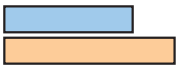
How Effective Do You Think Brighton and Hove City Council's New Constitution Is? 12 MONTH REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION Results from Citizens' Panel and on-line questionnaire

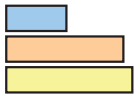
Are you aware of the new Cabinet system which came into effect at Brighton and Hove City Council in May 2008?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	43%
No	57%
Number of people who answered question:	815



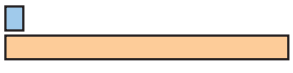
Do you feel you are able to have an input into decisions taken by the Council under the Leader and Cabinet system?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	20%
No	39%
Don't know	42%
Number of people who answered question:	814



Have you tried to have an input into decisions taken by the Council under the Leader and Cabinet system?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	6%
No	94%
Number of people who answered question:	811



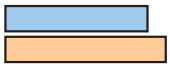
If yes, were you satisfied that your input was listened to and considered?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	26%
No	74%
Number of people who answered question:	42



Do you know how to find out where to take any issues related to the council and its business?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	47%
No	53%
Number of people who answered question:	798



Have you heard of the Forward Plan?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	18%
No	82%
Number of people who answered question:	812



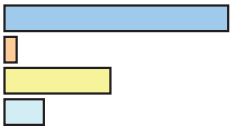
If yes, have you looked at the Forward Plan?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	18%
No	82%
Number of people who answered question:	147



If you have looked at the Forward Plan did you use it to:

Answer Options	Response %
Find out information about the major decisions likely to	74%
To plan attendance at Council meetings	4%
To get information on agendas and reports	35%
Other	13%
Number of people who answered question:	23



Did you know that some Council meetings are being webcast?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	23%
No	77%
Number of people who answered question:	813



If yes, have you seen any of the Council meeting webcasts?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	8%
No	92%
Number of people who answered question:	189



Are you likely to watch the Council meeting webcasts in the future?

Answer Options	Response %
Yes	23%
No	43%
Don't know	34%
Number of people who answered question:	807



Are there any changes you would like to see to the council's constitution / decision-making process?

Wider Consultation Before Decisions Made / Transparency of Decisions (14% of comments made for this question)

From what I hear, and what I feel, people feel that whatever they do or say, they will not be heard, that in the long run, it will make no difference to decisions made in the council. Successive goals are so remote and so detached, and won't listen to the people - and this country is in a very sorry state. And this tarred brush extends, in people minds, down into local councils, so that it seems pointless to attempt to try and make changes. If I had said to you that putting trees in pots on Western Road was a waste and would only become giant waste bins? Would you have listened? Use whatever processes you like - the result will be the same.

Greater transparency - too many large numbers and not enough detail. The communal bins show us decision making is not transparent. Ad hoc changes have occurred without consultation. Example movement of bin from Victoria Place to Montpelier Street without any consultation?

Greater transparency and neighbourhood consultation

I feel when there are important decisions to be made ie the selling of council owned land to the National Trust and Stanmer Park House to a private owner, all consultation should be made to the people of Brighton and Hove. You don't sell off the family silver without full consultation with the family.

I visit the library every week, I teach in a local authority school, I travel by public transport and yet I have little or no knowledge of how the council operates. It doesn't feel as if the council and I ever cross paths.

I would approve that any change that gave improved voice to those Brighton residents who can meet the legal criteria to qualify them as a permanent resident. I very strongly disapproved and still strongly disapprove the union of Brighton with Hove.

I would like them to ask the residents of brighton and hove when it comes to spending money on the continuous road works! The money spent on that could surely be cut and be spent on the NHS and making more beds available.

I would like to feel councillors listen. I am very concerned at some of the recent planning decisions. I feel they need to take more notice of the business community and their own planners.

I would like to see an independent body eg. Council tax payers, checking some of the crack-pot ideas such as stupid cycle lanes in The Drive and stopping them before the money is wasted.

I, like many, am under the impression in general that on many occasions where the council has announced a period of consultation - for example on intended implementation of a CPZ in a particular area - it is paying lip service, whether intentionally or otherwise, to the public, where the decision or outcome is already pre-determined. A current example is that of the London Road area.

I'd like much more wide raning local consultation taking place in neighbourhoods. I'd like the cabinet system to be abolished and replaced with a parliment-style open, and ublic, debating forum. I think all councillors should vote on all issues.

If possible to be more aware of the unity of the silent majority and to be less swayed by politically correct action. ie. Bicycle lanes on the Drive / Grand Avenue Hove.

Let the public have more of a say, and to take note and act on their behalf, instead of just doing what the council wants to do.

Listen to the electorate

Listening to residents and their opinions would be a start

Maybe more input from ordinary householers in the area. When a decision is being made information of where and when so possibly local people can voice their opinion.

My own experience is that the decisions taken cannot be altered even if they are admitted to be flawed. Despite an elaborate system, the council seem unwilling to listen to the publics views.

Public opinion

There is no commitment stated in the Constitution to take any heed of views or concerns stated by the public. As it stands, in this respect the Constitution describes a mere consultation process. A statement should be included to commit the Council to giving electors' opinions, views and expertise a tangible influence on decisions.

There is something inherently wrong with Brighton and Hove council, it works in isolation from the public and has cost this city jobs and prosperity because of bad decision making

There seems to be a distinct lack of involvement with the older people cohort. Surely such a large element of the population should have representation in cabinet.

To be more inclusive of those who are ready to work and are outspoken. Right now, everything appears to be too-one sided and as it were, hidden under a cloak.

Transparency on future strategic framework that relate to key performance indicators. Details of council members and other industrial relations/business interests.

Truth would be useful, not political correctness.

When there is poor questionaite/public response to a decision meeting, the council should repeat questionnair/public response.
Widen the constitution to involve more people outside who deserve the right to voice their opinions.
Yes listen to the people
Yes, stop making knee-jerk decisions
Yes. Listening more to the wishes of the electorate.
Yes.....Less about Money and more about the people of Brighton and Hove.

