



## **Summary of Findings from the Hackney a Place for Everyone Campaign and Survey**

**Produced by the Policy & Insight Team**

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## Overview of the campaign and survey

This wide ranging extensive campaign sought to engage with residents in a variety of ways and through a range of channels. This included: a 'state of the borough debate'; a questionnaire which was sent to all Hackney households and businesses, and which was also promoted face-to-face at over 50 locations in the borough resulting in 2980 responses; a chance for residents to provide face-to-face video feedback via a specially modified 'I Love Hackney' black taxi cab; a round table discussion event with members of the citizens e-panel; targeted focus groups with harder-to-reach groups (e.g. people in temporary accommodation, recent migrants, disabled people, LGBT residents); and, a series of themed events with residents and stakeholders. Ipsos MORI were also commissioned to run a repeat of a residents survey last undertaken in 2013 which provides responses from a representative sample of 1002 residents aged 16+ as a comparator. In parallel the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission carried out a review which sought to understand what could be done to ensure children and young people can access the opportunities available in Hackney.

### 1. Overall satisfaction with local area

#### *Very positive views about living in Hackney but divergent views among certain groups*

Residents surveyed **overwhelmingly felt satisfied** with their local area as a place to live with 88% satisfied overall. 46% felt their local area had got better as a place to live in the last five years and 59% agreeing that Hackney was a better place than two years ago. Below this very positive headline, there are some groups that are **less likely to be satisfied or feel the area is better than two or five years ago**. This is the case for those classified as **skilled manual workers (but not unskilled manual workers or those on a very low income), social renters and disabled people**. For some they may be more likely to be satisfied but feel the area has got worse (over 65s) or they are more likely to feel the area has improved but to nevertheless not be satisfied (**Black residents, unskilled manual workers and very low income groups**). The attitude of change among **longer term residents** (who have lived in the borough for more than ten years) seems somewhat polarised. They are less likely to be satisfied with their local area but are both more likely to think the area has got better and also more likely to think it has got worse. It is worth noting that the **55-64** age group is the most likely age group to feel satisfied and to feel the area has improved. Perhaps surprisingly, **private renters** are the tenure group most likely to feel satisfied. Even though 53% strongly agreed that housing in Hackney had become more unaffordable in recent years. Whilst it is not possible to prove why there are these divergent views we can build a picture through analysing the campaign findings of the main drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and of how this might affect different groups.

#### *Housing affordability- a concern for many and a desire to see action*

One in five residents surveyed (22%) believe **housing is becoming more expensive**. There are also concerns about **housing availability, quality and suitability, and a lack of affordable places to rent**. For campaign participants, house prices and cost of living are overwhelmingly the biggest negative change noticed during the last 10 years or so. Residents surveyed who had children were worried that **their children will not be able to afford to live in Hackney when they are older**. This concern was echoed in the focus group with migrant communities who were concerned about the **loss of the informal support networks** that they might have needed or might have wanted to offer (care for older people, childcare). Council Tax / Housing Benefit claimants were less likely to talk about housing affordability and

more likely to be concerned about housing quality. Concerns about social housing repairs were also raised at the residents' event on housing.

Development and specifically too much private, high end and luxury housing were in the top ten group of changes that residents identified as negative. There was also a view from some that planning control was lacking. The housing crisis is London wide and residents and the Council are limited in what they can do, but, **when asked what we can all do differently as part of the campaign, housing related responses received the third highest mention.** The most common suggestions were to build more social housing and more "genuinely affordable housing" and to control private sector rents and regulate private landlords. There was also a strong appetite for the Council to "stand up to developers" and to stop speculative development and luxury development without affordable housing. Many of these themes were echoed in the event on housing for residents, where there was also a strong desire amongst those present to "do something" and to collaborate with the Council on campaigns.

Some campaign respondents were specific about the groups for whom housing should be prioritised. Groups cited included families and longer term residents who might (if they were vulnerable) be a high priority for social housing but also included **young people, first time buyers and key workers, reflecting concerns that the market is not catering for these groups.** Both the e-panel event and focus groups with young black men raised the issue of housing for young people. The focus group with young black men suggested that the Council needed to be more honest in its messages about the availability of social housing and the options open to young people as there were a generation that had grown up in social housing in Hackney who assumed that this option would be open to them.

