

# Havering Communications Strategy 2025-26



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

# Contents

3	<b>Introduction</b>
4	<b>Achievements</b>
5	<b>Research</b>
6	Population
7	Budget consultations
10	<b>Objectives for external Communications</b>
11	Newsletters
12	Social Media
13	New channels and technology
14	Media relations
15	‘Havering on the map’
16	Fair funding
17	<b>Marketing</b>
18	Events
18	Filming in Havering
19	<b>Internal communications</b>
20	Internal campaigns
20	Measuring success
21	<b>Awards</b>
22	<b>Metrics and performance</b>

# Introduction

## **Introduction from Cllr Ray Morgon, Leader of Havering Council**

One of the key objectives of the new Administration was to keep residents informed about what we do and to be open and transparent. A separate resident engagement strategy has been approved and this communications strategy is another strand in communicating with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

This strategy takes into account research and insight including resident satisfaction surveys and the outcomes of previous budget consultations. This gives us data to help us set out our plans and priorities. It also takes into account the corporate plan in setting out the communication priorities.

What is important is we do all we can to make residents aware of how we are responding to their views as well as making sure they know how to access services. These services may go through change due to our finances – so it will be even more important for us to keep them updated on changes.

We also need to make sure residents know how we are trying to make the borough a more attractive place to live, work and enjoy together while also being attractive to investors.

We are also focused on improving our profile at a London and national level and to put us on the map. We want everyone to feel informed, engaged and involved in our vision and priorities.



# What have we achieved so far?



**In the last year, the Communications team has achieved much. This includes:**

- Highest number of responses to our budget consultation in 2023. We also listened to feedback and acted where possible
- Managed narrative around finances with an extensive communications and lobbying campaign
- Increased local, regional and national media coverage and interest in the council
- The weekly Living e-newsletter continues to be our flagship communications channel
- Built the foundations of our public affairs work in other areas too such as improving the borough's infrastructure
- Improved relations with London Councils, Local London, GLA and other bodies within the Local Government arena
- Developed a Havering brand
- Continued to inform on our regeneration projects
- Worked with partners on delivering a cost of living campaign
- Introduced a new advertising policy to help support the borough's healthy weight strategy
- Updated our small format advertising boards to increase income
- Won a number of industry awards
- Supported NHS and other national campaigns with marketing, outreach and engagement
- Supported successful launch of new waste contract
- Delivered another successful Havering Business Awards
- We have raised the profile of Havering Council regionally and nationally
- Worked with the customer services team to enhance the website and digital.