Communication & Publicity (14% of comments made for this question)

Better advertised in simple language.
Better publicity.
Comments say there is no wide publications of the council constitution
Communications between the public and council officers regarding policy and problems should be officially logged and put on the record and used in the decision making process.
Comunicate, comunicate, comunicate
Could the agenda of future meetings be advertised in the Argus (in a readable fashion) so if something that affects you is about to be discussed and decided individuals can get involved. We usually find out when the decision has already been made
Details of council meetings to be advised in local freebie paper The Leader.
Everyone has not got the means to contact websites, why can't things be published in your newsletter. They are not very accessible either.
I would like to know about it in the first place
Inform all residents through the Argus and e-methods (online)
Inform members of the public more regularly of what issues are being discussed which may affect residents and how they can play a role in them.
Information about how to access these processes/constitution
It would be good if circulars were sent from the council notifying us of meetings and ways to get involved.
More awareness
More information in local papers. eg The Argus, Leader and Kemptown Rag.
More openness
more PR so people understand how to get involved. A leaflet with examples of how to get involved and make changes in your community would go down well.
More publicity and encouragement for the public to participate. When I did raise an issue with my local councillor (about school catchment areas) she was supportive and cabinet committee listened/ but I had no idea what it would be like.
More publicity given so people know what they can do - easier for people to have input.
More publicity so it is easier to track what is going on and when.
More publicity to the recent changes may make people realise that they can be heard.
More simple format and widely publicised about how local people can get involved or influence decisions
More transparency.
Push it in the council newsletter
Rather than rely on the web site, an explanatory leaflet should be sent out to all households
Some idea of the subject under discussion. How votes were cast for and against.
The decision-making process should be more widely known to the general public.
Yes - to publicise the willingness to involve the community as much as possible
Yes, sending out e-mails to interested members of the public (who may have registered on the Council's website) about issues on the forward plan, would help inform the public - thus enabling them to be part of the debate.

Too Much Power In Too Few Hands / Undemocratic (10% of comments made for this question)

A democratic process introduced. At present, final decision making is held in the hands of too few individuals. The Leader of the Council holds too much power.

Because most councillors are removed from day to day decision making, the new consitution in a step back from local democracy for most residents. In an authority where no party has a majority, decision making is unreasonably party political.

Council's decision making process seems to be affected by your name ie. Tesco

Decisions should always be made collectively, never singly.

Given the emphasis is supposed to be on local democracy, I have felt for too long now that in reality is it getting less and less inclusive of residents and more that we are being dictated to by fewer and fewer decision makers.

Hold Q&A sessions =deputations etc= at separate times from decision making meetings. Do not let the planning committee make planning policy (SPF etc) as it will later have to implement them. This undermines the idea that it is a quasi judicial committee.

I am concerned that many of the decisions seem to be taken by or driven by officers. eg the continuous extension of the parkng scheme towards the suburbs (Compton Road, Reigate Road), which now seems to be little more than a money raising exercise. Committees and committee chairs need to be seen to be exercising democratic control over officers. This seems to be particularly important when there is a a 'hung' council. The councils newsletter could easily contain more information about how, and who by, contentious issues are raised and dealt with.

I am concerned that the cabinet system favours one group of councillors (ie one political party) and gives them an undemocratically justifiable influence on council activity.

I am unhappy with the centralisation of power under the new arrangements. Over the past 30 years, local government has progressively had more and more legal responsibilities and so many fewer powers such that local democracy has been extensively eroded. The centralisation of power under the 'constitution' - why glorify these new rules - is likely to be particularly pernicious from next year, when an already heavily weighted Tory administration will be returned in greater numbers and will then be under the influence of a central government dedicated to cutting and privatising local services. Look out for your jobs and pensions!!!!

I do not approve of the leader and cabinet method of governance as I think it is undemocratic.

I do not think that a minority should hold all the decision making power - the voting balance of the local population is not being taken into consideration in major decisions.

I don't think that there was anything fundamentally wrong with the committee system in place when the unitary authority was created. It encouraged councillors to be active and informed, and gave a range of opportunities for public input and scrutiny. I would like to see more decisions referred down to local community forums.

If the cabinet is chosen by the council leader and therefore will 'generally be single party', will decision making take into consideration as many varied views as having a whole and council voting? In other words will cabinet decision making become a bit 'closed shop?'

In what way is an unelected leader selecting unelected cabinet members democratic?

It seems that decisions are made quango style - I know for a fact that most policies are decided well before meeting stage, and transparency is not a key issue

New system seems to allow smaller number of people to take decisions or even just one person.

That councillors will listen to objections. Letters currently reamian unanswered, not even the courtesy of an acknowledgement! This needs urgent attention. How does one object to the planned position of the i360 ferris wheel? It would be helpfulif the council representative making decision or meeting the public, ie. ratepayers, was a local person, somone who understands the feelings of a resident born and bred.

That there is one representative from another party on any committee.

The most important thing to me seems to be how the leader of the council is chosen. If you or someone from you party becomes the leader then that party seems to have almost all the power. This seems a bit unfair and unrepresentative to me. I would like to know more about the vote for a leader.

There is too much emphasis on politics, at the expense of both governance and enabling councillors of ability to be involved. It is a poor system for local government, bearing in ming the very limited number of coun cillors from whom cabinet can be resourced. Many of those in the present cabinet appear to lack requisite skills and experience.

To learn what Financial/Oblique interests and benefits are truly being used to influence various planning. eg. cycle paths.

Too much power resides in too few hands. Councillors period of office should be 2 years (maximum). There should be an external audit every year, to be carried out as a snap audit. Department budgets should be reviewed and approved by residents/council tax payers. Much more transparency required and well publicised.

Introduce Committee System (6% of comments made for this question)

A return to committee system

As I voted against this system in favour of a committee system, as did the city overall, it's reinstatement would be one thing.

Commitee system - yes. Had a range of people to talk to at the various commitees and it was much easier to hold the councillors to account for decisions. Cabinet system - 1 councillor is in charge and the scrutiny process is not sufficiently robust in how it polices councillors decisions.

I preferred the Committee system

In my Luddite view the old committee system was preferable and would like to see a reversion to that system.

It is anti-democratic to impose the leader/cabinet model - go back to the previous model.

On the whole I would prefer a system of full council committees. It seems to me it would result in more balanced policy decisions, reflecting more exactly the proportion of political parties and individuals (independents) on council.

Return to commitee structure.

Return to committee system. We voted some years ago against an 'elected' mayor and leader as this is just another form. Too much power for one person in my view.

Return to committess and time democracy with decisions made by more than the executive (cabinet)

Return to full committee style council

The previous committee system was more accountable, but was signed to be disproportionate given the modest sense of most council decisions. There is a tension between accountability and effectiveness. the old system was more effective at promoting debate and accountability..

Yes, despite government instructions councils should revert back to the old Democratic system. The new "imposed" cabinet system removes all opportunities of democratic debate and voteing .It also allows the Cabinet to rule on wether the public is allowed to speak at meetings. I have had personal experiance of this, which allows the ruling party to railroad their decisions through.

Not Single Party Cabinet (6% of comments made for this question)

A cross party selection of members of the cabinet

Ensure all party involvement in cabinet and engage them

Having read the new constitution outline attached, it does seem far less democratic: it shouldn't be possible for one party to make decisions in Cabinet without the other parties being represented or even informed.

I am not aware, what I want.

I would favour the composition of the cabinet to be proportionate to the party political composition of elected councillors. The present systems seem to me to give too much power to the leader who could appoint a cabinet quite unrepresentative of the politcal news of its electorate. You could say that I am in favour of proportional representation at local level and I do not think this is necessarily in compatible with our system in general elections.

