

Brighton and Hove City Council

Organisational Assessment

Dated 9 December 2009



for an independent overview
of local public services

Brighton and Hove City Council

Overall, Brighton and Hove City Council performs well

Managing performance	3 out of 4
Use of resources	3 out of 4
Managing finances	3 out of 4
Governing the business	2 out of 4
Managing resources	3 out of 4

Description of scores:

1. An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements, Performs Poorly
2. An organisation that meets only minimum requirements, Performs Adequately
3. An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Well
4. An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Excellently

Summary

Overall Brighton and Hove City Council performs well. The Council is providing many good services and is effective at tackling issues that are important to local people. These are: improving the job opportunities for people within the city, particularly the long term unemployed, providing good quality services for older people and the most vulnerable and supporting the city's businesses through the credit crunch. People like living in Brighton and Hove and there is a real sense of community. Councillors and staff work well together, and the Council is effective at improving things for the people of Brighton & Hove. The Council is good at managing its money and making savings

Brighton and Hove City Council scores 3 out of 4 for managing performance. It knows that keeping the streets clean, helping vulnerable people live in their own homes for longer, keeping people fitter and healthier and ensuring people are safe are important to local people and it is effective at delivering these things. The Council is working well with the police to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and with the drug treatment services to get people who abuse drugs into treatment and then keeping them there. The Council is effective at creating new jobs through its local employment programme which is providing job opportunities for the long term unemployed. It gives support to people and local businesses that are struggling with financial problems, during the credit crunch. Nearly 5 out of 10 people are satisfied with the way Council runs things, which is above the average compared to similar authorities.

There are a few things however that the Council could do better. The Council has a high number of households in temporary accommodation, although this is reducing in 2009 and does not recycle as much as similar authorities. Secondary school education is not as good as elsewhere. There are also too

many council homes failing to meet minimum government standards, so many low income tenants and their families are continuing to live in unsuitable conditions.

Ofsted has rated the Council's children's services as performing well. There are a high number of good quality child care providers in the city, with over half of the nurseries providing an outstanding service. Primary schools provide a good level of education and support to its pupils and children at primary schools in Brighton and Hove do better than elsewhere in the country. Overall, the quality of secondary education is not as good as similar areas and one secondary school is not meeting the required educational standards. At 16, children's GCSE results are just below the national average.

Brighton and Hove has got two good six form colleges that ensure that many young people do well both in their GCE AS & A level results. The standards of school sixth forms in the city are however below the national average and need improving. More young people aged 16-18 are going into education, employment or training and young people's skills at 19 are good. Children with special needs, those from low income families, those in care and from ethnic minority backgrounds do as well at school and colleges as other similar areas.

For children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable, the children's homes and the fostering agency provide an outstanding service. The special schools and the adoption agency are good and the private fostering arrangements are satisfactory overall. Performance indicators show that the Council's performance in helping children in care stay safe and do well at school is similar to other areas. The Council responds effectively and quickly when children are referred to children services and the speed of assessing a child's needs is better than elsewhere.

The Care Quality Commission has rated the Council's adult social care as performing well. The Council is providing good services for the people who use the services and for the carers. Effective short term home care support is helping many people to stay at home longer and has reduced the number of adults needing longer term care. Services for carers and those who need care are comprehensive and are based on what they want. The choice of who provides care services is increasing and money - known as direct payments - is given to those who need care so that they can pay for it themselves. Carers and people who use services, including those who fund their own care, are supported by a wide range of information and advice, which includes helping people to claim all the benefits that are available to them. The Council has made big improvements in response times for requests for home care support and minor adaptations to people's homes, although the Council's performance is not as good as similar authorities. The Council works well with local business to improve employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. The Council, together with partners, including the voluntary and independent providers are working well to ensure vulnerable adults are safe.

People like living in Brighton and Hove, feel that they treat each other with respect and feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together. A recent survey shows that 86 per cent of people are satisfied with Brighton & Hove as a place to live. Nearly 9 out of 10 residents say that people from different backgrounds get on well together and 7 out of 10 people feel that they treat each other with consideration and respect, which are much higher

than similar areas. The Council with others has a strong reputation for celebrating the diversity within the city through for example the Brighton festival and Pride the country's largest Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender festival and there is a real sense of community within the city.

House prices in Brighton are high, but the Council has done well in providing 232 homes that local people can afford to buy or rent last year, which is above its target. It has also reduced the number of empty private properties in the city. The Council is confident that it will meet the government target to build 11, 400 new homes by 2026, which will include homes that local people can afford.

