

A better Brighton & Hove for all

What we've delivered
Brighton & Hove City Council

Outcome 1: A city to be proud of

Investing in our city

Our goal is to develop a flourishing and inclusive local economy that attracts and nurtures businesses and talent.

Developing Brighton & Hove as a place where people want to live, work, and learn

As one of the city's most treasured assets, **the restoration and rejuvenation of the seafront** is well underway. We are transforming underused and run-down public spaces into attractive, accessible places for visitors and residents, including rejuvenating Black Rock and creating Hove Beach Park complete with wheeled sports area, new padel courts, bowling green, skate park, tennis courts and outdoor sports hub. We've also kickstarted the restoration of the historic Grade II listed Madeira Terrace, beginning with the first 28 arches and a new lift to improve access to the eastern seafront.

We have made great strides **improving the city's sport and leisure facilities** as part of our 10-year Sports Facilities Investment Plan. Four 3G all-weather pitches and a new soft play area were opened at the Withdean Sports Complex and the seafront basketball court refurbished. Our swimming pools were kept open after securing almost £400,000 of grant funding, and solar PV installed at our leisure centres has generated 350,000 kWh of renewable energy each year, contributing to our decarbonisation plans for the city. Year on year we are seeing attendance numbers at our indoor sports facilities increase, with almost 1.8 visits in the last year. We were announced as a host city for the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025, building on our international sporting reputation and creating opportunities to further promote girls and womens sport in the city.

As part of our **playground refurbishment programme**, we have spent more than £5 million in section 106 contributions from developers on outdoor play and fitness facilities to provide upgraded, inclusive and accessible play areas at 45 sites and 6 new outdoor gyms.

Growing a diverse and sustainable city economy

As part of our commitment to developing a flourishing and inclusive city economy we adopted a **new three-year Economic Plan** in 2024. As a member of the regional Local Visitor Economy Partnership, we also **launched a new 10-year Visitor Economy Strategy for Growth to enhance**

Sussex's reputation as a thriving, vibrant and regenerative destination, with the aim to increase the total value of the local visitor economy from £5 billion to £7.5 billion by 2034.

In the last year alone, **the council-led Business and Intellectual Property Centre Sussex**, based at the Jubilee Library, **supported 2,670 entrepreneurs, inventors, and small businesses** from across the county. Focused on our goal of boosting economic growth and tackling inequality, we have seen high take up of our offer from women, Black and Racially Minoritised groups, disabled people and young entrepreneurs.

We have **set up a new Brighton & Hove Growth Hub** – a digital service supporting city businesses to scale and grow, creating more jobs for residents. The Growth Hub has recently completed its first Scale Up programme, with 32 businesses participating from across our economy.

Promoting and protecting what makes Brighton & Hove unique

Our focus on protecting the city's heritage has seen the **reopening of Brighton Dome's refurbished historic Corn Exchange**, following a six-year refurbishment programme. In early 2024 we secured more than £4m grant funding in partnership with Brighton & Hove Museums to **restore the Royal Pavilion Garden**. Plans that ensure the long-term sustainability of the city centre gardens were approved in August 2024.

We are **working to protect live grassroots music venues**, recognising the important part they play in our vibrant night-time and visitor economies. Together with the Music Venues Trust, we have **published a comprehensive guide to the planning system to support grassroots music venues** and ensure the music scene continues to thrive.

Developing talent and enabling lifelong learning

We've **increased the use of our libraries**. Across the city we saw an increase in footfall in our libraries, rising to over 1.2million visits in the last year. We reopened Saltdean Library in the newly restored Saltdean Lido.

An accessible, clean, and sustainable city

Our goal is to deliver an accessible, clean, and sustainable environment that we can all be proud of.

Keeping our city clean and managing waste

We have taken the necessary steps to get on top of weed growth to ensure roads and pathways are safe, accessible and clear for all, following five years of manual weed control. We are now treating weeds in pavements with controlled droplet application of glyphosate. Listening to residents, we have also introduced an opt out for those who want their roads to be excluded from our weed maintenance programme. So far 42 streets have opted out.

Illegal tagging is problem we have been working hard to address. Our three-year action plan prioritises removal of tagging and flyposting promptly and ensures enforcement action is taken. During the summer last year, **we invested £100,000 to clean up graffiti hotspots in the city centre and remove hard to reach tagging.** We also worked to prevent illegal tagging by supporting streets artists to bring creativity and vibrancy to authorised sites. For example, *FRIENDS mural, Hove Lagoon*. Local artist Aroe worked with six contemporaries to paint a letter in their own style on this tagging hotspot, supported by BHCC. The mural includes a full-size painting of Mercedes Gleitze, the first British woman to swim the English Channel, within the 'I'.

High-quality, accessible and family-friendly public toilets and changing places are essential for our residents and visitors. We are **investing more than £3 million in an ongoing programme to refurbish the city's public toilets.** Since July 2023 we have upgraded 6 public toilet sites and reopened and extended toilet opening hours. We also installed 3 new Changing Places toilets to help adults and children with disabilities get out and about and enjoy the day-to-day activities which many of us take for granted.

