

Havant Borough Council

Organisational Assessment

Dated 9 December 2009



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for an independent overview
of local public services

Havant Borough Council

Overall, Havant Borough Council performs well

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

Havant Borough Council is delivering improvements for local people and is performing well. It delivers good quality services and responds well to the issues that local people think are important. It produces good outcomes through partnerships in its key service areas. Whilst it has ambitious plans to cement joined up working through its Public Sector Village and the prospects for improvements in partnership working are good. Business and financial planning have improved recently and now incorporate risk management and workforce planning. The Council has clear plans to improve both community outcomes and how it will support these changes. This is why we have decided that the Council is performing well overall.

The Council, with the Safer Havant Partnership, has been successful in reducing crime levels in the borough, and dealing effectively with anti social behaviour. It works well with the Primary Care Trust and local schools to encourage people to be healthy and active. It continues to increase its rate of recycling and to reduce waste going to landfill. It is good at keeping the public informed through its team of waste advisors. It has also tackled problems with street cleaning and is now delivering a good service.

The Council is good at supporting local businesses and people during the economic downturn. The Council is having some success in promoting local tourism and attracting more visitors throughout the year. The Council is tackling homelessness and the number of people in temporary accommodation more effectively. The Council has increased the number of new affordable homes built locally and has reduced its targets for the future due to the economic downturn. The Council has had limited opportunities to bring empty homes back into use. Planning services are effective and the Local Development Framework is out to consultation. The Council is good at supporting those who are most in need locally.

The Council delivers good services and knows what it wants to do. It understands the needs of local people and works well with partners to get local taxpayers good value for money. The Council and its partners have started work on the Public Sector Village (PSV) that will join up services. The Council brings in the private sector to deliver better services where needed. Where services don't meet the needs of local people, the Council tackles this quickly

There are some areas which need to improve. The Council should continue to identify how it can help to make more properties available to meet local housing needs. The Council should continue to reduce the use of temporary accommodation in line with similar councils. Tackling unemployment will also be a challenge for the Council and its partners.

The Council's use of resources is adequate. The Council plans its finances effectively to deliver its strategic priorities and has secure financial health. It has a sound understanding of costs and performance and has achieved efficiencies over time. It commissions and procures quality services and supplies that aim to deliver sustainable outcomes and value for money. The Data it uses is reliable and supports decision making. The Council promotes and demonstrates the principles of good governance and manages risks. It is also planning, organising and developing its workforce adequately to support the achievement of its objectives.

About Havant Borough Council

Havant Borough Council is in south east Hampshire between West Sussex and Portsmouth comprising the main areas of Havant, Waterlooville, Emsworth, Hayling Island, and Leigh Park, each with distinct characteristics and needs. Within Leigh Park there are 5000 properties that are under the ownership of Portsmouth city Council. The borough is small with about 30 miles of coastline including sensitive areas such as Hayling Island. There are good communications by road and rail to London and along the south coast.

The borough has a population of 116,900 (2007). The proportion of older people is relatively high, accounting for around a quarter of the total population. Residents are mostly white, with the proportion of black and minority ethnic people much lower than the average for the South East. People's health is generally good, and life expectancy for men and women is better than the England average. However, there are pockets of inequality. For example, life expectancy for men living in the most deprived areas is 7 years lower than for those living in the least deprived areas. There are 81 per cent of residents who say they are 'satisfied' with the area as a place to live.

Many people work outside of the borough. Unemployment in the district is higher than other districts in Hampshire and expected to almost double to 7 per cent by the end of the year.

The council is led by the conservatives who hold 32 out of 38 seats. The remainder are held by 3 Liberal Democrat and 3 Labour candidates.

Havant Borough Council's aims are :

- cleaner
- safer and
- more prosperous borough.

Organisational assessment

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

The Council is delivering well to meet the needs of local people.

Safer

There are five different communities in the borough and the Council responds well to their different needs. The Council understands local needs well and has a good track record of delivering its objectives. It has assessed all of its services to ensure that they are accessible to all. Seventy nine per cent of people feel that the area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well which is above the national average. The Council and its partners have continued to reduce crime. Crime levels are lower than nationally but higher than other parts of Hampshire. Overall crime rates have reduced by nearly 11 per cent in 2008/09. Partners have particularly tackled burglary and this reduced by over six per cent. A recent review of the local CCTV scheme showed that crime rates fell by nearly a quarter over the last five years within the CCTV area.