The Council scores 3 out of 4 for Use of Resources. The Council looks carefully at the money it has to spend, and plans activities based on this. The Council manages its money well and spends it on what matters to local people. The Council plans well which enabled it to deal effectively with a substantial equal pay claim. It sets targets to make savings and uses available information to help in making decisions on how well services are run. This is supported by a programme of service reviews that ensures that local people are getting good value for money from its services.

The Council has made sure that Councillors and senior staff are held responsible for the money they control. There are regular Council meetings where Councillors oversee budgets, and make sure that Councillors and staff are behaving properly, for example in awarding contracts or claiming expenses. The Council is making information on its performance easier to find. It is developing well the way decisions are taken, the way risks are managed and how it buys goods and services. The Council is reducing how much it pollutes the environment and is encouraging local people and businesses to do the same.

About Brighton and Hove City Council

About 250 000 people live in the city of Brighton and Hove and the number is increasing. The population is generally young and diverse with many people born outside England and a large student population. People are attracted to the city because of its vibrant and diverse culture and its location by the sea, close to London.

Many people in the city are highly qualified but the local economy is dominated by many low skill jobs. Admissions to hospital related to alcohol, suicide rates and mental illness are high compared to other areas.

None of the political parties is in overall control. The Conservatives as the majority party controlling 25 of the 54 seats lead the Council. The Council has worked with local people and agreed five priorities. These are:

- Protect the environment while growing the economy
- Reducing inequality by increasing opportunity
- Fair enforcement of the law

- Better use of public money
- Open and effective city leadership

Organisational assessment

Protecting the environment while growing the economy

The Council is working with other organisations and local people to improve the city's environment. It has looked at how much it pollutes the city and is working with local people and local businesses to cut this down. It has improved the efficiency of council buildings and has reduced carbon emissions by 4 per cent, which has saved £50,000 from the Council's energy bill. The Council is working at reducing carbon emissions from vehicles by encouraging local businesses to use alternative forms of transport and it provided 10 electric vehicle charging points in 2008/09.

The Council is doing well at helping create more jobs for people in the city. The Council has worked successfully with local businesses to get people with the right skills matched to the right jobs, for example, Wired Sussex is a scheme to match media professionals with the city's digital media businesses. 50 per cent of those who took part have been offered a job. The Council with others is helping the long term unemployed and people in need get a job. The "get back to work" scheme has provided 30 work placements and 5 jobs for people claiming benefits and the local employment scheme has helped 58 local residents from disadvantaged backgrounds get a job. It also is helping local people develop the skills the city needs by employing 19 apprentices to learn the skills and trades wanted by local employers.

Local businesses are being supported through the economic recession. The Council is helping local businesses by paying what it owes them in ten working days rather than the standard thirty days, by providing business advice clinics and by visiting 1,100 small businesses to encourage them to apply for business rate relief. It has also got 170 local businesses signed up to the Be Local, Buy Local campaign,

The Council is helping local people through the credit crunch. People are encouraged to claim all the benefits they are entitled to and the Council knows that it needs to speed up how it deals with benefit claims because delays affect many people who suffer disadvantage. The Council is working with those who may be at risk of losing their homes and it has been successful in reducing the number of people becoming homeless, including young people. There has been a big drop in the number of people sleeping rough on the streets. The numbers in temporary accommodation still remain comparatively high. The Council had 366 households in temporary accommodation in 2008/09, which is way above the number in similar authorities. The Council has however reduced this to 306 households in temporary accommodation by July 2009.

House prices in Brighton are high, but the Council has done well in providing 232 homes that local people can afford to buy or rent last year, which is

above its target. It has also reduced the number of empty private properties in the city. The Council is confident that it will meet the government target to build 11, 400 new homes by 2026 which will include homes that local people can afford.

The Council is doing well at improving private sector housing. Working with others in the Brighton and Hove and East Sussex Together (BEST) partnership the Council got funding of £2.5 million which it has used to improve private housing in the city, particularly for those people who are most in need, The Council helped 748 households to be able to afford to keep their homes warm in the winter during 2008.

Almost half of local council homes fail to meet minimum government standards. The Council decided to transfer council homes to a housing association but a tenant ballot in 2007 rejected this option. It has worked hard since then to involve tenants in decisions over the future of the housing stock. However, it is clear the government's target for achieving the decency standard by 2010 will be missed, largely due to lack of progress in finding a workable solution. Large amounts of money are needed to fund the work required to bring homes up to an acceptable standard. There has been recent progress with plans to improve these home but major uncertainties remain. This means that the projected achievement of minimum standards by 2013 is not certain.

