

Hampshire County Council

Organisational Assessment

Dated 9 December 2009



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of local public services

Hampshire County Council

Overall, Hampshire County Council performs excellently

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

Hampshire County Council is performing excellently. It delivers high quality services that meet people's needs and can demonstrate improvement in the areas the public thinks are important. Prospects for improvement are excellent. The Council is strongly focused on its improvement priorities which tackle the areas that are hardest to improve. Recognising the poorer outcomes for some residents, such as those living in less affluent areas, it has a strong focus across all services on reducing inequalities. Excellent financial management has enabled the council to keep council tax low and make savings which can be reinvested in improved services. A dynamic approach to building staff capacity supports the drive for improved services, value for money and innovation. This is why we have decided that overall the council is performing excellently.

The council scores 4 out of 4 for managing performance. Crime levels are low in Hampshire and are reducing for most types of crime. The risk of personal crime is low and the council has worked successfully with its partners to reduce arson, criminal damage and the number of young people offending for the first time. The council has worked effectively with partners to reduce accidents and performance in improving road safety is particularly strong. The number of road traffic collisions has reduced by 40 per cent over the last year and the number of people killed or seriously injured on Hampshire's roads has fallen significantly.

Adult social care services are performing well, and have shown excellent performance in supporting vulnerable adults to get involved in assessing and making decisions about how services should be delivered. The council is helping more older people to live as long as possible in their own homes and is

working well with its health and district partners to promote health and well being.

Hampshire's services for children and young people are good. Most children have a good start in life and do well in their education. A high proportion of young people leave school with five or more GCSE at A*-C grades. Children's homes and fostering and adoption services are good. However, the council is not doing so well in increasing education results for vulnerable young people especially for children in care. Children and young people have a strong voice in how services for them are delivered.

The council shows commitment and leadership in managing natural resources well. It aims to be a climate change centre of excellence and has signed up to some challenging targets. It is the top performing county council nationally in reducing rubbish going to landfill with 90 per cent of waste recycled, recovered or composted. It has invested in incinerators which now produce equivalent additional energy to power 50,000 houses. In total, waste reduction has achieved a saving of £7 million.

The council is effectively supporting local people and businesses in coping with the recession. It supports a range of activities including retraining, Smarter Working Centres, grants to village shops, and its 'Buy with confidence' scheme. The council leads an employment skills partnership which is supporting 1400 young apprenticeships.

The council is working hard to protect rural life and provide fair and equal access to services and facilities. It is making steady progress in dealing with traffic issues in the county, though congestion remains a key challenge.

The council manages its resources well and is excellent at financial planning and management. With an innovative approach to achieving value for money; it has achieved efficiencies of £25.5 million which have exceeded government targets while maintaining the second lowest (nationally) council tax increase of 1.9 per cent over a two year period.

About Hampshire County Council

Hampshire is the third largest shire county in the UK. It includes five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the New Forest National Park and 230 miles of coast including Portsmouth and Southampton.

More than 1.25 million people live in Hampshire, mostly in urban areas such as Basingstoke, Gosport, and Winchester. A quarter of the population is aged over 60. This proportion expected to grow quickly and will include almost a third of residents by 2031. Almost two per cent of residents are from black and ethnic minorities, which is less than other areas of the South East of England.

The area is mainly prosperous and few people are out of work. Most young people achieve good exam results. However, there are areas, such as Gosport and Havant, where skill levels, average earnings and employment rates are below those for the rest of the county. House prices are higher than national average and they vary from area to area.

Hampshire is relatively safe and crime is low. Most people are healthy and they exercise more than the average for England but the picture varies across the county. Fewer people are obese than the national average.

The council consists of 78 councillors. The Conservatives are the majority party and hold 51 seats. The remaining seats are held by Liberal Democrats (25), Labour (1) and Community Campaign (1).

