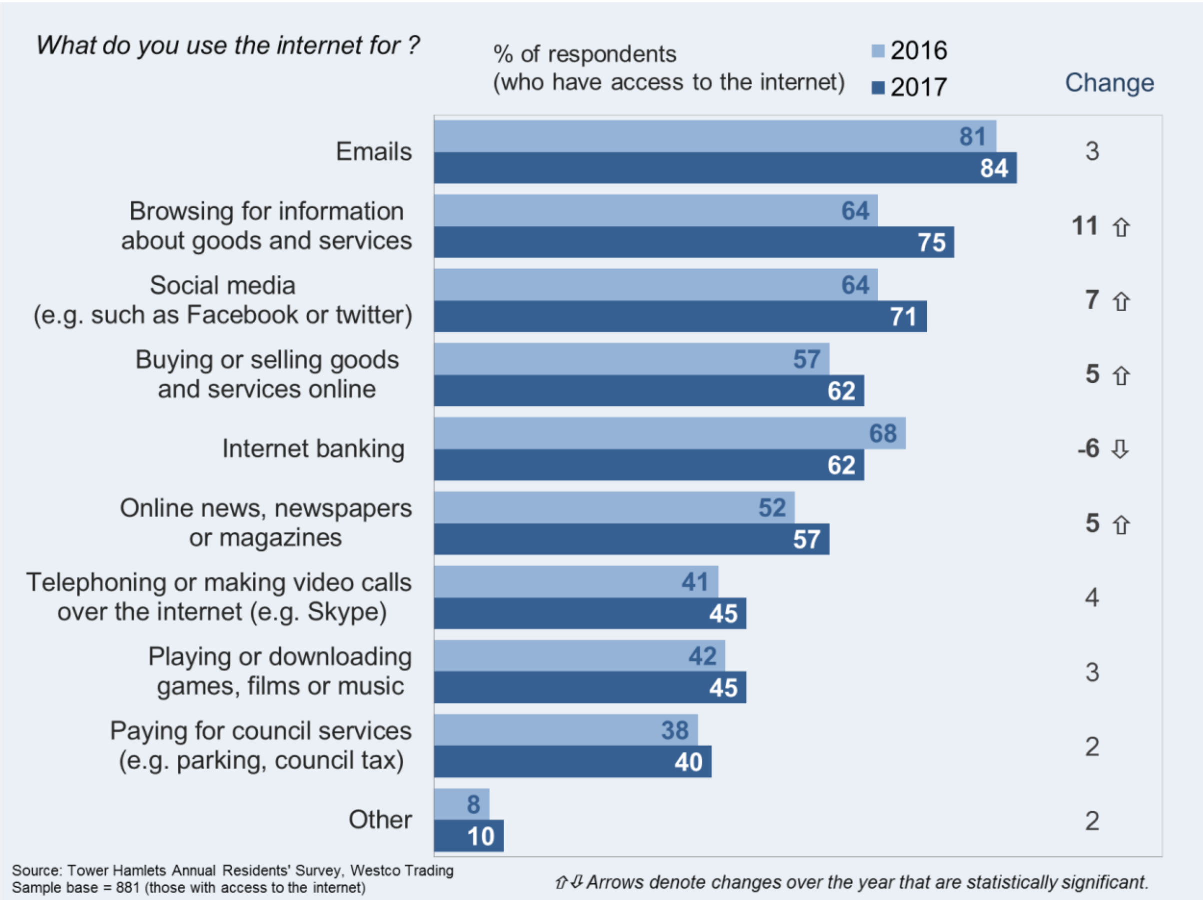
The majority (92 per cent) of respondents said they had access to the internet, the same as last year.

Figure 8 shows what residents use the internet for. The most popular activities are: email (84 per cent), web browsing (75 per cent) and social media (71 per cent).

Just 40 per cent of internet users said they used the internet to pay for Council services online, a similar level to last year.

Overall, while patterns of use are broadly similar to last year, levels of use are rising. Four activities have become more popular over the year: web browsing; buying and selling of goods online; social media and online news. The only area to see a decline was internet banking - used by 62 per cent of those with access to the internet - down 6 points compared with last year.

Figure 8: Internet access and use, Tower Hamlets, 2016 and 2017



Concerns

Residents were presented with a list of 15 issues and asked to say which three (if any) were their top personal concerns. This year, residents ranked lack of affordable housing and crime as their most pressing concerns (34 and 31 per cent). Issues residents were least concerned about included poor public transport and the standard of education (cited by just 3 and 4 per cent of residents as key concerns).

Concern rankings have seen significant change over the year. Areas to see the largest falls in concern were:

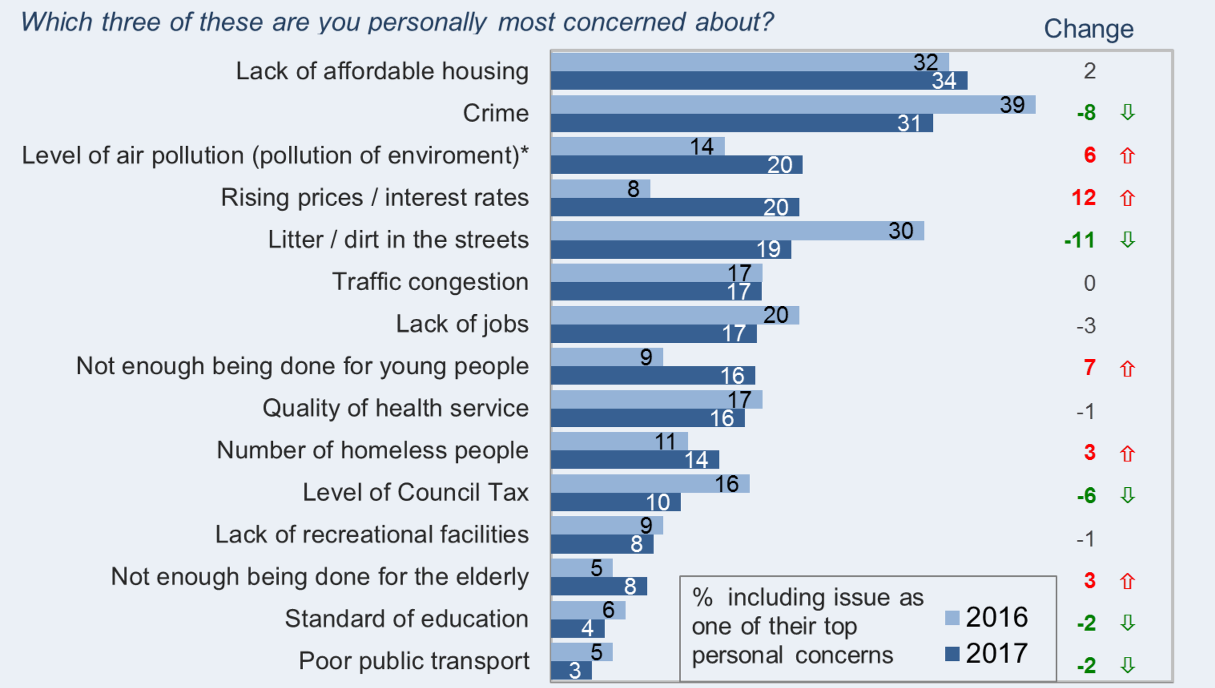
- Litter/dirt in the streets (down 11 points);
- Crime (down 8 points);
- The level of council tax (down 6 points).

