

# Tower Hamlets

## Annual Residents' Survey 2018

63% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things

The top resident concerns are crime and lack of affordable housing

62% feel the Council involves residents in making decisions

74% say they trust the Council

59% feel the Council listens to concerns of local residents

56% feel the Council is doing a better job now than a year ago

73% feel that the council keeps residents well informed

79% of residents are satisfied with their area as a place to live

58% agree that the council provides good value for the council tax they pay

86% feel people from different backgrounds get on well together

62% 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  
May 2018



## Contents

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Summary of key findings .....	3
About the Survey .....	5
Image of the Council.....	6
Image of the Council: trends over time .....	7
Contact with the Council.....	9
Overall level of satisfaction with the Council.....	10
Trust and transparency.....	11
Satisfaction with services .....	12
Trends in service ratings .....	13
Where residents get Council information.....	17
Internet access and use .....	18
Finances.....	18
Resident concerns.....	19
Anti-social behaviour .....	20
Success in dealing with anti-social behaviour .....	21
Area satisfaction .....	22
Volunteering .....	22
Influencing decisions .....	23
Cohesion .....	23
Views about cycling .....	24
Further information .....	24
Appendix A: Image of the Council trend data 1999-2018 .....	25
Appendix B: Service ratings 1999-2018 .....	26
Appendix C: Comparison of LGA and Tower Hamlets Surveys.....	27

## Summary of key findings

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This report presents the headline findings from the 2018 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey. The survey captured the views of 1,100 Tower Hamlets residents during January to March 2018. Key findings include:

- **Satisfaction with the Council:** 63 per cent of residents were satisfied with the way the Council runs things, down nine points on last year. Despite this fall, the Council's rating remains close to the national satisfaction rating for Councils (64 per cent).
- **Trust and transparency:** 74 per cent said they trusted the Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount', down 5 points over the year, though remaining well above the national trust rating for Councils (57 per cent). Half of those surveyed agreed that the Council is 'open and transparent about its activities' - down 9 points on last year.
- **Image of the Council:**
  - **Staff:** Council staff continue to be the most positively rated aspect of the Council's image: 77 per cent agreed that the Council has staff who are friendly and polite.
  - **Doing a good job:** More than two thirds of residents (69 per cent) felt the Council was doing a good job, and well over half (56 per cent) felt the Council was doing a better job now than one year ago.
  - **Efficiency:** Around two thirds (65 per cent) felt the Council was efficient and well run, and 58 per cent agreed that the Council provided good value for money.
  - **Resident engagement:** While almost three quarters of residents (73 per cent) felt the Council 'keeps residents informed about what it is doing', a lower proportion felt the Council involves residents when making decisions (62 per cent), or that it listened to resident concerns (59 per cent).
  - **Responsiveness:** Just over half of those surveyed felt that the Council responded quickly when asked for help (54 per cent), and the same proportion held the view that the Council was 'difficult to get through to on the phone'. However, when respondents were asked if they found the Council difficult to contact over the last year, just 19 per cent said they had, suggesting a marked difference between perceptions about contact and more recent experience.
  - **Trends over time:** Perceptions about most aspects of the Council's image became more negative over the year, consistent with the fall in overall Council satisfaction.
- **Service ratings:** Across universal services, refuse collection and street lighting are the most highly rated service areas, rated as good or excellent by 72 and 71 per cent of residents respectively. Idea Stores and Libraries continue to attract the highest user satisfaction rating (82 per cent of users rated them positively). As in previous years, user ratings remain lowest for parking services (40 per cent).
- **Trends in service ratings:** Over the last year, more than half of all service areas monitored have seen a decline in satisfaction ratings. However, despite this fall, current satisfaction ratings remain higher than, or similar to, levels five years ago.

- **Communications:** The most popular methods residents use to source information about the Council and its services, were: printed information (40 per cent); the council website (36 per cent); word of mouth (24 per cent); council emails, e-newsletters, texts (17 per cent); Our East End (the Council's quarterly newspaper) and direct contact with staff (both 16 per cent). The majority of residents were positive about these methods: between 88-95 per cent rated these different methods as 'very' or 'fairly' useful.
- **Digital inclusion:** Most (92 per cent) adults surveyed had access to the internet, and of those, 41 per cent had used the internet to pay for Council services.
- **Area satisfaction:** The majority (79 per cent) of residents are very, or fairly, satisfied with their area as a place to live - similar to previous years (79-83 per cent), and close to the national rating (81 per cent).
- **Top concerns:** Crime and lack of affordable housing are the two most pressing resident concerns: 41 per cent of residents cited crime as one of their top 3 concerns - up ten points since last year. Lack of affordable housing remains a concern for 37 per cent of residents. Just over one quarter of residents said litter and dirt in the streets was one of their top concerns - up 7 points since last year. Concern over lack of jobs continues to fall - just 11 per cent cited it as a top concern this year, down 6 points over the year.
- **Financial concerns:** Almost one quarter of residents said they were concerned about paying the rent or mortgage (23 per cent) and one in six (17 per cent) were worried about paying their fuel bills, while 15 per cent were concerned about paying their council tax.
- **Anti-social behaviour:** Drug use remains a significant concern for residents: six in ten residents felt that people using or dealing drugs was a very or fairly big problem in their local area. Around four in ten residents felt vandalism and graffiti was a big problem in their area and a similar proportion were concerned about drunk and rowdy behaviour. Just under one third (30 per cent) reported noisy neighbours or loud parties as a problem.
- **Cohesion:** Views about cohesion remain positive: the majority of residents (86 per cent) feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together - this is down 6 points on last year, but remains well above ratings for earlier years, and is above the national average (81 per cent).
- **Volunteering:** 22 per cent of those surveyed said they had undertaken some form of voluntary work in the past year. Nine per cent were regular volunteers, who volunteered weekly or monthly, while 13 per cent volunteered less often.
- **Cycling:** One in five residents were cyclists (20 per cent): 7 per cent cycled weekly or daily, while 13 per cent were 'occasional' cyclists who cycled less often. Almost two thirds (62 per cent) of those surveyed felt Tower Hamlets was cycle friendly, a fall of 12 points since last year (74 per cent).

## About the Survey

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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 finances
- Volunteering
- Demographic data

### Methodology

The survey took place during 11<sup>th</sup> January – 8th March 2018 and comprised 1,100 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 140 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. Only changes that are statistically significant are highlighted in the narrative. On tables, statistically significant changes are denoted by arrows  . All figures presented are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

## Image of the Council

To assess what residents think of the Council, respondents were asked to say to what extent they agree or disagree with 12 different statements about the Council's image (Figure 1).

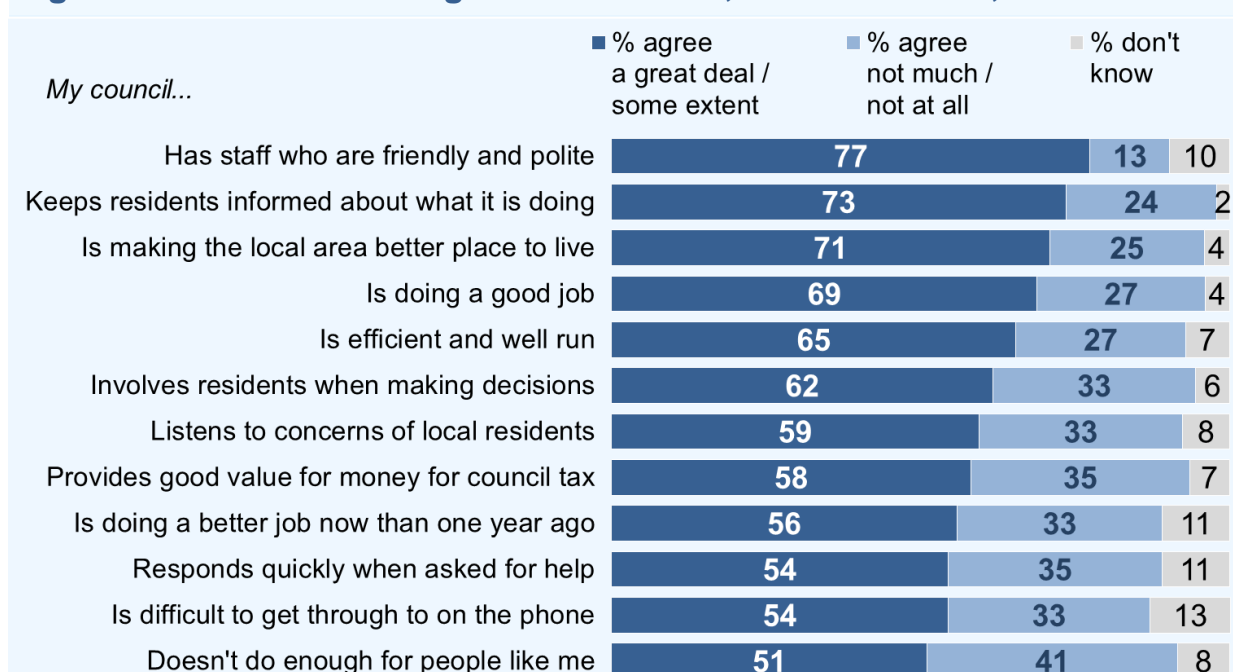
Council staff continue to be the most positively rated aspect of the Council's image: 77 per cent of residents agreed 'a great deal' or 'to some extent' that the Council has staff who are friendly and polite.

More than two thirds of residents (69 per cent) felt the Council was doing a good job, and just over half (56 per cent) felt the Council was doing a better job now than one year ago. Around two thirds (65 per cent) felt the Council was efficient and well run and 58 per cent agreed that the Council provided good value for the council tax they pay.

Views about resident engagement issues were quite mixed. While almost three quarters of residents (73 per cent) felt the Council 'keeps residents informed about what it is doing', a lower proportion felt the Council involves residents when making decisions (62 per cent), or that it listened to resident concerns (59 per cent).