Hampshire County Council's priorities are:

- Hampshire safer and more secure for all
- Maximising wellbeing
- Enhancing our quality of place

Organisational assessment

How well is the organisation delivering its priority services, outcomes and improvements that are important to local people?

County-wide and service plans reflect local priorities which have been identified through residents' surveys, local focus groups and user workshops. The council has a diverse approach to consulting and reaching all parts of local communities and is developing a wide range of ways to do this, including using social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Hampshire safer and more secure for all

Crime levels are low in Hampshire and are reducing for most types of crime. The risk of personal crime is low (5.3 per cent) and the council is working well with its partners to reduce violent crime, burglary, and criminal damage.

A particular success is the reduction in the number of young people going into the Youth Justice System for the first time. Junior Community teams which involve young people who are at risk of offending and promote responsible citizenship were at first focused on areas of most need but are now being rolled out more widely. The council has worked well with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Police, through the innovative arson task force, to achieve a huge reduction in arson, especially in rural areas (20 per cent). This has already exceeded the Local Area Agreement 3-year target.

The council shows strong commitment to making sure that Hampshire is a safe place. For example it gives £1.7m per year to provide 47 Accredited Community Safety Officers (ACSOs). These officers work closely with the police as part of neighbourhood teams tackling low level and personal crime, such as anti-social behaviour, especially related to alcohol. In place since 2004, the impact of the ACSOs is evident from the reduction in anti social behaviour and, importantly, the public's improving perception of crime and anti social behaviour, which is better than neighbouring areas. Neighbourhood teams

also make people feel safer through the work of the council's trading standards teams, such as no cold calling zones to protect vulnerable people from rogue and unwanted traders.

The council has worked very effectively with partners to reduce accidents and its performance in improving road safety is strong. The number of road traffic collisions has reduced from 2673 to 1433 over the last year. The 2010 target for reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Hampshire's roads has already been exceeded, with the lowest ever recorded figure this year. The bulk of the 120 "Village 30" speed limit schemes are now in operation and are showing very good results in reducing speeding. Other initiatives include delivering cycling training to an extra 2500 children during 2008.

The council takes a leading role in the county-wide Crime and Disorder Strategy Group. The Group is beginning to have an impact and influence on reducing and managing crime across the county. It has developed three year strategic delivery plans for its four priority areas of domestic abuse, alcohol, prolific and other priority offenders and drugs intervention programmes.

Maximising Wellbeing

The council continues to improve and deliver services that meet people's needs; it has been assessed as performing well in 2008/09 by the Care Quality Commission. The council has shown excellent performance in supporting vulnerable adults to get involved in assessing and making decisions about how services should be delivered. A new approach called "Getting Personal" which is based on the needs of local users and carers is changing the way the council delivers adult social care. The council has significantly improved how quickly people have their needs assessed, and is doing better than similar areas.

A number of activities aim to help people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. These include a "universal" offer of help and advice for every person with care and support needs, regardless of their means. It includes free social care for up to eight weeks for all those at risk of hospital admission or facing discharge from hospital and in need of support. A successful self-directed support pilot has been running in Basingstoke where 240 local users have commented on better involvement in the design of their care packages and better consultation on their needs. The council is leading by example in employing people with learning disabilities. It is working with Job Centre Plus to offer taster jobs within the council as preparation for employment.

The council is working well with its partners to promote health and wellbeing. There are lower levels of smoking and drinking, fewer emergency admissions to hospital and more older people being helped to live independently. The council is good at providing housing and family placements for vulnerable people in need of support. The council's contact centre is now providing a county-wide contact point giving advice and information for those wishing to contact departments and this is helping customers get quicker access to information and services.