The areas to see the largest rises in concern were:

- Rising prices/interest rates (up 12 points);
- Not enough being done for young people (up 7 points);

One in five (20 per cent) residents were concerned about the level of air pollution - a rise of 6 points over the year. However, the wording of this category did change slightly over this period (previously, it was described as 'pollution of the environment') which could have impacted on the comparison.

Figure 9: Top personal concerns of residents, Tower Hamlets, 2016 and 2017



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco Trading (2017 sample size = 967)
⇧⇩ Arrows denote changes over the year that are statistically significant.
** The wording of the pollution category changed from 'pollution of the environment' to 'level of air pollution' in 2017.*

Anti-social behaviour

Figure 10 charts resident perceptions about four different types of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Residents were asked to say to what extent they felt each issue was a big problem in their area.

More than half of those surveyed (56 per cent) felt that people using or dealing drugs was a big problem in their local area – up 5 points from last year's level (51 per cent). The proportion who feel people being drunk or rowdy was a problem was 39 per cent - the same level as last year, but well below the level recorded in 2014 (of 50 per cent).

Figure 10: Views about ASB in Tower Hamlets, 2017

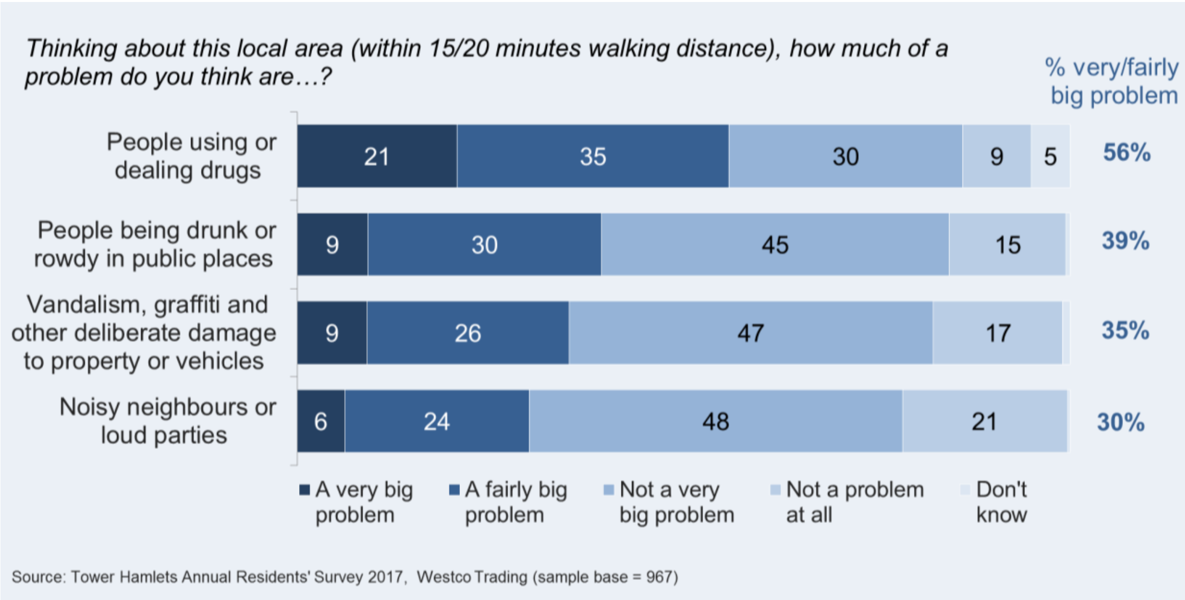
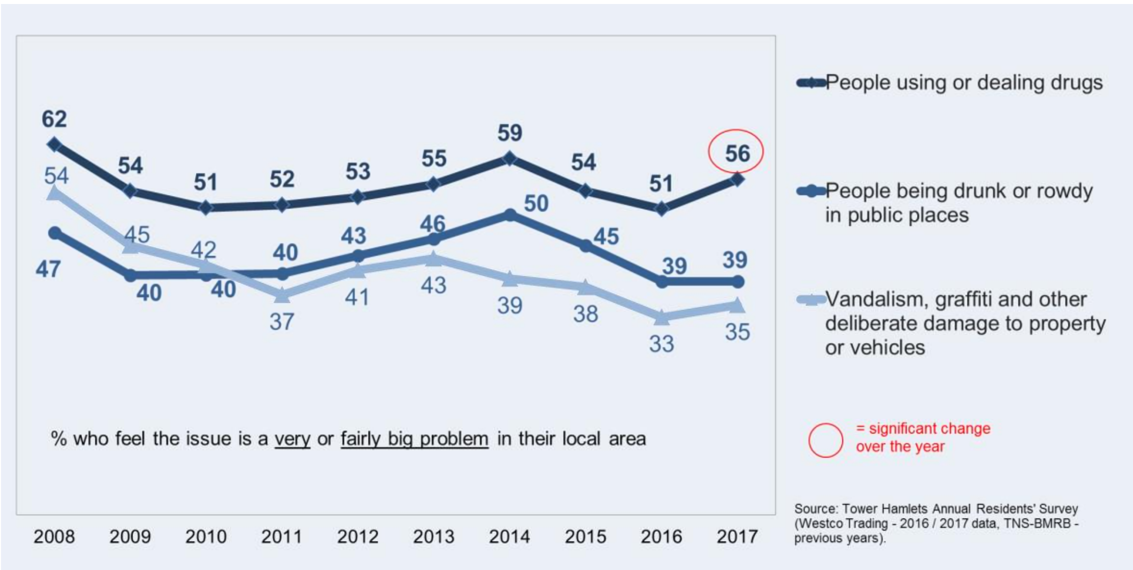


Figure 11: Trends in ASB perceptions, Tower Hamlets, 2008-17



Concern about vandalism, graffiti and criminal damage remains relatively low, by historical standards: just over one third felt it was a big problem in their local area, similar to last year's level but well below the level ten years ago when more than half of those surveyed felt it was a big problem.

