

Council finances and budget communications campaign

Survey Report

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Data analysis and report author:

David Besbrode
Research and Insight Manager

Co-author:

Martin Mallon
Communications Officer

Contact

Hackney Consultation Team
on 020 8356 3343 or
consultation@Hackney.gov.uk



Contents

Introduction, Background, Consultation & Engagement Approach, Response rate	2
Overview of results	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q2. Do you know where Council funding comes from to pay for services for residents? 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3. Can you name any services, projects or initiatives that you believe Hackney Council's budget pays for or supports? 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q4. Have you seen information about the Council's budget and council tax. If so, where did you see it? 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q5. If the Council held budget-related workshops or events in the future about the council's financial planning, would you be interested in attending? 	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q6. If you would like to be contacted in the future about any workshops or events, or to receive more information as requested, please enter your email below: 	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q7. Would you like to know more about the Council's finances? If so, how would you like to learn about it? 	9
X and Instagram - Polling Results	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q1. Do you know how the council gets money to pay for resident services? 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q2. Do you know how the council chooses which services and projects to spend money on? 	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3. I know local government is under financial pressure 	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q4. I am aware that Hackney Council may need to make savings in future 	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q5. I am aware of all the different places the Council gets its money from for its annual budget 	14

Introduction

The Council, like our residents, is facing increased costs of goods and services plus we continue to experience rising demand for vital services for some of our more vulnerable residents. These pressures taken alongside real term funding reductions of over 40% since 2010 place immense strain on Council resources.

Background

To address these financial challenges, the Council must make significant savings now and over the next few years to ensure we can continue to deliver key services and support those who need us most.

We wanted those who live and work in the borough to tell us what they currently know about the Council's budget so we can keep them better informed about how the council works; how services are funded; and how and why we prioritise where our money is spent.

Consultation & Engagement Approach

The survey was created on the Council's consultation platform Citizen Space and was live from 14 September 2023 until 26 October 2023.

Some of the questions from the survey, which were slightly reworded, were put on social media platforms (Instagram and X) as polling questions. There were 5 questions asked over a period of 5 weeks.

Response rate

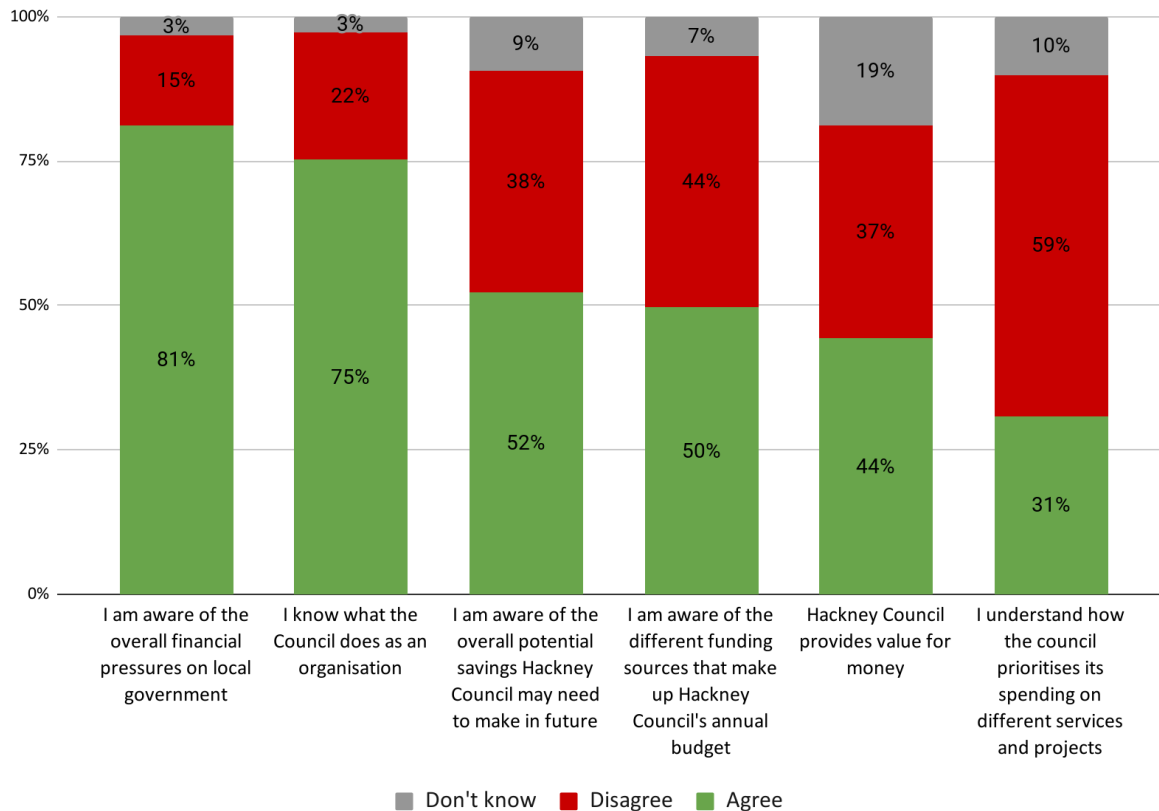
150 respondents took part in the survey.

