



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Corporate Plan
2008 - 2011

**FOREWORD BY
COUNCILLOR MARY MEARS,
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

I am delighted to be able to introduce Brighton & Hove City Council's Corporate Plan for 2008/11.

This plan sets out our programme for the next three years, and the targets we are committing to meet in each area of work. We will improve services for residents, while continuing to slow the rise in council tax.

The past year has given us a good foundation to build upon. The independent Audit Commission gives the Council three out of a possible four stars and says we are improving well. Children's services and adult social care services are among the best performing in the country and our annual resident survey showed that more local people feel we are doing a good job.

Over the next three years, we will **protect the environment while growing the economy**. Maintaining the strength of the city's economy in an uncertain economic climate is a key priority for us.

We will **make better use of public money**. The Council will spend over £2 billion of public money during the three years of this plan and we owe it to our residents to ensure that this is spent as efficiently and effectively as possible.

We also want to ensure that everyone in the City can share in its prosperity, and will be working to **reduce inequality by increasing opportunity**. Our ground-breaking Reducing Inequality Review has given us an invaluable insight into deprivation in the City and has provided us with the evidence base necessary to address many of the issues that it has raised.

We believe that no-one has the right to disrupt and disturb the lives of others, so we will be putting greater emphasis on **fair enforcement of the law**, including work to make people feel safer around the city at night, and to reduce disorder and anti-social behaviour.

This will be an **open and effective council**, which will provide new opportunities for public involvement and will operate a new constitution that will improve public access to the decision-making process.

We have committed to deliver real improvements on the issues that are most

important to our residents - lower tax rises to protect those on fixed incomes; choice and value for money in core council services; affordable and decent housing; clean and safe public spaces; and making sure that everyone is able to share in the success of this great City. I am very much looking forward to tackling the challenges ahead.

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**INTRODUCTION BY
ALAN McCARTHY,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Council has clear ambitions to be excellent. Excellent in terms of delivering the aspirations set out in this Corporate Plan but also in making a genuine difference to lives of people in Brighton and Hove.

To do this the Council must work in harmony with the City. This means that we need to understand fully the City and its needs. Through the pioneering work that the Leader has referred to in her introduction around inequality and our innovative use of research and statistics, we probably know more about the City and its residents now than we have

ever known before. We must use this knowledge to map out the future needs and shape of Brighton and Hove. We must design services around its needs, whether they be city-wide or tailored to particular communities, families or individuals, providing choice wherever possible. We must ensure that all within our communities are given the opportunity to improve their quality of life as the City grows in prosperity.

The Council itself has to be an organisation fit to rise to this task. Our staff need to be valued and developed to enable them to adapt continually to the challenges that providing services within Brighton and Hove presents. To be in tune with the City they must also reflect its rich diversity. We must adopt ways of working that concentrate on the themes set out above to ensure we can plan for the future, deliver efficient basic services and focus on those who need particular help.

We cannot do this alone. We need to work closely with all our partners in the City; public, private and the community and voluntary sector. We all have to work in harmony.

Our success will be measured by how well we deliver on the aspirations set out in this

Corporate Plan and the targets in the Local Area Agreement that we have developed with our partners.

It is an exciting prospect and one that the Council is looking forward to delivering.

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**PRIORITY ONE
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE GROWING
THE ECONOMY**

Maintaining economic growth in the city is vitally important. Growth will provide new opportunities in the city for those currently out of work, or for those who want to find higher-skilled jobs. Changing population patterns mean the city will need to create eight thousand new jobs over the next ten years just to maintain its current employment rate. To improve on our current employment rate, we will need even more.

In creating opportunities for growth, we understand the responsibility we have for improving and protecting our special natural and urban environment. We want to make Brighton & Hove a city where people can get around easily, and where better urban spaces encourage people to walk and stay. We also want to reduce the city's carbon footprint, and play a full part in tackling the international challenge of climate change.

1.1 Keeping our city moving

Brighton and Hove depends on its infrastructure. Its location constrains it between the Downs and the sea, and can make transport between outlying areas difficult. New land for building is at a premium, and a growing economy needs new houses and the right space for business. The Local Development Framework, which we will publish in 2009 and will replace the Local Plan, will set out how we propose to use land in the city over the next twenty years, balancing the tensions between development and protection of our unique heritage.

To help our residents and support the general economy, we need to improve transport in and around the city. We will work with bus and train companies, as well as the Highways Agency, to improve transport for residents, commuters and tourists. As part of the *Public Life Public Space* study and the Local Transport Plan, we will be working on making our public spaces safer, more distinctive and more inspiring, introducing better signposts for pedestrians and more shared surfaces like New Road.