I would like the cabinet to represent reflected votes (i.e. not constituted by one party only)

I would like to see proportional representation on members of the cabinet.

Is the cabinet system reflected of local political support? It is expected that cabinets will generally be single party.

It seems wrong that the Cabinet is expected as only containing the majority party.

Make the representation fairer across the Board at Cabinet level.

The Cabinet should be cross-party.

The Cabinet should be multi-party by default, preferably proportional.

The cabinet should not be a single party.

Accessing Information (5% of comments made for this question)

Are copies of meetings and decision making available to public via library?

Being non-computer literate makes it rather difficult to follow council meetings.

I am most concerned that the public are being expected to look at the council website for infomration, most people are much too busy to spend time checking the council website just in case there is anything that they might need to know. Such information should be easily open to the public. Local newspapers and radio are the most obvious method, but suprise suprise, they are all losing their voices because certain sections of the community assume everyone is tied to their computer, night and day.

I do not know enough about it to be able to comment properly. I am not computer literate enough to look at "webcasts". I do not know what these are. I have no speakers on my computer so if sound is involved, I cannot access it.

If no information is generated either by e-mail or newspapers then how are the public going to find info ??

More detailed information

Not everyone can afford the internet at home so are unable to watch meetings.

Not everyone has computers, so what do they do?

That residents are informed well in advance

To realise that not all of us have access to the internet, also some older and disabled people may not be able to visit council offices to view proposals.

Local Referenda (3% of comments made for this question)

1. More use of referenda. 2. Opening up of meetings to public input. 3. Recording of individual councillor votes

All meetings should be public unless to protect an individual elected to the council. All scrutiny committees should be chaired by the opposition parties. Key decisions should be reduced to £250,000 to preclude piecemeal cuts.

Consider using local referenda

More referenda - as in Switzerland where democracy is local and ongoing - not just election at intervals of several years.

Referendums

The introduction of referenda a major issue; eg. enforcement of traffic regulations.

Less bureacracy / Improve Efficiency (3% of comments made for this question)

Less bureacracy

Less paperwork. Less time-wasting. Greater consideration given to public opinion.

Less redtape, more awareness of the law!

Make it less beauraucratic

Speed things up. Everything is taking too long.

Speed up plannning decision process especially concerning large projects. Falmer - i360 - Agonising over West Pier is ridiculous

Weakness in existing constitution arrangements creates slow decision-making. Improve efficient decision-making. Involve Young People!

Open Meetings To Public (2% of comments made for this question)

More access to the public

More meetings should admit members of the public and questions or views of interested parties should be sought before any decision is made. Too many councillors do not reside in the built up areas, consequently they are not aware of the problems many of us encounter with regard to council services.

More members of the public invited to these meetings and able to have an opportunity to have a discussion if they feel they have something relevant to add.

More public involvement

Transparent accountability. Letting the public speak at meetings.

Involve People External To Council (2% of comments made for this question)

A wider mix of views to represent the political make up of the council. Too many decisions made by one political party is not democratic and does not represent the whole of the electorate

Do they actively involve young people in decision making about provision of services? As the mother of an older and younger teenage daughters I am conscious of meeting facilities between the ages of 14-18 are limited to drinking in parks and fields or very religious youth clubs.

Ensure a cross section of people and commission providers are present during the decision making process.

More local authority to community groups.

Generally Positive (2% of comments made for this question)

Having just read the information with the questionnaire I think the copnstitution seems reasonable. I didn't fully understand one point; the enhanced role of the Scrutiny commitee. The new committee's chair is decided by a full council decision which will probably reflect the winning parties decision who would also dominate the cabinet. ie There isn't a strong role for the opposition once the budget has been set (if you follow the logic of the information)

I find the new Cabinet System far more efficient then the endless Committees and Sub-Committees because decissions were transferred from Committee to Committee and subsequently lost in the system.

It sounds more accessible than I realised, so not really.

No, I think there is now a very practical and logical approach to decision making.

The outline given is most interesting and appears to be quite democratic

Elected Mayor (1% of comments made for this question)

An elected and political mayor, e.g. New York style

I think I had more chance to influence decisions under the old committee system. The elected major system might give more drive to the cities development

I voted against cabinet responsibility/ decision making for several reasons. It strengthens party politics at local level, when we should have individual, ward, representation. It dilutes individual responsibility and accountability, allowing people to hide behind collectivism. I'd rather have a mayor who takes personal responsibility for creating a dynamic town

Other (14% of comments made for this question)

Abandon 'the whip'!

Appears to be set out in law and we must give the arragements time to bed in and hopefully show all its advantages! Will be interesting to see if the leader appoints any non party for their expertise!

Do we need 54 councillors?

Elections every two years.

Fewer Councillors (around 30). Elected using a P.R. system.

I would like to see tenant participation just that not with so much influence over cabinet members - It appears that they have an overly-large say in policies throughout the city.

I would like to see the leader elected by the electorate, or at least as in Westminster the parties to declare who will be leader if they have a majority in Council elections.

I would like you to learn from experience in Canada when the PM had to challenge his cabinet to deliver savings in order to bring the country's finances into a better shape. The constitution is very admirable but high level and so I want to know you are going to be much more challenging to all areas to ensure we are getting value

In my experience, members of the public know more than Councillors. I was appalled at their ignorance of Planning and Building Regulations. All councillors should be required to have such expertise if they are on Planning committees etc..

It is a bit worrying that individual members of the Cabinet can make decisions without immediate consultation with other Cabinet Members. There needs to be more publicity about which councillor (or post) is responsible for which area so members of the public can address their concerns accordingly.

It's not the constitution or process, it's an attitude - if the response to the public was yes, or how can I help, or that an individual will take responsibility, there'd be an instant change.

Less control by government. More decision locally.

Make use of the councils staff and local knowledge instead of using experts at great cost and getting ideas which are not practical.

Many fewer councillors. Fewer necessary decisions. All to be taken by vote by whole council

More money put into SEN provision and inclusion.

My main 'issue' living where I do, is street smoking and noise related nuisance. In my opinion this is anti-social behaviour. The Police say it's no longer their remit and the Council do very little. This is a city wide problem and think a change of policy, ie: allow a smoking room/bar in some pubs. This really effects the quality of city centre life.

Only if they involved something directly in my area.. Or if they involved an issue that reallt concerned me.

Only those changes are vital to the efficient functioning of the council. Give the new system time to prove its value and to identify serious faults.

Probably quicker time frames, but no concrete examples to give at present.

Reduce the number of councillors to eight to twelve, but then expect those councillors to work full-time serving the council and its residents.

Sorry, after 10 years in this country (NHS) I lost all my trust in honesty and integrity of administration in the UK.