Across all social media platforms, a total of 813 people took part in the polling questions on both platforms.

Please note that some comments might fall into multiple categories, and the categorisation is based on the predominant theme in each comment.

Overview of results

**Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
(Base 149)**



The chart above represents six statements asking whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with each.

The majority of respondents at 81% (121) stated that they agree with being aware of the overall financial pressures on local government. A smaller 15% (23) stated they disagree with this statement and were not aware, and only 3% (5) stated they don't know.

This is followed by 75% (112) stating that they agree with knowing what the Council does as an organisation. A smaller 22% (33) stated they disagree with this statement as not knowing, and only 3% (4) stated they don't know.

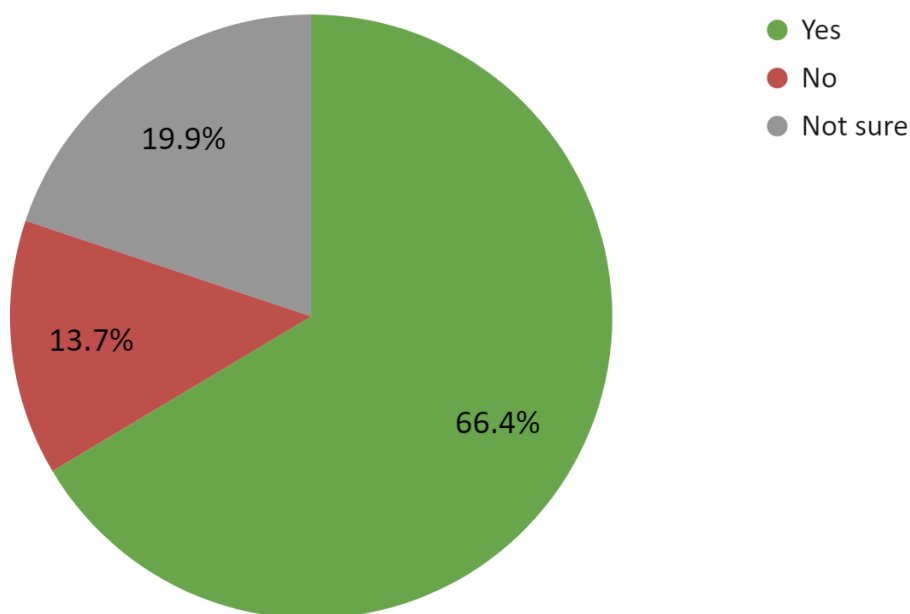
Just over half of respondents at 52% (78) stated that they agree with being aware of the overall potential savings Hackney Council may need to make in future. Over a third of respondents at 38% (57) stated they disagree with this statement and were not aware, and only 9% (14) stated they don't know.

