

March 2017

Hackney: A Place for Everyone

A Residents' View of Hackney in 2015-16



Introduction: Mayor Glanville



This document is a short summary of some of the key findings that emerged from the ‘Hackney: A Place for Everyone’ engagement exercise that the Council carried out last year. To begin with, I would like to thank all of the more than 4,500 residents who took part in the consultation – whether through filling in a questionnaire, taking part in a survey, coming along to a debate or event, or taking part in a focus group – every response we received was so valuable in helping us get a true picture of how residents really feel about the changes that Hackney has experienced.

What was really striking about the response, was the amount of time residents put into giving us really detailed feedback, and the sheer number of people who wanted to talk about change in Hackney, and how it has affected them. As Hackney’s new Mayor, I am very grateful to have access to such an enormously rich source of insight into the way that residents feel about a whole range of issues.

In many ways, my Mayoral programme, and the Council’s update to its corporate plan, are a response to the issues raised by ‘Hackney: A Place for Everyone’. The vast majority of people here feel that Hackney has changed for the better over the past 10 years. It’s cleaner and safer than ever, with outstanding schools and public transport links. The vast majority (88%) of people are happy with Hackney as a place to live, and I will work to protect everything that we have done to achieve that.

However, I will also be focused on tackling the widening inequality that threatens Hackney’s unique sense of diversity, cohesion and community. At the heart of that is the housing crisis, which is being felt across London, but particularly in Hackney, where the cost of buying and private renting has risen even more sharply than in other boroughs. Our sense of community remains strong, but there are people who feel increasingly excluded and left behind. Some of our long-standing communities feel they can’t access the new jobs and opportunities that are the result of Hackney’s economic growth, and I want to do more to assure this is addressed.

We provide a summary here of the topics that were most important to you, what we have learned from ‘Hackney: A Place for Everyone’ will inform every decision we make as a Council over the coming years. However, the Council can’t solve everything, and we can’t solve anything alone, so there are some challenges in here for our partners, other parts of the public sector, the business community and for residents to respond to as well. We touch upon how the information gathered is informing the way we work as an organisation, providing evidence for our major strategies and informing how we will talk to residents and businesses.

This consultation has provided some really rich insight, but this is only the start of the conversation and we will continue to listen to residents as we develop our response to some of the complex issues raised here. We’ve recently completed a similar engagement exercise to help shape the future of education in the borough – called the ‘Hackney: Schools for Everyone’ consultation – and we’ll also be talking to people about health, our housing strategy, about development in Hackney and how the Council’s planning policy shapes that, over the coming months.

Thank you again for your input into ‘Hackney: A Place for Everyone’. I look forward to carrying on this conversation with residents in the coming years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Philip Glanville'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney

Hackney: A Place for Everyone explained

During 2015-16, Hackney Council carried out a major borough-wide engagement exercise, asking residents for their views about the huge change that Hackney has experienced over the past decade. The consultation ran for more than a year and engaged over 4,500 Hackney residents. It included a questionnaire that was distributed to every household in the borough and we received more than 3,000 responses; we talked to many more people at community events, we held a 'state of the borough' debate and Ipsos Mori carried out a survey of 1,000 local people. We also captured many hours of video footage of people telling us their stories about changes in Hackney, using our specially modified 'I Love Hackney' taxi cab.

We wanted to get a clearer picture of how this change was affecting local people, their experience of living in the borough, and how people were feeling about Hackney. We also wanted to start a dialogue with residents about the role that everyone in the borough could play in keeping Hackney as a cohesive, stable community in the face of huge pressure on public resources, and rapid social and economic change.

Hearing directly from you about the challenges you face living in our borough, as well about the progress you have seen made over recent years, is invaluable to us. We gathered a huge amount of information from the consultation and we've spent the last year analysing it, considering what it means for the Council and using it to develop new approaches to the way we work. For example, it's underpinning the review of our Community Strategy and is directly feeding into to the prioritisation of our equality and diversity work. There is more information about how we're using this on the last page, but first we want to share what you, collectively, told us.