Opinion remains fairly negative on the issue of council responsiveness: just over half of those surveyed felt that the Council responded quickly when asked for help (54 per cent) and the same proportion held the view that the Council was 'difficult to get through to on the phone'. However, later in the survey, respondents were asked if they found the Council difficult to contact over the last year and just 19 per cent said they had (see page 9). This suggests a significant disconnect between perceptions residents hold about contact and their more recent experience.

**Figure 1: Views about image of the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2018**

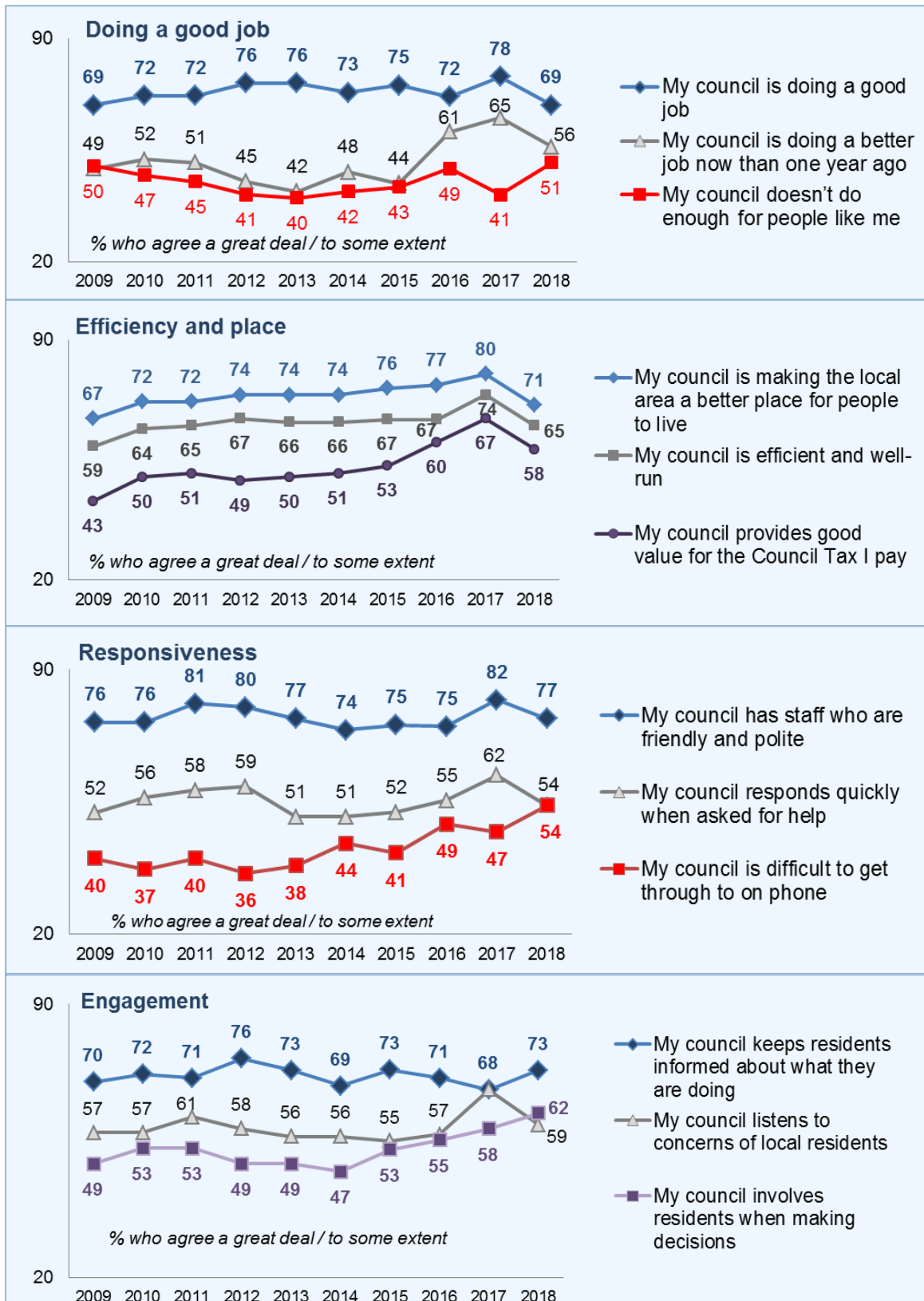


Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018, Westco Trading, (sample size=1,100)



## Image of the Council: trends over time

Figure 2: Image of the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2009-18



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco (2016-18), TNS-BMRB (2009-15)

Table 1 and Figure 2 illustrate how views about the Council have changed over time. In 2016 and 2017, views about the Council’s image generally became more positive, with many ratings reaching historic highs. However, the latest survey shows a significant decline in satisfaction: between 2017 and 2018, views about 10 of the 12 aspects of the Council’s image became significantly more negative over the year:

- Doing a good job (agreement down 9 points);
- Doing a better job now compared to one year ago (-9 points);
- Doesn’t do enough for people like me (agreement up 10 points);
- Is making the local area a better place for people to live (-9 points);
- Is efficient and well run (-9 points);
- Provides good value for the Council Tax I pay (-9 points);
- Responds quickly when asked for help (-8 points);
- Has staff who are friendly and polite (-5 points);
- Is difficult to get through to on the phone (agreement up 7 points);
- Listens to concerns of local residents (-9 points).

The only area to see positive change over the year was in relation to engagement: the proportion who felt the Council kept residents informed about what it is doing increased 5 points), taking agreement levels back up to the 2015 level.

Table 1: Image of the Council, Tower Hamlets, change over time, 2009-18						
% agree 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'	2017 (%)	2018 (%)	Percentage point change *			
			2017-18	2014-18	2009-18	
<b>'My council...'</b>						
Has staff who are friendly and polite	82	77	-5 ↓	3 -	1 -	-
Keeps residents informed about what they are doing	68	73	5 ↑	4 ↑	3 -	-
Is making the local area a better place for people to live	80	71	-9 ↓	-3 -	4 ↑	↑
Is doing a good job	78	69	-9 ↓	-4 ↓	0 -	-
Is efficient and well-run	74	65	-9 ↓	-1 -	6 ↑	↑
Involves residents when making decisions	58	62	4 -	15 ↑	13 ↑	↑
Listens to concerns of local residents	68	59	-9 ↓	3 -	2 -	-
Provides good value for the Council Tax I pay	67	58	-9 ↓	7 ↑	15 ↑	↑
Is doing a better job now than one year ago	65	56	-9 ↓	8 ↑	7 ↑	↑
Responds quickly when asked for help	62	54	-8 ↓	3 -	2 -	-
<i>Doesn't do enough for people like me</i>	41	51	10 ↑	9 ↑	1 -	-
<i>Is difficult to get through to on phone</i>	47	54	7 ↑	10 ↑	14 ↑	↑

Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco (2016-2018), TNS-BMRB (2009-15)  
 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. ↑↓

When viewed over the longer term, two indicators show particularly strong improvement: the extent to which the Council is felt to involve residents in making decisions - this has been rising steadily over the period 2014-2018 - from 47 to 62 per cent - a rise of 15 points; and, the extent to which the Council provides value for council tax; despite the recent fall to 58 per cent, this level of agreement remains well above levels 5 or 10 years ago (43 and 51 per cent).



Conversely, the area where perceptions have seen the most negative change over the longer term is in relation to perceptions about the Council being difficult to get through to on the phone (agreement up 14 points in ten years).

This section has focused on trends over the last ten years. Appendix A shows longer term trends over 20 years (1999-2018) for ratings across all 12 measures. Across most indicators, perceptions about the Council’s image are far more positive now than they were 20 years ago.

### Contact with the Council

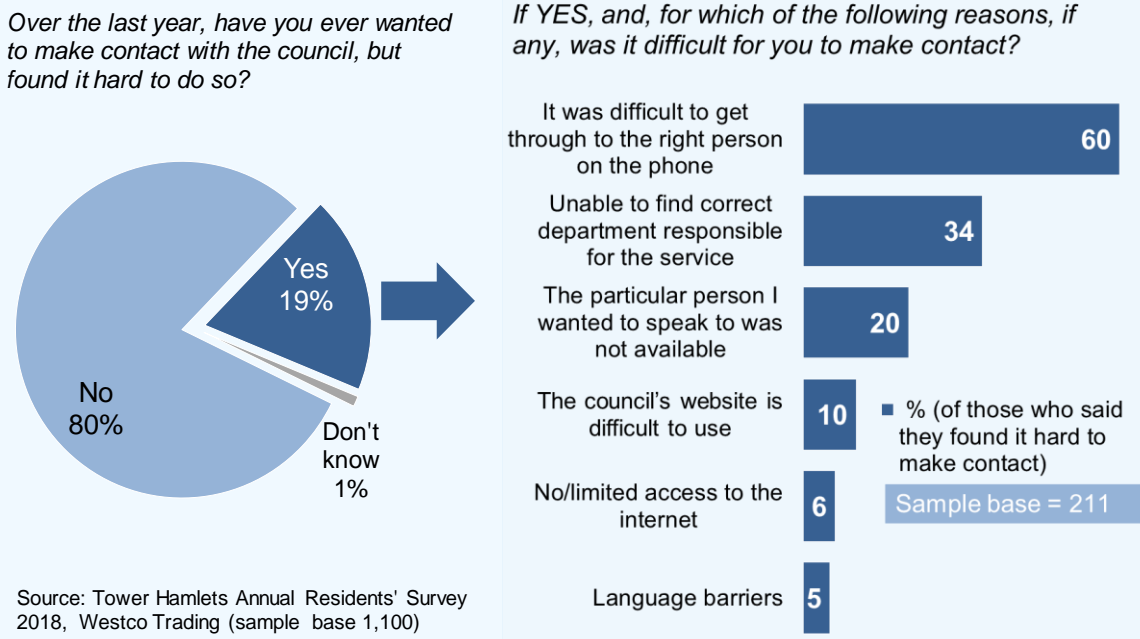
As was pointed out earlier, the perceptions resident hold about contacting the council do not always tally with what they report about their actual experience. So while half of those surveyed held the view the Council was difficult to get through to on the phone, significantly fewer reported contact problems over the last year.

