Brighton & Hove City Council
Community Development Strategy
2011-2015

This document sets out Brighton & Hove's approach to community development, with a clear path towards strong, engaged and cohesive communities; capable of resilience and civic activity and participation.

November 2011
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1.   **Vision**

Brighton and Hove City Council's new corporate plan[1], (2011-15), places great importance on the relationship between the council and the communities it serves.

The plan recognises that our citizens and communities are the lifeblood of the city. Engaged and active communities are not the by-product of a successful city; rather they are a prerequisite for its success.

The council recognises that supporting and engaging communities is a shared agenda. The council's public sector partners including the Police, Health Services and community and voluntary sector, are all committed to co-producing solutions to some of the city's most difficult issues; including the impact of the current recession and public spending measures.

As part of its 'A Council the City Deserves' programme the council has committed to embedding community engagement throughout its commissioning and delivery approaches. As part of its leadership role, the council wants to turn its services inside out and rediscover the human resources within communities.

This strategy recognises that community development provides a vital underpinning role in order to enable engagement to happen. Without grass roots support, some services struggle to connect to citizens.

The council believes that people in communities can drive change and development processes themselves. However, it also recognises that community development plays a key role in unlocking some of the barriers that exist to make this happen; particularly for the most disadvantaged people and places.

The council's community development approach is primarily about social justice and as such community development resources will be targeted at those people who are more disadvantaged and/or experience discrimination.

The council recognises that many people feel or perceive themselves to be powerless to change key features of their lives and of the many constraints they experience. This strategy seeks to enable them, through working together with others, to discover the confidence, knowledge and skills necessary to affect such changes.

This strategy also recognises that it is the capacities of local people and their community and voluntary activity that build powerful communities. The strategy sets out the construction of a new framework for implementation which aims to support communities to assemble their strengths into new

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[1] Brighton and Hove City Counci – Corporate Plan 2011-15.
http://corporateplan.brighton-hove.gov.uk/

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combinations, new structures of opportunity, new sources of income and control and new possibilities for production.

2.   What do we mean by 'community development'?

In 2004, the council adopted the following definition of Community Development, (which is taken from The Federation of Community Development - http://www.fcdl.org/home), and this will continue to be used for the purposes of this new strategy.

"Community Development is a long-term, value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion. The process enables people to organise and work together to:
- *identify their own needs and aspirations,*
- *take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives,*
- *improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part."*

3.   What do we mean by 'community'?

The Community Engagement Framework[2] sets out a range of useful definitions of 'community' that are used in this strategy. These were created through extensive city wide consultation with community and voluntary organisations and members of the public. The results and statements therefore have strong foundation and acceptance:

The term "community" is used to describe the common bonds that arise as a result of living in the same neighbourhood, or having some common identity or interest.

This definition of 'community' also recognises that different people identify themselves in different ways, (and at different times), and that we should be sensitive to this when carrying out any type of engagement activity. Moreover, the strategy recognises that people who see themselves as members of a community are also individual citizens.

The places in which we live, work and socialise will often include the people we share our lives, interests and backgrounds with. It may be a place with a physical or locally agreed boundary or simply a shared understanding or 'feeling' about a place – this is commonly defined as – a community of place.

Across the city and within the areas in which we all live, some people define themselves in addition to their community of place. This is quite often as part of a group of people with a shared interest or identity/experience – this is described as communities of interest or identity.

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2 The Brighton and Hove Community Engagement Framework. http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/BH_CEF_Community_Engagement_Framework.pdf

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A community of interest or identity can include:

- *People who identify themselves or are identified by society, by demographic characteristics, for example, children and young people, faith groups, older people, Black and minority ethnic people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people or people with a shared social background,*
- *People with a shared or similar interest, for example, in climate change, art, a local school or allotment,*
- *People with a similar or the same profession or place of work, for example, hoteliers, council workers, police officers, business associations.*

4. Why do we need this strategy?

There are a number of reasons why this strategy is required and timely.

While latest data, (The Place Survey, 2009[3]), indicates that many Brighton and Hove residents feel involved and able to participate and influence decisions in the city, the council recognises that there are large groups of people who feel unable to do so, or would like to do so, but are unsure how.

The corporate plan describes a range of devolution priorities which will require engaged and mobilised communities able to take up the opportunities on offer.

The public spending climate, recession and changes to the welfare state all mean that individuals and communities (particularly those facing most disadvantage) will face additional pressures over the coming years. The ability to be resilient will be a critical factor affecting the experience of this period of unrest.