Some of the key issues that residents talked about are presented here so you have the chance to see what the people of Hackney think about the borough as a place to live. It serves as a call to action to everybody with a stake in the future of our borough: the Council, residents and local businesses.



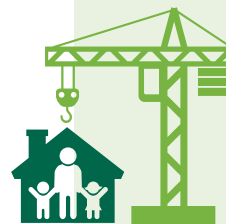
269,000 people live in Hackney. Over the last 15 years, the population of the borough has increased by a third (33%) from 202,800.



The proportion of households who rent from a private landlord has more than doubled in the past 10 years. Nearly a third of all households are now private renters.



To tackle affordability issues, Hackney delivered over 1,600 units of new housing in 2015, of which over 30% was affordable housing.



Nearly 16,000 additional new homes are expected to be built in the borough in the next 10 years.

Secondary school projections indicate that 12 additional Forms of Entry will be required by 2020.



20-29 yrs

Almost **1/5** of Hackney residents are aged 20-29.



Between 2010 and 2015, more than 9,800 square meters of additional employment floor space was created in Hackney.

👍👍 **Generally positive, but am worried that there are some people being left behind, and the diversity of community in Hackney is being lost.**



Resident, E5

👍👍 **It's got a lot better! The streets are cleaner, well looked after and look better. More independent retailers that aren't just betting shops or fried chicken shops.**



Resident, E5

👍👍 **The new Overground is a real benefit.**



Resident, N1

👍👍 **I feel proud of living in Hackney.**



Resident, E5

Hackney as a place to live

Overall, Hackney residents are positive and satisfied with the borough as a place to live (88%) and with the Council (70%). The vast majority of people, feel that Hackney is a cohesive and a neighbourly place, where people have a strong sense of belonging, and that they enjoy an excellent quality of life.

Many people felt that Hackney has become a much cleaner borough, with better transport connections, schools, parks and open spaces. However, the impact of population growth is being felt, with some people expressing concern about the fact that Hackney has become busier, noisier and more congested, with fewer and more expensive parking spaces.

The 7% who are dissatisfied with Hackney as a place to live and 14% with the Council are more likely to include less affluent groups, social renters, disabled people and black and minority ethnic people.

Some people felt that while the area had improved, they personally felt less satisfied with it. Most residents feel that changes in the borough have been positive, but there is an underlying ambivalence about whether they personally are able to benefit from all of the changes.

1. Housing affordability

Housing affordability is the top concern for residents, who do not see the market catering for anyone apart from the wealthiest. One resident said 'property prices are getting unaffordable for the people who have lived in Hackney for a long time. It is almost impossible to buy newly built property'.

Some parents expressed a concern that their children will not be able to afford to live in Hackney when they are older. One resident said 'after 20 years of living in Hackney I cannot afford to live here any longer...my rent is way too high for my income to cope with. It's not the Hackney I knew and cared for'. Many people felt that more social housing, or genuinely affordable housing should be provided. Housing affordability emerged as the top concern for residents, whether or not they were personally affected by it.

In focus groups, people talked about the loss of informal support networks as people are forced to leave the borough. Residents expressed concern about a lack of housing for young people, and for key workers and first time buyers. Many people also expressed a desire to see private sector rent controls and better regulation of private landlords.

Many residents recognised the improvements we have seen in our borough over the past 10 years – better schools, cleaner and greener open spaces and better transport links – but these positive improvements mean Hackney is now a much more desirable place to live and the knock-on effect of this has been a huge surge in demand for housing and spiralling prices. Housing affordability is a London-wide crisis, but it is even more acute in Hackney where house prices have more than doubled in the last 10 years (compared to an 80% increase across London), while incomes still lag behind the London average. Hackney now has the 10th highest average house prices out of 33 London boroughs.