Stop the conference coming to Brighton so the small shops like mine lose money. I lose about £3000 for every time they come here and I still pay my rates. why? The only people who make money are the police and big hotels and the pubs. And no-one comes to Brighton.. Well, not a lot.

There is clearly no concept at the council that local people cannot afford the exorbitant council tax rates. I do not believe that we are being given value for money, I believe there is a huge amount of waste and I do not see why local people should be contributing to pension pots when they can't afford their own. We need far more transparency and a better breakdown in how our money is spent. I am also not convinced that the i360 was supported by regency ward members whose quality of life will be affected.

This question should be put to the council members themselves.

Try to enforce more discipline with problems kids on housing estates

We have enough councillors drawing a wage now. I would like to see a reduction in this number.

Website petitions

Yes - remove the Councillors who have now little influence and give us one per ward so we can see clearly what it is they do. [Name Removed] Ward have three who are not even civil enough most of the time to reply to emails. They cost us more than the a much needed policeman or the railing in of the end of the Park to reduce the issues with children at night.

Yes I expect to be listened to without prejudice. I do not expect to be ignored. I expected [name removed] to do his job, his failure contributed to [name removed] death. WHAT is he paid for? Fobbing us off???

Yes, get rid of the caravans on Lewes Road.

Unable to comment / Don't Know (16% of comments made for this question)

As this survey is the first I've heard of it, at this point in time I don't have any information on which to respond to this question.

Can't comment.

Difficult to comment as Local Government in the UK remains one of lifes' great puzzles!

Don't know enough about it.

Don't know enough.

Don't know.

Don't know. This seems a bit complicated.

Don't understand it

Have not read the Constitution yet.

Haven't had time to study enough enclosed with this form but will take more notice in the future.

I am not aware of the process to comment on changes

I am not informed enough

I am not sure why the change to Leader & Cabinet was needed and how it benefitted the general electorate

I do not know enough about our local council to comment.

I don't know

I don't know anything about it

I don't know enough about it to comment.

I don't know enough about these services.

I found the constitution notes a bit vague. For example, can the whole council reject the councils' recommendations? Can the Scrutiny commitees insist on changes? What happens to their suggestions?

I would first like to know why the old sytem was changed for the current system of a leader and cabinet, What are the advantages of this system over the old system?

No not at present I haven't had any direct experience of it in action

Not if you're making the right decisions

Not on my present limited interest. After February 2010 I should be through with more than one day surgery treatments and able to read more.

Not really interested

Not really very interested in council activities.

Not sure

Not sure as I would need more information to understand better.

Not sure yet

Not that know of at present

Not with my present experience.

Too numerous to mention!

Unable to comment as I have no info about it and know nothing about it.

What is constitution? Who is in it? Although I always vote in elections for the choice of councillors I realise the main concern is to get the best but does this effect the constitution?

Yes, but it wouldn't be worth listing as they won't change!!

Do you have any suggestions to improve the public interest and involvement in the decision-making process?

Suggestions on Media To Use and Where (30% of comments made for this question)

A little leaflet about it saying what kind of things one could have an influence on...how to find out... how to go about what kinds of decisions the council is taking?

1) Get CityNews delivered in parts of city centre & elsewhere that don't receive it. 1b) make sure it is in libraries etc more consistently 2) Better publicity for consultations like the local planning framework / site briefs. 3) Sort out the refuse collections (hard for public to make representations)

A letter/email delivered to households.

A regular report/update in local newspaper. Same page, same day - perhaps in Saturday magazine. Decisions on next agenda etc..

Advertise the process in City News (instead of blowing your own trumpet). Make the input process clearly laid out.

Advertisement in the press or website where public are able to attend (this may already happen!)

Advertising what is going on through city news etc

Open access and notice in the Argus 1/52 before giving agenda and results of last weeks meeting.

Link should be put in accessible places like cafes where popular streets are where the majority of people gather. Also supermarkets.

As the council newspaper is not available to those of us living in the middle of the city, neither is the free Brighton Gazette delivered to addresses South of Western Road, perhaps a regular feature of council business and meetings could be published in the Argus.

Better promotion of the council webcasts.

Better use could be made of email, public notice boards and local papers

Broadcast issues more widely. It would, personally, be useful if I could be emailed about certain upcoming events (e.g. planning) and then respond with my comments electronically. It would be even better if I could manage my 'areas of interest' so I would only be emailed relevant material.

Church halls, GP Sugeries, Evening Argus, Leader, Post offices used to have notice boards.

Circulation of decision-making by letter (postal).

Clear notices rather than fast reports of past events in the monthly council newsletter would help. Lists of topics to be discussed, the agenda for meetings, if made public in advance for people who are attracted to the good newsletter but who do not necessarily go looking for info on the website, might bring more involvement. They would identify with issues affecting their own area or workplace and get in touch.

Community notice boards

Could something be published in a paper eg. the argus, I think that the majority of pensioners have no computer or computer knowledge.

Could you put some more information into City News, and Homing In. Maybe the Argus could include details. Send a grown up version of the playbus to parks with a range of council employees to introduce issues and developments. I live on a Council Estate and know that people need a lot of encouragement and bravery and belief in order to get involved.

Difficult because the people in charge of public information are all sold on the notion that everyone spends their time online or on blog sites, and the local press is closing down everywhere. Attractive free council newspapers might help (the present ones are not impressive and don't deal with issues in depth). Simple information in the press, radio and tv with details of the website so that people can get more information if they want to, might work. I think it is failing public duty to keep the population informed and to limit information to the website alone. The web site should be the second point of reference not the first. The public cannot be expected to act on proposed changes that they don't know might happen (and the council should not leaves themselves opento the accusation that they are to deliberately under dissemminating information)

E-mail interested parties when web debates are due and more info regarding this agenda

Forward notice of key issues placed in The Argus

Forward plans, agendas and reports need to be more accessible to the general public, perhaps at Libraries or a newsletter similar to that the Police send out and City News.

How about a large tv screen in the main entrance of the town hall which constantly shows Council meetings? It may engage peoples interest and remind them that they can attend.

How about updates in free local papers e.g. the Leader or in the City News publications.

I found the old City magazine extremely helpful in knowing what issues were current and what plans were being formulated. Since it ceased publication there has been no alternative that I can find.

I get most information from City News. I think this is a great way to communicate with people. I also read the Argus but this is not a free service. I'm not a great user of the internet so I don't know what is available on here. For me personally, simple and informative ways, for example the City News, are great as they reach people on all levels.

I was not aware that the public could watch meetings on web cast and be involved - probably not everyone is aware - could some sort of letter be put in with everyones' council tax bills as to this, then everyone would be informed and have a choice to be involved or not. To be involved you need the necessary information.

Important announcements should be published and displayed in public places such as supermarkets, cinemas, etc

Include such details prominently in the monthly City News, with details of how to get involved.