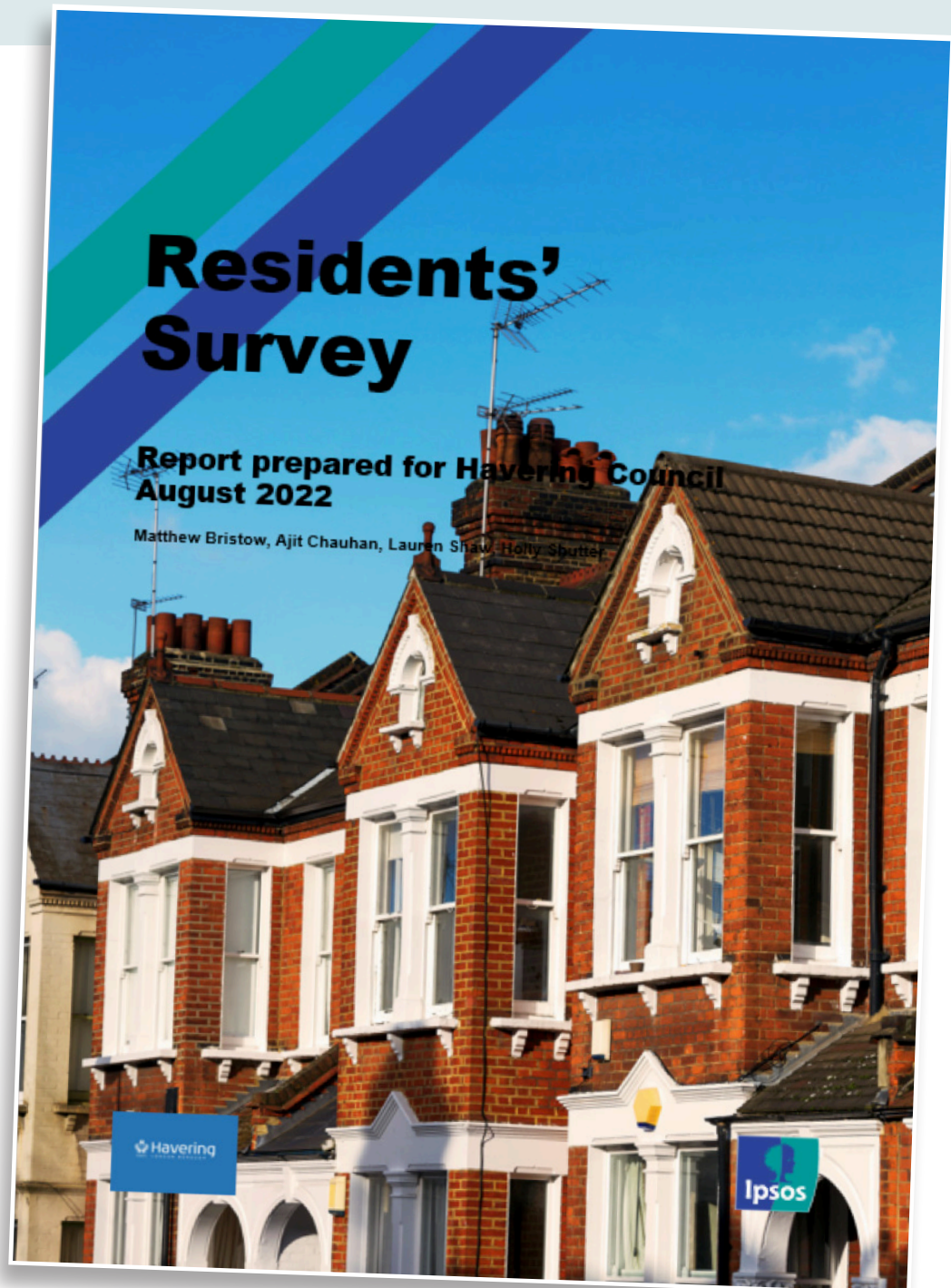
# Communications research

Data and research is really important in delivering our work. We draw on a number of data sources to help inform this strategy:

This includes:

- Ipsos-Mori research
- ONS 2021 Census
- Budget Consultations
- Staff workforce data.


We also work with our partners and stakeholders and tap into their data, research and intelligence that includes our health partners, the voluntary sector, police, businesses, members and other stakeholders.




# Population

The population of Havering is changing as more people are either moving into the borough or families are growing.


## Research – key facts - population



**Havering population stats:**



**Total resident population**  
**262,000**  
2021

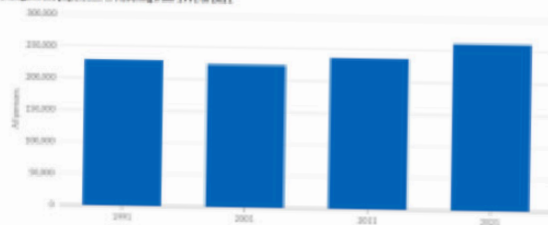


**Total Number of Businesses**  
**10,235**  
2022


- Women 135,668
- Men 126,384
- We have the second oldest population in London – and it is still growing
- We also have the fourth fastest growing 0-14 population in the country

The chart below compares the figure for Census 2021 with the closest population data selected from NCAR for 2011, 2006 and 1991 to show change over time in the headline data.


**Change in the population in Havering from 1991 to 2021**



**Population by broad age group for Havering 2021**



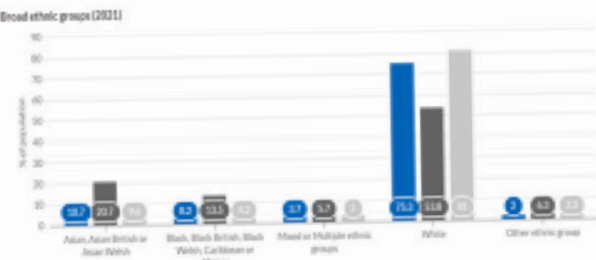
## Research – key facts – population in Havering




**Ethnicity**

This section displays statistics about the number and percentage of people from each ethnic group. The way people describe their ethnic groups is based on their culture, family background, identity or physical appearance.

**Broad ethnic groups (2021)**



**Percentage of population by ethnic group (2021)**



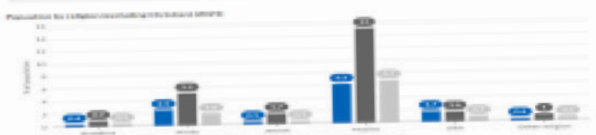
**Religion**

This section shows the percentage of people who identify themselves as Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jews, or other religions. It also shows the percentage of people who are not affiliated with any religion.