Half of respondents at 50% (74) stated that they agree with being aware of the different funding sources that make up Hackney Council's annual budget. Just under half at 44% stated they disagree with this statement and were not aware, and only 7% (10) stated they don't know.

44% (66) of respondents stated that they agree that the Council provides value for money. Just over a third at 37% (55) stated they disagree with this statement, and 19% (28) stated they don't know.

The majority of respondents at 59% (88) stated that they disagree with understanding how the Council prioritises its spending on different services and projects. Just under a third of the respondents at 31% (46) stated that they agree, and 10% (15) stated they don't know.

**Q2. Do you know where Council funding comes from to pay for services for residents?
(Base 146)**



The majority of respondents, at two thirds (97), stated that they do know where Council funding comes from to pay for services for residents. 20% of respondents stated that they are not sure, and 14% stated no.

If Yes, please tell us below: (96 comments)

- Central Government Funding: (39 comments)
 - Many comments mention that a significant portion of the funding comes from the central government.
- Council Tax: (41 comments)

- Council tax is frequently mentioned as a source of revenue for local councils.
- Business Rates: (23 comments)
 - Business rates, which are taxes on businesses, are another common source of income.
- Rental Income: (11 comments)
 - Rental income from council-owned properties is also mentioned in several comments.
- Parking and Traffic-Related Income: (24 comments)
 - This includes parking permits, parking fines, traffic fines, and fees related to traffic violations.
- Grants and Specific Funding: (17 comments)
 - Some comments mention grants from central government or other specific funding sources.
- Other Revenue Sources: (18 comments)
 - There are various other income sources mentioned, such as fees for services, commercial waste collection charges, licensing fees, and income from council-owned assets.
- Community Charges: (3 comments)
 - Some comments refer to community charges and levies.
- Public Dissatisfaction: (2 comments)
 - A couple of comments express dissatisfaction with the allocation of funds, suggesting a need for more funding in specific areas like education and social care.

Q3. Can you name any services, projects or initiatives that you believe Hackney Council's budget pays for or supports? (132 comments)

- Education: (25 comments)
 - These comments mention funding and services related to schools, education, and libraries.
- Social Care: (19 comments)
 - Comments in this category pertain to adult and children's social care services.
- Housing: (15 comments)
 - These comments relate to housing, including maintenance, benefits, and support.
- Waste Collection/Management: (15 comments)
 - This theme encompasses comments about rubbish and recycling collection and waste management.
- Parks and Leisure: (14 comments)
 - Comments about the maintenance and funding of parks, leisure facilities, and cultural activities fall into this category.
- Transportation (Including LTNs): (11 comments)