## 2. Community life

### ***Strong community cohesion and a desire to find ways to encourage neighbourliness and mixing as the demographic changes***

Levels of **community cohesion remain very high** with 9 in 10 residents surveyed agreeing that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get along well with each other. When asked how strongly they agree or disagree that the **demographic make-up of Hackney has changed for the better, residents are more likely to agree** than disagree with this statement by a ratio of approximately three to one. When asked what, if anything, residents think has got better about their local area in the last five years, **'better community spirit'** is also one of the top mentions from the survey (14% of residents spontaneously cite this).

There is a **strong value placed on social mixing** with 90% of survey respondents feeling it was important for people from different backgrounds to mix with each other and 69% feeling they lived in a neighbourhood where people from different socio-economic backgrounds got on. People are also open to diversity and disagreed with the statement that they didn't like mixing with people who were different. Survey respondents were most likely to mix with people from other socio-economic backgrounds in the shops.

There is however a difference between the extent that people get on well together (90%) and the extent to which they actually mix with each other (70%). The campaign findings can further expand on this. Despite the majority of people surveyed feeling that Hackney's demographic mix had changed for the better, there is a **perception expressed that can be seen across**

**all engagement (campaign, focus groups, events) that recent “incomers” are less interested in the community that is already in Hackney or engaged** in the borough’s recent heritage and communities, and that there is a **growing social segregation** (similar dynamics in Islington are explored in the Kings College study [Super-gentrification in Barnsbury](#)). Some respondents to the Campaign talked about a sense of division in areas where people can mix, with some residents feeling ‘locked out’ of the new cafes and shops that are becoming more prevalent. Young people in focus groups at Woodberry Down observed this as did young black men. For some there are also concerns expressed in the campaign and focus groups about places specifically for ethnic minority communities, particularly shops, closing down.

People are surprisingly comfortable about singling out an incoming group of residents which sits at odds with Hackney’s tolerance and openness. Fortunately, there seems to be a strong desire to take actions which might build bridges with newer residents, thus helping to protect Hackney’s community spirit and high levels of cohesion. The most commonly cited suggestions in response to the campaign question “what we could all do differently” related to having more **community events where different people can meet their neighbours** and mix e.g. street parties, jumble trail / community festivals, Hackney One Festival, carnival and Hackney half marathon (this was also a strong theme at the e-panel event). The fourth and fifth most common suggestions related to encouraging **neighbourliness and being tolerant of each other**. A focus group with LGBT residents suggested Hackney should have a local Pride march or festival, as a way of promoting LGBT equality. However, not everyone thought community events were the answer - in a focus group young people were sceptical about this and instead saw the value in maintaining parks and open spaces for everyone and where mixing could happen in a less forced way.

As well as the changing demographic, there also appears to be **genuine concern about the impact of population growth**, even if the majority of residents do not necessarily make mention of it as a change for the worse. The survey shows that residents on balance say they are worried about the impact of population growth in the borough on local public services (44% agree with this sentiment compared to 31% who disagree).

### ***Growing inequality – a concern for all***

Linked to the issue of social segregation, is a concern, shared by all groups, of growing inequality in the borough. Almost half of residents (45%) think that Hackney has become a more unequal borough; double the proportion who disagree this is the case (22%). The more affluent groups who tend to feel more positive towards recent changes in the borough are also the most likely to be concerned about the growing sense of inequality. 64% of professional and managerial residents think that the borough has become more unequal, as do 50% of full-time workers and 57% of owner-occupiers (compared to 45% of residents overall), suggesting that Hackney’s affluent residents tend to still care about the wider community rather than just thinking about their individual situation. There appears to be an ethnic dimension to this too, with White residents also more likely to feel this way (50% compared to 40% of residents from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) background).

Beyond overall concerns about inequality, which clearly require complex policy responses, there are a number of issues which relate to a borough which is changing rapidly which residents raised which could be addressed in the shorter term:

**Catering for all residents** - find ways to keep Hackney diverse, ensure people from different backgrounds are catered for, encourage inclusion/cohesion, community history and culture.

**Isolation** - Whilst 76% of residents had a close bond with other residents, 10% feel isolated and 27% know fewer people than before. Isolation is more likely to be experienced by semi-skilled, manual and very low income groups, social tenants and, Asian residents. One in five Muslim residents said they felt isolated.

**Loss of community space** - Concerns about the loss of community space were raised in focus groups and this was also linked to the loss of spaces where communities might have socialised such as pubs and barber which was also articulated by some in the campaign. There was also a view expressed that the Council needed to better understand and value what the community valued. This included spaces for LGBT residents, Caribbean residents and lower income groups.