The Council is reducing the amount of rubbish it sends to landfill. The Council has slightly improved the amount it recycles, but its performance is below the national average and there is too much waste going to land-fill sites. The Council recycling rate is 29.5 per cent in 2008/09 compared to 28.39 per cent in 2007/08. A recent survey shows that the resident satisfaction with the refuse collection service, doorstep recycling and the recycling centres is below similar areas. The Council recognises the need for improvement and is therefore steadily improving the waste collection and recycling service. It has rolled out 600 communal bins in the centre of the city, which has resulted in significant improvements in street cleanliness in those areas.

Local people are satisfied with Brighton as a place to live. The Council is working with others to remove litter and grime. For example, problems with abandoned or burnt out cars now stands at 7 per cent from a high of 41 per cent in 2003. 55 per cent of local people are pleased with street cleanliness which is high compared with other places.

Public transport within Brighton and Hove is good. Overall satisfaction with the local bus service is very high. People are satisfied with the service and frequency of the buses, the quality of the information given and the number of bus stops.

Reducing inequality by increasing opportunity

The Council is effective at reducing inequality across the city by improving the opportunities for all its children and young people and helping those adults in most need. The Ofsted rating for children's services in Brighton and Hove is that it performs well. The Council has a good understanding of the needs of local people and it has been successful in encouraging the development of more child care settings across the city. There are a high number of good

quality child care providers in the city. Nurseries are better than elsewhere, with over half of them providing an outstanding service. Childminders provide a satisfactory service overall.

Primary schools provide a good level of education and support to its pupils and children at primary schools in Brighton and Hove do better than elsewhere in the country. Overall, the quality of secondary education is not as good as similar areas and one secondary school is not meeting the required educational standards. At 16, children's GCSE results are just below the national average.

Brighton and Hove has got two good six form colleges that ensure that many young people do well both in their GCE AS & A level results. The overall quality of school sixth forms in the city is not as good as elsewhere however and needs improving. The council with others is effective at encouraging and helping school leavers at 16 to develop the skills they need for future work. More young people aged 16-18 are going into education, employment or training and young people's skills at 19 are good. The number of young people who gain Level 2 or 3 qualifications - equivalent to five good GCSEs and higher level qualifications - is significantly above the national average.

Children with special needs, those from low income families, those in care and from ethnic minority backgrounds do as well at school as other similar areas. Brighton and Hove is also seeing an increase in the number of young people from these backgrounds going into higher education, such as universities.

The children's homes and the council's fostering agency are outstanding and support children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable very well. The special schools and the adoption agency provide a good service and the private fostering arrangements are satisfactory overall. Performance indicators show that the Council's performance in helping children in care stay safe and do well at school is similar to other areas. The Council responds effectively and quickly when children are referred to children services and the speed of assessing a child's needs is better than elsewhere.

The Council with its partners is effective at promoting healthy life styles for children in the city. All schools have achieved healthy school status and the number of obese children aged 3-11 is lower than elsewhere. The Council with others has increased the participation rates in leisure and sport by children and young people. 932 young people participated in summer fun activities and 16,216 young people participated in the "take part" event in the summer of 2008.

The Council is providing good services for adults who need support and care. The Council is changing the way it provides services to adults so that they have more choice and are able to live in their own homes for longer. Good short term home care support is helping many people to stay at home longer without needing to go to hospital and is helping to reduce the time people are in hospital. This support has reduced the number of adults needing longer term care in 2008/09. The Council also provides good support to those people leaving hospital so that they are able to adjust more quickly to living independently at home. However, this good work has not yet been reflected in positive resident feedback. A recent survey showed that only a quarter of local people felt that older people received the support they need to live

independently which is less than most other places in the country.

The Council has significantly improved response times for requests for home care support and minor adaptations to people's homes, although the Council's performance is not as good as elsewhere. People are however highly satisfied with the service provided. The Council has improved access to its services for all adults, so that any resident can be given advice and support. By joint working arrangements with the Department of Work and Pensions the Council has also encouraged people to claim all the benefits available to them.

The Council works well with local employers to improve employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. This has resulted in a high number of people with a learning disability getting a full-time job, when compared to elsewhere. The Council is actively promoting and encouraging healthier and safer lifestyles for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs. For example, half of the walkers on the 'Health walk' scheme have chronic health conditions or are disabled.

The Council is working with others to provide care services that improve the quality of life for adults in need. Services for carers and those who need care are comprehensive and are based on what they want. The choice of who provides care services is increasing and money - known as direct payments - is given to those who need care so that they can pay for it themselves. The Council is also ensuring any service provided by independent care providers meets strict quality standards. The Council however needs to ensure that it routinely reviews the effectiveness of the care support given to adults and that it effectively monitors the take-up of adult care services by people from different backgrounds.