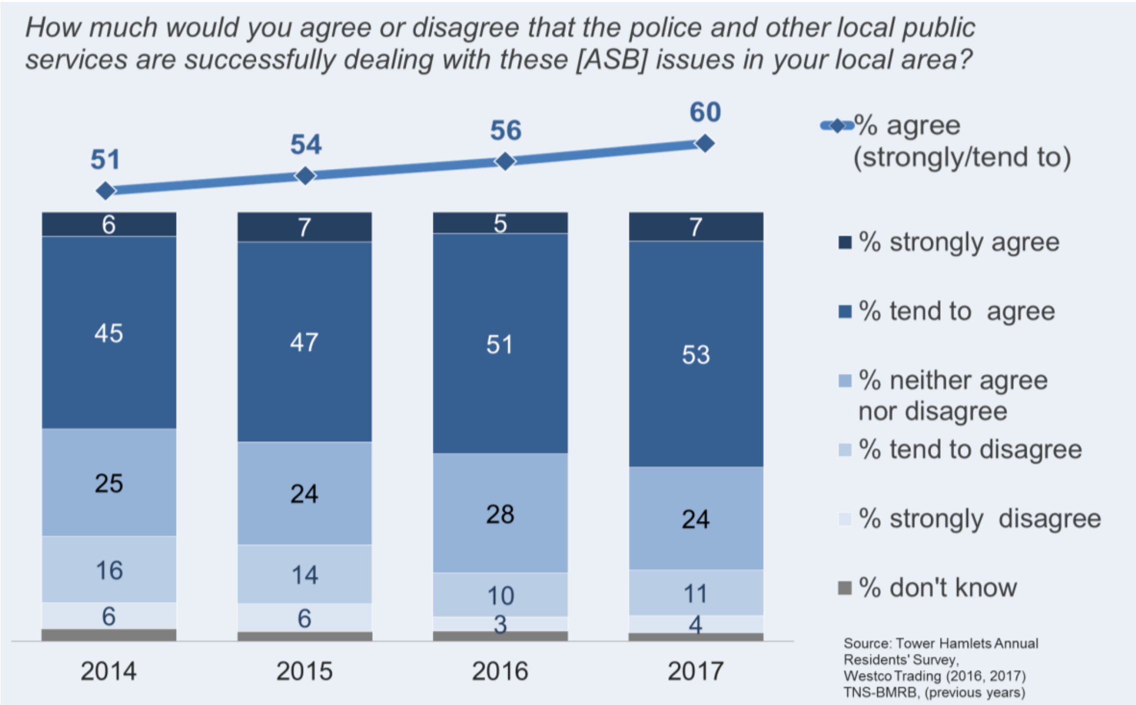
Just under one third (30 per cent) of respondents felt noisy neighbours or loud parties were a problem in their area. *Note: this was a new category added this year, so no trend data were available.*

Success in dealing with anti-social behaviour

After the ASB questions, respondents were then asked 'How much would you agree or disagree that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with these [ASB] issues in your local area'. In response: 60 per cent agreed, 15 per cent disagreed and around one quarter were ambivalent (they neither agreed nor disagreed, or didn't know).

The percentage who agree rose 4 points over the last year; while this annual rise was not 'statistically significant', trend data do indicate that there has been a slow and steady improvement in the rating over the last four years from 51 to 60 per cent[2].

Figure 12: Success in dealing with ASB, Tower Hamlets, 2014-2017

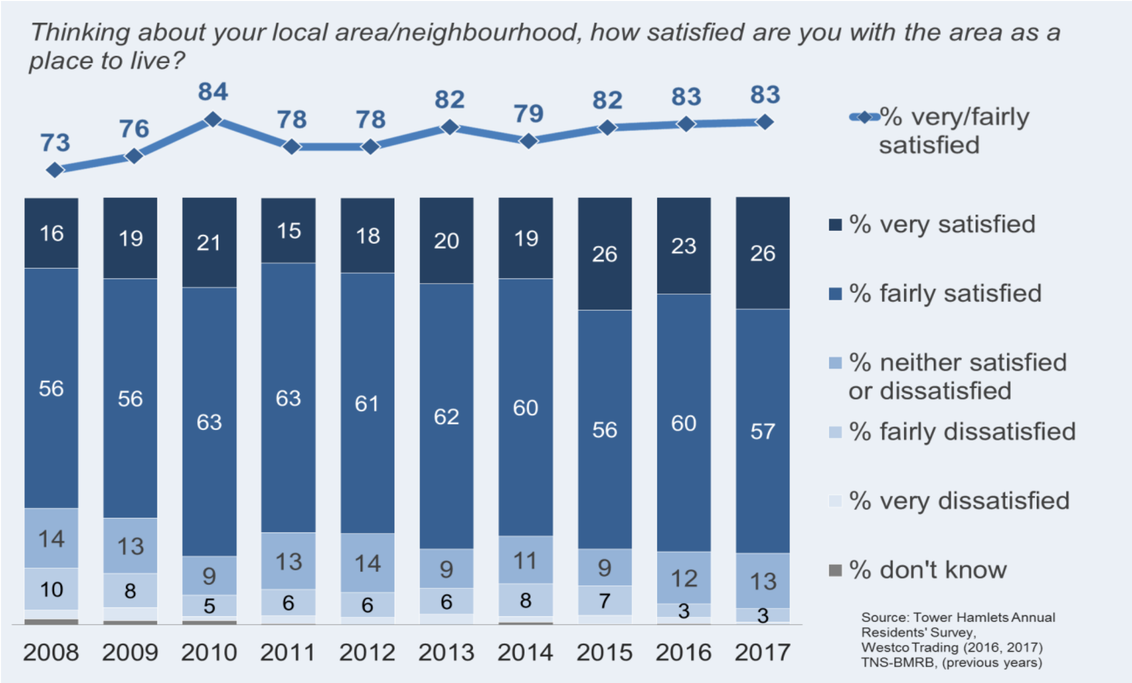


[2] Note: In considering trends on this indicator, it should be noted that a change was made to the one of the four categories in the preceding question on ASB problems. In 2017, the category 'rubbish/litter lying around' was removed and replaced with 'noisy neighbours or loud parties'. This could affect comparisons of the 'success in dealing with ASB' question between 2016 and 2017.

Area satisfaction

Views about the area remain positive: 83 per cent said they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live – similar to previous years. This is broadly in line with the level of area satisfaction nationally: the LGA's most recent poll found that 80 per cent of residents were satisfied with their area as a place to live (Appendix C).