**Christian**  
Percentage of population: **52%**

**No Religion**  
Percentage of population: **31%**

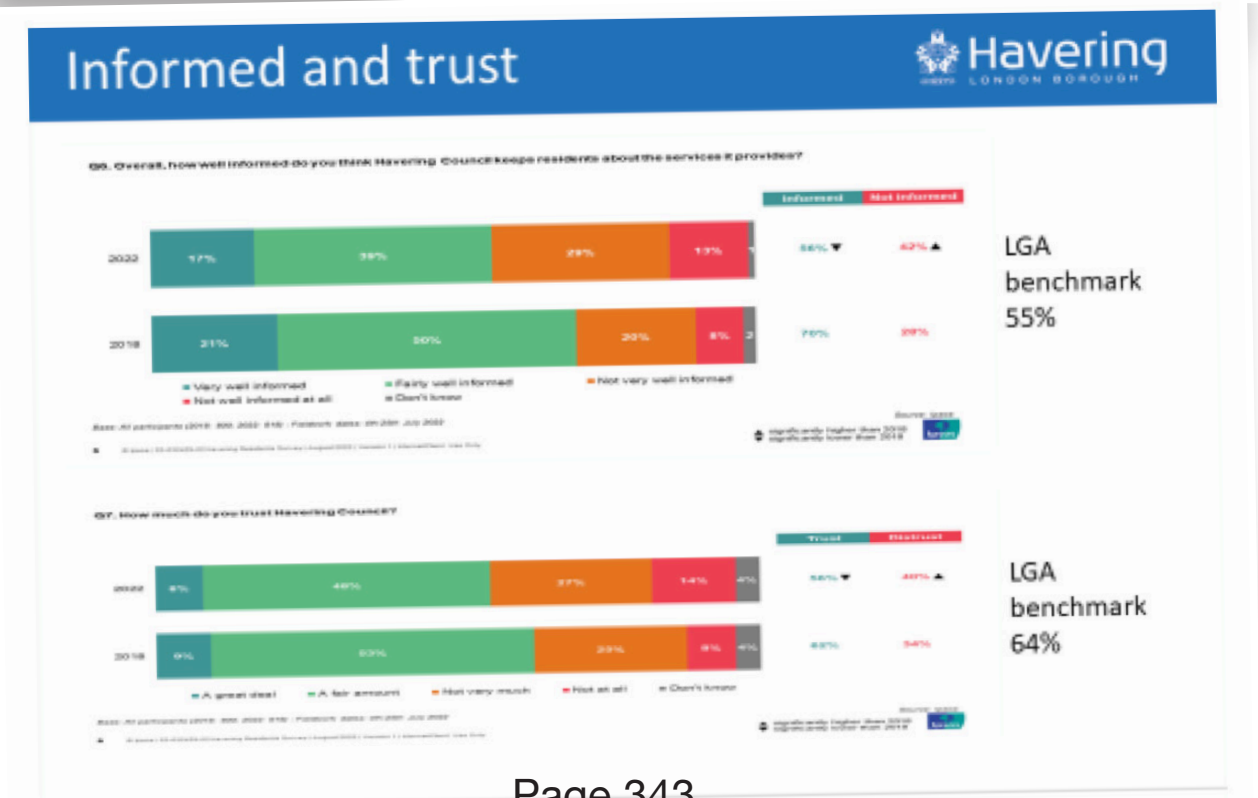
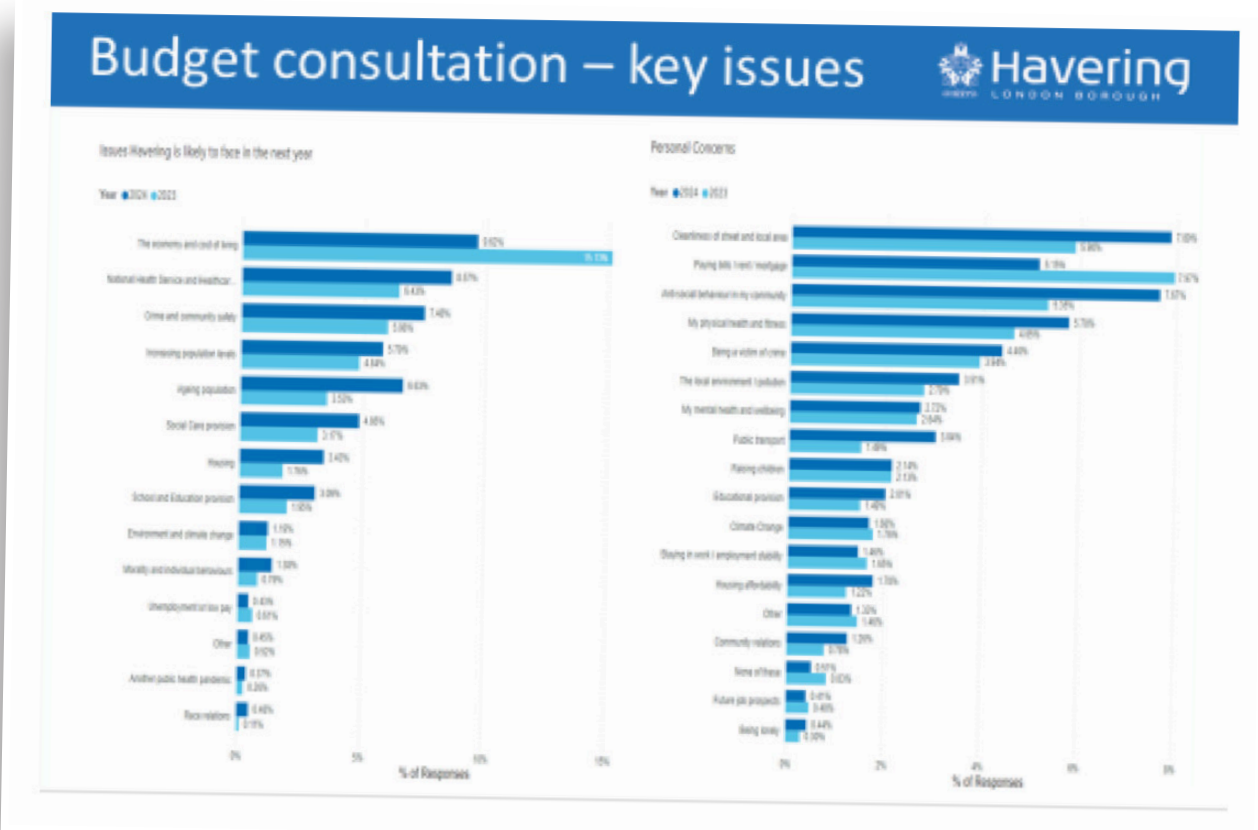
**Not Answered**  
Percentage of population: **6%**



- 81% were born in the UK
- 90% main language is English
- Of the 10%, most spoken other languages are from other European countries and South Asian

# Budget consultations

In the last two budget consultations, we have included questions similar to what you would find in an annual residents' survey, to gauge the key issues affecting our residents.