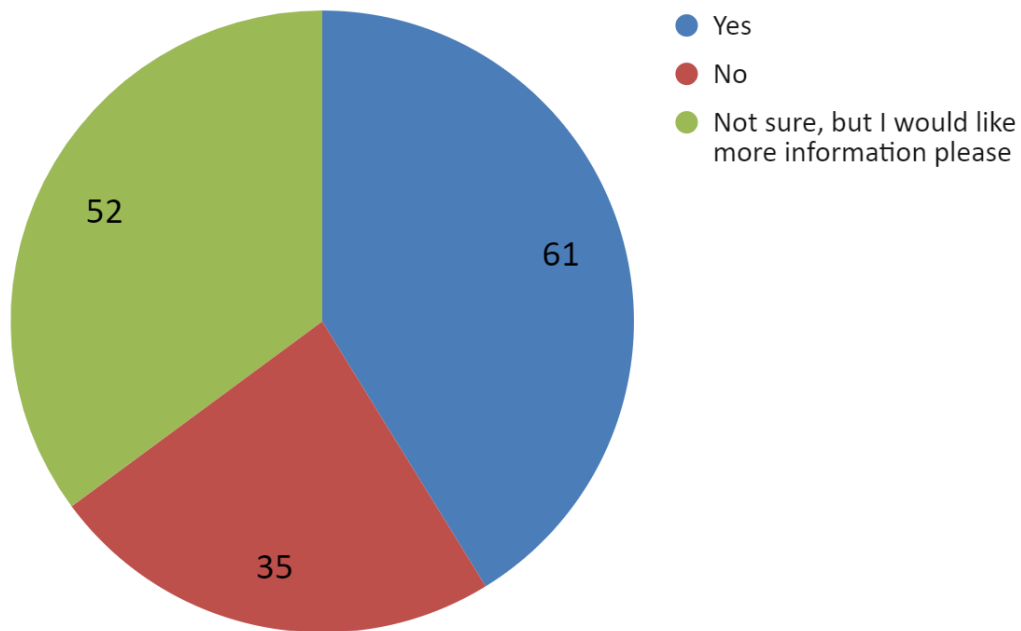
- This theme covers road closures, low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), and cycleways, impacting transportation and traffic.
- Health Services: (9 comments)
 - These comments discuss health care services and support for aged care.
- Local Services (Street Cleaning, Tree Maintenance, etc.): (9 comments)
 - This category includes services such as street cleaning, tree maintenance, and maintenance of roads.
- Libraries and Cultural Activities: (8 comments)
 - Comments related to libraries, cultural events, and new age games are included in this theme.
- Community Support and Grants: (7 comments)
 - This theme encompasses comments about grants, support for disadvantaged families, and community organisations.
- Parking and Traffic Management: (7 comments)
 - These comments focus on traffic management, electric car charging, and parking-related services.
- Public Health: (7 comments)
 - This theme includes comments related to public health services and support for the cost of living.
- Community Engagement and Events: (6 comments)
 - Comments about community grants, engagement, and events are grouped in this category.
- Economic Support (Business, Markets, etc.): (5 comments)
 - This theme covers support for start-ups, social enterprises, street markets, and businesses.
- Environmental Initiatives (Biodiversity, Recycling, etc.): (5 comments)
 - Comments in this category discuss initiatives related to biodiversity, recycling, and waste management.
- Emergency Services: (4 comments)
 - These comments mention police, fire, and ambulance services.
- Youth Services: (4 comments)
 - Comments related to youth services and youth parliament are included in this theme.
- Public Spaces: (4 comments)
 - This theme covers funding for public spaces, parks, and public services such as recycling.
- Community Housing (Council Housing, Repairs): (3 comments)
 - Comments about council housing, maintenance, and repairs are grouped here.
- Road Maintenance and Infrastructure: (3 comments)
 - This category includes comments about the maintenance of roads, schools, and infrastructure.

Q4. Have you seen information about the Council's budget and council tax. If so, where did you see it? (120 comments)

- Council Tax Bill Information (24 comments):
 - Residents mentioned receiving information about the council's budget and council tax in conjunction with their council tax bills or related documents. This includes leaflets, letters, pamphlets, and information that accompanies their bills.
- Council Publications (8 comments):
 - Residents referred to council publications and media sources where they have come across information regarding the council's budget and council tax. This includes council newsletters, newspapers like "Hackney Today" and "Love Hackney," and online sources.
- Annual Letters (1 comment):
 - Some residents specifically mentioned receiving annual letters from the council that contain information about council tax and the budget.
- Lack of Information (19 comments):
 - Residents expressed not having seen or received sufficient information regarding the council's budget and council tax. Some comments in this category also indicated dissatisfaction with the information provided.
- Other Sources (10 comments):
 - Residents mentioned various other sources where they have encountered information about the council's budget and council tax. These sources include council meetings, online videos, political party communications, and more.

Please note that some comments were categorised as "Lack of Information" because they mentioned not seeing any information about the council's budget and council tax.