In the next three years we will:

- Provide safer and better roads and transport routes by delivering the Local Transport Plan investment programme
- Change attitudes around travel to school, to reduce unnecessary car journeys
- Start work on the new Rapid Transit System to speed up cross-city public transport
- Improve public spaces with better signposting and a more welcoming street scene for all users
- Retain and build upon our status as a cycling demonstration town

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- People have better access to services by public transport, walking and cycling
- Rush hour car journeys are shorter
- Fewer people are killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents

1.2 Preserving and improving our urban and natural environments

We have a responsibility to maintain and enhance our city not just for our current residents, but for future generations of residents and visitors. This means taking action now to protect the urban environment, keeping streets clean, preserving our architectural heritage and ensuring that derelict sites are redeveloped quickly. We will also protect and enhance our parks and green spaces, and will work with the new National Park Authority, when created, to safeguard the city's Downland for future generations.

For the longer-term, we also need to mitigate and adapt to challenges of global climate change, which potentially present serious risks to us as a coastal city. The Council, through its carbon management programme, is taking a lead on reducing CO2 emissions from its own activities. The next stage of work is to encourage businesses and households in the city to reduce emissions through energy efficiency and building a more environmentally sustainable economy.

In the next three years we will:

- Encourage more efficient use of private vehicles and fleets, and work with business and schools to help them do the same
- Reduce carbon emissions and deliver energy and financial savings through our Carbon Management programme
- Make our streets cleaner by introducing communal bins
- Strengthen the park ranger service
- Complete the stonework restoration at the Royal Pavilion

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- There are fewer derelict plots of land
- CO2 emissions per head and CO2 emissions from council activities have reduced
- Our streets are cleaner
- More wind, solar and other sustainable energy is installed locally
- More people are happy with the state of our streets and parks

1.3 Growing our economy

We will work to maintain economic growth in the city, and to ensure that growth is sustained into the long term. We will protect our unique retail experiences in the Lanes and the North Laine, while expanding the retail sector elsewhere in the city. We will secure a new and much improved Brighton Centre and support delivery of other major projects such as the i360 and the Brunswick Marina development.

We want to continue to diversify our economy beyond tourism and related industries, giving space for businesses to start and to grow. As part of that we will continue to support the city's thriving cultural industries, which provide nearly 16,000 jobs. We will work with business support organisations and the city's universities to help new high-growth businesses establish themselves. We will endeavour to retain existing business in the City and secure new business through inward investment. We will match skills and training opportunities in the city with the needs of the economy.

In the next three years we will:

- Increase the space available to cultural and creative industries, to support growth in the cultural sector

- Support business investment in the city by creating and implementing an inward investment strategy
- Work with local businesses to provide the skilled workforce they need
- Support retail and conference business by starting work on a new Brighton Centre

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- More of the city's businesses are growing
- Key milestones on a new Brighton Centre have been achieved
- The city's wealth per head has grown
- More tourists are coming to the city, and tourist income has increased

1.4 Excellent cultural opportunities for all

The city's broad and diverse culture is central to our economic and regeneration agendas. It is a major element of our economy and helps to shape our urban landscape. We want all people in the city to be able to take part in the cultural and sporting activities it offers.

Participating in cultural or sporting activity expands people's life chances, improves their physical and mental health, and enables people to share in the life of the city.

Culture and sport is particularly important in the education and support of our young people, both within and alongside formal education. For residents of all ages, access to literature and cultural activities can change lives, broadening horizons and promoting understanding of ourselves and others.

In the next three years we will:

- Increase and diversify participation in cultural and sporting activities
- Develop an inspiring programme of activities leading up to the 2012 London Olympics
- Work through museums and local libraries to support early years learning

- Regenerate at least three community libraries, enabling them to act as hubs for community services
- Provide new spaces for professional and amateur sport at the Community Stadium and Brighton International Arena

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- More people are engaged in and enjoying the arts
- Our library service is more popular and better-used
- More children go on organised museum visits
- More people are involved in sport and physical activity

1.5 Providing the homes that people need

More homes, and more affordable homes are desperately needed, but building land is scarce. Traditional approaches will not meet the need for housing our residents.

We will be working with all our partners to produce a comprehensive answer to housing shortages and poor quality housing. Our work will unlock the value of currently under-used land, while providing new and better-quality homes, available to all at affordable prices. If economic uncertainty turns into recession, we will do what we can to help residents stay in their homes and avoid being made homeless.