Keeping the public informed of the progress of any decision or project embarked on through the council website/newsletter

Local newsletters. Regional issues. General awareness of local matters. Most people are unaware of things until it meets issues in the press. ie. The Argus, which can be biased.

Mailshots.

Main decisions to be posted on all council notice boards, together with a statement of full council minutes.

Make it more public knowledge that people can be involved and how - local media, maildrops etc. Advertise the Forward Plan somewhere other than the internet etc.

Maybe allow people to sign up for topics of interest (online) and then email/text them when these are coming up for discussion - for viewers via webcast or in person.

Maybe drop leaflets through doors to make people aware that there is such a thing. I didn't know that there was such a thing as the Forward Plan and I'm sure that many others do not know either.

Maybe more info in local newspapers with enclosed info sheets? Local TV and Radio attend meetings live?

Minutes of meetings on the web site.

More articles in the Evening Argus to publish the Council events.

More info sent with the bills.

More information in the councils newspaper perhaps?

More information regarding future decision making meetings - maybe a calendar of events in Hove Factually or the Leader

More local press for those of us that don't have computers.

More publicity and continual publicity about what the public can do and how it can get involved through City Newsletter, the press and council web page

More specific reporting in The Argus

More use of new technology as opposed to newsletters that don't get read. Also a need to publicise such technology - i.e. webcasts! Could there be a forum where residents could post comments and questions?

Perhaps greater attention to such issues could be given in City News. I don't think there's been much coverage of the new Constitution and its significance to residents.

Possibly info in the free newspapers. Info leaflets on the buses, schools asked to send home leaflets to parents.

Posters in civic buildings.

Posters in shops, libraries, doctors surgeries and buses. Make titles of meetings and agendas understandable and less dry. Get people who have had an experience to feature/promote experiences in eg. local paper. More visibility of meetings/less formality.

Proactively send a summary of the forward plan to city households - people won't ask for it at the council if they don't know it exists.

Provide forums on the radio for question time sessions. Awareness of online consultations/surveys that can be accessed by the public. Articles in local press on decisions, impacts, results. Posters in key media locations announcing major topics and informing people how they can get involved. An integrated media and communication campaign using new media, rural marketing and above/below the line.

Publicise how people can get inolved better. Redesign council website for clarity, and add forums.

Publicise meetings in advance via local media (inc Argus) outlining what, when meeting will take place, how public can provide input.

Publicise the existence of the Forward Plan, Use website/discussion forums/social networking tools to encourage participation. Make members use same tools so electorate can easily access them.

Putting the council magazine in more areas e.g. where Friday ad's are put - so that more people are aware of what is going on, what is planning to be done, and what has been done in the name of the people of Brighton and Hove. At the moment there is little awareness of what goes on in the council by the general public.

Raise the profile by ensuring that (on a regular basis) local newspapers, and especially local radio stations and television, publicise what is going on and how one can be involved.

Reports in the Leader or City News

Send out proposals to people - don't just expect people to browse your website speculatively

Simple online polls allowing those who pay community charge to vote and make comments

Take groups of school children into the meetings. Small introduction to process by a member of the council. Someone who can deliver a passionate plea for democracy in action.

The City News can include what is under discussion in the coming months with input welcome. Then detail of what was decided and why in next issue.

The decisions being planned should be published by the local press and Key Decisions should be publicised widely, perhaps by mailshot or local poster campaign.

The workings of the council are a mystery to me, and I had no idea of the change of governance to leader and cabinet system. I wonder whether there could be more publicity in the local papers, particularly the 'free' papers which come through the door. I will endeavour to look at the council website more regularly

To make people aware just like when people apply for planning/building rights. The council could have a list online - in local papers - posting letting people know - so that if they wanted, they could get involved.

Updates and news reviews in Argus, Leader and City News.

Use webcasting/cable channel for local council/commitee meeting broadcasts. - let the greater public see their elected reps in action. Examine the council and its fibre network in Vallenciennes, France for an account of local accountability.

Vastly more publicity! I'm a reasonably well-informed member of the community, but it hasn't truly occurred to me before that I have any real means of involvement in the decision-making process, so I haven't bothered. It's just been off my radar, and if that's how I am I'm sure that this must apply to many others. Lots more publicity needed - on websites, in City News, on posters at stations etc.

Webcasts sound good - more like this. Plus advertisements on billboards etc sharing how people can get involved.

Yes. Email me at the beginning of the week saying "This week, your Council will be deciding...[insert list]... Do you have any points to contribute to the discussion by email?"

City News could be used to a better advantage. Instead of all the self-complementary articles it could request council proceedings.

More Inclusive / Consultation / Listen (21% of comments made for this question)

Local referenda allowing the public to make the decision on a range of subjects

To be more inclusive. If you have any role for me to serve, I am always ready.

Ask the voters for their ideas on local issues. eg. do they want bicycle lanes outside their houses.This is done well with reference to parking restriction zones.

At the moment all the powerful lobby groups - business, gay rights, minority causes - mobilise their voice very well, and appropriately, economically weak groups are ignored. How is that going to change in mainstream politics ?

Demonstrate in practical terms that the man or woman in the street will make a difference. Make it all so much easier to access and understand, we are not all lucky to have had fantastic upbringing and good education/s.

I don't know how it would be done, but there should definitely be more public consultation over issues at a very local level, such as changes to traffic flows and planning.

I think the public should have to be involved in all decision making. For example, live jury service. One or two members of the public should be randomly picked to attend all meetings.

I would guess public interest is strongest around the issues which have a higher profile - e.g: Planning, Waste Management, Health, Transport. I don't believe the Council want more involvement from the public. I think they want to take their own decisions and 'tick the box' re: public involvement. The council forgets that their full time jobs are wrapped up in the decisions they make and the issues they deal with...for us (members of the public) we have busy lives and it's only when we realise things will impact on us in a major way that we are galvanised into taking action. If the council really want more involvement on big issues/decisions they should a) PROACTIVELY publicise future plans, etc (rather than put small adverts in the free press or put things up on their website and assume people will be looling at the site every day/week. b) Listen to the public views rather than cynically manipulate decision making processes (e.g. with the Hollingbury waste transfer site) to get the result they wanted in the first place. Are the council listening to the public on the London Road redevelopment? At the moment reports suggest NOT. The best way to get more future public involvement is to demonstrate to us that when we do get involved, our involvement is listened to. Basicaly it's about honesty.

Improvement to the consultation process to ensure genuine consultation and that the public are fully informed of significant decisions . A multi party review of this process.

In my experience public involvement is invited only selectivel;y. E.g. asking local traders for input regarding trader parking prior to policy being implemented.

Listen to the public

Listen to the public

Listen to the public when we complain about something - like binvelopes - the stupidest rat infesting litter inducing invention ever - not to mention in a conservation area it makes the area look like a landfill site - plus children and old people have trouble walking down the streets when they were outside the house - It was such an unbelievably stupid plan and invention!