When residents were asked if they had experienced difficulties in contacting the Council over the last year, one in five (19 per cent) of those surveyed said yes, they had wanted to make contact, but found it hard to do so.

Of this group, the most common problems cited were:

- It was difficult to get through to the right person on the phone (60 per cent of those who had had difficulties);
- Unable to find correct department responsible for the service (cited by one third of those who had found it difficult);
- The particular person they wanted to speak to was not available (a problem for one in five of those who had experienced contact problems).

**Figure 3: Difficulty contacting the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2018**



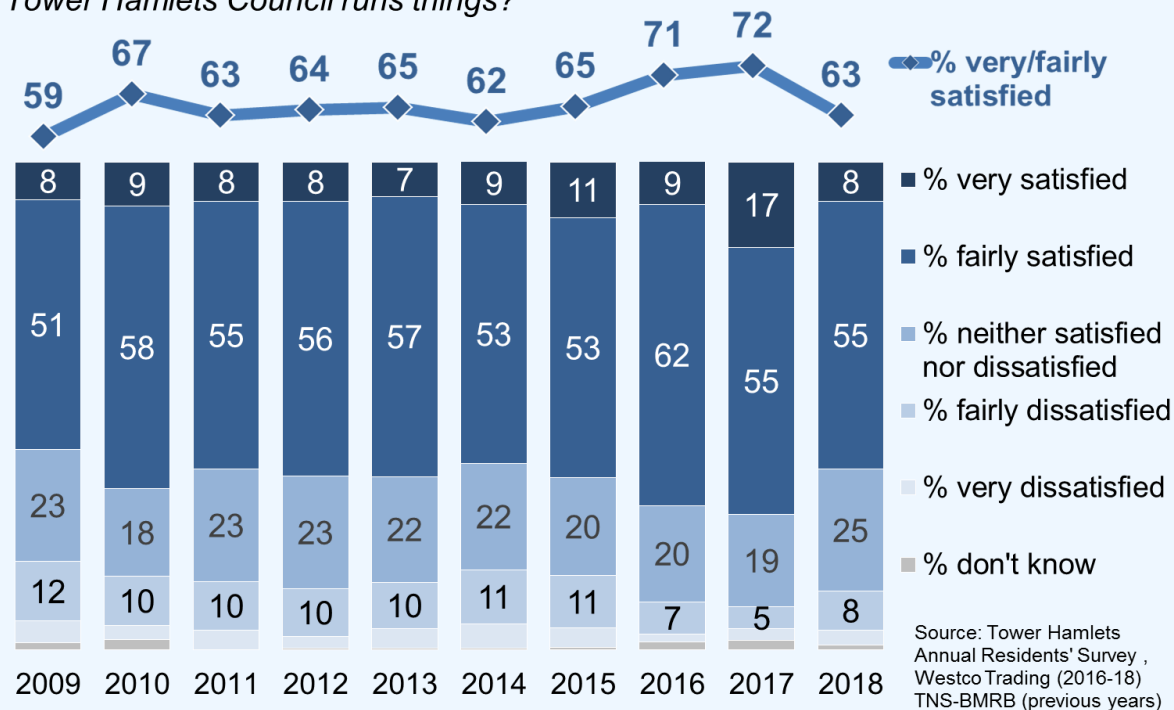
## Overall level of satisfaction with the Council

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, 63 per cent said they were very, or fairly, satisfied with the way the Council runs things, down nine points on last year's rating of 72 per cent (which was a historical high).

Despite the fall, the Council's rating remains similar to the national satisfaction rating for Councils. The latest LGA telephone poll<sup>1</sup> for February 2018 found that 64 per cent of those surveyed across Great Britain were very or fairly satisfied with their local council - fairly close to the Tower Hamlets rating.

**Figure 4: Council satisfaction, Tower Hamlets, 2009-2018**

*Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Tower Hamlets Council runs things?*



<sup>1</sup> LGA, Polling on resident satisfaction with councils, Round 19, May 2018 (data relate to February 2018). Note: the LGA poll and the Annual Residents' Survey are different in terms of their methodology - so comparisons should be viewed as 'indicative' only (See Appendix C for more information on benchmarking data).

## Trust and transparency

Two new questions were included on the survey in 2016 to explore perceptions around trust and transparency (Figures 5 and 6).

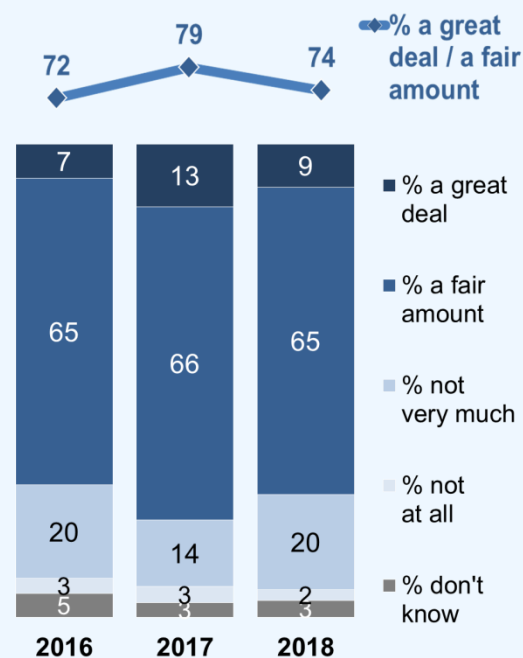
When asked how much they trusted the Council, 74 per cent of respondents surveyed said they trusted the Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount', down 5 points from 2017, though close to the rating for 2016.

Despite this fall, the rating in Tower Hamlets remains far higher than the trust rating recorded in the LGA's national poll - nationally, 57 per cent of those surveyed said they trusted their local council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount'.

Views about transparency remain mixed and became more negative 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', just 50 per cent agreed - down 9 points on last year. Well over one third of residents were ambivalent about the issue, that is, they neither agreed nor disagreed (or didn't know), while just 13 per cent disagreed and felt the Council was not open and transparent.

**Figure 5: Trust in the Council, Tower Hamlets, 2016-2018**

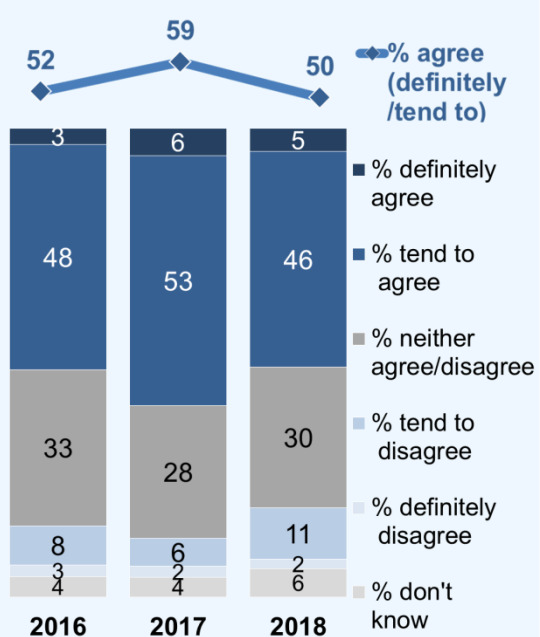
How much do you trust Tower Hamlets Council?



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2016-2018, Westco Trading (sample base, 2018 = 1.100)

**Figure 6: Transparency, Tower Hamlets, 2016-2018**

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Tower Hamlets Council is open and transparent about its activities?



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2016-2018, Westco Trading (sample base, 2018 = 1.100)

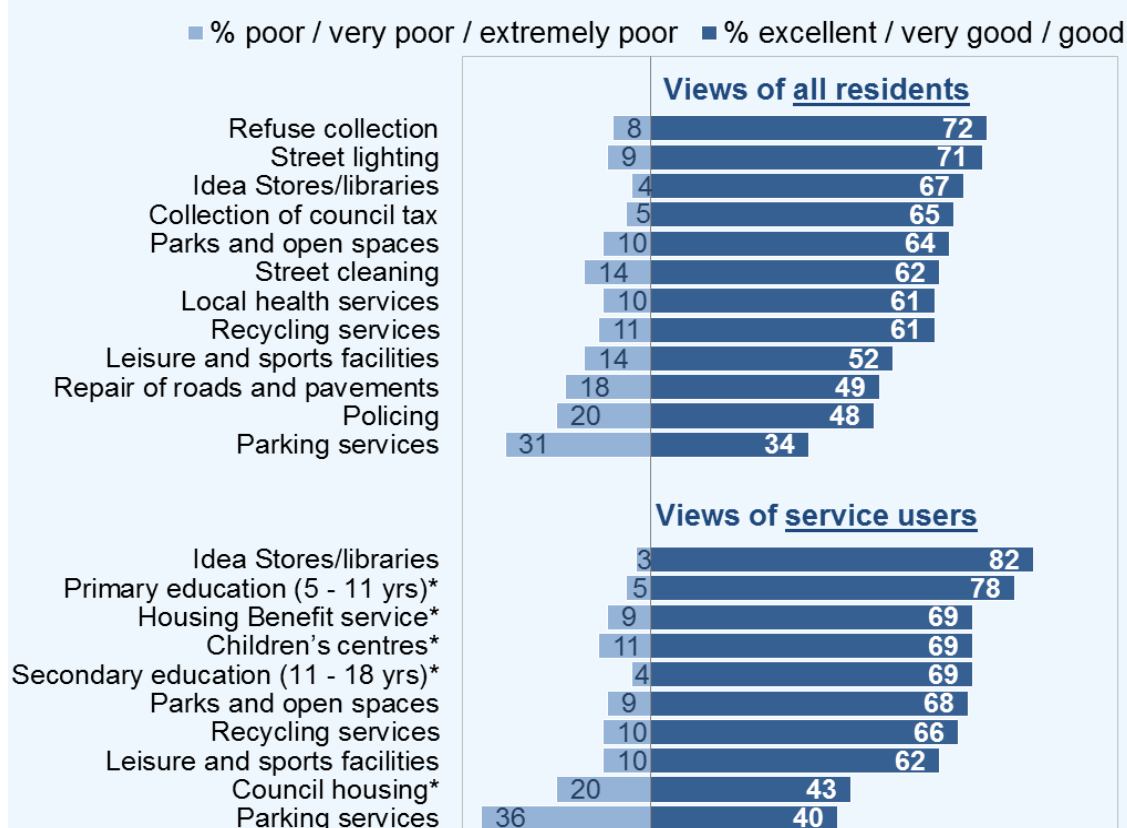
## Satisfaction with services

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 7 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 far more divided.