Figure 13: Area satisfaction, Tower Hamlets, 2008-2017



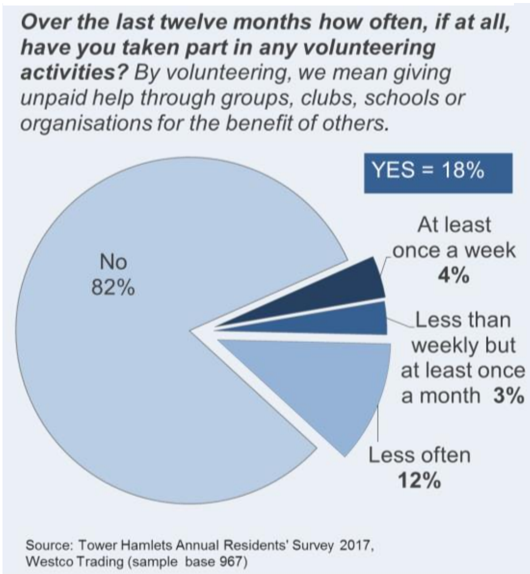
Volunteering

Residents were asked whether they had done any voluntary work in the last year. Volunteering was defined as 'giving unpaid help through groups, clubs, schools or organisations for the benefit of others'.

In total, 18 per cent said they had undertaken some form of voluntary work in the past year.

Just under half of this group (7 per cent of residents) were regular volunteers - who volunteered at least weekly or monthly. While 12 per cent were occasional volunteers who volunteered less frequently. *Note: All figures are rounded to nearest percentage point (which is why the rounded figures do not sum exactly to 18 per cent).*

Figure 14: Volunteering in Tower Hamlets, 2017

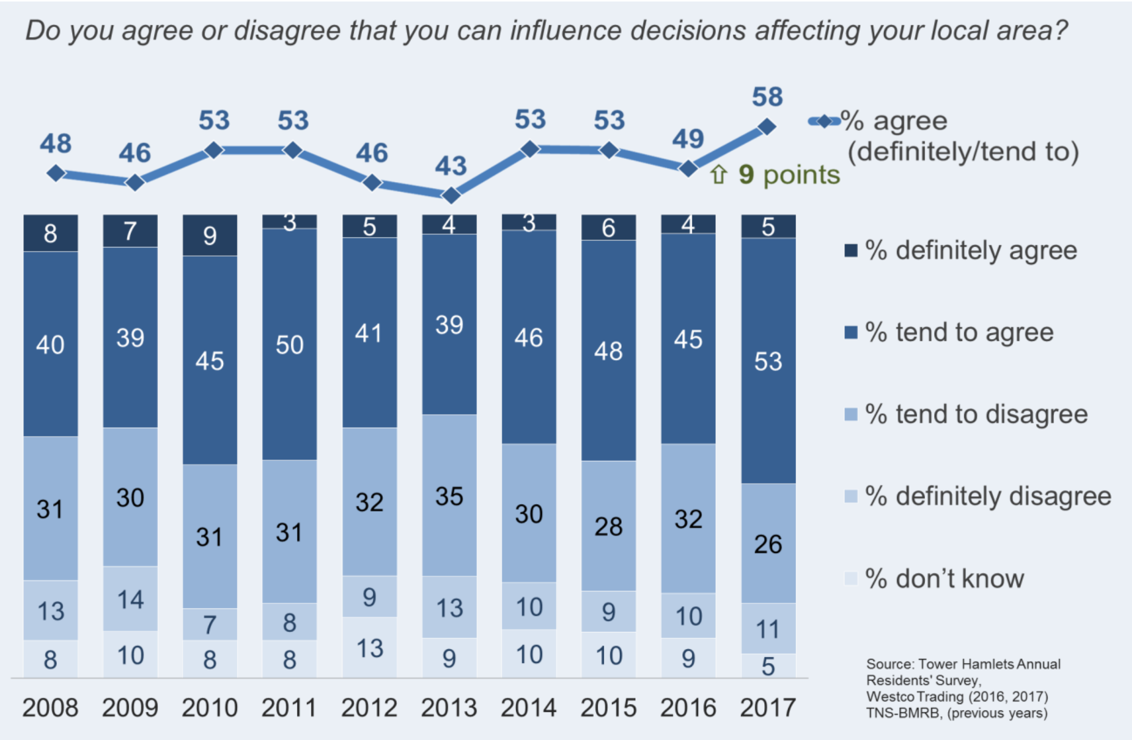


Influencing decisions

While views about resident engagement remain mixed, recent trend data show improvement. Residents were asked whether they felt they could influence decisions affecting their local areas: 58 per cent agreed they could, while 37 per cent disagreed. The percentage who agreed is up 9 points over the year - a significant rise (Figure 15).

These figures are broadly consistent with data presented earlier on resident engagement (see page 6). A similar proportion agreed with the statement that the Council ‘involves residents when making decisions’.

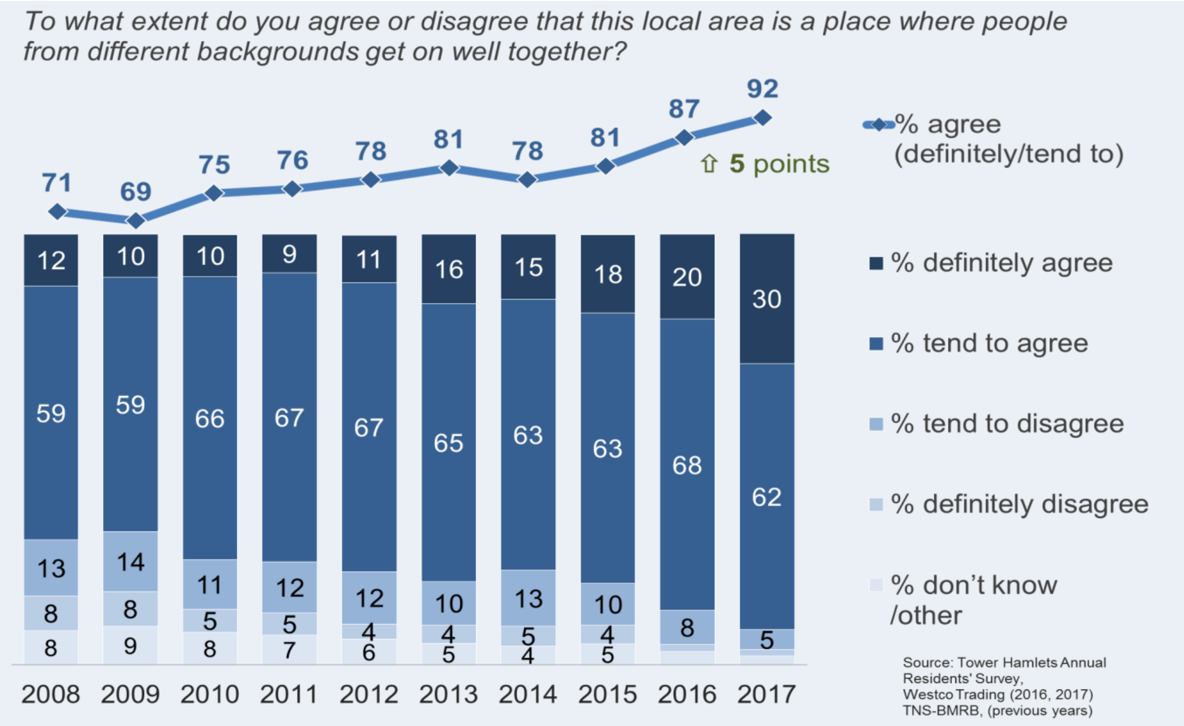
Figure 15: Influencing decisions, Tower Hamlets, 2008-2017



Cohesion and fairness

Views about cohesion continue to improve: the majority of residents (92 per cent) agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together – up 5 points on last year – a new historical high.