The council also recognises the evidenced value that community development brings to the city:

- Increasing and strengthening community and individual well-being and resilience, (as evidenced by the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health Report 2010[4]).

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[3] The Brighton and Hove Place Survey, published 2009. http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=13314

[4] Annual Report of the Director of Public Health, Brighton and Hove 2010. http://www.brightonhovecitypct.nhs.uk/about/documents/3559CouncilDPHReport2011newlores.pdf

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- Increasing the numbers of volunteers that are active in the city, (as evidenced by the City Volunteering Strategy – Joining the Dots[5]).

- Increasing the numbers of community groups in the city, (many of which are established for self-help and/or providing community based support to vulnerable people. This has been evidenced by monitoring returns from existing community development commissioning[6]).

- Increasing public satisfaction with community/neighbourhood and services provided there; increasing social networks; increasing individual skills and knowledge; and increasing the ability to be involved in decision making. (As evidenced by the Social Return on Investment, (SROI), analysis 2010[7]).

- The SROI study also showed that for every £1 that Brighton and Hove City Council invests in community development it receives £11 return in social value.

4a. The national picture

Recently, there have been a number of legislative changes, (some of which are still going through Parliament at the time of writing), which will have a significant impact on public services and communities. Particular measures will impact on, or require support from, community development activity in order to be possible to implement. These include the new Localism Bill, (with its associated community rights proposals), and changes to the NHS which has led to the creation of new Clinical Commissioning Groups in Brighton and Hove.

Reductions in public spending, the associated changes to the welfare state, together with the ongoing recession mean that vulnerable people and communities are being exposed to challenging times. Community resilience is dependent on individual and collective ability to respond to such challenges and community development plays a pivotal role in promoting this. With a focus on the 'Big Society' central government hopes to foster greater civic responsibility, volunteering and self help – all of which are key outcomes for community development.

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[5] Brighton and Hove City Volunteering Strategy – Joining the Dots. http://www.i-volunteer.org.uk/assets/profile/vcbrightonandhove/files/Brighton%20&%20Hove%20Volunteering%20Strategy%20-%20Action%20Plan.pdf

[6] Monitoring information collected from community development commissioning held by the Communities and Equalities Team of the City Council. Contact communitiesteam@brighton-hove.gov.uk for further information.

[7] Social Return on Investment (SROI), undertaken by the Communities and Equalities Team of the City Council as part of the Strengthening Communities Review. Contact communitiesteam@brighton-hove.gov.uk for further information.

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4b.   The local picture

In Brighton and Hove, a new Administration was elected in May 2011 and with the consequent production of its Corporate Plan, the council continues to maintain a strong focus on community engagement and community development as tools for empowerment and social justice.

The Council's recent State of the City Report[8], as well as various needs assessments undertaken as part of the Intelligent Commissioning programme have demonstrated that inequality continues to exist in the city and affects particular people and places disproportionately.

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health showed that community resilience levels were affected by factors associated with social inclusion, such as education, employment and housing. The resilience of a community is influenced by is social relationships, networks and social capital. These affect its ability to cope during difficult times, such as those we currently face.

5.   Impact and Needs Assessments

This strategy is informed by two important activities that have helped the council to understand the need for community development and its impact on key outcomes:

a. The Strengthening Communities Review 2011[9]

b. Initial Neighbourhood Needs Assessment 2011[10]

a. The Strengthening Communities Review, (SCR)

Undertaken during 2010/11, the council established the SCR to review community engagement, community development and representation work in the city. The review was set in the context of 'Creating a Council the City Deserves' change programme which established need for stronger engagement with citizens and communities as a key strand.

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[8] Brighton and Hove City Council – The State of the City Report. 2011.
http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=b1149084&action=show_pr&id=261445

[9] The Strengthening Communities Review, undertaken by the City Council's Communities and Equalities Team. Final Report. http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1212096

[10] Neighbourhood Needs Assessment, undertaken by the City Council's Communities and Equalities Team. Contact communitiesteam@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Findings from this review, (part of which included an independent evaluation), showed that community development had strong and positive impact on neighbourhoods and improved perceptions of place and well-being. It found evidence of individual empowerment, new community groups forming and the work supported resident involvement in service design, delivery and planning.

The review found that community development is most effective in areas where residents have a sense of attachment to their neighbourhood. In areas with transient populations, such as student areas, and areas of high density rented property, it was found to be considerably more difficult to engage residents in community activities as they have little or no stake in the long term development of the immediate community/area.

b. Initial Neighbourhood Needs Assessment.