The Council, together with partners, including the voluntary and independent providers are working well to ensure vulnerable adults are safe. People have a good understanding of what to look for and how to prevent adult abuse and this is reflected by the high number of safeguarding referrals. The Council however should ensure that those people who fund their own social care are clear about the council arrangements for keeping vulnerable adults safe.

Fair enforcement of the law

The Council is working well with Sussex Police and helping people within Brighton and Hove to feel safer. Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour are reducing. The Council and Police share information and target activities in crime hotspots that are having a significant impact on crime figures. Operation Reduction is tackling the supply of class A drugs, like heroin and cocaine into the city. The Council and others have been successful in disrupting the supply of drugs to users by the organised crime syndicates and has increased the availability of drug treatment services, which has reduced the number of muggings and petty thefts.

A recent survey has shown that there has been an improvement in the way residents feel about anti-social behaviour, drugs use & rowdy behaviour in the city. Over three quarters of local people believe that anti-social behaviour and drunken behaviour is not a problem in Brighton and Hove. Again, the Council with others has been successful at reducing anti-social behaviour through

effective management of the areas of the city where there is an active night life and through targeted initiatives. For example, Operation Park involving the police, the youth offending service and the children and young people trust has worked well at reducing drunken and rowdy behaviour and petty crime by young people. As part of this initiative, young people caught under-age drinking have been escorted home by police and their parents informed of their actions. In addition, the Families Intervention Project has helped reduce by over three-quarters complaints against families who have a history of anti-social behaviour.

The Council has also been successful in ensuring cafes, restaurants and take-aways are clean, hygienic and provide a good standard of food to customers. It now has 1,371 food outlets in its "Scores on the Doors" scheme and the number of five star premises has increased from 7 per cent to 22 per cent in the last 18 months.

Better use of public money

The Council manages its money well and spends it on what matters to local people. It has scored 3 out of 4 for Use of Resources. The Council looks carefully at the money it has to spend, and plans activities based on this. It was able to deal with a substantial equal pay claim without effecting service delivery or having to raise council tax. It sets targets to make savings and uses information to help in making decisions on how well services are run. This is supported by a programme of service reviews that ensure that local people are getting good value for money from all of its services. The Council has reduced costs in adult social care, out of city placements for children with special needs and in waste and recycling. It has also reduced the cost of agency staff in housing management from £622, 000 in 2007/08 to £322, 000 in 2008/09. People can find clear information about Brighton and Hove's finances on the Council website and in the council magazine.

The Council has made sure that Councillors and senior staff are held responsible for the money they control. There are regular Council meetings where Councillors oversee budgets, and make sure that Councillors and staff are behaving properly, for example in awarding contracts or claiming expenses.

The Council is making information on the Council's performance easier to find. It is developing well the way decisions are taken, the way risks are managed and how it buys goods and services. It is improving the way that council buildings are being used. The Council is reducing how much it pollutes the environment and is encouraging local people and businesses to do the same.

Open and effective city leadership

People living in Brighton and Hove, feel that they treat each other with respect and consideration and feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together. A recent survey shows that 86 per cent of people are satisfied with Brighton & Hove as a place to live. Nearly half of Brighton & Hove residents are satisfied with the way the Council runs things, which is above the national average. Nearly 9 out of 10 residents say that people from different backgrounds get on well together and seven out of ten people feel

that they treat each other with consideration and respect, which are much higher than similar areas. The Council with others is effective at celebrating diversity through for example the Brighton festival and Pride - the country's largest Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender festival. The Council understands the needs of different people and communities, it is rated the top local government employer in the Stonewall workplace equality index and is working to implement a new national equality standard by March 2010.

The Council works well in partnership with others. There are close links with the 2020 Community Partnership where local public services including the police and the health service come together to deliver shared local aims for the city. The Council communicates well with local people about its priorities and tackles issues that are important to local people. For example, the setting up of art projects with council tenants to foster pride in their local estate and to discourage anti-social behaviour. The Council listens to what local people say and makes changes to its services for example; the enforcement of the zig-zag lines around schools has reduced accidents and the Council has improved pavement access, following consultation with parents and disabled people.

Those responsible for running the Council are providing good leadership. Councillors and managers generally work well together to provide good quality services to local people. The ambitions for the area are clearly set out each year after asking local people what they think the Council should focus on. The leader of the council and the acting chief executive both understand the importance of working with the local community and both have high profiles in the community. The Council has recently appointed a new chief executive. It has achieved Investors in People a nationally recognised standard designed to help organisations improve their business by having effective plans for its staff.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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