**Figure 7: Service ratings, Tower Hamlets, 2018**



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018 (Westco Trading).

Notes: Residents were presented with a 7 point answer scale, which also included 'average', not shown.

\* Denotes service ratings based on small esample size (<350) - these have larger confidence intervals.

Across universal services, refuse collection and street lighting are the most highly rated service areas, rated positively (good, very good or excellent) by 72 and 71 per cent of residents respectively. Less than ten per cent of residents rated these services negatively (poor, very poor or extremely poor). In contrast, services such as policing, and road and pavement maintenance are viewed less positively - with around half of those surveyed rating these services positively (48 and 49 per cent), while around one in five gave negative ratings. Parking services continue to attract the lowest satisfaction rating.

The services which attract the highest user satisfaction ratings are: Idea Stores and libraries (82 per cent) and primary education (78 per cent). As in previous years, user ratings remain lowest for parking services and council housing (40 and 43 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, though the gap in perceptions is highest for Idea Stores/libraries (82 vs. 67 per cent).*

## Trends in service ratings

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Figures 8a and 8b illustrate how views about the Council's services have changed over time.

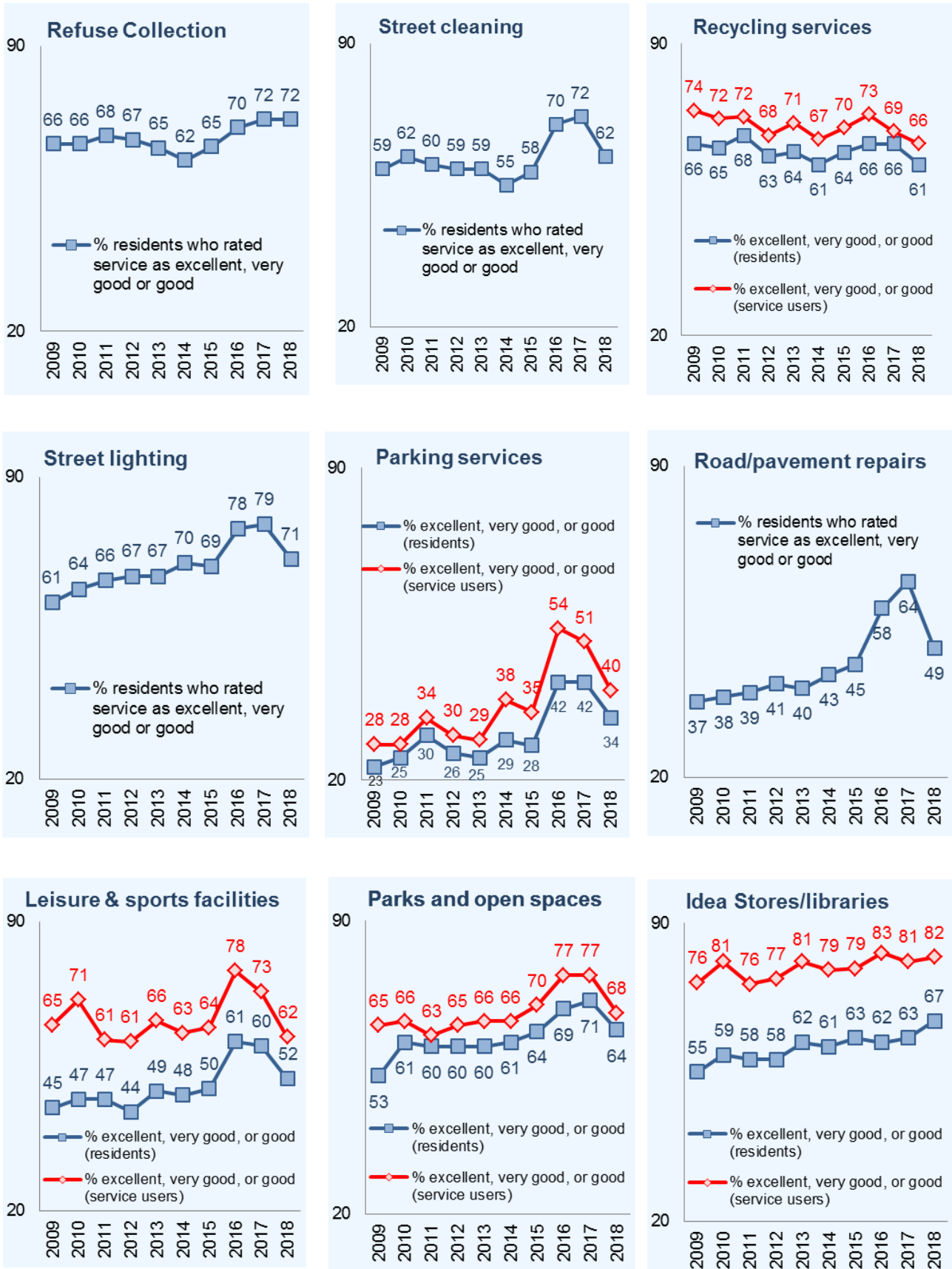
Over the last year, more than half of all services have seen a fairly sharp decline in ratings. For many of these services, these falls were preceded by rising satisfaction levels during 2015-17. For example, the percentage of residents who rated street cleaning positively fell from 72 to 62 points between 2017 and 2018 - a fall of ten points. However, this followed a quite sharp rise in ratings in 2016 (by 12 points). Similar patterns can be observed for: street lighting, road and pavement repairs, leisure and sports facilities, parks and open spaces, parking services, health services and policing.

Given these patterns, despite the recent falls, the majority of services currently have satisfaction ratings either higher, or similar, to their levels five (and ten) years ago (Table 2).

Over the long term, the services that have seen the largest rises in satisfaction (ie rises of ten points or more over the last ten years) include: street lighting; Idea Stores/libraries (all resident rating); collection of council tax; parks and open spaces (all resident rating); road and pavement repairs; and parking services.

The only service area to see a significant fall in ratings over the last ten years is recycling services (user rating). Just two thirds of users rated recycling positively in 2018, down from around three quarters in 2009.

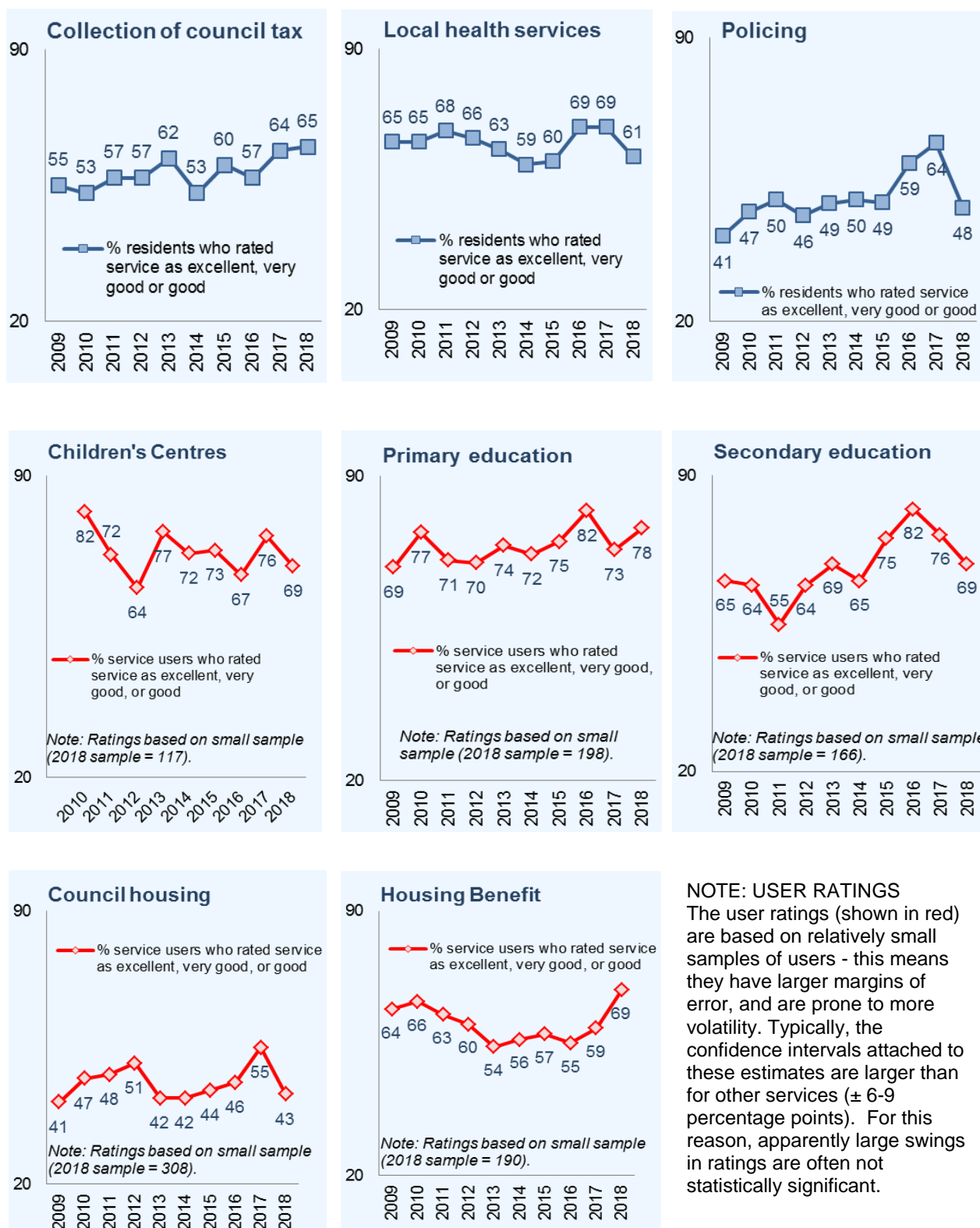
**Figure 8a: Service ratings, Tower Hamlets, 10 year trends (2009-18)**