### **Civil society**

Linked to the strong sense of community and interest in inequality, there is also an interest in encouraging and supporting community projects. This was the fifth most frequent response to the question “what could we do differently” in the Hackney a Place for Everyone campaign. Encouraging volunteering was also mentioned by a significant number of campaign participants and in the residents’ survey, a fifth said they would be willing to use their own professional skills to help businesses and the same number said they would help out in a local day centre for older people, whilst two in five respondents would be willing to do something lighter touch like helping out a neighbour with a chore. In the focus groups with new entrant communities difficulty of setting up organisations to support their community was raised, and the public debate on crime and community safety discussed resources for such groups.

## **3. The local environment and amenity**

### **Residents valued improvements to cleanliness and parks the most, but also expressed a desire to see residents taking greater responsibility for looking after their environment**

The improvements which campaign participants are most likely to spontaneously cite are cleanliness and parks and open spaces, and there was also a clear interest in maintaining levels of cleanliness and protecting parks and open spaces. However there was also an indication that **residents had a role to play in this**. When asked for practical actions we can all take “to keep Hackney a place for everyone,” many residents responding to the campaign (105) felt that other residents should **take responsibility and stop littering the streets and fly tipping** (“keep it clean so less money is needed to be spent on street cleaners.”), **as well as a smaller number that felt more residents needed to recycle**. Residents surveyed wanted the Council to protect and maintain parks and the campaign findings include suggestions to encourage more voluntary engagement in community gardens and public spaces, which echoes the interest in community groups. Interestingly, “community responsibility” was a very popular suggestion in the campaign for what we could all do differently to keep Hackney a place for everyone.

### *Strains of urban intensification- development, noise, congestion*

Development and specifically **too much private, high end and luxury housing** were in the top ten group of changes that residents identified as negative. There was also a view from some that planning control was lacking. Whilst the negativity seems largely to be about private housing, there are some specific mentions of high rise development and of protecting parks and open space from development. As Hackney and London's population has increased it is unsurprising that **congestion and speed of traffic and noise** are two of three things that survey respondents say have got worse in terms of the environment and they were also mentioned in the campaign and in focus groups.

### *Transport and road safety – great transport connections, complaints about parking facilities and poor driver and cyclist behaviour*

**Transport connections have dramatically improved in the last five years** and this is the second most frequent positive mention in terms of the local environment. However, for those who need parking there is a perception that facilities have got worse. When asked what would most improve the quality of life for local people living in the area, survey respondents spontaneously mention **more car parking spaces (12%) and cheaper parking (9%)**. In addition to speed of traffic, survey respondents talked about **poor driver and cyclist behaviour**, including cyclists on the pavement and jumping red lights. This was also discussed in the focus group with disabled residents. In terms of what could be done, both the surveys and campaigns talked about enforcement, but also talked about education and awareness. This echoes some of the sentiments expressed above about **wanting to see people being more considerate and tolerant of each other**.

### *Business growth – positive about the quality of products and choice but concerned about affordability, loss of diversity of offer*

**Business growth was the most frequently mentioned positive change** in terms of the local economy and housing in the campaign. Verbatim comments talk about the quality of products and choice. However, the changing business profile that has meant **some established businesses being priced out**, was also raised as a negative change in the campaign, as was the business mix in some areas, with a view there were **fewer affordable places and too many cafes and bars**.

In response to what we could all do differently, campaign participants spoke about **supporting local shops and prioritising and encouraging small local businesses and independent shops**, as well as encouraging a **good mix that caters for all needs** including more affordable places.

In line with concerns explored above about the extent to which communities mix, some campaign respondents were concerned about **social segregation in businesses** and wanted to see less segregation between places for poor and places for rich. The changing commercial realm was discussed in detail in focus groups. New shops and amenities including chains were welcomed, but similar concerns about the **accessibility and exclusiveness of some of the offer was raised**. Young Black Men cited a number of examples of venues where they believed black people were not welcome and disabled people said new businesses were

catering for a younger “trendy” population and not thinking about accessibility e.g. signage, ramps

### **Crime, safety and policing- a safer place but concerns about violent crime**

**16% of survey respondents felt Hackney had become safer** (although 5% felt less safe) and it was a strong theme in the campaign as well. Some campaign respondents talked about making Hackney safer or about a greater a police presence and this was also discussed at the public debate. Focus groups with young people explored feelings of safety. In one there was a view that Hackney appeared safer, but that gang crime which used to be more visible had "gone underground" and that there **remained problems with violent and gang crime**. Different groups of young people expressed concerns about gun and knife crime and this was echoed at the public debate. One of the questions was whether Hackney was becoming a more violent place than it had been in recent years, and the extent to which this was fuelled by inequalities. Some young black men felt unsafe outside of their postcode.