Environmental Rangers and Police Community Support Officers provide extra help to find out what the local problems are and their powers are being extended to issue on the spot fines for littering and dog fouling. The Safer Havant Partnership, which includes the Council, police and others, is working well to improve community safety and its actions have been effective. The Home Office has recognised what the partnership does as good practice. Local people have identified anti social behaviour as a concern which partners are addressing. For example, recorded levels of nuisance complaints in relation to anti social behaviour have reduced. This has been done through a number of schemes for younger people. This has included a caution clinic that has seen low levels of re-offending and support for prolific and persistent offenders.

The Council encourages people to be healthy and active. The Council and its partners promote public health messages around quitting smoking and sexual health. It has received funding for a physical activity officer. The officer has assisted in the development of five 'walking to health' schemes around Leigh Park, Wecock and Hayling Island. The Council has developed an exercise referral scheme in partnership with Hampshire Primary Care Trust and Park Community School to target individuals with specific health conditions. It has recently renegotiated its agreement with the local Leisure Trust. This is enabling the Trust to invest in the Leisure Centre long term, create closer links

to the sports development programme and closer partnership working for common goals. An average number of residents are satisfied with sports and leisure facilities.

The Council is making a difference to children's health. Around 9 per cent of reception age children in Havant are obese and the level of physically active children, although improved over recent years, is still just below average. The Council is about to run its seventh Mind Exercise Nutrition Do it (MEND) programme aimed at children with weight problems. Over 60 children have already completed the programme, and they have achieved good levels of maintained weight loss. The Council has targeted seven schools to be involved in the Havant Healthy Food Project to promote healthy eating in partnership with Staunton Country Park and Havant and Waterlooville Football Club. There is also a wide range of sports development in the borough especially aimed at younger people including Street Sports.

Cleaner

The Council's waste and street cleaning services are good. Its work to reduce the amount of waste is good in comparison to others and recycling levels were 32 per cent in 2007/08. Waste costs remain low and there are high levels of customer satisfaction. Assisted collections are in place for those who need it. The Council has also improved its garden waste service. The service was re-launched in April 2009 with 3,800 customers. The scheme is collecting between 90 and 100 tonnes of garden waste per month. The Council employs Environmental Rangers who ensure fly tipping and abandoned vehicles are dealt with quickly and have good links with community groups. There has been an improvement in street cleaning. The Council has tackled higher levels of litter and street cleanliness is now good. An average number of people feel that the Council keeps public land free from litter and refuse.

More prosperous

There are examples where the Council is supporting people and businesses during the economic downturn. There are good links with business sector partners. The Council is a member of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) which is key for the Havant area and is looking at ways to make sure planned developments don't stall because of the recession by investing in the infrastructure of these sites. The 'Party in the Park' was developed as a careers event. Music and entertainment were also provided to widen the appeal and over 2000 people attended and 30 local employers exhibited. The Leigh Park Taskforce has been started, bringing together public and private bodies. A community day identified good outcomes being delivered by Sure Start locally and has led to commitments from local organisations to support improvements in the area. For example, the college will improve the environment around the Hermitage stream and in return the students will be able to use it for environmental and biology field visits. Plans to develop a 'skills centre' in Leigh Park are stalled by a national review of Learning and Skills Council funding.

The Council is good at dealing with new housing benefit applications. During 2008/09 the Council took 7.23 days on average to process all housing benefit claims. It has achieved this through an appointment system that makes sure

that claimants bring in the right documents when submitting their claim. Home visits are also offered to those members of the community who need them. A private company, Capita, undertake this service in partnership with the Council. This has significantly improved the service provided to those in most need within the borough.

The Council's planning service is meeting its targets for processing planning applications. However, the Council has seen an increase in the number of planning appeals it loses, increasing to 38 per cent in 2008/09 which is high in comparison to others. There is a risk that planning decisions are not as robust as they could be and this could result in legal costs for the Council. The Council needs to review the results of appeals to identify if improvements need to be made to the decision making process. The Council has seen a reduction in the number of planning applications overall.