Using data which includes Census 2001, the Place Survey 2009 and Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010[11] an initial needs assessment has been undertaken to establish target areas for community development resource. The assessment identified that those people most at risk of inequality were those:

§ least able to meet their own needs,

§ have the least opportunity to engage and participate,

§ lacking access/not taking up services and facilities,

§ from 'protected groups' such as those from Black and Minority Ethnic, disabled, older and younger, and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgendered communities.

6.   Background

This strategy updates the existing Community Development Strategy, published in 2004. Its revision was agreed as part of the Strengthening Communities Review and by the Stronger Communities Partnership as an action under the Community Engagement Framework action plan. As a council policy, its implementation is being led by the Communities and Equalities Team working in close collaboration with the Stronger Communities Partnership.

The strategy has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and builds on the consultation undertaken to create the Community Engagement

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[11] Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010.
http://www.centreforcities.org/assets/files/2011%20Research/11-04-08%20IMD%202010.pdf

Framework. Additional consultation activity was undertaken during the SCR, including 500 people as part of the SROI process.

A workshop was held with key community and voluntary sector organizations in the city and was also attended by representatives from the new Clinical Commissioning Groups as well as council staff responsible for community development and engagement.

This strategy is limited to the delivery and commissioning activity of the council and does not seek to create a city-wide community development strategy. This enables the council to identify and focus on its delivery and commissioning commitments to community development as part of its corporate plan and objectives.

7.   Resource Implications

The council has accessed regeneration funds, (such as Neighbourhood Renewal and New Deal), to fund its place based community development over the last 15 years. With the demise of these initiatives and a growing awareness of the importance of community development, the council has increasingly invested core funding into its commissioning programme.

This core funding ring fence is likely to be under pressure with the current economic climate. Therefore decisions regarding annual spend will be subject to normal council budget setting processes and are separate to, but informed by this strategy.

As such this strategy reflects the importance of joint commissioning, (both internally and with external partners) and a continued focus on value for money.

The strategy also recognises the positive impact that community development can have in such challenging economic times, by:

-   Enabling more funding to be levered into the local economy through a focus on independent resources from charitable sources.

-   Supporting people to support themselves through self help activities and community based services.

-   Increasing the numbers of volunteers and therefore contributing significant economic equivalent value, (the SROI analysis showed that residents directly involved in community development projects gave on average 21 hours of volunteer time per month - 9 hours more than the Brighton and Hove average described in the Brighton and Hove -

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Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, Taking Account[12], report of September 2008 - and that the average value of this volunteering per annum is £153,530).

8. Approach

The strategy uses an approach based on outcomes to promote the value of the work, to provide a structure for corporate action and to inform the commissioning of services in the city. It is designed to provide a clear but flexible framework, with council leadership in place to steer a pathway towards stronger communities.

Recognising the need for flexibility, it sets outcomes to allow council services, commissioners and partner organisations to engage with our priority objectives.

9. Outcomes

The following outcomes for community development have been developed and agreed in consultation with members of the community and community development professionals. They were created through the SROI process and are clearly evidenced by a range of performance indicators. As part of a national pathfinder using SROI to assess the impact of community development, the outcomes are well researched and evidenced.

a. **High Level Outcome One:**
Improving community and personal well-being by:
1. Increasing levels of trust;
2. Increasing a sense of belonging;
3. Increasing people's opportunities to take part in decision making;
4. Improving skills, confidence and knowledge;
5. Increasing people opportunities to take part in community activity

b. **High Level Outcome Two:**
Building community and individual resilience by:
1. Increasing collective community activity;
2. Increasing the engagement of groups in decision making;
3. Increasing community links;
4. Increasing opportunities for groups and individuals to influence the design and delivery on services;
5. Increasing the sense of positive functioning in communities.

10. Performance and Reporting

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[12] Brighton and Hove Taking Account. A report of the Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum. http://www.cvsectorforum.org.uk/takingaccount

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Progress on the implementation of this Strategy will be through a number of mechanisms:

- Progress on the overall objectives will be reported to the Strategic Director – Communities and Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities and Public Protection through the business planning processes of the Council.

- Progress will also be shared with the Members Advisory Group (a cross party steering group), and the Stronger Communities Partnership (on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership).

- All commissioning and grant agreements will be subject to the council's standard monitoring and evaluation processes and will be summarised and reported periodically through the mechanisms described above.

- Outcomes will be measured using agreed performance indicators (developed as part of the SROI process). These will be reported on quarterly and data received shared with key stakeholders, (including local communities) and used to inform future work.