In the next three years we will:

- Provide more family homes, including homes adapted for children with disabilities
- Improve the quality and availability of social housing
- Reduce homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation
- Provide accommodation for gypsies and travellers, by opening a permanent travellers' site

- Work with the fire service to provide smoke detectors and fire safety visits to more homes

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We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We have provided more homes
- More council houses are classified as 'decent'
- More empty properties have been brought back into use

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1.6 Supporting people into work

Work improves people's life chances, grows the city's economy, and reduces poverty and inequality. People with stable jobs have higher disposable incomes, and being in work brings benefits for mental and physical health and the communities in which we live.

Some people in the city have difficulty getting into work, through poor health or lack of skills. With our partners across the city, we will support the most disadvantaged into stable employment, and ensure that good job progression routes are available within the city. As part of our education programmes, we will increase access to learning for adults.

In the next three years we will:

- Help more people to get into work and reduce dependency on benefits
- Use the construction phase of major projects to develop local skills and business
- Develop apprenticeships that are relevant to the skills needs in key sectors of the economy
- Develop training and employment agreements with employers

- Work with employers to sustain and improve models of employer engagement

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- Fewer working age people are on out of work benefits
- A higher percentage of the city's population are in work
- More disabled people and people with mental health problems are in long-term paid work

**PRIORITY TWO
BETTER USE OF PUBLIC MONEY**

The Council spends over £700m of public money each year, and it is our responsibility to ensure that it is well spent. We will set council tax rates as low as we can, bearing in mind the need to support essential services and invest in the city's long term success.

We will manage our existing financial and property resources carefully, redeveloping or selling surplus or underperforming assets. We will actively pursue those who do not pay money that they owe.

We will also keep the costs of delivering services under careful review to give each pound that is spent maximum impact. At the same time, we will continue to maximise the external funding we receive from Europe, the National Lottery, central government and other sources, to deliver specific projects that support the needs of the city.

2.1 Providing services that are good value for money

We have an obligation to use taxpayers' money wisely and to show how we are using it to deliver for the city. We are committed to slowing the rate of increase in council tax.

We will systematically review all our services, identifying areas where we can reduce costs without compromising on the quality of the outcomes we achieve. We will do this by learning from other organisations, making best use of technology and minimising bureaucracy. We will ensure best practice procurement is adopted throughout council services. Where we can we will work with other partners to share costs, promote innovation and reduce duplication.

We will make it easier for citizens to contact us and get the information and advice they need and reduce the number of times that citizens need to interact with us on the same issue.

In the next three years we will:

- Deliver a Council wide programme of value for money reviews of all services

- Introduce a new business planning framework and approach to risk and opportunity management
- Implement our “Access Vision for our Citizens”

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We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We have delivered year on year reductions in the rate of increase in council tax
- We have delivered 3% efficiency savings every year
- The Audit Commission judge us as “performing well” in how we use our resources
- We have increased levels of customer satisfaction with the Council in priority areas

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2.2 Protecting the Council's financial position

The Council has to work within tight financial constraints. Our medium term financial strategy (MTFS) sets out how we will work within those constraints to deliver our priorities. It identifies the financial risks we face and how we can best manage them. A Summary of the MTFS is contained later in this Plan.

We will invest the council's cash wisely, continually checking that we have got the right balance between risk and returns and will make sure we minimise the costs of borrowing. We will take a robust but fair approach to collecting money owed to us and to protecting the council from fraud. We will do this in a joined up way across all council services.

We will lobby central government on the distribution of formula grant and on funding for new responsibilities to protect the council's financial position.

In the next three years we will:

- Update the MTFS and review our reserves annually
- Set prudent limits on how much we borrow

- Implement our policies on Anti-Fraud & Corruption, Treasury Management and Debt Collection & Recovery

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We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We have maintained our reserves in line with best practice guidelines
- Achieved our income collection and recovery targets
- Maximised our investment returns within the appropriate risk limits set out in the investment strategy

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2.3 Responsible Financial Management

Strong and effective financial management is key to delivering the council's priorities and ensuring the financial stability of the council.

We will closely monitor our financial position to make sure we control our costs and will be transparent in our reporting of how well we are doing. We will set out clear standards for how we expect our staff to manage budgets and provide them with the right training and support to meet those standards. We will take a long term view of costs and benefits when we make major investment decisions or enter into substantial contracts.

We will continually monitor our internal controls and set out our framework and actions in our Annual Governance Statement.

In the next three years we will:

- Improve financial management standards across the council
- Modernise how we manage and report on our budgets using our new financial information system
- Further integrate our business and financial planning processes

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We have managed our overall spending to within 1% variation of our net budget
- Our services have successfully worked within their cash limited funding allocations

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2.4 Ensuring the best use of our property & land assets

The council is a major owner and occupier of land and buildings. Our Asset Management Plan & Corporate Property Strategy provide a framework for assessing the costs and benefits of holding particular assets, and making sure they are fit for purpose.