Q5. If the Council held budget-related workshops or events in the future about the council's financial planning, would you be interested in attending? (Base 148)

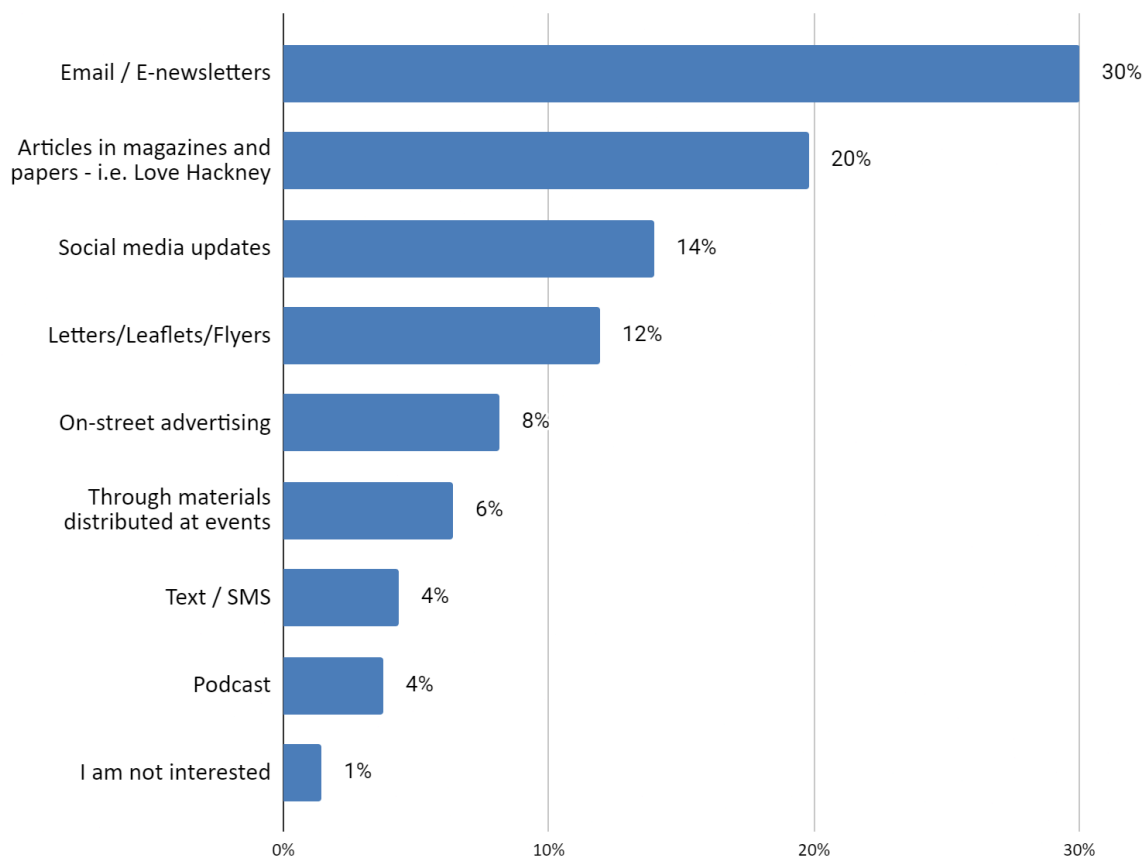


The chart above represents the interest from respondents in attending workshops or events.

Q6. If you would like to be contacted in the future about any workshops or events, or to receive more information as requested, please enter your email below:

94 email addresses have been provided from those who stated “Yes” or “Not sure, but I would like more information please” (2 respondents did not provide their email).

Q7. Would you like to know more about the Council's finances? If so, how would you like to learn about it? (Tick all that apply) (Base 343 responses)



The highest percentage of responses related to those wanting to find out about the Council's finances via email or e-newsletter (103). This is followed by articles in magazines and papers (68), social media updates (48), letters, leaflets and flyers (41), on-street advertising (28), through materials distributed at events (22), text messages (15) and podcasts (13). Only 1% (5) of respondents were not interested.