Listen to the rate-payers demands instead of making politically correct decisions that we do not want or need.

Listen to us! Nobody bothers to have involvement as we all know how wasted it will be.

Local tax payers (residents) to be given a referendum on any project that increases the density of population under the council jurisdiction. Further, all capital projects and decisions to be put before the residential community (ie rate payer) for their formal approval.

Maintain Xchange questionnaire and invite more residents to participate.

Many, or most, Councillors do not have any real expertise or experience in their respective fields of responsibilities. Without a sincere commitment to taking heed of the public, poor decisions will continue to be made (e.g. communal rubbish bins that cannot be opened using a foot bar, so now many people cannot operate some of them). The Council do not operate an effective Unwanted Events (UWE) check on the decision making process, which would help prevent execution of decisions that ultimately lead to unwanted outcomes. Without this type of process, the public will continue to view Councillors as incompetent for the most part. The UWE approach is used in industry quite effectively, but it is trained out to staff and used in the normal course of the decision making process. There is no reason a similar approach cannot be used by the Council.

More listening to peoples views

My feeling is (and I think it is widely shared) that consultation is a paper exercise only and that public involvement has no effect on decisions. That perception needs to change if public interest is to improve.

Only asking the opinion of the general public by a yearly questionnaire. Although it is good to have access to everything online not everyone has a computer! - especially not the elderly.

Opportunity for greater (and effective) input into decisions that affect local people. Recent meetings to 'consult' on parking in my area have seen either no BHCC representatives present, or attendance by those who are apparently unable either to answer questions or to report back to committee.

People that I speak to feel that they will not be listened to. Can the council have information days, not specific to sections of the community eg. older people, disabilities and bme? Use customer service weeks to actually go out and ask or ask people if council can contact them for news by phone. Stop/Limit how many groups individuals can be on - too few people have too much say and this can be intimidating for others to join in.

Proactive engagement of interested groups re differing elements of work/business - evidence and views to inform overall decision making process.

Public consultation. Telling people what is happening. Making senior council officers available and accountable. Please don't just provide a webcast: that is totally and woefully inadequate and inappropriate. Ultimately it is our council but now it is run like a private corporation. Not good.

Public interest would be improved if their views are actually listened to and taken into account. I feel my views would be ignored if they did not fit in with the Local Councils political views

Really listen to worries, take on board the upsets, do not favour any particular group of people.

Referendums

Reflect the balance of votes better in decision making.

Resident involvement in Planning and Implementation

Return to the local forums, piloted

Sadly, much of my extensive experience in public involvement has shown that most of it pays only lip-service to people real needs and preferences. Current through the CEF, LINk and the PCT and Scrutiny Panels have yet to demonstrate their outcomes; and though it seems likely these structures will produce better dissemination of information (which is important), it is already clear that many decision-making processes will remain out of bounds to the people with the most interest in them, let alone subject to influence.

Consultation on parking seems to ensure agreement from those who do not express as opinion and is effectively introduced by default but as an officer led activity (as I do not live in the area to which parking control are being extended). Until some notice is taken of the public situations, then cynicism about decision making will remain. I don't have particular issues with the new constitution but will the decision making process actually change to provide amore democratic process?

Take heed of the needs of the majority not just pressure groups and minorities. Every person is equal and should be treated so.

The front line will often know best if they are informed as to what has to happen. So if you say that we must achieve for example £10m savings the front line needs detailed consultation as to how that should be achieved. The fact of the saving should not be debated at that level but all stake holders need information about the realities and stark choices so we do not put off change or pick easy targets

The public should be assured that their input will be taken in to account. This is not the case at present. The complaints procedure should be open, results published and available on request/website. The continued cover-up is not acceptable. Why ask whether we want street bins when you have no intention of taking any notice of our negative response..

To actually consider public interest

To actually take the public views into accouunt instead of just pretending to.

To have free phone numbers. Then all the public can take part. Not just a few with the internet. This would be fair to all.

Try listening to your rate payers.

Try to involve young people more widely - have a big conference for Young People who then discuss all issues that are in the councils plan. eg. 16-18yrs, 18-25yrs. Don't just look for reps, as many people as possible need to be engaged and not alienated.

We could go to public place eg library or town hall to vote for decisions online.

Yes ask local people to make decisions, not councillors who have no idea about living in that exact area.

Yes ask us. This Survey is a good media.

Yes involve the public much more .

Yes No Maybe boxes won't give you answers. It's all too black and white. The format looks ok, but you are not listening! The public will only become interested if they can see their needs and desires met. I refer to Q7. I shall attempt to look at one of your meeting webcasts.

Not announce major decisions in the summer when people are away. Make it easier for people to make comments. I have tried and it is hard to find things out.

I do not feel that my views are taken into consideration. I email the council about issues but have not yet had one response in three years. Change that and it would be a start.

Interact with residents on exactly what is going on. The Starbucks CAFE on St. James Street fiasco and delay in & lack of decision-making makes the council look like a fat lazy pig that makes money for doing nothing but delay to keep their jobs. Makes me sick to see the mess of planning permission on local retailers in relation to big high street names being given approval more. Shame on the council!

Local community fora/parliaments would give people an opportunity to engage with local matters and develop their own expertise and skills. In my view ordinary ward councillors have been deskilled by changes in local government and are no longer a channel for scrutiny and influence.

Better Information / More Publicity - GENERAL (19% of comments made for this question)

1. Council website to be clearer. 2. Council new-sheet to be published regularly, with clarity of decisions about to be made.

A chance to gain more information and content about decisions in an accessible way - articles/web/leaflets etc.

A summary of elements in the Forward Plan - to be published in print in advance of discussion and decision.

Better publicity would help.

Being as I didn't even know who is on the council or that you could see or visit some council meetings, they need to do more informing the people of Brighton & Hove

Better advertising of this new constitution. I knew that meetings were being webcast when I read the leaflet that came with this questionnaire. This was also the first time I was aware of this constitution and the role it takes in making decisions that involve the sending of the budget.

Better info on when meetings are being held and agendas

Better information to the public re issues being discussed and how to get involved.

Better publicity

By using other media outlets.

Clear communications about what goes on in council

Comunication

Greater publicity of forthcoming decisions to be made. Using a mixture of media.

I remember being informed of a council meeting by Unison once and attended. I use the library and notice display there sometimes. I don't have regular access to the interent but do look at the council website when I'm in the library sometimes. I have met councillors through the Trustee Board at my work and at community meetings sometimes.

I think that informing the general public of the Brighton and Hove new governance system would be a good idea. I do not recall receiving any literature informing me of the changes in decision making bodies within the council; To my mind, before the general public can have opportunities to be involved in the decision making process of the council understanding the new council governance structure is an essential prerequisite. The new governance structure seems overly complicated to me and having read the accompanying literature it is not clear how important decisions are made within the council - which body is ultimately responsible?