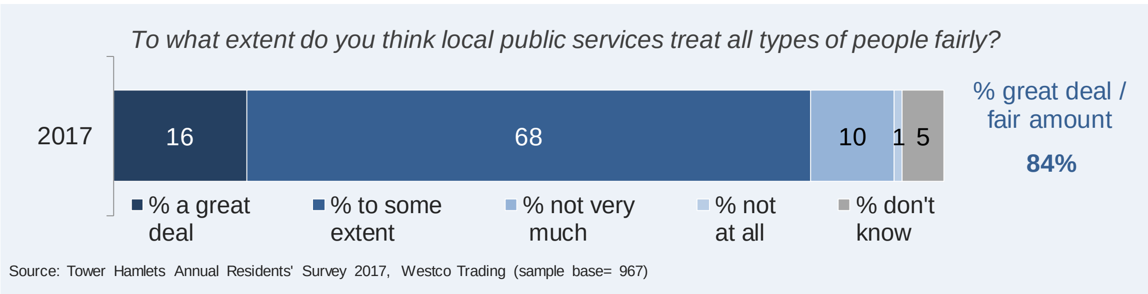
Figure 16: Views about cohesion, Tower Hamlets, 2008-2017



A new question was added to the survey this year about fairness: 'To what extent do you think local public services treat all types of people fairly'? In response, 84 per cent agreed: 16 per cent agreed a great deal and 68 per cent agreed 'to some extent'.

This contrasts with views about the Council - discussed earlier: 41 per cent of residents agreed (either a great deal or to some extent) with the statement: 'the Council doesn't do enough for people like me'. So perspectives about fairness of treatment vary considerably in relation to what particular aspect is being explored.

Figure 17: Fairness of treatment, Tower Hamlets, 2017



Views about new housing developments

A new question was included this year to explore resident perceptions about different aspects of new housing developments across the borough (Figure 18). Views were fairly mixed and a fair proportion of residents were ambivalent about the issues explored.

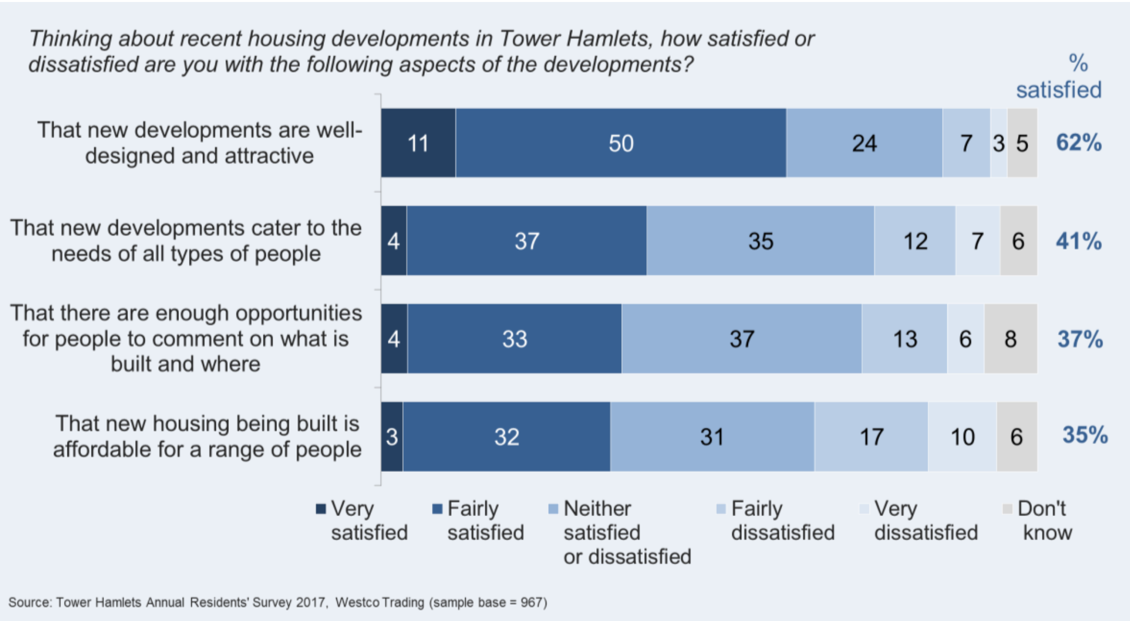
Of the four areas, the most positively rated aspect was the extent to which new developments were felt to be well designed and attractive: just under two thirds of those surveyed (62 per cent) were satisfied with this aspect of new development and 10 per cent were dissatisfied. One quarter were ambivalent (were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) and 5 per cent said they didn't know.

Views were less positive about the extent to which new developments were felt to 'cater for the needs of all types of people': just 41 per cent were satisfied this was the case and 19 per cent were dissatisfied. Again, levels of ambivalence were quite high (35 per cent neither satisfied nor dissatisfied)

There was a similar picture in relation to whether people felt 'there were enough opportunities to comment on what is built and where', just 37 per cent were satisfied that there were. Again, a relatively high proportion were ambivalent or didn't know (45 per cent).

Views were most negative about affordability. Just 35 per cent of residents were satisfied that 'new housing being built was affordable for a range of people', 28 per cent were dissatisfied. The remainder were ambivalent: 31 per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 6 per cent said they didn't know.