11.   The Model – 'The Four Building Blocks of Community Development'

This Strategy describes the council's approach and 'theory of change' for community development and is described as 'the four building blocks of community development':

1. Core community development work
2. Engagement that works
3. Building effective partnerships
4. Shared service design and delivery

The following section describes these blocks and some of the activities that are being delivered, or planned, to achieve it.

11.1   Building Block 1 - Core community development

The council will develop, fund and support a critical mass of community, social and environmental groups, residents' associations and other local voluntary groups and networks that provide the foundations for communities to articulate their needs and issues, take control to help themselves and develop their understanding of how to work best with local and central government bodies.

How will this be achieved?

- Provision of grant aid in support of community and voluntary groups to support both people and places.

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- Commissioning of neighbourhood based community development.

- Continued implementation of the City Volunteering Strategy which supports active citizenship internally and externally.

- By ensuring that front-line council workers understand the role of community development work and activity, groups and networks and respond to and support them where appropriate.

- By strengthening and improving the quality of community activity which in turn builds social capital.

- Through the work of the Council's Housing Participation Team and implementation of the new Tenant Involvement Strategy.

11.2   Building Block 2 - Engagement that works

Communities need to have the ability to engage effectively with those who deliver services to ensure that such services meet their needs. Groups therefore need the skills and information necessary to both identify priorities and propose solutions. The council recognises that it needs the skills and capacity to engage meaningfully and effectively with communities.

How will this be achieved?

- Ongoing implementation of the Community Engagement Framework (and related action plan), in order that we:
    - engage communities to help inform and shape Council policy and decision making;
    - Work with partners in the public and community sectors to identify and apply good practice.
- Support engagement activity linked to Community Development provision
- Facilitate shared learning on community engagement within the council and with the community and voluntary and public sector partners through the Corporate Learning and Development team.
- Continue to work with and assist council delivery units to design and undertake community engagement.
- Embed engagement processes into the intelligent commissioning framework.
- Engage with user groups, advocacy groups and community networks to stimulate feedback and invite informed influence.
- Diversify the range of engagement methods used; including exploring the role of social media.
- Strengthen and improve the quality of Equalities Impact Assessments to ensure that they include strong engagement (and therefore voice) of vulnerable people and communities.
- Through the work of the Partnership Community Safety Team in supporting Local Action Teams and other forums to engage with community safety and environmental improvement services.

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11.3   Building Block 3 - Building effective partnerships

Increasingly, partnership-working is at the heart of many of the relationships between communities and successful service delivery. The council recognises that our staff, services, partners and communities need the capacity to co-design, deliver and evaluate services that address local need through partnership working. There is also a need to understand the wider interlocking social, economic and environmental issues which impact on local areas.

How will this be achieved?

- Continued support for the involvement of community and voluntary sector representation on the city's Family of Partnerships.
- Develop effective partnership through Community Development provision.
- Support to enable community and voluntary sector groups to be equal partners in the intelligent commissioning process (by monitoring and reviewing commissioning and procurement decisions).
- By Increasing and strengthening the role of the Stronger Communities Partnership as the policy lead for engagement in partnership working.
- The development of a Neighbourhood Planning model for Brighton and Hove that ensures communities have an effective means of participating in community planning processes.

11.4   Building Block 4 - Shared service design and delivery

Although not always appropriate, in some instances communities may wish to move to a position where they are the delivering local services. At this level community groups become delivery partners in meeting local needs, developing community assets and delivering local services.

How will this be achieved?

- Support community organisations in the development of social economy enterprises.
- Community Development provision to support groups wishing to deliver services.
- Through the facilitation of an area planning approach, (neighbourhood forums) to bring together service providers and communities to understand share issues and produce shared solutions
- Implementation of a new neighbourhood councils programme where communities hold responsibility for budgets and decisions.
- Through the Council's new youth work commissioning strategy which will include a participatory budgeting programme with young people.
- Implementation of the Council's 'Embrace' model for adult social care, which will support community based services and personalised services

12.   **Conclusion**

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This strategy describes the vision, need and proposed approach to community development for Brighton and Hove City Council. It is not intend to be a city-wide strategy for community development but will complement partner activity in this respect.

It focuses on support to tackle inequality, involve communities in all aspects of the City Council's work and create sustainable communities through improved social capital and resilience.
It describes our model of 'building blocks' that illustrate the different ways in which community development supports our corporate objectives and illustrates some of the ways in which these are being implemented.

It sets a framework for both corporate work focussed on delivery units and front line services and also describes commissioning and funding priorities.

Most importantly it presents a starting point for the council's vision, with an invitation to partners and stakeholders to work together on shared agendas.

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