I would like to be informed as to how to get involved

If possible, find another way of bringing agendas and forward plans to public notice. I doubt that many people will make the regular visits to council offices to obtain this information. For those that use the internet, perhaps set up an email link to individuals who want to receive this information regularly. Where will paper information be available? Which office?

Improve awareness to general public of webcasts and committee/cabinet decisions - more use of media, radio/TV/press locally

Increased awareness of the process and topics/issues being discussed and decided upon

Invitations to selected random groups of residents to attend a particular commitee meeting.

Invite any interested members of the public to either come to meetings, or be given an agenda of the meeting and add their written/email comments.

It is difficult to get the interest of the general public unless they have a specific issue. Make the most of occasions when people do get in touch with comments, complaints etc. Keep using a wide range of media - web, local papers etc.

Make all information more easily available and in jargon free language. Don't rely so heavily on websites to say you have consulted. Most people don't know what consultations are available and many people do not see the web as a tool for gathering local information. Reach out to communities instead. Community development workers and voluntary sector forums can tell you how.

Make more widely known the public access to meetings/committees, how to access a webcast, too.

Make sure that information is displayed clearly and people are given clear instructions how to get involved

Make the public more aware that they can have their say by making announcements in local press and media in general.

More information distributed.

More information on how to be involved.

More information! Didn't know about any of this.

More public awareness needed regarding this. I had no idea about it until I read the enclosed info.

More publicity

More publicity about the agendas being discussed with real time and dates being provided so that public can opt in to watch/attend discussions, and have more of an understanding of the issues across the city.

More publicity needed about how to get involved

More publicity to council meeting and their agenda and decisions

More publicity to upcoming meetings on key local issues

More visibility to the public, better marketing strategy, keeping contemporary in branding.

Publicise meetings more, especially if any issues that are relevant to a particular area are about to be discussed. Inform people how to contribute and make sure local councillors can act as advocates or spokespeople for the public incase someone is unable to, or unwilling to attend a meeting.

Publish more

Publish precis in the Leader

Publish some actions/'core' examples illustrating how and what public involvement made a difference to an issue.

Tell people about webcasts

Tell the public how to find out what is going on!

"www" is not accessible to all, and is not familiar to many. The volume of information available can be overwhelming. Is there a means of communicating simply to the majority on significant issues?

Yes more information needed to individual households.

You really do need to tell the residents of Brighton & Hove of these changes. I'm sure you have tried, but I don't personally feel you have succeeded.

Pro-actively informing the public using e-mail etc, would improve public inolvement as we will be made aware of the issues coming up, when the debate will be and how we can get involved. We can then choose whether we want to take part in the decision making process.

More Face-to-Face (7% of comments made for this question)

Bigger open meetings on a regular basis (perhaps one or two issues at a time) so that people get the chance to have their say in public and get to hear opposing views. Getting people to discuss issues openly could actually find a compromise and bring some issues down to a more manageable level.

A face to talk to.

Better connection between Councillors and public, ie some effort put into canvassing local opinion.

Canvassing at local shops maybe, or door to door, B+H, by email and local community groups.

Chance to get to know/meet council members

Councillors need to be more proactive in meeting their constituents, soliciting views of their electorate rather than taking the party line

Councillors to be available to discuss residents' concerns on a daily basis with the support of staff.

Get the council as a whole on a given evening at the town hall and get them to answer questions,suggestions etc, for a timed meeting

Holding public Q&A Sessions

I think that councillor visits to schools to explain may be a way to reach families. Perhaps there could be school visits to the council members too!

Lead Councillors on particular issues to hold some sort of consultation/promotion to the Public. This could be done by having an Open Afternoon where ideas/plans are put forward and members of the public would have a chance to question councillors directly.

Local councillors should drop door-to-door contact information, and get a higher profile in the different areas of their ward.

More public meetings. Better publicity for councillor surgeries. Better info about council, we don't get a newsletter. Stop changing ward boundaries - destroys continuity.

More publicity about projected changes to Brighton and Hove. The possibility to meet councillors for a meeting to discuss plans and changes that affect you or you lifestyle. That comments or objections are listened to sympathetically (not defensively of dismissively). Committee members should remember the rate payer cover their generous salaries.

More workshops with the public

Neighbourhood/area meetings jointly held with Police etc.

Greater council visibility in public spaces.

More Transparency (3% of comments made for this question)

Communications between the public and council officers regarding policy and problems should be officially logged and put on the record and used in the decision making process.

I would like to see a review of the process whereby surveys such as the composition of parking permits are carried through on a majority vote regardless of how few people take part. The creeping privitisation of parking across the town being done without sound and accurate consultation.

Introduce a system to prove that ideas or schemes are worthwhile and not just a gimmick to please a vocal minority. ie. prove you are spending our money wisely.

Often it seems that decisions are made following very complicated and untransparent consultations. To be informed about consultation is a fulltime job. Often in my experience, it is often felt that decisions had been made via handshake, and influence from the public was ignored.

Yes a statement as to what member proposes what policy and how they vote

1. Far more transparency and a much more detailed breakdown in how our money is being spent including pensions and consultancy. 2. Detailed note about decisions affecting a local community including meetings between developers and council staff, 3. The new constitution is entirely undemocratic - I could not believe what I was reading. This should be scrapped and a representative decision making process reinstated. Truly disgraceful.

Decision Making Process (3% of comments made for this question)

A door-to-door information and consultation process. More transparency at Cabinet level. More all party involvement in key decisions.

Broader cross-party involvement in the cabinet.

Discussions are already made by Cabinet and Politicians own interests. So called consultations for example with staff, are just lip service and have no influence on the decision. Proper consultation would have to take place well before cabinet decisions not afterwards

Ensure that members of all parties particapate directly in the decision making process, rather than in this detached manner. Scrutiny is totally ineffectual in terms of holding cabinet member to account for their decsions. Many councillor appears out of their depth in planning etc. andd the executive is too powerful. Publicise ways that organisations ignored by councillors can obtain answers/address on behalf of their contituents. Encouraging people of ability across party boundaries to be involved strengthens democratic invovement in the process.

I think all councillors should be allowed an equal share in the decision making process and decisions taken out of the hands of a tiny group (the leader and cabinet)

More input into final decisions from all other parties.

I believe that too many decisions are being made by council officials and not our elected councilors. This is most obvious in the way planning issues are dealt with and more importantly the speed in which travellers are moved on.

Reduce involvement and increase accountability of special interest groups - who usually manipulate the system to gain advantage. eg. The King Alfred Planning Issue

Give more feedback / Keep Informed (3% of comments made for this question)

Rarely got any feedback about what decision was made. There should be improved information around major projects that flagship the city. What on earth is happening with 2 Preston Barracks: Still no homes/jobs or use after years. Information please.