In some of the focus groups with young people and at the Public Debate, there was a feeling that the dialogue between authorities and the community was not strong enough around community safety, and that there was a need to build relationships. This was seen as a way to make Hackney a safer place, as crime prevention started in homes and in the community, engaging young people before they became disaffected or criminalised.

### **Education and children's facilities**

**Improved schools were identified as a positive change** by both survey and campaign respondents and in focus groups. In the focus groups participants also recognised and appreciated the improvements in education over the past 10 years, although there was a concern that some schools were now **focused on performance exclusively** and not pupil welfare and that uniforms were expensive.

Focus groups also talked about:

- Strategies for improving attainment for Turkish / Kurdish children and young people
- The importance of extra-curricular activity / pastoral support in educational achievement
- Parental engagement in education: Turkish / Kurdish young people highlighted that their parents have been in Britain for only two generations. Linguistic, social and cultural barriers mean they are cut off from or do not understand the education system or career options. These parents do not have the social networks through which young people could receive informal advice and information about careers – i.e. parents do not have lots of friends and acquaintances who are in the careers that their children want to pursue.
- Young people placed **a very strong value on work experience** and gaining exposure to industry. They felt apprenticeships were still viewed quite poorly.

Like the population overall, young people in focus groups **valued parks and open spaces**, but some felt they were not welcome to “hang out” and would be moved on and also that local leisure facilities were not welcoming for young people. Young black men felt that the spaces that they valued such as football cages were not recognised and were seen as problematic and neglected spaces that could be shut down or redeveloped. Some campaign respondents reflected these views in their suggestions of what could be done to keep Hackney a place for everyone, suggesting more activities or spaces for young people. While no less satisfied with

the Council overall, residents with children in the household are less likely to believe that the quality of Council services is good overall.

### **Local job opportunities**

Residents are **split over whether or not they agree that jobs are accessible** to them *personally*, and/ or to the population *equally* in Hackney. They are also much more likely to disagree (43%) than agree (15%) that there are plenty of job opportunities in Hackney for the current population which could reflect the feelings explored above among residents that **some are being left behind and excluded from new and emerging opportunities**. This view is stronger among residents not currently in full-time work and who live in social rented housing, and among residents from a BME background, younger residents aged 16-24 and those aged 45-54, as well as disabled residents. The focus groups also discussed this concern that jobs were not going to local people. However no local employment strategy looks solely at the jobs in its local area and all the focus groups with **young people identified high career aspirations that looked beyond the borough boundaries** and an interest as mentioned above in gaining work experience. Suggestions from campaign participants about what we could all do differently included **skills and employment support, mentoring and community work as a step to employment**.

### **Attitudes towards the Council**

**The majority of residents (70%) are satisfied with how well Hackney Council** runs things overall, and only one in seven (14%) are actively dissatisfied (in line with national figures). Residents are also far more likely to think Council services have got better rather than worse over the last two years despite the ongoing financial pressures facing the Council. There is a greater level of satisfaction in Council services among the **25-34 age group** (78%) whereas **21% of 65+ residents are actively dissatisfied** compared with 14% overall. **Professional and managerial groups** more likely to be positive about the Council whilst **semi-skilled, manual and very low income groups more likely to be dissatisfied** and to disagree that the quality of service is good. **Social tenants** are the least content with only 62% satisfied and 25% of disagreeing that the quality of Council services is good. **Black residents** are also less likely to be satisfied or think the quality of Council services is good and this has gone down since 2013 by 10% from 69% to 57%. Nearly a third of **disabled residents** are not satisfied with services, double the population overall. People with children are also less likely to be satisfied as are longer term residents.

**Residents are more evenly split on how well the Council listens to local people** - residents are equally as likely to agree (29%) as they are to disagree (31%) with this statement. Just over two in five residents (43%) think the Council acts on the concerns of local people, and while a significant proportion of residents are sitting on the fence on this issue, one in five (19%) actively disagrees this is the case. **35-54 year olds, semi-skilled, manual and low income groups, social renters and black residents are all more likely to feel that the Council does not listen to them**. In response to the question of what we could all do differently, there were suggestions from campaign participants about the Council **engaging with all residents and listening their views and experiences**. The focus groups talked about the Council providing a lot of information but not creating space for dialogue, especially in relation to regeneration.



There is a great deal of synergy between the groups that are not satisfied with their local area and with the Council, which is unsurprising, but helps us to identify the groups who may feel the most disaffected in their local community and with services.