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco (2016-18), TNS-BMRB (2009-15)



**Figure 8b: Service ratings, Tower Hamlets, 10 year trends (2009-18)**



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco (2016-18), TNS-BMRB (2009-15)

**Table 2: Service satisfaction ratings, Tower Hamlets, 2009-18**

% who rate service as good, very good or excellent	%		Percentage point change *						Sample size (2018)
	2017	2018	Annual 2017-18		5 yr 2014-18		10 yr 2009-18		
<b>Views of all residents (regardless of whether they use the service)</b>									
Refuse collection	72	72	0	-	10	↑	6	↑	1100
Street lighting	79	71	-8	↓	1	-	10	↑	1100
Idea Stores/libraries	63	67	4	-	6	↑	12	↑	1100
Collection of council tax	64	65	1	-	12	↑	10	↑	1100
Parks and open spaces	71	64	-7	↓	3	-	11	↑	1100
Street cleaning	72	62	-10	↓	7	↑	3	-	1100
Recycling services	66	61	-5	↓	0	-	-5	↓	1100
Local health services	69	61	-8	↓	2	-	-4	-	1100
Leisure & sports facilities	60	52	-8	↓	4	-	7	↑	1100
Road/pavement repairs	64	49	-15	↓	6	↑	12	↑	1100
Policing	64	48	-16	↓	-2	-	7	↑	1100
Parking Services	42	34	-8	↓	5	↑	11	↑	1100
<b>Views of service users</b>									
Idea Stores/libraries	81	82	1	-	3	-	6	↑	509
Primary education**	73	78	5	-	6	-	9	↑	198
Secondary education**	76	69	-7	-	4	-	4	-	166
Children's centres**	76	69	-7	-	-3	-	n/a	n/a	117
Housing Benefit service**	59	69	10	↑	13	↑	5	-	190
Parks and open spaces	77	68	-9	↓	2	-	3	-	800
Recycling services	69	66	-3	-	-1	-	-8	↓	786
Leisure & sports facilities	73	62	-11	↓	-1	-	-3	-	494
Council Housing**	55	43	-12	↓	1	-	2	-	309
Parking Services	51	40	-11	↓	2	-	12	↑	493
Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey (Westco (2016-18), TNS-BMRB (2009-15))									
*Changes that are statistically significant are denoted by arrows.									
** These service ratings are based on smaller samples of users (below 350), so confidence intervals attached to these estimates are larger than for other services (± 7-9 percentage points). For this reason, apparently large swings in ratings are often not statistically significant.									

### Historical trend data

This section has focused on trends across the last ten years. Appendix B provides longer term trend data for the last 20 years (1999-2018) for all services. Across all service areas, perceptions are far more positive now than they were 20 years ago.

## Where residents get Council information

Residents were asked to identify the main ways they sourced information about the Council and its services.

The results show strong demand for both online and print sources: 40 per cent used printed information while a similar proportion used the Council website (36 per cent).

Almost one in six (16 per cent) used the Council's quarterly magazine 'Our East End' to source information, while a similar proportion relied on emails, e-newsletters or texts (17 per cent).

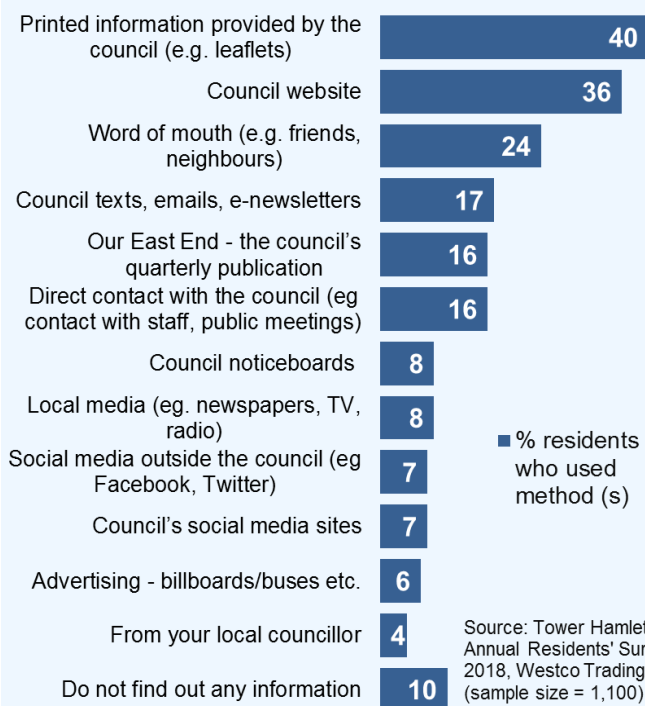
Face to face contact also remains important: one in six of those surveyed used direct contact with Council staff to get information, while one quarter relied on word of mouth.

Residents were asked a follow up question about how useful they found their preferred methods. Figure 10

shows views about the most popular methods used. Across the board, the vast majority were positive about the sources they used - with 88-95 per cent rating the method (s) they used as 'very' or 'fairly' useful.

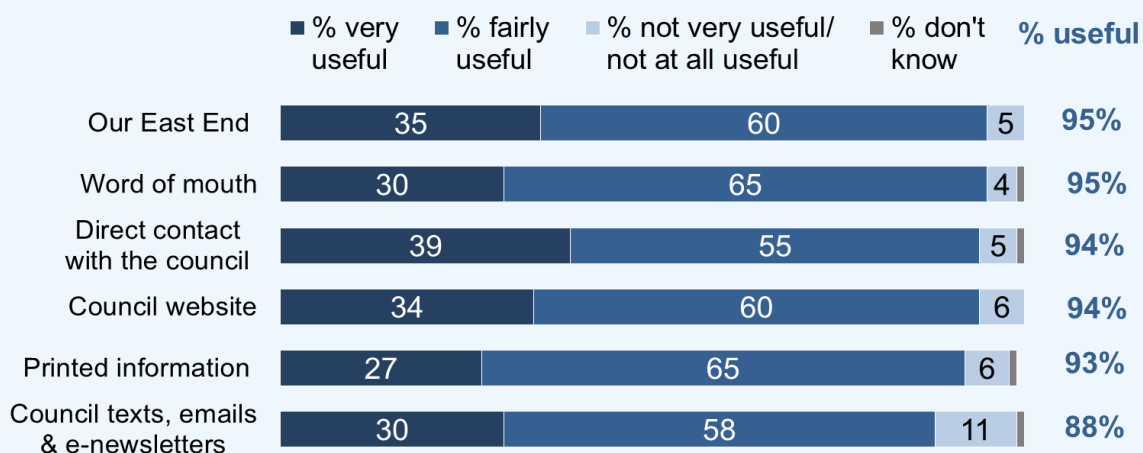
**Figure 9: Preferred ways to get Council information, 2018**

*Where would you say you get most of your information about Tower Hamlets Council and the services it provides?*



**Figure 10: Views about how useful information sources were, Tower Hamlets, 2018**

*How useful do you find each of the sources that you use ?*



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey, Westco Trading (2016-18), TNS-BMRB (previous years)  
 Note: Sample base = those who used that method: Printed information (437); Council Website (397), Word of mouth (259), Council texts, emails (185), Our East End (180), Direct contact (177). Only sources used by more than 10% of the sample shown here.

## Internet access and use

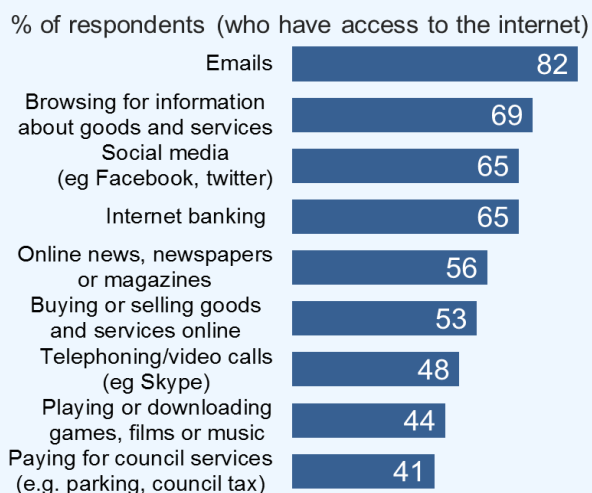
The majority (92 per cent) of respondents said they had access to the internet, the same as last year.

Figure 11 shows what residents use the internet for. The most popular activities were the same as in previous years: email (82 per cent), web browsing (69 per cent), social media and internet banking (both 65 per cent).

Just 41 per cent of internet users said they used the internet to pay for Council services online, a similar level to last year (40 per cent).

**Figure 11: Internet use, 2018**

*What do you use the internet for ?*



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018, Westco Trading  
Sample base = 1014 (those with access to the internet)

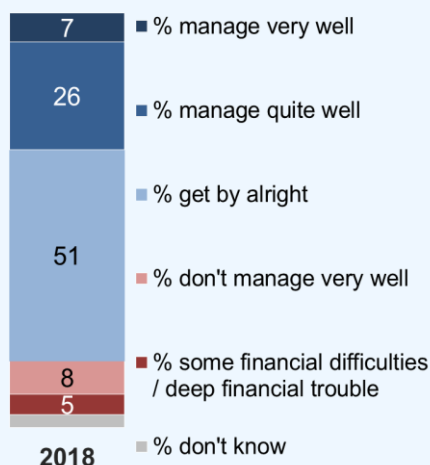
## Finances

When asked to describe their financial circumstances: around one third of residents (33 per cent) said they were managing very well or quite well; around half said they 'get by alright', while one in eight residents (13 per cent) indicated they were facing difficulties managing financially.