There are limits to what the Council can do to address the housing crisis, which is a systemic, London wide issue, but delivering more affordable housing is a top priority for Hackney's Mayor. In real terms this means that the Council is working to be the first borough to provide 500 new homes under a genuinely affordable living rent scheme. In addition to this, the Council has committed to directly developing new homes, as well as working with our social housing partners to build 3,000 new homes between 2014 and 2018, of which half will be for rent and shared ownership and we are on track to provide many more than this by next year.

Alongside this, we are developing a new Housing Strategy which will set out the Council's approach to dealing with the issues many have raised – in particular, it will reaffirm our strong commitment to challenging developers to build the maximum amount of affordable housing in new developments. It will also set out creative new models for providing housing such as a Council-owned housing company to provide high quality, affordable and secure private tenancies, and ensuring developments include housing that is adaptable enough to meet people's needs throughout their whole lives.

We are also focusing on improving standards in the private rented sector, ensuring that private landlords are meeting their obligations to tenants. We encourage all of them to become accredited under the London Rental Standard and we continue to take every opportunity to lobby the Government to raise standards in the private rental sector. Lettings agencies can do their part in this area too by being transparent and fair to tenants, displaying all fees and charges clearly and up front.

2. Community and Cohesion

The resident responses to Ipsos MORI's survey show that 90% of people in Hackney feel that this is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together and this is a strong indicator of cohesive communities. One resident reported that 'there's a more optimistic atmosphere, more diverse range of residents; more of an outdoor culture' in Hackney in recent years. However, when asked if they felt that people from different class or socio-economic backgrounds in Hackney actually mix with each, only 70% agreed. People in Hackney place a high value on social mixing, with 90% of survey respondents feeling it was important for people from different backgrounds to mix with each other.

The majority of people surveyed felt that Hackney's demographic mix had changed for the better, but there is a perception that recent 'incomers' are less interested in the community that is already in Hackney. This perception reflects a fear that what makes Hackney unique is at risk, because of the pace of change in the borough.

People expressed a strong desire to protect Hackney's community spirit and cohesion, and to see more community events where different people can meet their neighbours and mix together. Events mentioned included street parties, community festivals, jumble trails, the Hackney One Carnival, the Hackney Half Marathon, and Play Streets. The Council is committed to continuing to run an annual events programme that brings people together, and celebrates Hackney's diversity and community, including borough-wide events, but also smaller events in parks and on estates.

We also want to make it easier for people to hold local events on our streets, and to build networks and connections in their local area. Residents themselves can help maintain our positive community spirit, by taking part in these local events and by making the effort to get to know different people in their communities, hopefully this will inspire people to plan their own events and build networks and connections in their local area.

During the consultation, residents mentioned encouraging neighbourliness and tolerance and there is a keen interest among many people to give their time in their local community. For some this meant helping a neighbour, and for others it meant volunteering time at a local organisation. The Council will be launching the Active Hackney Network over the coming months, which will make it easier for people to find opportunities to give their time and will also reach out to volunteers and organisations already running projects in their community to help support and develop their work.

More prosperous in parts but more stratified. To live here now you either have to be a long-established social housing tenant or a long-established home owner, or else a very high earner.

Resident, E8

A huge population rise. It's difficult to get doctor's appointments.

Resident, E9

It's becoming a place where you need money to feel secure.

Resident, E5



👍👍 *I don't like division, and the mix has got worse, and could make the area more boring. The cafes are better, and more expensive. Hipsters are fine. Gates are not.*



Resident, N16

👍👍 *Our family has benefited from the reduction in crime. There appear to be fewer muggings. The gang culture seems to have receded.*



Resident, N16

3. Maintaining Hackney as a great place

The cleanliness of the borough's parks and open spaces is highly valued by residents. One person said that Hackney has 'become cleaner and greener in most places, I feel proud to be a Hackney resident as it has such beautiful and well maintained green spaces'.