We will regularly review our property portfolio to ensure that each asset is contributing to our corporate objectives and is accessible and safe for our staff and service users. We will continue to look for shared property solutions with other public agencies wherever suitable opportunities arise and support a joint estates strategy with our Health partners.

We will seek to make efficient use of our buildings in terms of space and energy consumption.

In the next three years we will:

- Identify sites that are underused or surplus to requirements and make plans to redevelop or dispose of them to meet our corporate objectives

- Reduce our dependency on office accommodation by supporting effective mobile working for appropriate staff
- Identify poorly performing buildings by reviewing our operational property assets in terms of condition, suitability and capacity
- Seek sustainable solutions to our new build and maintenance works programmes, improving energy efficiency and increasing materials recycling

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We have achieved a minimum of £1m in capital receipts per annum by the targeted disposal of under-performing assets
- We have achieved an overall 10% reduction in the current floor space used by each full-time equivalent member of staff
- We have achieved energy efficiency savings of 5% each year

**PRIORITY THREE
REDUCE INEQUALITY BY INCREASING
OPPORTUNITY**

Despite the city's economic growth and considerable investment in regeneration by the city council, too many of our citizens are still disadvantaged by lack of skills, poor health, poor employment opportunities and difficulties accessing services. Our approaches will focus on preventing people falling into disadvantage in the first place and proactively working to equip people with the opportunities to rise out of it.

Much good work has been carried out but funding for many initiatives is now coming to an end. We have undertaken major new research on deprivation in the city, which has shown that deprivation is much more dispersed through the city than had previously been thought. It also showed that worklessness is one of the fundamental elements of deprivation in the city today. We will therefore increase people's opportunities for work, support those already working to stay in work and progress, and collaborate with other authorities to alleviate poverty wherever it is found.

3.1 Giving our children the best start in life

We want our children to grow up with the skills and resilience to succeed and grow into responsible and active citizens. We will support vulnerable families through early identification of need and delivery of integrated services. We will provide cultural and learning opportunities that enable children, young people, and adults to aim high and achieve their ambitions.

We will back parents and families to bring up their children by providing good information and advice. Our integrated children's services will provide the most vulnerable families with the right support and targeted services when needed.

We will work with parents and families to achieve the right balance between keeping children and young people safe and allowing them the freedom they need to have new experiences and to enjoy their childhood and teenage years.

In the next three years we will:

- Review and improve our services for children at risk and with special needs or disability

- Make services more accessible by building more children's centres across the city
- Improve early assessment and support for children who need them
- Ensure that the city has sufficient flexible and accessible childcare to allow parents to work and train
- Deliver a range of positive activities for young people
- Improve young peoples' reading levels by implementing a city reading strategy
- Help keep children safe on our roads with Bikeability cycle training, road safety education, and publicity

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- Obesity in primary schools has reduced
- Children's social care assessments are carried out quickly
- Our services for disabled children have improved
- Bullying in schools has reduced
- More children are trained in cycle safety

3.2 Providing excellent education for all

We are uncompromising in our ambition for our children and adult learners and want all schools to be at the heart of the communities they serve. We will give adults more opportunities for formal and informal learning.

We will continue to work with head teachers to ensure that every school is a good or outstanding school and that all pupils meet the highest possible standards. We believe that all children and young people, including those with special educational needs or a disability, should have access to educational and social opportunities within the mainstream system alongside high quality specialist provision. We will work closely with all schools to meet the needs of children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and we will work to reduce exclusions.

We will also work in partnership with schools, colleges and training providers to deliver high quality education and training to 14-19 year olds so that they have the opportunity to achieve their potential and, as young adults, take their full place in society as confident citizens.

In the next three years we will:

- Develop a capital programme for the rebuilding and refurbishment of primary and secondary schools
- Build an Academy at Falmer providing excellent educational opportunities and specialising in entrepreneurship and sport
- Improve support to children and young people with behavioural, emotional and social needs
- Review special needs provision and promote inclusive practice
- Improve museum education services for children and adults through the Museum Renaissance Programme
- Increase public access to excellent online information and learning in public libraries

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- All our schools are judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED
- Our learners have better numeracy skills
- More of our children obtain good level 2 qualifications
- Migrants' English language skills have improved
- Public ICT in libraries is more available and more popular

3.3 Improve the health of our residents

Improving the health of the city's residents is not just a matter for the NHS – poor health is a major cause of deprivation in the city. The city council will be working closely with the NHS and others to support people with health problems, and to create a healthy environment that prevents problems from arising. In particular, we will encourage people to live healthy and active lives, improving diet and increasing participation in sport.