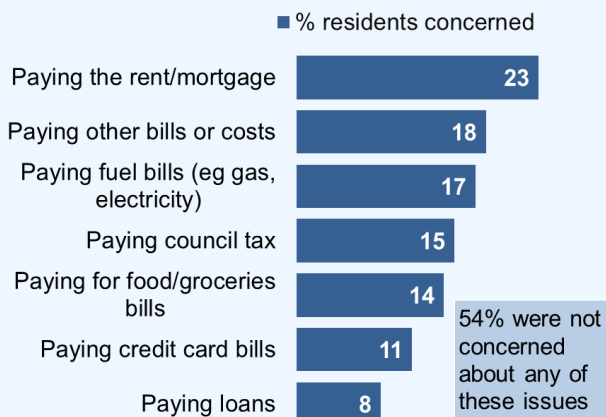
Residents were also asked whether they had any specific financial concerns. The most common concern was worries about housing costs: almost one quarter of residents said they were concerned about paying the rent or mortgage (23 per cent). Almost one in six (17 per cent) were worried about paying their fuel bills, while 15 per cent were concerned about paying their council tax.

**Figure 12: Financial concerns, Tower Hamlets, 2018**

*Taking everything together, which of these phrases best describes how you and your household manage financially these days?*



*Thinking about your finances, which, if any, of the following are you concerned about at the moment?*



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018, Westco Trading (sample size = 1,100)

## Resident concerns

Residents were presented with a list of 15 issues and asked to say which three (if any) were their top personal concerns.

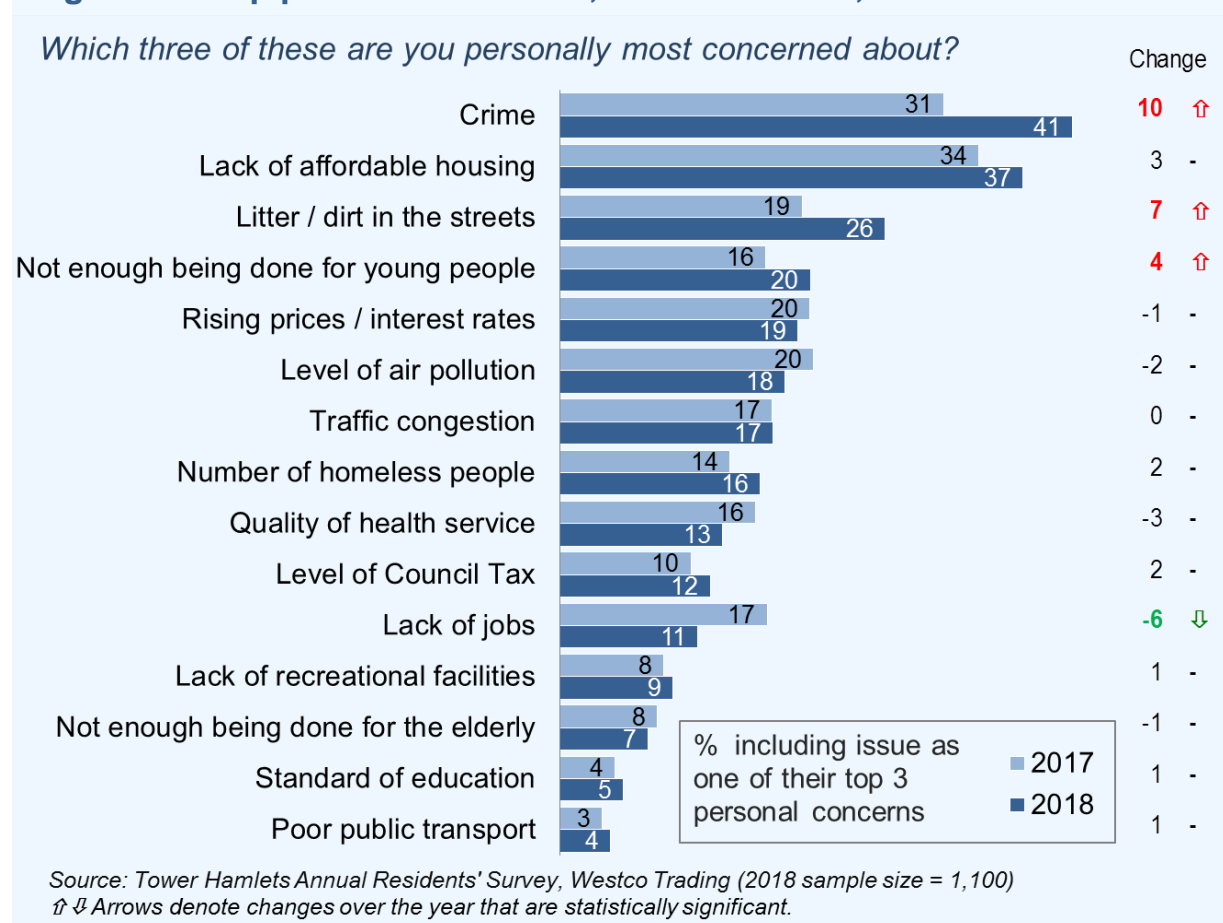
In 2018, residents ranked crime and lack of affordable housing as their most pressing concerns (41 and 37 per cent). Issues residents were least concerned about included poor public transport and the standard of education (cited by just 4 and 5 per cent of residents as key concerns).

Over the year, the areas to see the largest rises in concern were:

- Crime (up 10 points);
- Litter/dirt in the streets (up 7 points);
- Not enough being done for young people (up 4 points);

The only area where concern fell significantly was in relation to lack of jobs (down 6 points).

**Figure 13: Top personal concerns, Tower Hamlets, 2018**



## Anti-social behaviour

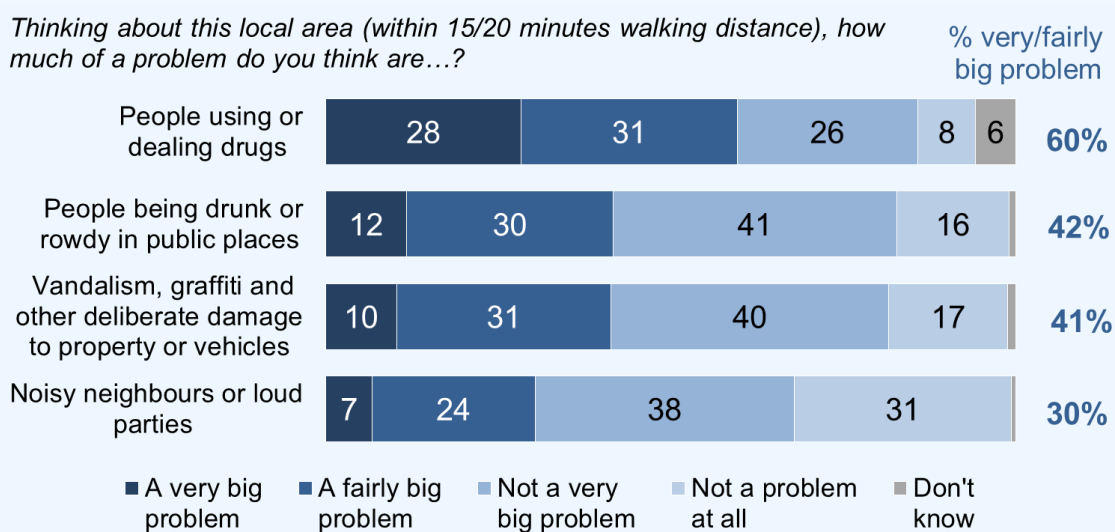
Figure 14 charts resident perceptions about four different types of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Residents were asked to say to what extent they felt each issue was a big problem in their area.

Concern about drug use and dealing remains relatively high: six in ten of those surveyed (60 per cent) felt that people using or dealing drugs was a big problem in their local area. Concern levels have risen 9 points since 2016 (Figure 15).

Around four in ten residents (42 per cent) feel people being drunk or rowdy was a problem in their area - similar to the levels over the last two years, and well below the level recorded in 2014 (of 50 per cent).

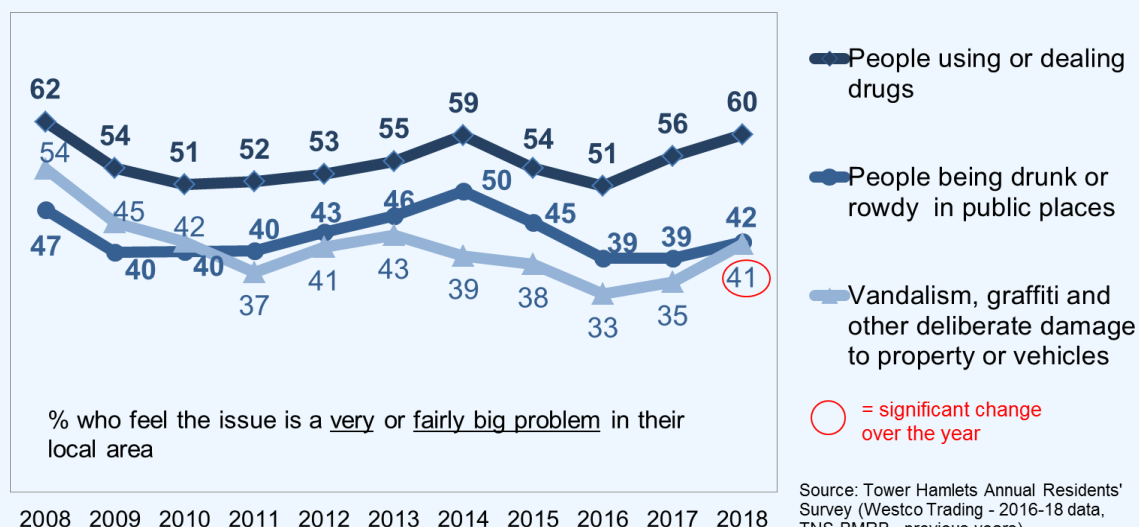
**Figure 14: Views about ASB in Tower Hamlets, 2018**

Thinking about this local area (within 15/20 minutes walking distance), how much of a problem do you think are...?