Additional saltwater testing. The sea water testing project is a citizen science initiative funded by Southern Water to supplement the bathing water quality testing undertaken by the Environment Agency. The local project has been led by sea swimming residents; they take regular water samples using a testing kit provided by Southern Water. Samples are collected all year round to assess the water quality outside of the bathing season when the Environment Agency have ceased testing. The samples are then tested at the King Alfred Leisure Centre.

Working towards carbon net zero

As part of our commitment to achieving carbon net zero, we **published a ground-breaking decarbonisation pathways study** in 2024, which looks in detail at how the city can change to low carbon energy systems by delivering high-impact projects delivering energy-efficient and low carbon homes, businesses and transport. The study identifies economic opportunities for the city with the potential to create around 2,500 new jobs.

We have seen great improvements in the levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and we are now **consistently reporting NO₂ levels below the legal requirement** of 40 µg/m³ at our three key monitoring locations. We are part of the largest network of air quality monitoring sensors in the UK and last year we launched a website giving people access to real time information to raise awareness of the impact of vehicle and gas boiler emissions and burning solid fuels on the city.

In partnership with Brighton & Hove buses we **unlocked a landmark £10m project for zero emission buses** at the start of 2024, and in August we were named the local authority with **the best on-street electric vehicle charging coverage in the UK outside of London**, demonstrating our strong commitment to achieving carbon net zero and a more sustainable city.

Protecting and enhancing the city's natural environment

We have **improved the protection of the city's trees** through enhanced enforcement of Tree Protection Orders. We have also taken steps to manage the spread of elm disease, using new technology to detect and treat infected trees, removing them quickly to protect our prestigious National Collection from a wider outbreak.

We know that **good quality parks, green and open spaces** are as important for people as they are for nature. We are proud to be flying seven Green Flags in parks in Brighton, Hove, Portslade and Rottingdean, demonstrating that we have some of the country's best-maintained parks with excellent facilities. We have completed significant infrastructure improvements at Stanmer Park and Preston Park, making them safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Likewise, Hove and Saltdean beaches have been awarded Blue Flags for their high-quality bathing water, facilities, safety, and management.

We are **the UK's only accredited urban biosphere** and recognise the important stewardship role we have in protecting the wildlife and habitats, and promoting sustainable, environmentally aware communities across a 390 square kilometre designation. In 2024 we submitted our application as part of the Living Coast Partnership to UNESCO to continue our accreditation.

As part of our **ongoing commitment to improve the condition of our roads we have agreed to invest more than £3.9 million annually in planned works**. Using new digital tools, we are identifying high priority areas to target, and trialling innovative solutions that save time, cost and carbon, whilst improving the longevity of our repairs.

In November 2024 **we began constructing Phase 3 of the Valley Gardens project**, which is set to transform this city centre public space. The project will enhance and renew this important arrival point for visitors, provide accessible and inclusive public and green spaces, simplify the road layout for motorists, and improve road safety. We have completed significant infrastructure improvements at both Stanmer Park and Preston Park, making them safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Working closely with the city's bus operators we **introduced an affordable day travel ticket, extended bus routes, and introduced a new express bus route** to encourage greater use of public transport. In December 2024 we were awarded a further £9.2million of grant funding to continue delivering our Bus Service Improvement Plan. In the last year we saw more than a **6% increase in buses running on time**, despite some major works disrupting the road network.

Since we **introduced red routes on London Road and Lewes Road** in 2023, congestion has significantly reduced and road safety has improved, with almost 86% fewer pedestrian injuries. We listened to businesses and residents about the impact of red routes and installed more loading bays and a motorcycle bay in response to concerns raised.

We are working hard make parking in the city simpler and fairer and to improve people's experience. For 2023/24 we reduced planned parking hikes including around the Royal Sussex County hospital and for 2025/26 **we froze parking charges in council car parks** for the first time in a decade, after listening to residents' concerns about the impact of parking charges during a cost-of-living crisis.

A new Active Travel scheme is just being completed on the A23 that enables residents to choose alternative modes to the car by improving cycle lanes and introducing more crossings on a very busy strategic road. The scheme introduces a safer direct connection for cyclists to access the city and improve walking routes into Preston Park. Residents are now able to have the confidence to cycle in the city by being able to store their bikes directly on the city's streets in the expanded "Cycle hangars" network. Bike storage can be rented within safe and secure facilities across many areas of the city.

The **Let's Get Moving** strategy is being implemented, **supporting our ambition to be an active city** and building on the progress we have already made.

Outcome 2: A fair and inclusive city

An inclusive and fairer city

Our goal is for Brighton & Hove to be inclusive, accessible and equitable – a place where everyone can thrive.

Engagement and collaboration

In March last year we **published new community engagement framework** setting out the council's commitment to engagement, with a refreshed policy statement and accompanying guidance and tools to support best practice in our engagement with local communities.

Alongside the framework we **launched Your Voice, a new digital engagement tool** which offers better and fairer opportunities for residents to have their say and to follow engagement projects they are interested in. Your Voice is intended to complement not replace face to face engagement and gives access to a wider audience.