With better support, many of those currently on health-related benefits could be in work. Of particular concern is the mental health of our citizens, which is one of the main causes of health-related benefit claims. This will be a focus of our work over the coming three years.

In the next three years we will:

- Provide mothers with the help they need to breastfeed
- Support participation in sport, particularly among the young
- Improve support in the community for those with mild mental health problems
- Provide better health information in our libraries, and expand the Books on Prescription scheme

- Help more older people to maintain independence through better rehabilitation and intermediate care
- Improve air quality by reducing transport emissions

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- More drug users are in effective treatment
- Mental health services, particularly for children and adolescents, have improved
- Fewer people in the city smoke
- Alcohol-related hospital admissions rates have reduced
- Cholesterol and blood-pressure screening is more widespread
- Fewer people are killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents

3.4 Working together to target the most vulnerable

A major piece of research on the city has shown that old solutions are not enough to tackle the multiple problems that some of our most disadvantaged citizens face. In a city where deprivation is dispersed – concentrated in some areas, but present everywhere – neighbourhood-based approaches on their own cannot work. Our new approach focuses on the individuals and families suffering disadvantage.

While provision of good neighbourhood services is important and will continue, we will be bringing together public, private and voluntary sector work to provide better joined-up services for the most vulnerable families and households.

In the next three years we will:

- Provide more self-directed support, so individuals can control their own care
- Help more vulnerable adults and older people to live in their own homes and to claim the benefits they are entitled to
- Help those on benefits save money through greater fuel efficiency

- Target citywide problems such as worklessness and mental health by working better with our partners

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- More 16-18 year olds are in education, employment or training
- Fewer children are in poverty
- More people receive self-directed social care support
- Fewer teenagers fall pregnant
- Suicide rates have reduced

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**PRIORITY FOUR
FAIR ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW**

We want to make Brighton and Hove a city where people are safe and feel safe, no matter where they are. No-one has the right to curb others' peaceful enjoyment of our city, so we will work with police to get results on anti-social behaviour, and we will reduce fear of crime.

We are proud of our city's tourist trade, but we will not allow visitors to abuse our hospitality and inconvenience our residents. We will encourage people to be responsible, not through regulation and lecturing, but through firm action and consistent enforcement.

4.1 Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

The city has made good progress in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in recent years. Firm policing and early interventions have reduced serious violent crime, while work behind the scenes to tackle potential offenders has also been successful. Our residents tell us that fear of crime is reducing, and we will continue our work with the police in this area.

Over the next three years, we will be undertaking focused work around young people with the potential to be involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. Effective, accessible, early interventions work best, and we will involve children and young people in the design and delivery of activities and services.

We are also working to reduce the likelihood of crime in our public spaces, through better urban design and better lighting.

In the next three years we will:

- Deliver a parenting strategy that sets out different levels of support from prevention through to compulsory engagement and enforcement

- Involve communities in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour in social housing
- Improve support to survivors of domestic violence

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We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- Fewer people are concerned about anti-social behaviour
- The reoffending rate of persistent offenders has fallen
- There are fewer repeat incidents of domestic violence
- The number of under-17s entering the criminal justice system has fallen
- The number of arson incidents has reduced
- The number of crimes involving assault with injury has dropped
- The number of class A drug-related offences has fallen

4.2 Fair enforcement

Our visitors and residents need us to protect them from public health risks and environmental hazards. We have already improved public awareness of food safety with our innovative *Scores on the Doors* scheme, and over the next three years we will continue to match rigorous enforcement of safety rules with better information for the public and businesses.

We will work with the NHS to reduce stress at work and assess the health implications of what we do. We will also take action on wider health risks, monitoring air quality and taking steps to improve it.

We will review alcohol licences where we believe alcohol is causing violence or anti-social behaviour, and we will work with police to close the worst offending premises. Our new approach to licensing in the city centre will restrain growth in new pubs and bars.

Over the next three years, we will:

- Reduce noise problems by swift investigation and action on complaints
- Continue with high-profile enforcement of food and health and safety rules

- Maintain our excellent record on environmental health improvements

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We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We complete more than 98% of our programmed food inspections, and all our pollution control inspections
- We meet national guidelines on health and safety interventions
- We investigate all noise complaints, and resolve 90% with two months
- We send out noise patrols for more than 100 nights a year

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**PRIORITY FIVE
OPEN AND EFFECTIVE CITY LEADERSHIP**

We want to talk to, and listen to, everyone in the city. Our new City News gives residents better information about work going on in their city. Over the next three years we will be changing the way we do business to include more of the city's residents, and to encourage them to get involved in local groups and communities.

Our new Cabinet system will work in an open and transparent way, with public access to every meeting, and a new council scrutiny system to advise on the decisions we make.