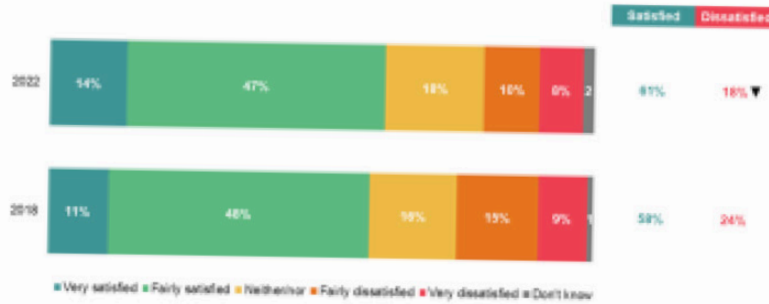


# Budget consultations

## Satisfaction



Q1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Havering Council runs things?



Base: All participants (2018: 800; 2022: 818) | Feedback date: 4th-20th July 2022

Source: Ipsos | Ipsos 2022/23 Havering Resident Survey Report (2022) | Ipsos 2018/19 Havering Resident Survey Report

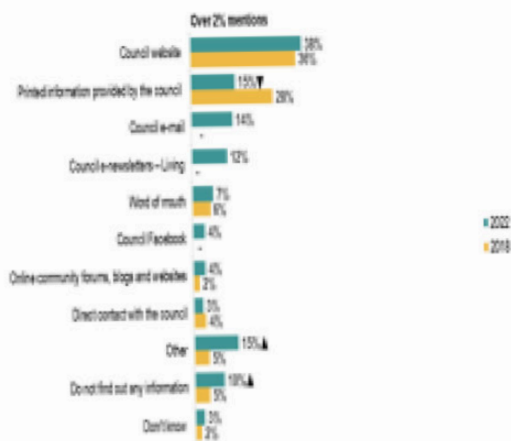
Source: Ipsos  
 ▲ significantly higher than 2018  
 ▼ significantly lower than 2018

The LGA survey says overall - sixty per cent of respondents are 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the way their local council runs things.

## How do you find out?



Q20. How do you currently find out about Havering Council and the services it provides?

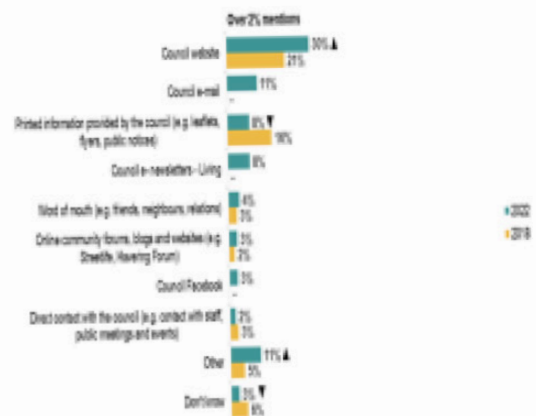


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Source: Ipsos | Ipsos 2022/23 Havering Resident Survey Report (2022) | Ipsos 2018/19 Havering Resident Survey Report

Source: Ipsos  
 ▲ significantly higher than 2018  
 ▼ significantly lower than 2018

Q21. What is your main source of information about Havering Council and the services it provides?