Figure 18: Views about new housing developments, Tower Hamlets, 2017

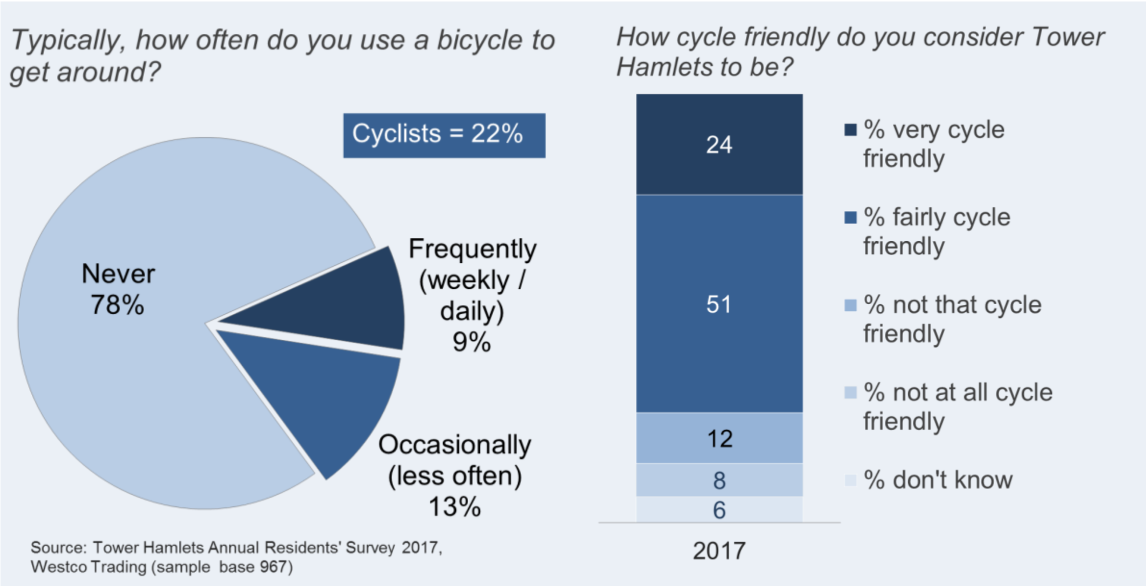


Views about cycling

Just over one in five residents (22 per cent) were cyclists: 9 per cent were regular cyclists who cycled weekly or daily, while 13 per cent were ‘occasional’ cyclists who cycled less often.

Almost three quarters (74 per cent) of those surveyed felt Tower Hamlets was cycle friendly[3].

Figure 19: Cycling in Tower Hamlets, 2017



Further information

This report provides a summary of the headline results. More detailed analysis of the survey will be undertaken in coming months. Information from previous surveys can be found on the Council’s website at the following link: http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/borough_statistics/Annual_Residents_Survey.aspx

This briefing was produced by the Council’s Corporate Research Unit. For queries about this report, or the survey, please contact us:

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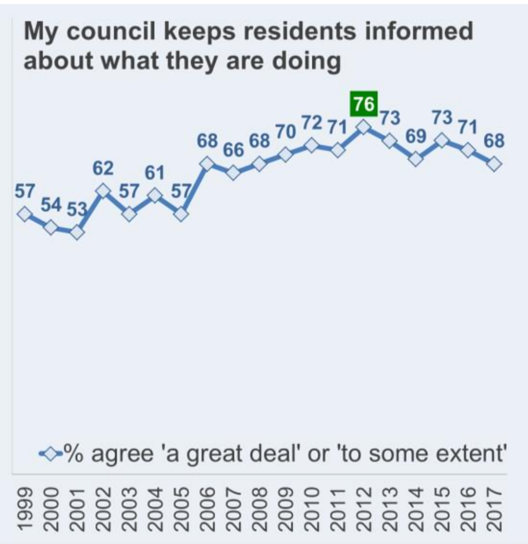
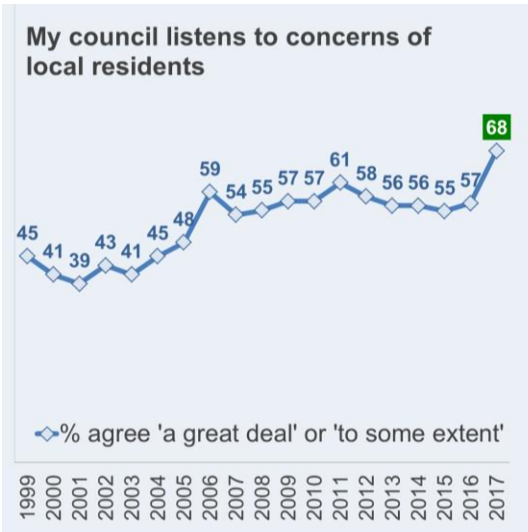
Officer contact for this report: lorna.spence@towerhamlets.gov.uk

[3] All percentages have been rounded to the nearest percentage point. This why individual statistics shown on charts do not always sum exactly to the summary totals quoted in the narrative.

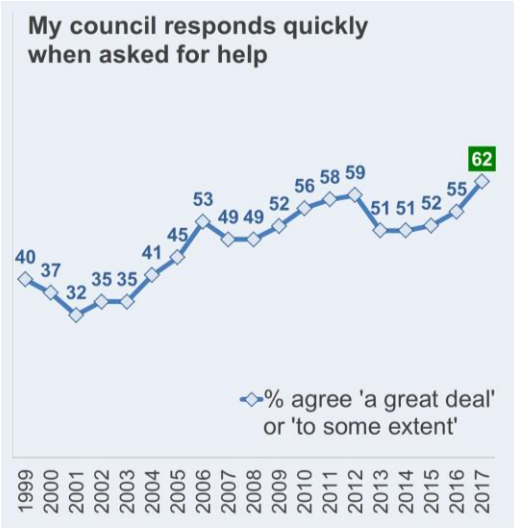
Appendix A: Image of the Council trend data 1999-2017

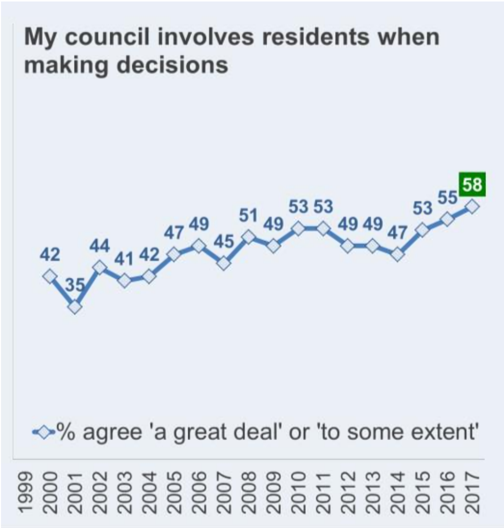




Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco Trading (2016, 2017); TNS-BMRB (previous years).
Notes: Figures in green are historical highs.