We want people to feel they can talk to the council and be heard. We want to work in ways that meet people's needs and don't disadvantage members of particular groups and communities.

5.1 Keeping residents informed and engaged

We will be working over the next three years to improve our communications to the general public, and to give the public greater opportunity to influence decisions. The new City News has proved popular with residents, and we will be continuing its publication. Alongside that, improvements to our internet presence and a trial of webcast council meetings will bring the council's operations closer to the citizen.

In 2009, we will be putting in place a citizen engagement framework – a structure within which citizens can become more involved in the decisions the council takes.

In the next three years we will:

- Support the citywide assembly for housing tenants and leaseholders
- Create a new forum that will inform decisions on the personalisation of adult social care
- Create a community engagement framework to bring council decisions closer to the people

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- More people feel they can influence decisions in the city
- More people participate in regular volunteering
- More communities have a local hub or anchor
- More people are satisfied with opportunities to engage in local decision making

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PART TWO

BUILDING AN EXCELLENT COUNCIL

According to the Audit Commission (the National body that regulates and inspects all Councils) the council is a 3 star authority (out of a possible 4) that is improving well. Children's services and adult social care services are among the best performing. More importantly, our annual resident survey tells us that more local people than ever feel that the council is doing a good job and that they are satisfied with council services. Improvements were recently noted in the quality of our environment and services delivered. More residents are satisfied with the way the council runs its business.

Whilst encouraged by this progress our ambitions for the Council are greater. We want not just to be known as one of the best performing Councils in the country by residents, visitors, businesses, our partner organisations and our external regulators. We also want that reputation to be based upon what we achieve and people's experiences of us.

There is a large array of important activities that we have in progress or have developed plans for. These include how we change services provided to the public, how we communicate, make partnerships more effective, manage and develop staff, use land and technology assets, reduce our costs and our carbon footprint in doing our business. This part of the plan refers to several areas that we want to make particular progress in namely:

- 1. Becoming an employer of choice**
- 2. Creating opportunities and reducing barriers to achievement for all residents**
- 3. Delivering excellent services that provide good value for money.**

BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

We are committed to responding to what our community and employees tell us about our role as a model employer in the community. We will work to provide opportunities for people who are struggling to gain employment. We will introduce fairer and more transparent pay and reward schemes. We will work hard to ensure that we compare favourably with 'best practice' comparators on diversity measures.

The Council has a large and committed workforce, many of whom are residents of the city and have made a career choice to provide public services in their home city. In many service areas these staff are the most essential element to ensuring high quality services for our residents.

We want to be an 'employer of choice' with both a strong reputation and good people management practices. We want to ensure that all staff are consistently aware of what is required of them, skilled to meet those requirements and clear of how they are doing. We want to achieve fair pay for a good day's

work, provide better development opportunities, recognise the essential need for flexible working to increase our efficiency and have productive industrial relations.

We also recognise that as one of the largest employers in the city we have a responsibility and a capacity to support into work more residents who find getting jobs the most difficult. Working with other partners we will therefore expand our apprenticeships, work place learning and schemes to encourage local people to work for us, our partners and contactors.

In the next three years we will:

- Ensure that our internal processes for managing people are consistently strong and effective
- Modernise our pay schemes to make them fair and comprehensible
- Transform our HR approach through new technology, reducing costs and allowing more flexibility in how we manage our business
- Increase our staff satisfaction and thereby improve the quality of services delivered
- Increase the number of apprenticeships/ trainee schemes that lead to local

people working for us and partner organisations in the city

- Ensure that we continue to make progress with good diversity in our workforce
- Develop a comprehensive people strategy to ensure we have the workforce that we need into the future

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We achieve the Investors in People Standard across the whole Council and consistently use those approaches to manage our services
- We have equal pay across the entire Council
- We have new HR technology that supports staff and managers to do their jobs quickly and cost effectively
- Our staff survey results show a positive trend and are used to identify areas for attention
- More local people are employed by us as a result of apprenticeships and other training schemes
- Our indicators of diversity in the workforce continue to improve

**CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND REDUCING
BARRIERS TO ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL
RESIDENTS**

The City and City Council has worked hard in recent years to acknowledge and build upon the economic and social benefits of a diverse community. We will be investing in creating opportunities for people to participate in the city and we want the city council to be in tune with the community it serves.

We have created a City Inclusion Partnership that will oversee and champion this work across the city. Within the Council we want to ensure the way that we design and deliver services, commission and procure activities from others and use human and other resources are aligned behind this ambition.