X and Instagram - Polling Results

Q1. Do you know how the council gets money to pay for resident services?

This question relates to 'Q2. Do you know where Council funding comes from to pay for services for residents?' from the survey.

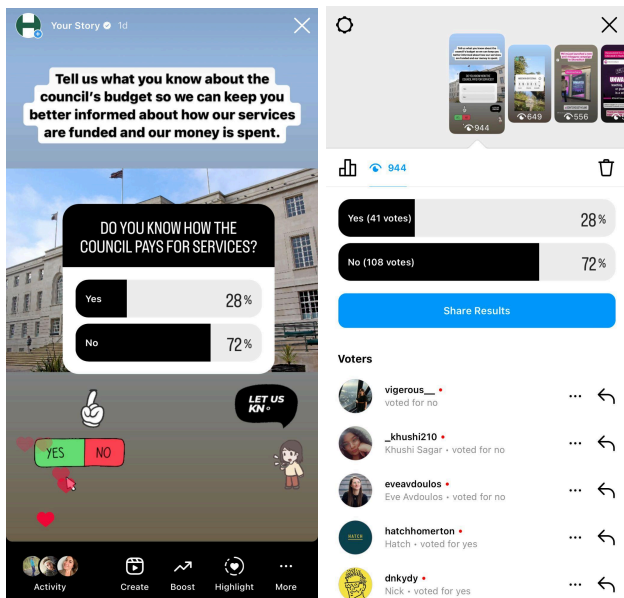
X results



2,217 accounts reached, 92 votes cast

52 people said they know how the council gets money to pay for services (56.5%). 40 people said they did not know how the council gets money to pay for services (43.5%).

Instagram results



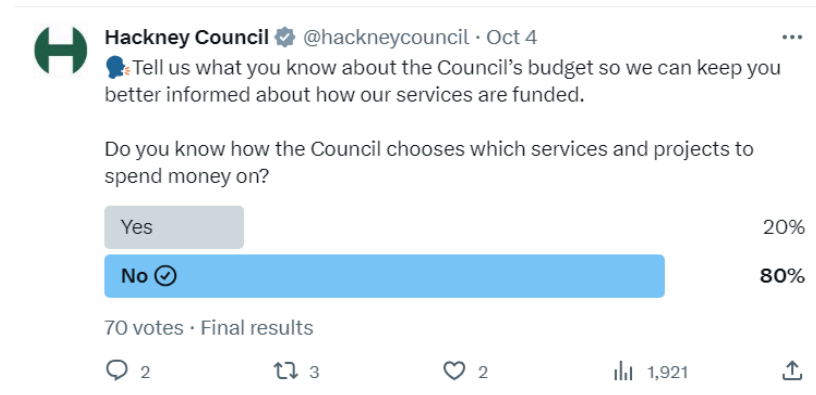
912 accounts reached, 149 responses

41 people said they know how the council gets money to pay for services (28%). 108 people said they did not know how the council gets money to pay for services (72%).

Q2. Do you know how the council chooses which services and projects to spend money on?

This question relates to the statement in Q1 of the survey, which asks “I understand how the council prioritises its spending on different services and projects”.