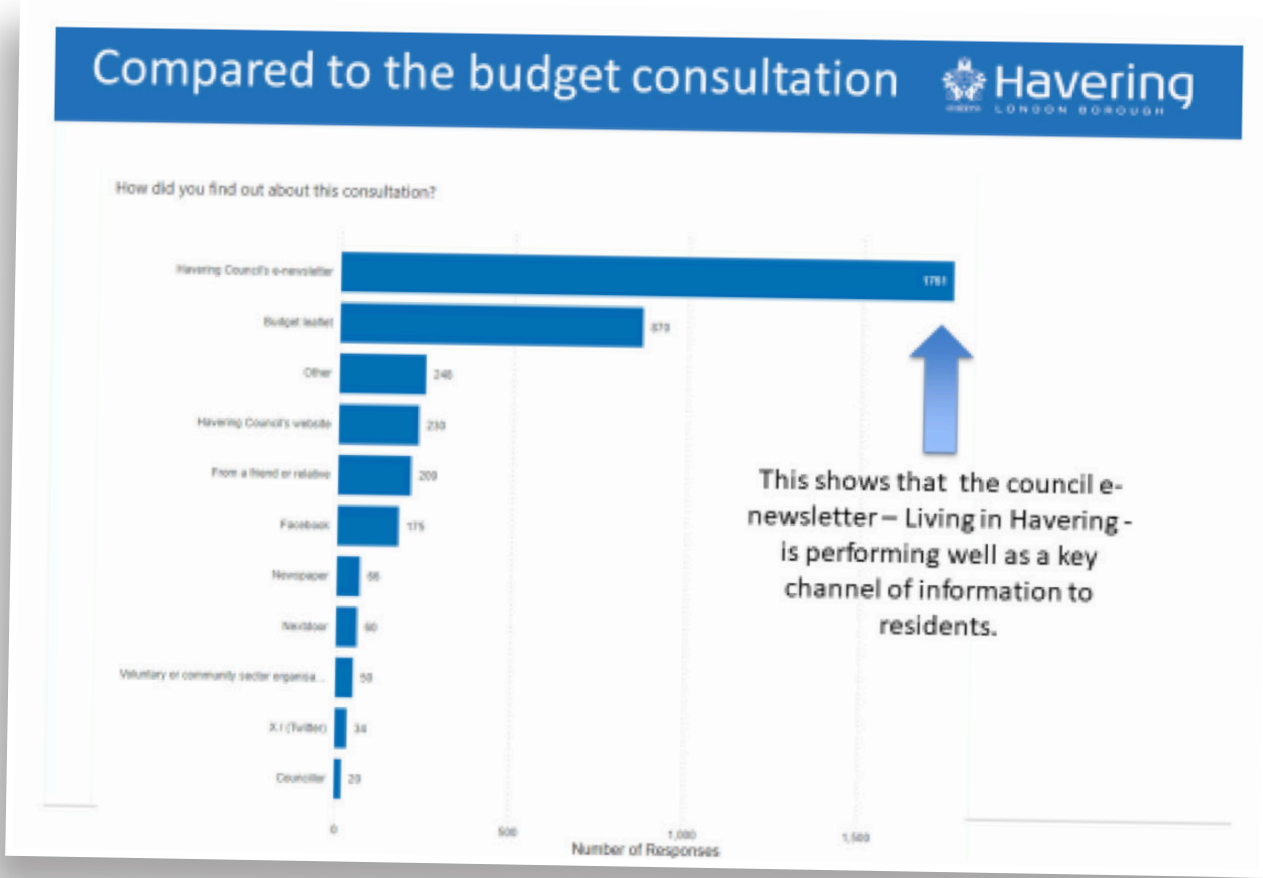
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Source: Ipsos  
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# Budget consultations



# Havering Budget Consultation

Have your say

[www.havering.gov.uk/budget24](http://www.havering.gov.uk/budget24)

# Objectives for external communications

## **Our Corporate Plan – which has three key objectives –**

- supporting our residents to stay safe and well
- a great place to live, work and enjoy
- and enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council.

## **Combined with the data on the last few pages, helps us understand what the key issues are for us to focus on:**

We have a growing older and younger population that is becoming more diverse. We therefore need to find ways of reaching them.

Residents are concerned with a number of key issues:

- cost of Living and the economy
- crime and community safety
- street cleanliness
- health
- We are not the sole agency leading on the issues set out above, and we need to continue, as well as improve, how we work with partners in supporting residents
- We do well at informing residents but need to build trust through better community engagement and informing on how we have listened and acted on their concerns (this once again aligns with the Engagement Strategy)
- We also need to take into account how we communicate key strategies and plans mentioned in the Corporate Plan that are there to improve the lives of residents.

## **We also need to look at, and communicate, wider issues and opportunities affecting us:**

- Our financial situation continues to get worse due to reduced Government funding.
- Conversely, despite concerns around a growing population, we still need more homes.
- The right infrastructure and public services must be in place to support this.

# Newsletters

Our newsletters have high engagement figures when benchmarked against other local authorities and we are above average. According to Campaign Monitor, the average open rate for a ‘Government & Politics’ newsletter is 19.4%, with the average click rate for this industry at 2.8%.

Name	Distribution	Subscribers (latest)	Subscribers (last year)	Typical Open rate	Av. click rate
Living in Havering	Weekly on Friday	66,488 subscribers (10.2% increase)	60,356	34-52% (43% average)	4.6%
Business Briefing	Approx. every two months (last week of month)	11,965 (11.6% increase)	10,728	26-32% (32% average)	3.6%
At the Heart (council tenants and leaseholders)	Quarterly/ As requested	13,457 (Refreshed subscriber list)	7,273	39-49% (45% average)	5%
Safer Havering	Quarterly	6,310	N/A	41-44% (42% average)	2%
Cost of Living steady stream of emails (Drip campaign)	Drip campaign as people subscribe	703	N/A	63% (main campaign, last 6 months)	5.6% (main campaign, last 6 months)
Launders Lane drip campaign	Switched from drip to ad-hoc distribution	217	N/A	81% (across 5 bulletins)	8% (across 5 bulletins)

## Living growth

This year we continue to look at how we can grow Living to a wider audience as well as launch a customer service special edition every every month. We will also look at a greener Havering newsletter.

# Social Media

We have been working to increase content and engagement on our social media channels. This includes video and infographics. We will continue to look at new channels to reach our audiences.

Twitter (now X) has grown as a customer service channel, with a majority of engagement coming in the form of customer service queries.

The engagement figures are an average over a 90 day period, covering September to November 2024

Channel	Followers (latest)	Followers (last year)	Followers % increase	Avg monthly engagement (from 90 day period)
LBH Twitter/X	19,547 subscribers	18,300 subscribers	6.8% increase	31,591 impressions
LBH Facebook	16,472 followers	15,066 followers	9.3% increase	520,299 reach
LBH Instagram	3,502 followers	2,736 followers	28% increase	18,882 reach
LBH LinkedIn	9,103 followers	6,667 followers	36.5% increase	18,336 impressions
LBH YouTube	562 subscribers	438 subscribers	28.3% increase	4,904 views
LBH NextDoor	56,139 members	N/A	N/A	89,181 impressions (across 32 posts in 90 days)

**Notes:**

- We use YouTube as a video host only, and have not promoted subscription to that channel
- NextDoor users are automatically subscribed to the LBH channel when they sign up for an account.