Children and Young People

Children's services in Hampshire have been rated by Ofsted as performing well. Performance in social care services is consistently above the national average and above, or in line with, similar areas, while the picture in early years and education is more mixed. Fostering and adoption services and private fostering arrangements are good. Eight of the council's ten children's homes are good. The recent unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements highlighted a number of strengths and confirmed child protection thresholds are well understood and appropriately applied. However, the inspection also identified unacceptably high caseloads in one area of the county as a priority action, together with a number of areas for development. While three of the four serious case reviews completed since December 2008 were adequate or better, one was judged inadequate due to poor terms of reference and poorly formed recommendations and action plan. The proportion of good or better childminder and childcare settings is below the average of similar areas, but above national levels. The large majority of the county's schools are good or better. The proportion of good primary schools is higher than the national average, but below the average for similar areas. Five of the seven pupil referral units are good or better, higher than in similar areas and the national average, but one is inadequate. Post-16 provision is good in almost all sixth form colleges and approximately two-thirds of school sixth forms and further education colleges are also good or better.

Performance against the very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, are above or in line with similar areas and the national figures. Most children have a good start in life and achieve well at school. The gap in attainment between the majority and those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable is closing in some areas. However, the picture is inconsistent for different groups of children and young people, for example the attainment of children in care is low at the end of primary school and a high proportion of care leavers not in education, employment or training.

Good progress has been made in establishing children's centres across the county. Sixty children's centres reaching 42,000 children aged under five are now in place, with work on track to deliver a further 25 centres, aiming to reach all under fives by March 2010. The centres offer a wide range of services for children and families all accessible under one roof. The council works in partnership with other providers, especially voluntary groups, such as Citizens Advice Bureaux to meet local needs.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted well in schools, and levels of obesity and physical activity are in line with the national average or better for most children. The council is working with the Primary Care Trust to provide extra support in areas which have more obese and inactive children. There are strong links with children's centres and with services for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them improve or maintain their health. All schools are part of the healthy schools programme and 61 per cent have achieved enhanced healthy schools status.

The council has a very strong focus on participation, and children and young people's views have changed the way services have developed. A Participation Team works with young people across all services. Youth Councils have been established across Hampshire. This approach has resulted, for example, in young carers being able to help design services to meet their

needs. Hampshire's 'Rights, Respect and Response' citizenship model for children has been based on the UNICEF model. By increasing their sense of belonging and 'community spirit', the scheme is helping to build their appreciation and willingness to be part of the local community.

A high proportion of young people continues in learning at age 17 and numbers have risen steadily over the last four years. The proportion of young people not in education, employment and training has grown but remains in line with the national average. Challenging targets have been set to reduce this figure by half to 3.3 per cent by 2010/11. The proportion of care leavers in education, training and employment was well below average in 2007/8. Council action includes recruiting additional staff and reorganised teams to better support children when they are in care and when they leave. The council is working to support young people in getting employment or training through summer programmes with school leavers. Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement (EMTAS) is working with schools and other agencies to increase the achievement of Gypsy/Roma/Irish Traveller children. Connexions is providing individual help and support for those young people who need it most. The council is working with local businesses to support young people into technical and practical apprenticeships.

Enhancing Quality of Place

The council has made good progress in enhancing the local area and community services. Local people's satisfaction with most services and the area is above the national average.

The council shows commitment and leadership in managing natural resources well. Adaptation to climate change, reduction in CO₂ and landfill diversion have all been chosen as priorities for the Local Area Agreement.

The council aims to be a climate change centre of excellence and is one of only a handful of councils applying the Aalborg criteria. In March 2009 Hampshire County Council won a national award in the Government Business Awards for its environmentally friendly work. The award recognised the positive work the council is doing to move the concept of sustainability from the fringes to the heart of the organisation. The Council is making positive early progress against environment National Indicators and its Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC). This is a good indication for future prospects for improvement.

Hampshire is the top performing county council nationally in diverting waste from landfill with 90 per cent of waste recycled, recovered or composted. Its investment in incinerators is producing equivalent additional energy to power 50,000 houses and there is capacity to move to Combined Heat and Power. There has been an increase in the number of tonnes of material recycled by schools and public sector sites in Hampshire this year from zero to 3,952 tonnes. In total, waste reduction has achieved a saving of £7 million.