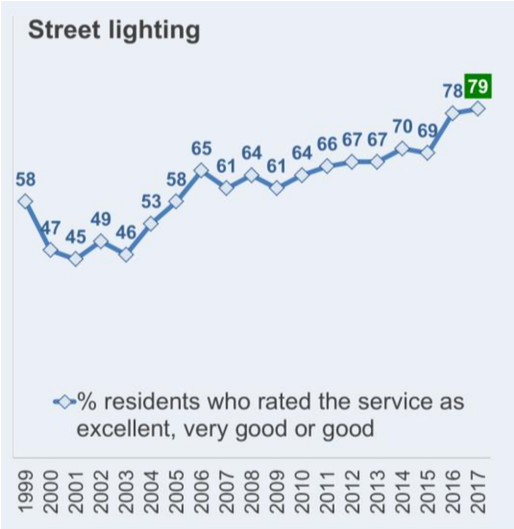
Appendix A: Image of the Council trend data 1999-2017

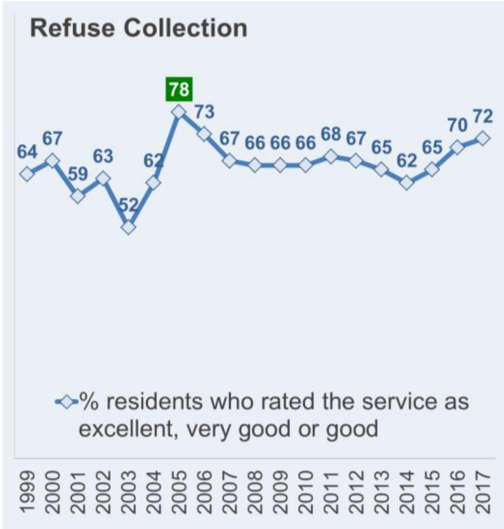


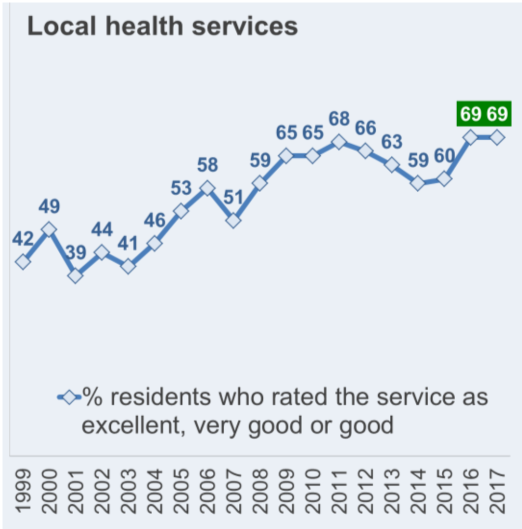


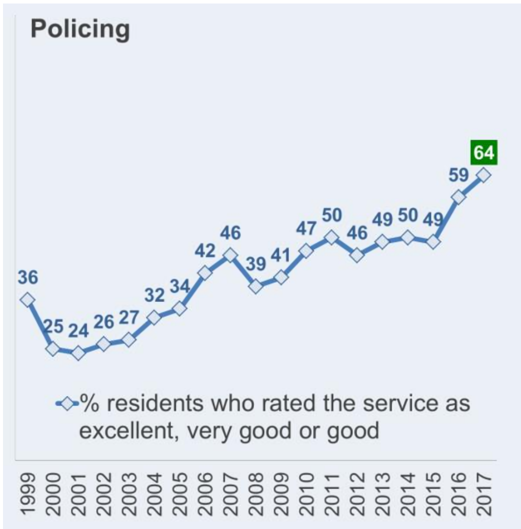
Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco Trading (2016, 2017); TNS-BMRB (previous years).
Notes: Figures in green are historical highs (or lows in the case of the two negative statements).

Appendix B: Service ratings trend data 1999-2017



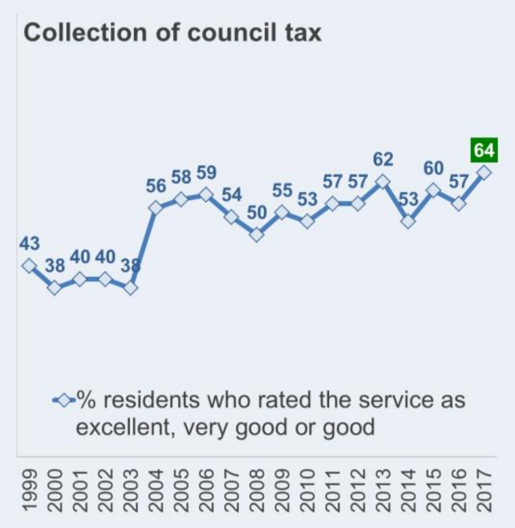


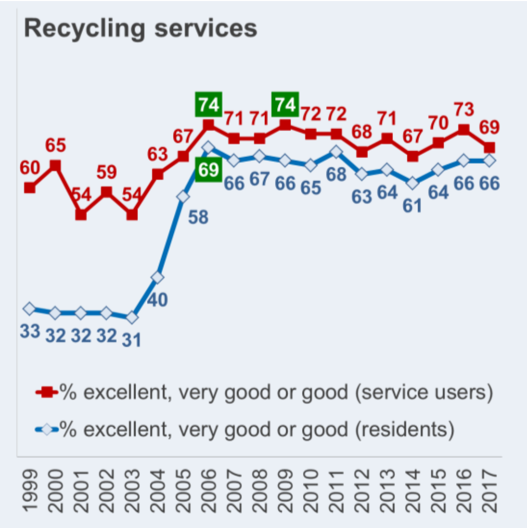


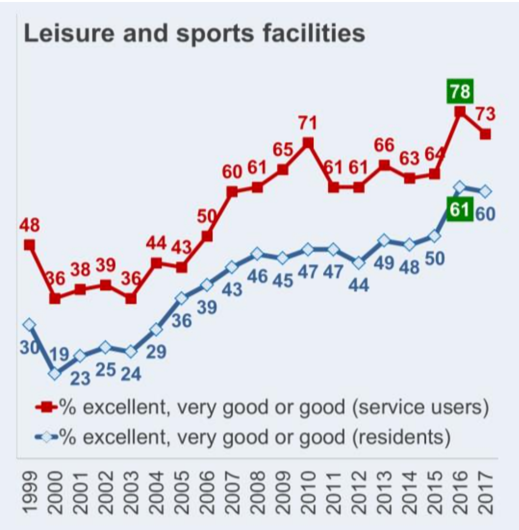


Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco Trading (2016, 2017); TNS-BMRB (previous years).
Notes: Figures in green are historical highs.