The Council has improved its delivery of affordable housing in 2008/09. However, numbers in the future are expected to reduce due to the economic climate. The downturn in the housing market has resulted in fewer affordable housing starts than expected. It did well to achieve 88 new affordable homes by the end of the year and have added a further 10 shared ownership homes purchased through the open market. It has now changed its affordable housing target to 75 per year which is more realistic and it is well placed to meet this. Homelessness services continue to improve. The Council has worked closely with Stonham, a registered social landlord, and Connexions, the government's advice service for young people, to provide additional support to 16 and 17 year olds at risk of homelessness. It has used £71,000 funding for the prevention of homelessness through additional housing advice resources to meet need. The Council also had £5,000 funding relating to the credit crunch, which it granted it directly to the CAB to support them in delivering local advice. The Council has achieved the government set target early of reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50 per cent by 2010. However, there were 95 households in temporary accommodation at the end of 2008/09 and this is higher than other authorities. There are low levels of empty properties in the Borough and therefore limited opportunities for the Council to bring these back into use. The Choice Based Letting scheme with Winchester and East Hampshire has been in operation since April 2009 and is giving people more choice and enabling people to move more quickly.

The Council is supporting the marketing of the 'tourism offer' well. Tourism generates £160 million within the borough and supports over 3000 jobs. The borough presently attracts 300,000 staying visitors and 1.89 million day visitors per year. It is working with local tourism businesses and is aiming to attract more visitors throughout the year as well as providing a full programme of Council supported events. Visitor numbers locally have increased. The coastline is important in attracting visitors and the Council has achieved £55,000 funding from the Environment Agency to complete 'beach nourishment' at Eastoke which will reduce the risk of flooding and reverse some of the beach erosion. The Council works very closely with Gosport Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council on coastal management.

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

improvements?

The Council has good leadership, capacity and capability to deliver future improvements. The Council has clear ambitions for the district and works well with its partners. Councillors and officers work well together and are fully committed to improving services for local people. The Council has recently agreed that its' Chief Executive will be shared with East Hampshire District Council and is considering the possibility of shared management teams. This should result in some cost savings and enable sharing of skills between the two councils. Decision making is good and based upon effective analysis of the needs of local people.

The Council works well with partners to make sure that what they do makes a difference for local people. Plans are clearly linked to the Hampshire County Council Local Area Agreement but the Council makes sure its actions relate to need within the borough. The Council has a good approach to bringing partners together to join up service delivery. A good example is the Public Sector Village (PSV) development. This aims to bring together statutory partners and key voluntary and community organisations into one site and provide a 'one stop shop' in a fully joined up way. The Council has secured the funding for the building changes needed and some organisations already have staff on site including Hampshire County Council and the Citizens Advice Bureaux. This is a very ambitious project and partners are fully committed to making it happen. The Council has an excellent customer contact centre that deals with 90 per cent of requests at the first point of contact. Customer services dealt with 147,395 customer contacts in 2008/09 and this resulted in only 199 formal complaints. It is tracking the number of 'avoidable contacts' made by the public where they could have accessed the information and services they required through other simpler means. This will help customers to access services more effectively and free up space for those who are most vulnerable. The Council has put staff and web links into local libraries to improve access and has high levels of services that are accessible through the website.

The Council brings in the private sector to deliver better services where needed. It is extending its partnership with Capita to provide not just revenues and benefits services but other income collection. The Council is considering extending the contract to cover ICT and Human Resources as the PSV develops. The benefits service at Havant has developed over time into a 'centre of excellence' undertaking detailed work for other Councils remotely with highly skilled staff on the Havant site. The private company is better placed to invest in new staff resources as caseload rises. This will provide greater service resilience and flexibility to the Council. The Council plans its finances adequately to deliver its priorities. The medium term financial strategy supports the budget framework. There is an effective record of financial governance and leadership. Business planning has improved over time and supports the delivery of action that is linked to wider community needs. The Council has recognised that there are still some internal weaknesses and is developing its service plans to ensure they make a full contribution to financial and corporate objectives.

The Council has delivered £2 million worth of savings over the last three years. and the Council is delivering adequate value for money. Performance management is well established. The Council's performance against its targets

is regularly reviewed by managers and councillors and action is taken to address any areas of concern, for example the street cleansing performance has been under scrutiny for some time and has resulted in improved performance with any slippages dealt effectively. The data the Council uses is reliable and supports members decision making. The Council promotes and demonstrates the principles of good governance and manages risks. It is also planning, organising and developing its workforce adequately to support the achievement of its objectives.

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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