We recognise that inequality can impact on all of our citizens and so have sought to broaden our consultation arrangements to include improvements that the community sees as being important. The City Inclusion Partnership includes other statutory partners as well as representatives from community and voluntary sector to help us ensure we hear the views of many sections of our diverse communities of

interest. In addition, we have separate consultation arrangements for all of our key service areas including housing, community safety, planning and social services.

Our approach embedded within our Local Area Agreement (with Central Government) will be to:-

- Prevent people falling into poverty wherever possible, helping young people into employment and training, teenage conceptions, etc.
- Provide the opportunities for people to lift themselves out of poverty (through skills improvement, early years interventions, public health programmes, etc.)
- Alleviating the impact of poverty (providing decent homes, addressing health inequality, independent living, etc.)
- Combating discrimination (in delivering the Local Area Agreement, the work of the new partnership and designing and delivering services)

In the next three years we will:

- Create an Equality & Inclusion Policy to draw together our activities on reducing inequality

- Improve our rating on the equalities standard for Local Government to ensure a consistent approach across all services

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- We can demonstrate improved outcomes for key groups including people not in work, people with mental health problems and the safety of our LGBT community
- We have achieved Equalities Standard Level 4
- Our indicators of diversity as an employer and a service provide are sustained or improved

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**DELIVERING EXCELLENT SERVICES THAT ARE
GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY**

This year we have made value for money a top priority across the council. We have many very good services and our achievements have been recognised both in our inspections and in what our residents have been saying about us. Our commitment to continuous improvement has led to a council-wide review of all of our services to demonstrate that we make the best use of public and council tax payer's money. Specific commitments in each service area can be found in the first part of this plan.

All of our services are committed to delivering excellence through people by ensuring we recruit the most committed staff with the skills they need to perform their jobs to the best of their ability. We undertake to ensure all staff have individual or team plans which clearly show how their work contributes to the wider priorities of the council.

To promote the best performance, every service is required to have a business and service plan to demonstrate they are using their resources in the most efficient way, to all parts of the community equally. Services have their

performance checked and reported on regularly and are compared with the best performing authorities.

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In the next three years we will:

- Have improved our score on the Audit Commission's Use of Resources measure
- Have demonstrated that our value for money work has supported the decrease in council tax rises and efficiency savings
- Have embedded a business planning and risk management framework that will deliver continuous improvement

We will have succeeded if, by 2011:

- Our Audit Commission Use of Resources score is "performing well"
- We have reduced the overall number of services whose spending is relatively high compared to other comparative Local Authorities
- We have a recognised and embedded system of performance management that is applied to all of our staff and services

PART THREE

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Corporate Plan

The detailed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be a complementary document to the Corporate Plan and covers the 4 year period up to 2011/12. The corporate plan includes the strategic priorities and what they mean in practice. The resources projected to meet the strategic priorities are set out in the summary MTFS shown below.

Council Tax Strategy

We are committed to lower council tax increases and have already agreed an increase of 3.9% for 2008/09, the lowest percentage increase since the council was created. The target increases for the next 2 years are 3.4% for 2009/10, 2.9% for 2010/11. The Council remains committed to ongoing reductions in the rate of increase in council tax. However detailed projections have not been undertaken for 2011/12 as these are dependent on a new 3 year grant settlement from the Government.

The overall level of council tax is also dependent upon the council taxes set by the Sussex Police Authority and East Sussex Fire Authority. Overall the comparable band D council tax for Brighton & Hove residents is slightly above the national and unitary average and well below the average in Sussex.

Financial Planning Principles

The combination of inflationary and demographic pressures on the budget, below inflation increases in government grant and the council tax targets mean that significant savings will need to be identified in future budgets. As part of this savings package the council is committed to delivering 3% efficiency savings per annum over the planning period in line with government targets.

The underlying principles to be adopted in the savings process will be:

- Value for Money including improvements in procurement and partnership working
- Aligning resources with priorities
- Improving income generation & collection
- Aligning housing strategy and investment with commissioning strategies for Children's Services and care packages for adults

- Achieving maximum benefit from the asset base

The council will actively promote strong financial and risk management and maintain sufficient reserves to support financial planning as set out in the Financial Management section of the Corporate Plan.

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National context

The Government set 3 year grant settlements for the period 2008/09 to 2010/11 in January 2008 following the comprehensive spending review. The council will remain at the grant floor over the period and therefore will receive below inflation increases in grant of 2%, 1.75% and 1.5% respectively. The level of grant funding in 2011/12 is uncertain and for planning purposes it has been assumed that the floor increase will continue to decline to 1%.

Schools are largely funded by Dedicated Schools Grant which will increase per pupil by 4.2% in 2008/09, 3.6% in 2009/10 and 4.1% in 2010/11. A major national review of the way schools funding is calculated is currently underway with any changes due to be introduced in 2011/12.