The responses also showed that there is a clear interest in maintaining and protecting this so the borough is a place that everyone can enjoy. Residents were clear that everyone has a role to play and people need to take a greater responsibility for keeping these spaces clean.

Transport connections have dramatically improved in the last five years and this was another positive that residents recognised. However, for those who need parking there is a perception that facilities have got worse. In addition to speed of traffic, survey respondents talked about poor driver and cyclist behaviour, again with respondents wanting to see people being more considerate and tolerant of each other on the roads.

Every person passing through Hackney from resident to worker to visitor can contribute to keeping the borough safe and clean, by showing consideration as a pedestrian, cyclist or driver, not dropping litter and remembering that parks and green spaces are for everyone to share.

4. Promoting a balance of businesses in the borough

Overall, residents appreciate the growth in the number and type of businesses in the borough in recent years and see it as a positive change for Hackney. There was feedback from a resident that 'the area has become more vibrant, attracting different types of people to the area. New businesses opening up local shops and the community working/supporting the area.' However, the changing business profile has meant that some established businesses have been priced out and some people have the view that there are now fewer affordable places and too many cafes and bars in some areas. Hackney is leading the way with an Affordable Workspace Strategy that seeks to maximise the affordable space delivered by new commercial developments as one way of trying to deal with this threat to local businesses.

We know that the upcoming Business Rates Review will be a particularly stressful time for many local businesses, particularly small, independent firms. We will offer a wide range of support to SMEs throughout this, in particular to help businesses appeal rates rises and apply for Small Business Rate Relief.

In line with concerns about the extent to which communities mix, some respondents were

Hackney: A Place for Everyone

What residents told us:

88%

of Hackney residents are satisfied with the area as a place to live.



90% of people feel it's important for people from different backgrounds to mix with each other.

👍👍 *Hackney is a more vibrant place than it used to be.* 👍👍

Resident, E9



When asked 'what could we all do differently?' one of the top responses from residents was for everyone to take responsibility and stop littering the streets and fly tipping.

concerned about social segregation in businesses and wanted to see less segregation between places for the poor and places for the rich. For example, there was a comment from a resident that 'a lot of people of ethnic culture are being pushed out of the borough and local shops are gearing towards the white middle class'. 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.

We want to develop our services to businesses and will work with businesses of all sizes, providing a single point of Council contact, and opening up access to a range of research, networks and supply chains for all to benefit from.

5. Tackling inequality

Almost half of all residents surveyed think that Hackney has become a more unequal borough. One said that they have seen 'increased polarisation between wealthy middle class homeowners who seem to take over a lot of public space and everybody else'. Although 76% of residents had a close bond with other residents, 10% said they felt isolated and 27% said they knew fewer people than before. 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 barbers. Above everything else, the Council and other public sector bodies need to keep our focus on tackling key inequalities, for example by understanding why some groups do less well in education or health and tackling the root causes of inequality.

Income inequality is a major contributor to overall inequality in the borough, the underlying factors that lead to people being on low incomes are complex and not easily resolved. We work with central Government agencies and neighbouring boroughs to tackle long-term unemployment and benefit dependency, and to attract high quality, sustainable jobs to East London. Residents are split over whether or not they agree that jobs in the area are accessible to them personally, and/or to the population equally in Hackney and one person said that 'new business should be encouraged to employ local people'. Some residents feel that there are a lack of job opportunities in Hackney for the current population, which reflects the feelings expressed by some residents that they are being left behind and excluded from new opportunities. This view is stronger among some groups of residents including those not currently in full-time work and who live in social rented housing, residents from a BME background and disabled residents. However, focus groups with young people identified high career aspirations that looked beyond Hackney's borough boundaries.

“There are many new cafés and bars near me, which get more and more upmarket all the time. I also think the families and older people living in my estate are being gradually replaced by more and more young flat shares (such as my own).”



Resident, E2

“Increased house prices, cleaner streets, richer people moving in.”



Resident, E5



People are concerned about growing inequality – almost half of residents (45%) think that Hackney has become a more unequal borough.