# New channels and technology



## It is important we do not stand still!

We will utilise new channels and tools to reach our different audiences. This includes:

- look at more visual communications such as video and pictures for Instagram and TikTok
- continue to develop Nextdoor as an engagement and communications tool
- use more programmatic advertising (depending on budgets)
- testing WhatsApp as a communications and engagement tool
- look at AI tools - subject to guidance from ICT
- look at more interactive communications and polls.
- review the newsletter distribution platform to make sure it meets requirements and look at how it can be used for more focused campaigns
- continue to work with the Trade Press.

This is about innovation – which takes time and resource – including training and trialling. However, if we get this right, it should lead to greater reach with our residents, as well as making our jobs more efficient.

# Media relations

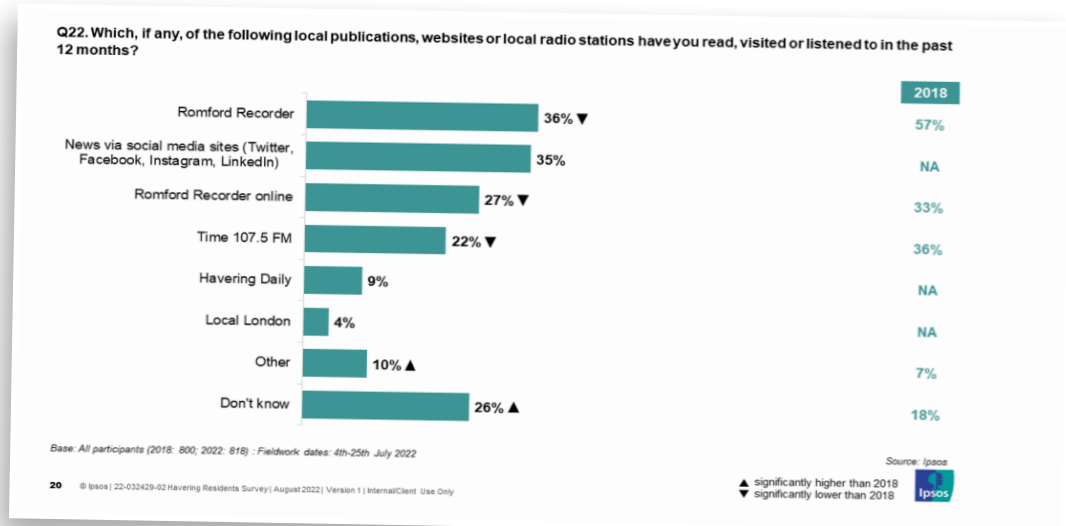
Media relations is a key service delivered by the communications team. This will often override other activity, especially in times of crisis. This is now an extremely busy part of the service and has at least one person dedicated to responding to enquires on a rolling basis – although often it involves more. On average we receive 15 to 20 media enquiries a week. The work delivered by the team in detail includes:

- responding to press enquiries in an efficient and effective manner
- writing and issuing of press releases
- creating content for social media, newsletters and the website
- rebutting inaccurate stories
- managing emergency communications (a separate plan exists for this)
- managing the reputation of the council
- build and maintain relationships with media
- write and edit content for e-magazines.



## What does the media landscape look like?

In order to check what media our residents consume, we asked a question as part of the Ipsos mori survey:



This tells us that the Romford Recorder combined online and newspaper is the most read news outlet. However, all of the outlets have lost popularity – compared to the council’s Living in Havering e-news publication that continues to grow.

A new question was asked about social media and it is clear many residents go to one of the social medial platforms for news as the second most popular place behind the Recorder.