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018, Westco Trading (sample base = 1,100)

**Figure 15: Trends in ASB perceptions, Tower Hamlets, 2009-2018**





Concern about vandalism, graffiti and criminal damage had been on a broadly downward trend in recent years, but over the last year, concern levels have seen a rise (of 6 points over the year up to 41 per cent).

Just under one third (30 per cent) of respondents felt noisy neighbours or loud parties were a problem in their area, the same as the level in 2017. *Note: this was a new category added in 2017, so long term data are not available.*

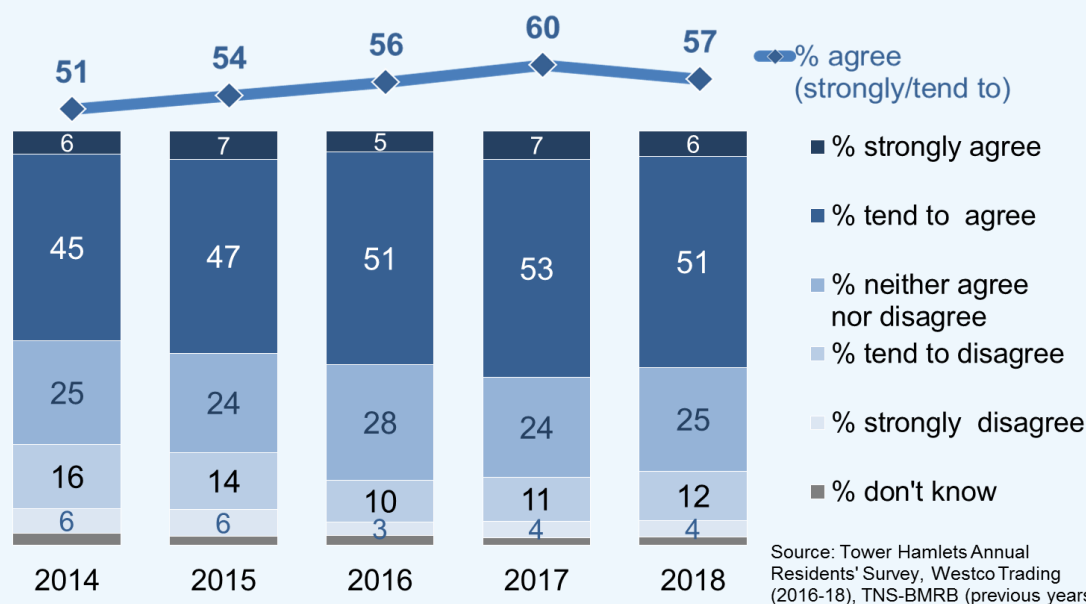
## Success in dealing with anti-social behaviour

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: 57 per cent agreed, 16 per cent disagreed and over one quarter were ambivalent (they neither agreed nor disagreed, or didn’t know).

The percentage who agree has remained around the 56-60 per cent level for the last three years - with no significant changes.

**Figure 16: Success in dealing with ASB, Tower Hamlets, 2014-2018**

*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?*

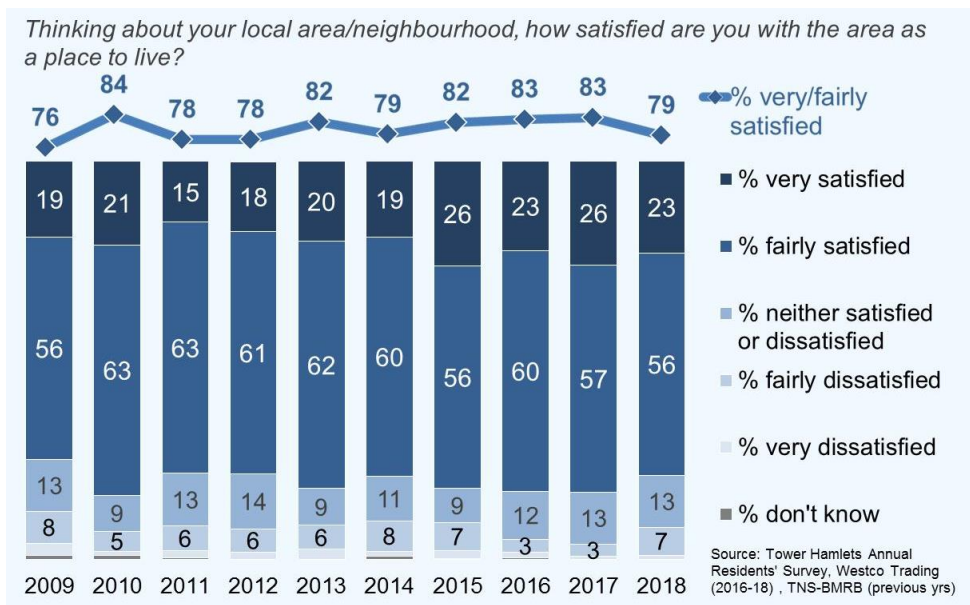


## Area satisfaction

Views about the area remain relatively positive: 79 per cent said they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Satisfaction levels fell over the year, though fairly marginally (-4 points). Over the long term there has been relatively little change in ratings: area satisfaction levels have remained between 78-83 per cent over the last eight years.

Area satisfaction levels locally are broadly in line with those nationally: the LGA's most recent poll found that 81 per cent of residents were satisfied with their area as a place to live. (Appendix C).

**Figure 17:**  
Area satisfaction, Tower Hamlets, 2009-2018



## Volunteering

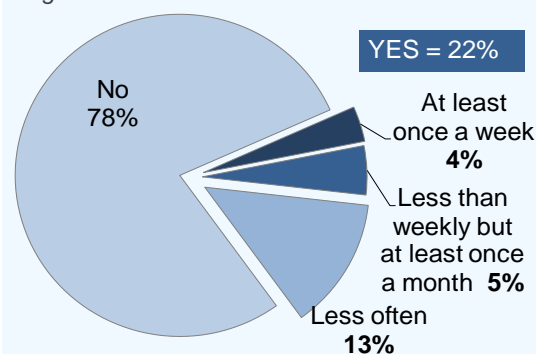
Residents were asked whether they had done any voluntary work in the last year. Volunteering was defined as 'giving unpaid help through groups, clubs, schools or organisations for the benefit of others'.

In total, 22 per cent said they had undertaken some form of voluntary work in the past year.

Just under half of this group (9 per cent of residents) were regular volunteers - who volunteered at least weekly or monthly, while 13 per cent were occasional volunteers who volunteered less frequently.

**Figure 18: Volunteering in Tower Hamlets, 2018**

Over the last twelve months how often, if at all, have you taken part in any volunteering activities? By volunteering, we mean giving unpaid help through groups, clubs, schools or organisations for the benefit of others.

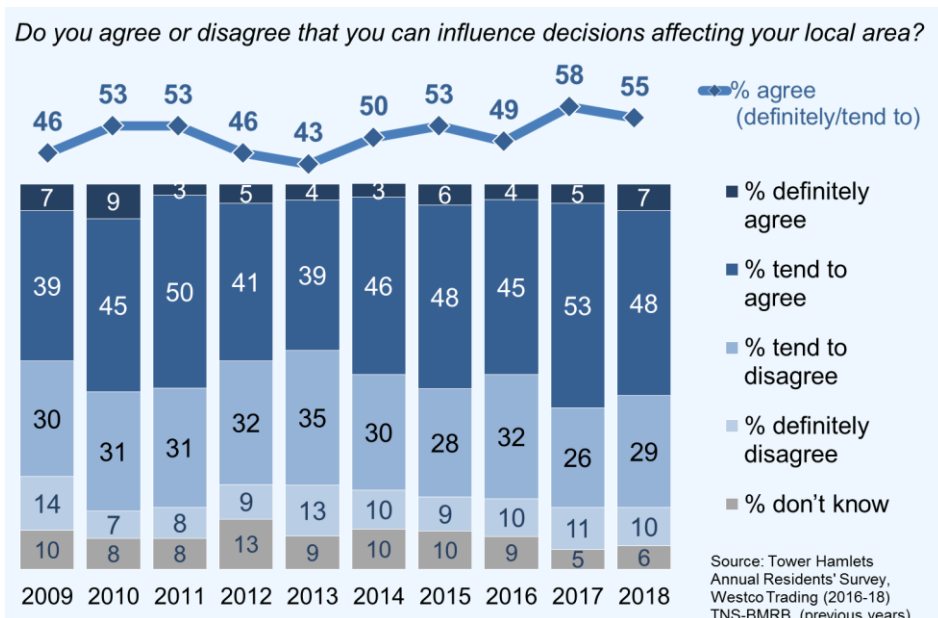


Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018, Westco Trading (sample base 1,100)

## Influencing decisions

Residents were asked whether they felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area: 55 per cent agreed they could, while 39 per cent disagreed. The agreement level remains close to last year's high of 58 per cent. These figures are broadly consistent with data presented earlier on resident engagement - 59 per cent felt the Council listened to the concerns of local residents and 62 per cent felt the Council involved them when making decisions.