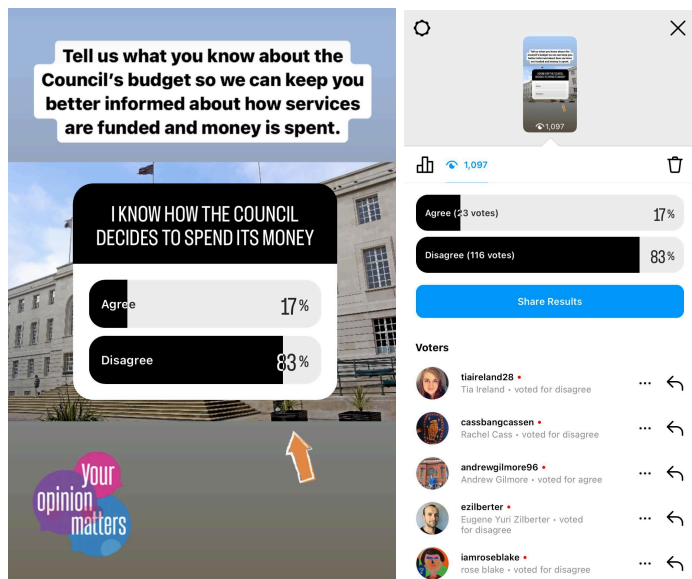
X results



1,921 accounts reached, 70 votes cast

14 people said they know how the council chooses which services and projects to spend money on (20%). 56 people said they did not know how the council chooses which services and projects to spend money on (80%).

Instagram results



1,097 accounts reached, 139 responses

23 people said they know how the council decides to spend money on services (17%). 116 people said they did not know how the council decides to spend money on services (83%).

Q3. I know local government is under financial pressure

This question relates to the statement in Q1 which asks “I am aware of the overall financial pressures on local government”.

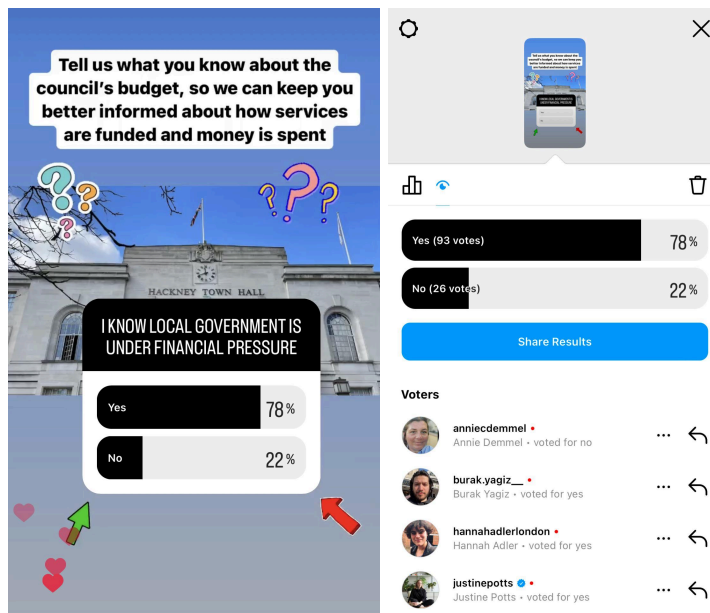
X results



1,573 accounts reached, 66 votes cast

47 people said they know that local government is under financial pressure (71.2%)
19 people said they did not know that local government is under financial pressure (28.8%).

Instagram results



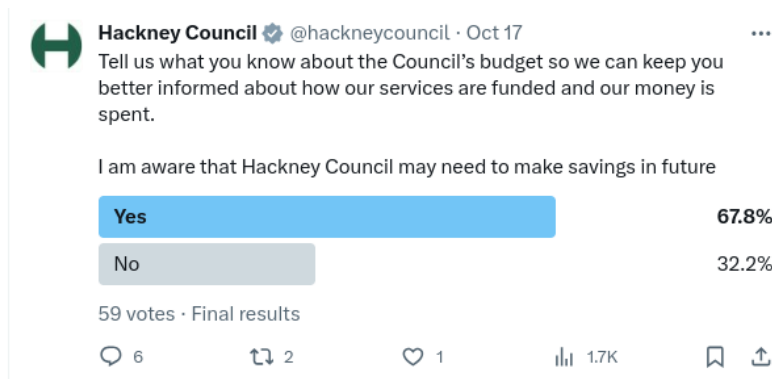
940 accounts reached, 119 responses

93 people said they know local government is under financial pressure (78%). 26 people said they did not know local government is under financial pressure (22%).

Q4. I am aware that Hackney Council may need to make savings in future

This question relates to the statement in Q1 which asks “I am aware of the overall potential savings Hackney Council may need to make in future”.