By demonstrating the public's input into decision making, I think it would encourage more people to engage. For example - I know that the council distributed forms for the citizens of Brighton to complete about the changes in the drinking allowed on the beach (years ago - please excuse old example!) but despite my completion, at length, I had no response/mechanism of even knowing if my opinion had been noted. Other than the passing of the bill to which I had so vehemently opposed.

Ensure that the public are made aware of any decsions Cabinet members make. Document only really talks about meetings and does not reflect other decsion making rates.

Full reports on the council websites of council meetings. Use minutes available early of full council meetings and cabinet meetings.

Higher quality reporting in council circulars more detailed writing. Make clearer any evidence that public opinion has been taken into consideration with decision making process

Hold open days (unless already happening). Emphasise/demonstrate how public involvement has affected decision making: case studies. n.b. Asking respondents to read the Constitution before answering completely changes/skews answers. Useful if you are testing its communication, but not if you want a true picture of awareness levels.

Simpler Language / Less Bureaucracy (2% of comments made for this question)

First, to try and inform the public that they can have involvement. Try to cut through the inevitable 'meeting speak'.

Easier language/less jargon/ Although the public can theoretically get involved with an overview and scrutiny committee, the language and sheer amount of paperwork are a massive disincentive

Less dull and bureaucratic! Good meetings amangement - less waffling and political one-upmanship would promote public interest

Tell us in simple terms how things work and how we can get involved, have a voice, influence things - better communication and publicity about what is going on

Other - Political (3% of comments made for this question)

Devolve more powers from Westminister, particularly on planning issue. Local income tax.

Give Guy Fawkes a second chance? The general public have largely been demoralised by a succession of unaccountable and treasonous national governments whose only real agenda is to look after the interests of corporations and their shareholders at the expense of all else. With the implemention of The Lisbon Treaty, we have lost our sovereignty and are now a satellite state of a Totalitarian run European Union. As a consequence, our local councils are on a similar footing as were those of French towns under occupation in the early 1940's. Fascism is still depicted by the media in mid 20th century terms, when in truth it is much more sophisticated today, wearing a suit and tie (or even an open necked hemp shirt) instead of jackboots. Governance offering an illusion of 'choice' while implementing increasing amounts of regulation and control over peoples lives is not acceptable and urgently needs to be addressed. In this current state of affairs the question of "involvement in the decision making process" is academic, don't you think!? No, in short I have no suggestions other than to "be real", wake up to what's going on and give consideration to the bigger picture; what can be done at a local level to reinstate some semblance of true Democracy at national level, without which local democracy (which this survey suggests exists) is nothing more than a sham. Remember, remember the 5th November.

Give us one councillor per ward who then gets a clear overview of what is happening and we do not get the inane politicking this ward has had with three different political groups represented. Nothing seems to get done in this situation unless you bypass them and go to the officers.

Since reading how our current Labour councillors wandered borders and hijacked the democratic process associated with the introduction of the lottery system for school place allocations, I have lost both confidence and interest in the whole process.

The public will continue to show little interest or be involved in the decision making process whilst the party political system operates, change to independent councillors who can be judged by their performance and be voted out if they fail to come up to expectations.

A separate department, appointed by opposition, to monitor cabinet committee adherence to democratic principles which should come from a written code of proactive inclusion measures. The council should increase representation by adding proportional representation to the first past the post system still hanging on. This would have no statutory basis but around moral foundation.

Other - Miscellaneous (8% of comments made for this question)

Costs and incomes should be published

Don't call your documents things like 'Forward Plan'. It's a 'Plan'. How many plans are 'Backward Plans'?

Don't try too hard.

For my money I do believe the general public interest will always be low. It is only when the extra ordinary come along interest is aroused, like for instance, 15% increase in Council Tax.

I think we should be able to slice and dice expenditure to see where our money is being spent. An online web application of download to Excel would be even cheaper. More progressive councils would I believe offer an application, but I can appreciate there would be a cost.

I think when I have contacted my MP on issues that I feel are important, for example the rise in Newsagents getting liquor licenses in Kemp Town. I was disappointed that I didn't get anything other than a list of By-Laws sent to me explaining the licencing process. What I wanted was the human element, their opinion, what my MP was going to do about my worries and how this would be communicated back to the council.

I'm not a Politician and not arrogant enough to make suggestions to long serving Councillors how to do their jobs.

Less technology.

Modernise. Stop living with the status quo, and accept change is necessary to bring this city into the 21st Century.

Participative budgetting.

The decision to allow virtually 24 hour drinking in the town centre was a very serious mistake. Because the Saturday night policing draws officers away from the suburbs there is virtually open license for burglars at the weekends, just when our drug-users are seeking funds for their habits. The central pubs and clubs are too concentrated and attract dangerously large groups of hooligans.

To take into consideration that many people work and are very busy and it would help to make public involvement simpler and easier - I remember receiving a document regarding consultation on airport expansion and the questions were so detailed and convoluted it would take hours to fill out properly. Most public enquiries on planning decisions (ie the royal alex) are held during the week day - people who work cannot usually access these.

True clarity in planning process and the various direct or indirect influences, influencing or indeed controlling the whole procedure.

When you receive complaints do something about them - your council staff are so off-putting and resistant when suggestions about change are made, why should anyone imagine you are capable of responsding? The council is slow, self congratulatory, in denial and offers any number of excuses before taking action.

When decisions are made, the council should be 100% correct in what they are saying i.e. the banning of dog walkers in School Playing Fields which I, as a dog owner, totally agree. There should be total public involvement over the problem of cyclists who think they can ride on footpaths, pavements and verges and not adhering to the laws of the land regarding cyclists. There should be a dedicated line for people to report incidents caused by cyclists. It is a useless exercise reporting to police.

When is the Mickey Mouse Council going to do things long term, ie 24/7. Bikes on pavements and down on seafront. Hostel in Regency Square, close it down. Why should our rates money pay for it, it costs £300 a week for one room. It's not fair. It's money could go to people who need it not them. I know its a hard thing to say, but you don't live around here and you could have them come and live near you? I don't think so.

Why can't the Police and Environment Department actively work together to resolve some of these issues. It's a total 'Cop out' in my opinion and a major contributor to stress in modern living in this country.

Yes you are perceived to be arrogant and not caring about the needs of the local community, especially when it comes to parking schemes and traffic management.

Yes. Change the staff at the Social Services to people who listen, are not ignorant about the care of the elderly, and are family orientated, compassionate people, and are able to report accurately what is said to them, and who have decent moral standards - especially regarding truth, justice and humanity.

Unable to comment / Don't Know (2% of comments made for this question)

Would help if I could have answered Yes to at least some of the questions

I am not sure, as don't know much about how the cabinet-system works.

Know nothing about it

Not sure what aspect you are talking about.