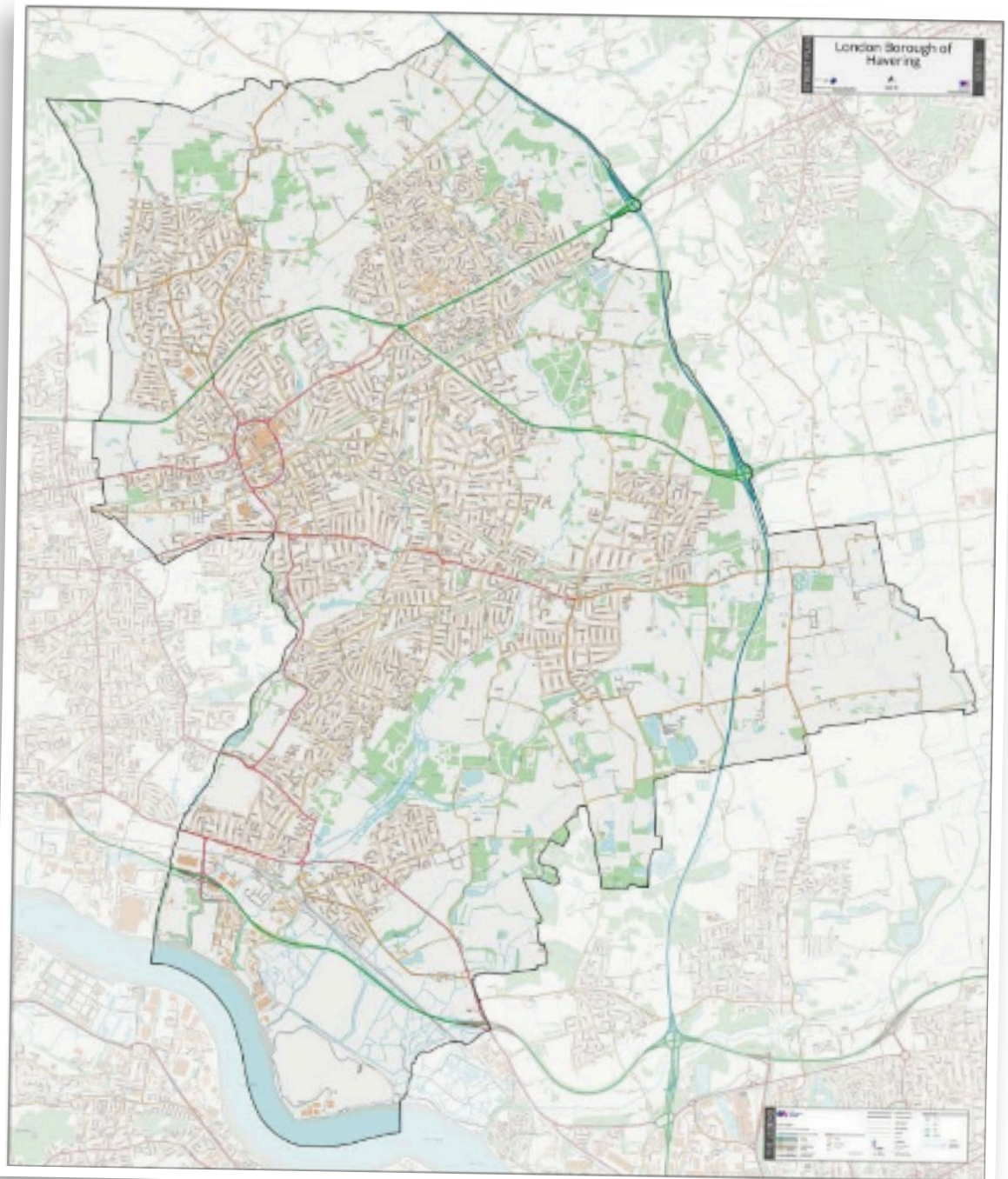
# Havering is on the map

## It can be said that Havering is now on the map!

**This is following our strategy of being open, honest and transparent about our finances, where we have seen an increase in coverage in regional and national publications.**

Our lobbying also includes working with the media. Most notably the Council was the subject of a Panorama programme earlier in the year that did a fly on the wall documentary around our challenges.

Media also picked up our plans around transport infrastructure especially on the north - south connection and we expect the East Havering Data Centre to generate interest if/when things move forward.



# Fair funding



In the last year the council has increased its lobbying of the Government and the GLA around a number of issues.

## Fair funding

We have built a new relationship with our MPs, the GLA, London Councils and a number of other stakeholders to help support this work

**We successfully highlighted the issues we are facing with our finances by:**

- meeting with Ministers, London Councils, the GLA
- attended lobby group meeting with other similar councils
- a Westminster Hall debate held by former MP Jon Cruddas
- used as case study by LGA and London Councils in their lobbying
- increased media interest which has led to more in depth-work around our challenges.

Looking ahead we will continue to push our case. This will include working with a think tank around solutions to the lack of funding and issuing a white paper to help influence Government policy.



# Marketing, events and income



## Marketing and Income

As budgets get smaller the communications team will look to build additional income by procuring new advertising contracts for Council assets, or finding ways of maximising assets to deliver packages. The team will also look to support marketing aims of commercial services. The service has a target of £50k next financial year. This is to help mitigate the saving targets now in the communications budget as well as grow income for the other services and the Council.

### We will do this by:

- by procuring new large format advertising boards as well as procuring roundabout and lamppost contracts
- look at maximising advertising income from our passenger transport buses and rubbish trucks and other council assets
- seek to obtain sponsorship for events and other activities to reduce the cost e.g. Christmas events and Langtons Summer Concert
- maximise event space in buildings and parks
- procure new public notices contract to save money.

# Events

We have a small events team and they deliver a number of key events throughout the year.

**The key aim of the team is to:**

- increase footfall in town centres and therefore improve income for retail and market businesses
- maintain and improve community cohesion through a variety of events
- build pride in the borough
- support corporate and other events
- increase events and income in parks and green spaces.

**To achieve this, the key event themes are:**

## Community

- Remembrance Day (parade)
- Armed Forces Day (parade)
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- St Georges Day
- Easter.

In addition, the team deliver events to celebrate our borough, including our community and sporting heroes. This includes celebratory parades and events for our local sport teams such as Hornchurch Football club.

# Filming in Havering

We manage commercial requests for filming via a concession contract with Filmfixer.