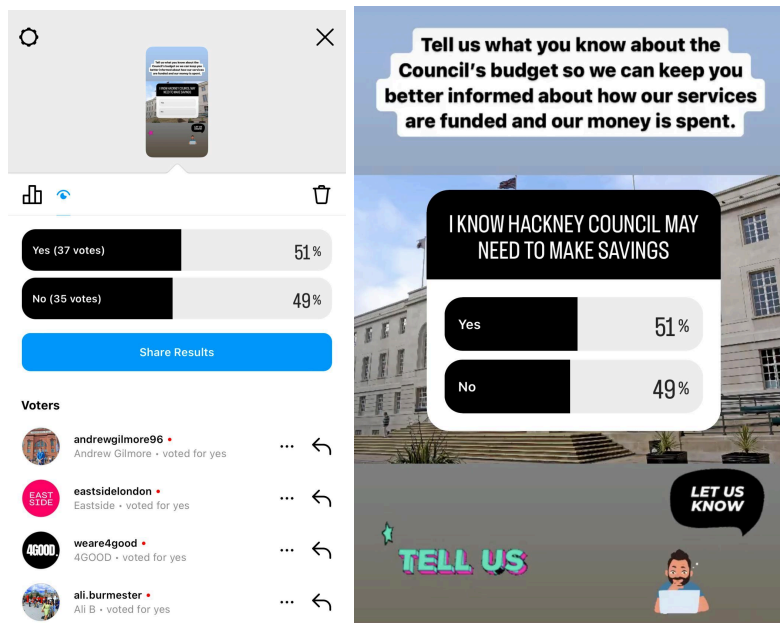
X results



1,748 accounts reached, 59 votes cast

40 people said they are aware that Hackney may need to make savings in future (67.8%). 19 people said they were not aware that Hackney may need to make savings in future (32.2%).

Instagram results



669 accounts reached, 72 responses

37 people said they know Hackney Council may need to make savings (51%). 35 people said they did not know Hackney Council needs to make savings (49%).

Q5. I am aware of all the different places the Council gets its money from for its annual budget

This question relates to the statement in Q1 which asks “I am aware of the different funding sources that make up Hackney Council's annual budget”.

X results

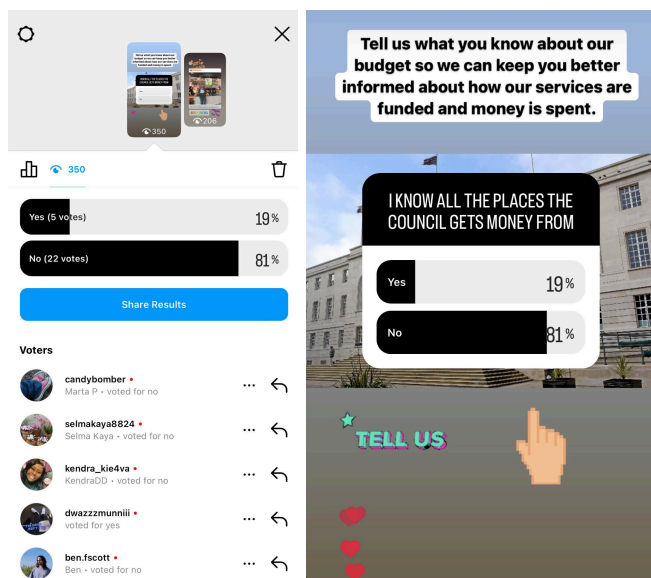


763 accounts reached, 20 votes cast

4 people said they were aware of all the different places the Council gets its money from for its annual budget (20%)

16 people said they were not aware of all the different places the Council gets its money from for its annual budget (80%)

Instagram results



351 accounts reached, 27 responses

5 people said they know all the places Hackney Council gets money from (19%). 22 people said they did not know all the places Hackney Council gets money from (81%).