“Families that have lived here for generations have left the borough to be replaced by middle income and professional classes.” Resident, E5

High house prices and cost of living are overwhelmingly the biggest negative change noticed during the last 10 years or so.



“Much improved, especially in street and public space cleanliness and in primary and secondary education.”

Resident, N16

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 2015:
59% of residents felt informed about the Council.



Nearly a **1/3** of people (**32%**) also use their local networks of friends, neighbours and relations to find out about the Council.

People want to have their say in Hackney, so far over 2,000 have contributed to the Schools for Everyone consultation.



Hackney Today is a popular way of obtaining information for many residents and is used by 39% of people, as their first choice for finding out information about the Council.

Over the last decade, Hackney has seen the arrival of many new businesses, bringing more local employment, from the growth of Tech City to developments such as the new Hackney Walk with a range of fashion outlet stores close to Hackney Central, and Here East: the new digital and technology campus in the former broadcasting centre on the edge of the Olympic Park. These businesses are key partners, and we need to work with them so local people have a fair chance to secure these jobs and opportunities.

Mayor Glanville has relaunched the Council's approach to local employment, including the successful Hackney 100 work placement programme, which connects young people with the industries that are seeing strong growth in Hackney. The Council will also be creating 100 apprenticeships across the organisation. We also need to drive up wages. The Council is a London Living Wage employer and is asking other local employers to move to paying London Living Wage too. We work with local businesses to promote the benefits of local recruitment, and apprenticeships, and ensure that as many of our contracts as possible reflect these priorities.

What next? Making the most of the findings from 'Hackney: A Place for Everyone'

Developing new approaches

We are currently in the process of developing a vision for Hackney for the next decade which will form the basis of the new Community Strategy 2018-28. The findings from 'Hackney: A Place for Everyone' have been crucial in helping us to develop an inclusive vision and strategy, to support all our residents through present and future challenges.

Alongside the work to develop our new Community Strategy, the consultation feedback is also feeding into the development of the new Housing Strategy which is also being consulted on soon – look out for this later in the spring – and the refresh of our Local Plan, which sets planning policy for the borough. The refresh of the Local Plan is a longer process which you will have several opportunities to have your say on before it is considered for adoption in late 2018. In particular, the issues outlined here around housing affordability and the need to plan and support cohesive communities that work for people of all ages and backgrounds is being fed into the both these new strategy documents.

A lot of the key themes summarised here, as well as the wider findings of the consultation, are complex issues that require cross-cutting new approaches in response. The Council is keen to renew the focus on jobs and employment to bring opportunities to local people who have felt left behind. There is now a dedicated Cabinet Member whose portfolio includes responsibility for employment and skills and the Council is also working to develop a new framework internally to coordinate our work to help all residents benefit from the economic development we are seeing in Hackney.

Carrying on the conversation

This was the start of a new conversation with residents, businesses and the people who visit and work in our borough. In the past, the Council's approach to engaging with its citizens has focused on formal consultation on specific issues. We have also been successful in engaging the public in creating a sense of civic pride and building an identity for Hackney as a place, and the role of our residents within that. We have now started to move to the next level, translating those positive feelings about the place into a more active form of engagement. More than 2,000 residents so far have participated in the recent 'Hackney: Schools for Everyone', debate about the future of education in Hackney. There is a genuine appetite for more engagement on the big issues. The consultation feedback has also helped us rethink the relationship between the Council, residents and local businesses.

In response to this, we have started to develop more channels through which you can make a genuine contribution to local debate, to policy development and to service improvement. This includes a series of independently chaired debates and themed public engagement events, and creating more online space for people to share ideas, innovate and talk over the big issues that matter to them.



For more detail on the findings of 'Hackney: A Place for Everyone', visit: hackney.gov.uk/HAPFE

If you are interested in having your say on Council services and the issues that affect Hackney, please visit: hackney.gov.uk/consultation