The council receives substantial funding from specific grants many of which are tied directly to certain spending areas. The main issue for the council is the ending of New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Renewal and Stronger Safer Communities funding with transitional funding only in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is working towards a sustainable long term business plan to deliver tenants priorities and the decent homes standard. The HRA receives an annual subsidy determination that currently results in a net transfer of resources to central government. The government is reviewing the method of subsidy distribution as the current subsidy system is producing a surplus for central government. The outcome of the review will not be known until 2009 and could impact on the 2010/11 HRA budget.

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Budget and resource projections

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gross Budget	704,409		
Specific Government Grants	-332,000		
Other income	-155,392		
Net Budget	216,017	222,861	228,092
Formula Grant	-105,800	-107,593	-109,185
Use of general reserves	-422	-1,070	0
Collection Fund Surplus/deficit	298	1,070	0
To be funded from Council Tax	111,093	115,268	118,907
Tax Base	93,350	93,583	93,817
Council Tax at Band D (B&H element)	£1,190.07	£1,231.72	£1,267.44
Council Tax increase*	3.9%	3.5%	2.9%

Medium Term Financial Forecast

The medium term financial forecast is expressed as percentage changes to service budgets and is designed to provide cash limited funding allocations within which each service is expected to manage. The percentage changes are designed to deliver resources for statutory commitments such as the new national free concessionary bus fares scheme, cover demographic changes and reflect service priorities. They are also shown net of savings for that service area.

		2008/9	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
		Budget £'000	% Budget increas e	% Budget increas e	% Budget increas e
Corporate	Concessionary fares	9,285	68.73%	5.48%	5.41%
Finance &	Planned Maintenance	3,628	2.50%	1.50%	1.00%

	2008/9	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Budget £'000	% Budget increas e	% Budget increas e	% Budget increas e
Resources				
	F&R - Other Services	14,149	-1.70%	0.00%

Strategy & Governance	Members Allowances	1,053	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%
	S&G - Other Services	8,085	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Cultural Services	Cultural Services	12,773	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%
	Waste Disposal	11,487	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%
Environment	CityClean	12,959	-0.50%	0.00%	0.00%
	Parking Income	-11,061	-19.50%	-1.50%	-1.50%
	Environment - Other Services	23,439	3.89%	1.50%	1.50%
CYPT	LEA functions	8,086	-5.00%	0.00%	0.00%

	2008/9	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Budget £'000	% Budget increas e	% Budget increas e	% Budget increas e
	35,977	5.04%	4.00%	4.00%
Adult Social Care & Housing	21,707	4.26%	4.00%	4.00%
	40,752	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
	12,487	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
SubTotal	204,806	2.76%	1.70%	1.88%
Corporate Budgets	11,789			
Total	216,595	3.42%	2.92%	2.35%

The move to cash limited funding allocations is being supported by the Transformation Fund. This provides recurrent funding to support service transformation both in terms of management capacity and learning & development. This recognises that achieving a step change in value for

money will require a shift in culture and approach that needs resourcing on top of the day to day running of the organisation's business.

- In addition there is £0.5m recurrent funding each year for risks. The main potential risks include :-
- Pay awards higher than projected
 - The outcome of the equal pay and single status negotiations
 - A further downturn in the economy leading to excessive pressures on budgets such as homelessness
 - Waste facilities are not delivered within current timescales
 - Failure to manage within cash limited budgets and deliver efficiency savings
 - Failure to meet asset sales

Actions to mitigate these risks will be in the detailed MTFS.

Capital

This table sets out the Council's proposed spending on capital items over the next 3 years. The capital programme is heavily reliant on specific government funding and therefore projections beyond the 3 years allocation already announced would be speculative.

Capital Resources

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Borrowing	14,927	10,638	9,625
Grants	13,150	18,363	24,878
Sale of Assets	6,900	5,000	3,250
Capital Reserves	5,537	129	182

Revenue Contributions	14,072	13,920	13,920
Grant & contributions from external bodies	213	1	0
	54,799	48,051	51,855

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Capital expenditure plans

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Investment in Schools	8,379	13,121	19,444
Local Transport Plan	7,488	6,165	6,587
Investment in car parks	3,000	0	0

Investment in waste & Recycling	2,197	2,197	1,914
Housing	23,905	19,259	17,612
Adult & Children's Social Care	2,804	3,228	2,548
Investment in regeneration projects	1,786	1,050	1,000
Planned Maintenance & property Improvement	3,400	2,281	2,000
Libraries, Museums & Historic records	150	0	0
Investment in Computer infrastructure	1,690	750	750
	54,799	48,051	51,855