The council is balancing the provision of housing and business development while maintaining a good focus on the environment and sustainability. It has made good progress against its local target to deliver 500 homes through County Council land disposals in the five years to 2009/10. The county is playing an increasing role in supporting the development of rural housing.

Examples include financial support for the work of rural agencies and work to identify building sites for homes.

The council is making steady progress in dealing with traffic issues in the county. Overall, the condition of Hampshire roads has improved over the year. The winter road maintenance service coped well with the worst winter weather conditions for 18 years. The impact of the bad weather was tackled quickly through extra resources given to “ pothole busters” and the damage has now been repaired. Hampshire has made good progress in some areas in improving bus services. Quality bus partnerships are in place and working effectively together to deliver for local people. The £33 million A3 bus corridor north of Portsmouth has been completed and has resulted in a 17 per cent increase in usage on an improved fleet of buses. The council spends £6.5 million on supporting bus services. Satisfaction with bus information is high, but satisfaction with commercial bus services in Hampshire remains low when compared to other councils. Congestion remains a key challenge. Work is underway to tackle 20 “ hotspots” but overall the strategy is to prevent the situation worsening as business and housing development goes forward.

The council has set in place a range of support for local people and businesses in coping with the recession. In August 2009 it launched a “ Recession Busting Project” to assist workers and help independent businesses develop new opportunities to prosper in the economic downturn. This includes a support package to retrain redundant shop workers and the establishment of Smarter Working Centres in up to a dozen new locations across Hampshire to offer 'drop-in' low-cost work space, meeting and training rooms and communal/networking areas. It supports independent retailers and makes grants to village shops. Voluntary and community groups can apply for up to £2000 to recruit and train; and Businesses can apply for grants up to £4000 to invest in skills and training through taking on apprentices. Other measures include taking a more flexible approach to tenants on rental payments, promoting tender opportunities with the council and through its ‘Buy with confidence’ schemes and reducing payment times to support small business cash flow. It is increasing its support to citizens for example by assisting with debt payment terms, promoting benefit take up, improved dealing with debt information and grants to debt advice agencies, and helping young people with job search skills.

The council leads an employment skills partnership with key players such as Learning Skills Council and Job Centre Plus. The area is providing / supporting 1400 young apprenticeships. This amounts to £200,000 funding which offers £4,000 over two years to firms taking on a young apprentice. The county is on track to achieve its target of increasing attainment of working aged adults qualified to NVQ level two or above but is unlikely to reach targets for increasing attainment at levels three and four.

The council has developed a comprehensive rural delivery plan to improve and sustain the rural environment, protect rural life and provide fair and equal access to services and facilities. Activities already underway include mobile service points, a rural library link, supported bus services, support for rural community organisations, businesses and agriculture through funding, advice, information and volunteering opportunities. The council has been looking at the impact of losing village post offices and is now developing a programme to support villages replacing services that went with the post offices. It is also providing financial support to improve Broadband coverage to more isolated

rural areas. The “ Universal Offer” is available in rural communities, and the council is using rural schools to provide a greater variety of services such as children’s centres, IT and health facilities.

The council provides a good library service and this is reflected in the increased number of visitors. Mobile services and Discovery Centres at Gosport (opened in 2005) and at Winchester (opened in 2007) continue to deliver high quality services with good levels of user satisfaction. More than half of library buildings have been refurbished in the last five years, and this is having a positive impact on wider community involvement and visitor numbers. The Winchester Discovery Centre is used for community forums such as BME and disability groups, and provides space for arts events. The council is giving older people the opportunities to develop computer and internet skills and has produced Computer Skills for Life packs in libraries and schools across the county and well as on the website.

The council plays an important role in supporting and developing a thriving arts community. It is giving more opportunities for people to enjoy the arts and is working with partners and talking to local communities to understand local needs. For example, its review of Hog the Limelight, the annual programme of arts in villages, has shown where there is poor take up of activities. This has resulted in special offers for young people and free outdoor music and theatre performances. Hampshire people were more involved with arts activities in 2008/09 than other areas.