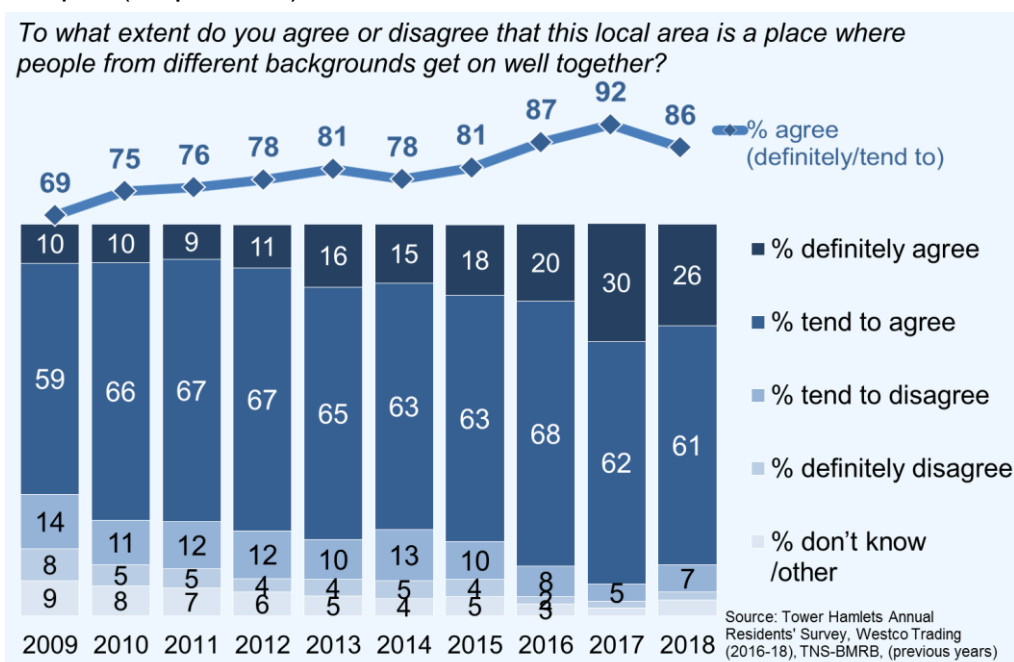
**Figure 19:**  
Influencing decisions, Tower Hamlets, 2009-2018



## Cohesion

Cohesion ratings fell marginally this year but remain positive: the majority of residents (86 per cent) agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, down 6 points on last year. Despite this fall, the cohesion rating in Tower Hamlets remains higher than the rating recorded in the LGA's national poll (81 per cent).

**Figure 20:**  
Views about cohesion, Tower Hamlets, 2009-2018



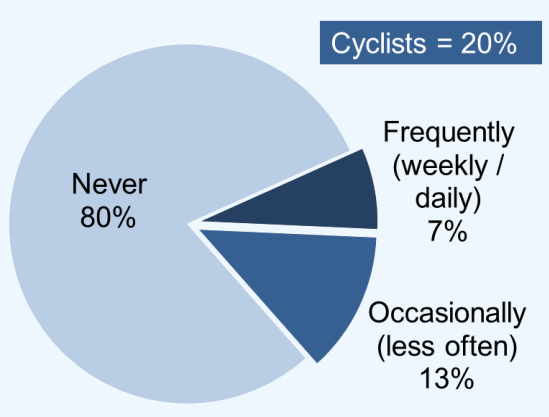
# Views about cycling

Around one in five residents (20 per cent) were cyclists: 7 per cent were regular cyclists who cycled weekly or daily, while 13 per cent were 'occasional' cyclists who cycled less often. This was similar to last year (22 per cent were cyclists).

Around 62 per cent of those surveyed felt Tower Hamlets was cycle friendly<sup>2</sup>. The proportion who rated the borough as cycle friendly has fallen significantly over the year - in 2017, almost three quarters (74 per cent) rated Tower Hamlets as cycle friendly.

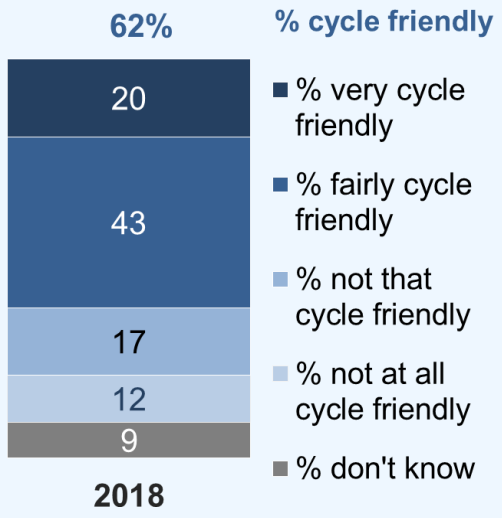
**Figure 21: Cycling in Tower Hamlets, 2018**

*Typically, how often do you use a bicycle to get around?*



Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018, Westco Trading (sample base 1,100)

*How cycle friendly do you consider Tower Hamlets to be?*



## 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/ignl/community\\_and\\_living/borough\\_statistics/Annual\\_Residents\\_Survey.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/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](mailto:lorna.spence@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> All percentages have been rounded to the nearest percentage point. This is 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 1999-2018

Views about the image of the Council, Tower Hamlets, 1999-2018																				
% agree 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>'My council...'</b>																				
Has staff who are friendly and polite	73	68	64	68	68	71	68	75	71	75	76	76	81	80	77	74	75	75	82	<b>77</b>
Keeps residents informed about what they are doing	57	54	53	62	57	61	57	68	66	68	70	72	71	76	73	69	73	71	68	<b>73</b>
Is making the local area a better place for people to live	53	43	54	56	50	58	55	69	66	67	67	72	72	74	74	74	76	77	80	<b>71</b>
Is doing a good job	52	54	51	52	50	57	64	67	64	68	69	72	72	76	76	73	75	72	78	<b>69</b>
Is efficient and well-run	41	45	40	42	43	48	55	60	56	61	59	64	65	67	66	66	67	67	74	<b>65</b>
Involves residents when making decisions	n/a	42	35	44	41	42	47	49	45	51	49	53	53	49	49	47	53	55	58	<b>62</b>
Listens to concerns of local residents	45	41	39	43	41	45	48	59	54	55	57	57	61	58	56	56	55	57	68	<b>59</b>
Provides good value for the Council Tax I pay	32	30	33	31	31	30	40	37	37	41	43	50	51	49	50	51	53	60	67	<b>58</b>
Is doing a better job now than one year ago	35	30	35	37	36	38	42	52	45	50	49	52	51	45	42	48	44	61	65	<b>56</b>
Responds quickly when asked for help	40	37	32	35	35	41	45	53	49	49	52	56	58	59	51	51	52	55	62	<b>54</b>
<i>Doesn't do enough for people like me</i>	44	36	41	39	35	45	42	46	48	51	50	47	45	41	40	42	43	49	41	<b>51</b>
<i>Is difficult to get through to on phone</i>	50	49	46	48	50	48	41	48	43	43	40	37	40	36	38	44	41	49	47	<b>54</b>
Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018 (Westco (2016-2018), TNS-BMRB (1999-2015))																				
Notes: Figures <i>in italics</i> are negative statements - so a fall in the percentage is an improvement.																				

## Appendix B: Service ratings 1999-2018

Service satisfaction ratings, Tower Hamlets, 1999-2018																					
	% rating service good, very good or excellent																				2018 sample size
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
<b>Views of all residents (regardless of whether they use the service)</b>																					
Refuse collection	64	67	59	63	52	62	78	73	67	66	66	66	68	67	65	62	65	70	72	72	1100
Street lighting	58	47	45	49	46	53	58	65	61	64	61	64	66	67	67	70	69	78	79	71	1100
Idea Stores/libraries	45	37	35	39	42	46	47	54	54	55	55	59	58	58	62	61	63	62	63	67	1100
Collection of council tax	43	38	40	40	38	56	58	59	54	50	55	53	57	57	62	53	60	57	64	65	1100
Parks and open spaces	31	29	30	34	28	33	39	46	50	54	53	61	60	60	60	61	64	69	71	64	1100
Street cleaning	51	46	35	39	32	44	60	59	54	51	59	62	60	59	59	55	58	70	72	62	1100
Recycling services	33	32	32	32	31	40	58	69	66	67	66	65	68	63	64	61	64	66	66	61	1100
Local health services	42	49	39	44	41	46	53	58	51	59	65	65	68	66	63	59	60	69	69	61	1100
Leisure & sports facilities	30	19	23	25	24	29	36	39	43	46	45	47	47	44	49	48	50	61	60	52	1100
Road/pavement repairs	31	25	21	22	17	29	38	47	40	41	37	38	39	41	40	43	45	58	64	49	1100
Policing	36	25	24	26	27	32	34	42	46	39	41	47	50	46	49	50	49	59	64	48	1100
Parking Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	25	23	25	30	26	25	29	28	42	42	34	1100
<b>Views of service users</b>																					
Idea Stores/libraries	54	52	53	56	57	64	56	71	71	72	76	81	76	77	81	79	79	83	81	82	509
Primary education*	-	-	-	59	63	63	61	73	69	73	69	77	71	70	74	72	75	82	73	78	198
Secondary education*	-	-	-	43	38	50	43	61	63	62	65	64	55	64	69	65	75	82	76	69	166
Children's centres*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82	72	64	77	72	73	67	76	69	117
Housing Benefit service*	51	48	55	51	42	55	43	60	58	59	64	66	63	60	54	56	57	55	59	69	190
Parks and open spaces	39	40	38	46	35	43	45	53	60	63	65	66	63	65	66	66	70	77	77	68	800
Recycling services	60	65	54	59	54	63	67	74	71	71	74	72	72	68	71	67	70	73	69	66	786
Leisure & sports facilities	48	36	38	39	36	44	43	50	60	61	65	71	61	61	66	63	64	78	73	62	494
Council Housing*	26	23	26	28	29	32	33	39	36	39	41	47	48	51	42	42	44	46	55	43	309
Parking Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	29	28	28	34	30	29	38	35	54	51	40	493

Source: Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey 2018 (Westco (2016-2018), TNS-BMRB (1999-2015))

\* These service ratings are based on smaller samples of users (below 350), so confidence intervals attached to these estimates are larger than for other services ( $\pm 7-9$  percentage points). For this reason, apparently large swings in ratings are often not statistically significant.



## 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 (Round 19) was taken in February 2018. Four of the questions included in the LGA poll are also carried out on the Tower Hamlets survey, and these are compared below (Figure 22). 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 - that is they provide contextual data as opposed to strict 'like for like' comparisons.

On council and area satisfaction, the Tower Hamlets ratings are fairly close to national ratings. On cohesion, the Tower Hamlets rating is 5 points higher than the national rating. On trust, the Tower Hamlets rating is far more positive than the national trust rating (74 vs. 57 per cent).

**Figure 22: Views about the Council and area: Tower Hamlets vs. LGA survey**