Appendix B: Service ratings trend data 1999-2017

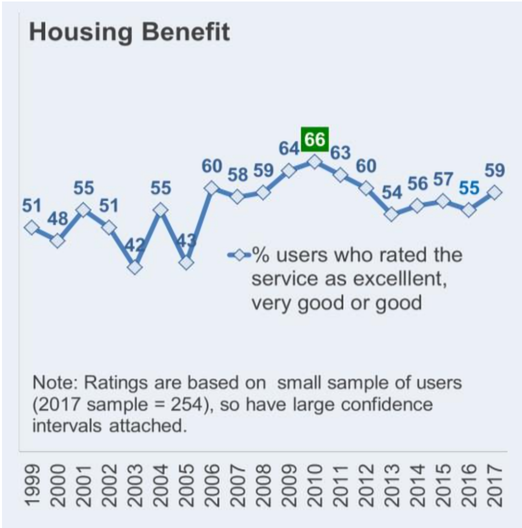


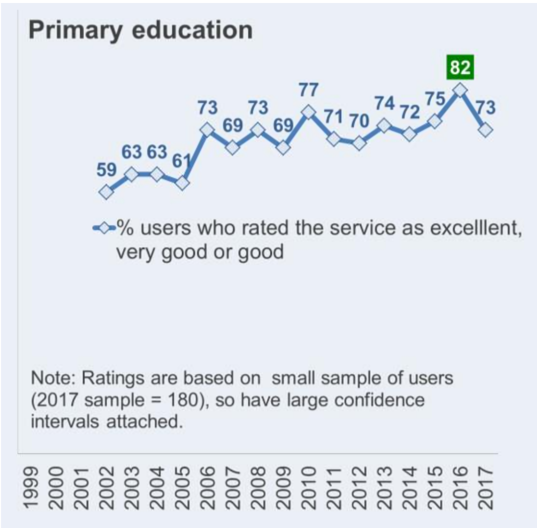


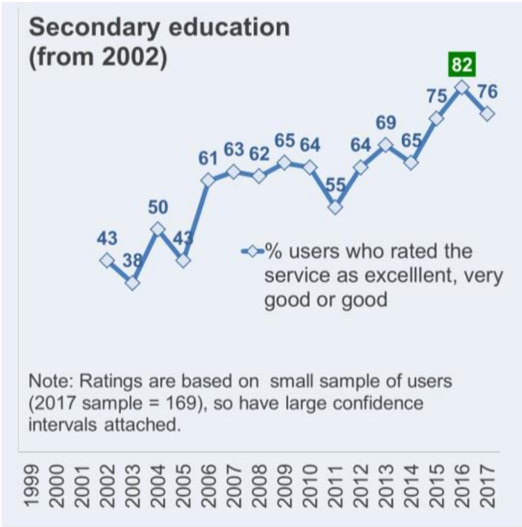


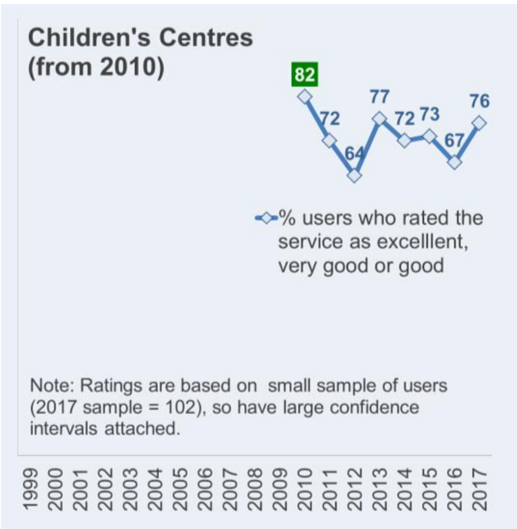
Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco Trading (2016, 2017); TNS-BMRB (previous years).
Notes: Figures in green are historical highs.

Appendix B: Service ratings trend data 1999-2017









Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco Trading (2016, 2017); TNS-BMRB (previous years).
Notes: Figures in green are historical highs.

Appendix C: Comparison of LGA and Tower Hamlets Surveys

The Local Government Association (LGA) carries out a regular survey to explore resident satisfaction with Councils at a national level. The latest poll was taken in February 2017, in the middle of the Tower Hamlets Survey fieldwork period (Jan-March 2017). Three of the questions included in the LGA poll are also carried on the Tower Hamlets survey, and these are compared below (Figure 20). These are the only questions on both surveys where the question wording is the same (or very similar), and the answer categories are the same.

In considering comparisons, it needs to be borne in mind that the two surveys being compared are different in a number of ways. Key differences include:

- Methodology: the LGA poll is conducted by telephone while the Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey is carried out face to face.
- Content: The question content is quite different on each survey with limited overlap.
- Order: The questions that appear on both, are not asked in same order, and follow different preceding questions.

Consequently, the comparisons below should be treated as 'indicative' only - that is they provide contextual data as opposed to strict 'like for like' comparisons.

On the issue of area satisfaction, views on both surveys are similar with around four in every five people surveyed feeling satisfied with their area as a place to live.

On the issue of council satisfaction, the proportion of Tower Hamlets residents who were satisfied is a bit higher than nationally (72 vs. 65 per cent). On the issue of trust, the Tower Hamlets survey is far more positive: 79 per cent of borough residents said they trusted the Council a great deal or a fair amount, compared with just 59 per cent nationally.

Figure 20: Views about the Council and area: Tower Hamlets vs. LGA survey

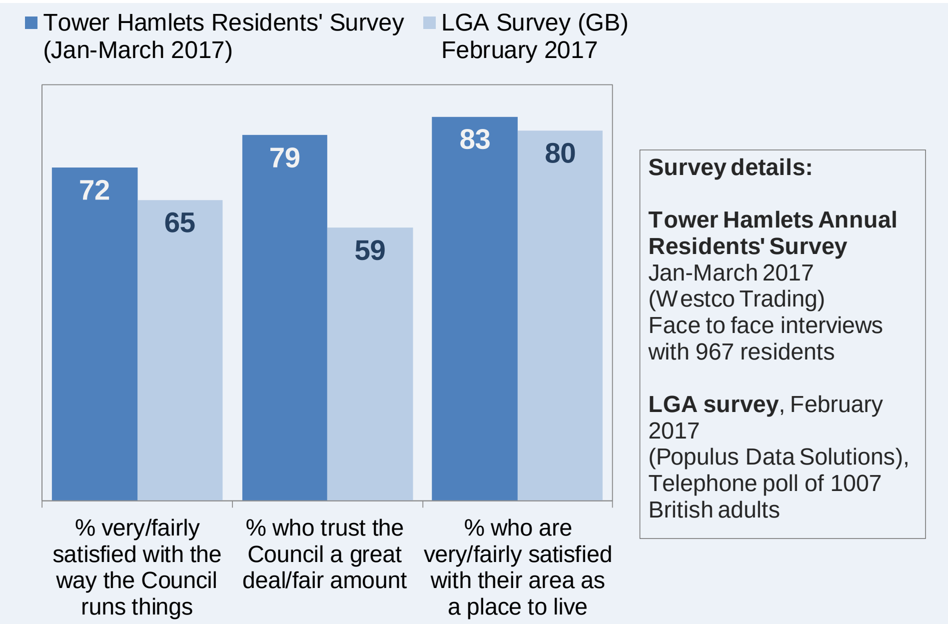


Figure 21: Comparison of question wording on the Tower Hamlets and LGA surveys

	Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey (Jan-Mar 2017)	LGA poll, Great Britain (February 2017)
Council satisfaction	Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Tower Hamlets runs things?	Overall, how satisfied are you with the way your local council runs things?
Trust	How much do you trust Tower Hamlets Council?	How much do you trust your local council (s)?
Area satisfaction	Thinking about your local area / neighbourhood, how satisfied are you with the area as a place to live?	Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?