Access to council services is improving through the Hants Direct contact centre which is delivering high quality services across a wide range of social care and other services. Its performance is good. Out of hours services are now linked into the contact centre operations and the centre has improved its opening times.

Does the organisation have the leadership, capacity and capability it needs to deliver future improvements?

Prospects for improvement are excellent. The Council is strongly focused on its improvement priorities which tackle the areas that are hardest to improve, and are most important to residents and users of its services. Recognising the poorer outcomes for some residents, such as those living in less affluent areas, it has a strong focus across all services on reducing inequalities. Sound financial management has enabled the council to keep council tax low and make savings which can be reinvested in improved services. For example, the Council has made savings of 13 per cent in home to school transport, that are being shared with schools, while delivering a high quality in-house service that covers the whole county. A dynamic approach to building staff capacity supports the drive for improved services, value for money and innovation.

A particular strength is engagement with users in designing, delivering and improving services. For example, the Commission of Inquiry on Personalisation, led by the Leader of the Council, brought together local politicians, national experts and commentators and took evidence from hundreds of older and disabled people and their carers to develop the Hampshire model of care. This has influenced both the way the Council is providing care and how national

standards are being developed.

The council has a strong track record of making improvements and addressing difficult issues. For example, in partnership with district councils, it has adopted an Extra Care Strategy for the provision of 400 units of extra care housing by 2010/2011. 244 additional extra care places were made available by March 2009 ahead of the 200 target. The council has invested money to solve specific problems which are important to local people, for example an additional £3 million has been allocated to improving the state of Hampshire roads and the renovation of residential homes as a result of consulting with local communities.

The council has delivered or exceeded most of its targets. For example, it has exceeded its target to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill this year. The council has good improvement plans in place to address areas of weaker performance and to deal with future challenges and pressures. It has improved the way it manages its performance with a new framework - "Driving Success" - which focuses on service priorities and any areas where there may be pressures or risk or where the rate of improvement is too slow. There is a strong focus on tackling what the community and customers want and making sure that the council has the capacity to deliver its promises.

The council works effectively with partners to deliver improvements for local people. Good progress is being made against most of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) including reducing crime and disorder, increasing recycling and supporting more vulnerable people to maintain independent living. Some targets are not on track, including the stability of placements for children in care (3+ placement moves), 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET), and the number of children who are the subject of a child protection plan for a second or more time. The 'Hampshire Workstyle' initiative is using mobile technology to change the way people work, achieve better use of buildings and other assets and support better working with partners. For example it is enabling Health and Adult Services to share accommodation and IT systems.

The council's strong focus on delivering outcomes has enabled it to be influential at county, regional and national levels in terms of good practice and innovation. The council has been leading the Improvement and Efficiency programme for the South East, where over 50 councils have collaborated with Hampshire in its leadership of procurement of construction projects. Over £1 billion of construction projects have been developed in this way for local government and the council has recently been asked by the government to lead a national project on procurement, construction and asset management across all regions in England.

The council is effectively building staff capacity to enable it to deliver future improvements. It is improving its workforce planning and is supporting the development of talented officers and future leaders. Services have been redesigned to improve support functions and better manage the assets of the council.

The council is excellent at financial planning and management. It has consistently achieved high performance and low council tax while receiving one of the lowest government grants. In 2008/09 it achieved savings of £25.5 million, exceeding government targets while maintaining the second lowest

(nationally) council tax increase of 1.9 per cent over a two year period. Leadership on financial management is highly effective. For example, the council has been successful this year in raising the standards of financial management in schools; school balances have been reduced by £6.7 million and schools are beginning to look more strategically at the use of remaining balances. Cost and performance information are well understood by the council and support decision making and how it uses its resources.

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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Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ
Telephone: 0844 798 1212
Fax: 0844 798 2945
Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946
www.audit-commission.gov.uk



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