They market the borough as a destination for filmmakers via The Havering Film Office including a dedicated [haveringfilloffice.co.uk](http://haveringfilloffice.co.uk)

The provider undertakes all admin associated with filming – permits, insurance etc. - providing a significant saving in staff time . We've seen the BBC's Christmas Carol and M&S Christmas Ads filmed in Havering.

We have recently renegotiated the contract to increase income to the council. We will be working with FilmFixer to improve the marketing of the borough for filming.



For example, we will see if we can offer a larger variety of venues and opportunities to the film industry.

We have seen a number of recent filming successes such as scenes being shot in the Town Hall Council Chamber for Danny Dyer's Marching Power, or music video productions such as Headie One and Stormzy's Cry no more which was filmed exclusively in Romford.

We have also had the Jazz Fusion band called the Ezra Collective also filming in Romford.

# Internal Communications



We have been evolving our internal communications to ensure we reach and engage more staff, especially as the council has seen massive change following Covid, the TOM and the current financial situation we are in.

This means it is more important than ever that staff are brought with us and are part of the change, both culturally and in their day job.

As part of this we are working with HR to review Choose Havering and make sure it evolves as our Employer brand, helping to inform our culture and leadership and ensure staff are fully engaged.

In addition, we are developing a new Intranet based on SharePoint that will be more user friendly and accessible to staff who do not have digital work equipment.

What is important is we get better at how we engage and keep staff informed. This includes opportunities for staff development, and how they support this. It also includes how we measure performance and innovate in their work.

We have been improving this through online sessions and increased communications. It was recognised in a recent LGA Peer review that this has been the case.

## We will build on this in the following ways:

- look at how we use existing and new tools such as how we integrate our new intranet with the other available channels
- create more face-to-face opportunities to reach offline staff
- support other teams in increasing awareness of what they do
- ensure more staff take part in training and other sessions being made available
- support the Star Awards
- promote good practice.



# Internal campaigns

Each year we deliver a variety of campaigns aimed at staff to do a number of things such as change behaviour, help with culture change and support new services changes.

**We will continue delivering campaigns that will:**

- support the READI programme with a campaign to increase diversity data disclosure
- continue to see staff growth and career progression as we increase the number of apprentices
- highlight priorities around financial control, customer service and climate and relaunch Choose Havering.



# How will we measure success?

**This will be done in a number of ways:**

- by the number of staff attending online and face to face sessions
- feedback from staff surveys
- staff focus groups and polls
- sign up to training sessions
- improvement in people updating diversity data
- number of staff responding to call-to-actions
- awards and recognition.

# Awards

We feel it is extremely important to benchmark how we do our work against the best. We therefore ensure we enter industry awards for both internal and external communications campaigns.

We have a good track record of winning and we aim to continue this.

Not only does it benchmark us, it also helps maintain morale and ensure Havering continues to be recognised against its peers.

Body	Award	Result	Entry
Public Relations Communications Association (PRCA)	Campaign of the Year	Winner	The Havering Characters
Public Relations Communications Association (PRCA)	Best use of Planning, Research and Evaluation	Winner	The Havering Characters
Public Relations Communications Association (PRCA)	Employee Engagement Campaign of the Year	Winner	The Havering Characters
Institute of Internal Communications	Single Campaign	Award of Excellence	On Track
Institute of Internal Communications	Employee Engagement	Award of Excellence	On Track
PRCA Dare Awards	Low Budget campaign	Winner	Fostering
PR Moment Awards	Employee Engagement Campaign	Winner	On Track

# Metrics and performance

We have set a number of objectives that can be measured to help ensure the service is delivering as planned. We will also report quarterly to Cabinet on progress. The metrics are as follows.

Body	Entry
Increase levels of being informed from 56 to 58%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of people signed up to Living.</li> <li>• Better engagement with residents.</li> <li>• More events with council information.</li> </ul>
Increase trust from 56% to 60%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open and honest communications and engagement.</li> <li>• Better relationship with residents.</li> <li>• More targeted communications to show we are listening and responding to their views.</li> </ul>
Maintain satisfaction	Continue to inform residents on service delivery and how we can support them. Show how we listen to their views
Improve positive and neutral media coverage from 56% to 58%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of good news stories.</li> <li>• Increase positive campaign.</li> </ul>
Improve social media engagement rates by 4%	More targeted campaigns and engaging content
Improve followers on social media channels by 4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better promotion of channels.</li> <li>• More shareable content.</li> </ul>
Increase e-Living subscribers by 40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include link on key website pages.</li> <li>• Look at opt-out for residents on digital applications.</li> <li>• Better marketing and promotion.</li> </ul>
Increase income from parks and other events by £20k	Increase number and size of events
Increase advertising and other income by £70k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure new advertising contracts.</li> <li>• Be more creative in selling sponsorship and advertising packages.</li> </ul>
Increase above base line of 400 staff attending online staff meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More engaging online events and subjects.</li> <li>• Better reach of staff.</li> </ul>
Improve levels of staff being engaged from 63% to 66%	Deliver new intranet, ensure more engaging stories and news in newsletters and through other targeted communications
Increase number of people who have completed diversity data on fusion from 62% to 90%	Run engaging campaign about benefits of doing so
Increase number of staff apprentices and spend of the apprenticeship levy	Run a campaign communications campaign to include staff webinars, case studies and target communications
Benchmark against private and public communication teams	Enter 3 different awards