In 2023 and 2024 we delivered Leader's surgeries, giving residents the opportunity to raise policy and strategy issues with Council leadership at surgery sessions across the city. We also hosted a series of events across the city asking residents to **Re-imagine Brighton & Hove**. The project identified **community-led ideas to tackle graffiti tagging, the cost-of-living crisis, violence against women and girls, and improving health and wellbeing**. Insights were fed back to relevant services.

Fighting discrimination and embracing diversity

We won a landmark case in the High Court against the Home Office in 2023 concerning the treatment of unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC). The judgment led to a change in national policy so that UASC could no longer be placed in hotels and B&Bs but rather must be placed through the National Transfer Scheme into foster placements under the Children Act.

Our commitment to being a **City of Sanctuary** has seen 40 Afghan households resettled by the council, alongside our successful Homes for Ukraine scheme. In 2024, we were awarded Library Service of Sanctuary. The award recognises the efforts of our library staff to create a culture of welcome for refugees and asylum seekers.

In August 2023 we agreed and launched a **new Accessible City Strategy** to ensure barrier-free services that promote independence and equity of access, opportunity, and representation for disabled people and their diverse identities.

We progressed the development of the city council's **Anti-Racist Strategy** with a range of programmes and events, including a multiagency conference for Black history Month in October 2024, to also reaffirm allyship and action following the far-right violence of the summer of 2024. Additionally, in partnership with the Family justice quality circle, we developed a 'family court anti-racist practice statement', ratified for use in Sussex Family Courts, by the Sussex Family Justice Board.

We have developed a new **Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit to support trans and gender diverse children and young people to thrive in their education**. The toolkit helps staff and governors make informed decisions about how to promote the welfare of students who are gender exploring or meet the definition of being transgender.

We **engaged with and supported diverse community groups** including the TNBI Round Table, Disability Panel, Interfaith Group, BME & migrant groups, older people's tenant groups, groups tackling violence against women and girls, and city safety forums, to ensure diverse voices shape council policy and services. We delivered a range of **cultural and community events**, included Armed Forces Day, LGBT+ History Month, Black History Month, in support of our diverse communities and cultural spaces. This includes **support for the city's LGBTQ+ communities and spaces**, meeting regularly with community representatives, listening and responding to concerns.

Working to reduce inequality

With resident, partner and staff input we developed the **Brighton & Hove Cost of Living Plan** and set up a Poverty Reduction Steering Group. **Extensive support for residents impacted by the cost-of-living crisis** has been delivered through the Household Support Fund and the Brighton & Hove Fairness Fund, including food, fuel, and essential items. We have used these funds to provide free school meal vouchers to eligible children during holiday periods and for those educated outside of mainstream school, supported families in buying school uniforms, worked with local food partnerships and emergency support networks, and supported pensioners on low incomes to meet their fuel bills.

Almost **1,000 city businesses have now signed up to the Brighton & Hove Living Wage**. These businesses are committed to paying their staff a real living wage and we continue to work closely with the Brighton Chamber to manage and deliver the campaign.

Our Welfare Rights Team used data analytics to identify and target older people on low incomes to promote uptake of Pension Credit and access to the Winter Fuel payment. We agreed the Brighton & Hove Food Poverty Action Plan 2025-2030 to **strengthen our approach to tackling food poverty**. Growing, cooking and food waste prevention are key themes in our approach.

We **supported community activity and volunteering** by funding local community and voluntary organisations, fostering active citizenship and stronger community networks. Our Fairness Fund for People & Place funded small community groups working to tackle poverty. Other funding for the voluntary and community sector included the Communities Fund 2023/24, the BME Engagement Fund and the Community Catalyst Fund. In 2024 we brought together different funding streams into a new Thriving Communities Investment Fund for 2025 to 2027.

In partnership with Trust for Developing Communities and social enterprise partners across the city, we secured almost £1.3m from the Climate Action Fund **to empower disadvantaged and under-represented communities in Brighton & Hove to participate in climate action**.

A city where people feel safe and welcome

Our goal is to keep people safe and to create a city that is welcoming for all.

Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour

We have reviewed and refreshed the city's **Community Safety Strategy**, working with the Violence Reduction Unit **to reduce violent crime and to divert young people away from crime**.

Creating safe public spaces that are accessible for all

Last year we launched our new strategy and action plan for **tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence** to create a better future where violence is prevented, survivors are supported, and perpetrators are held accountable.

Homes for everyone

Our goal is to deliver accessible, affordable, and high-quality homes for all residents of Brighton & Hove

Improving housing quality

Last year we **invested £89.735 million in our council homes**. This included £14.7 million to ensure building, health and fire safety compliance alongside planned maintenance, repairs and major projects including delivering new council homes. We have worked hard to address the backlog of routine repairs, with over 3,000 repairs carried out each month and a new materials supply chain introduced. Our repairs and maintenance service offered **apprenticeships** to 25 individuals in 2024/25.

Over a third of the city's residents rent privately. **To drive up standards, we introduced a city-wide Additional Licensing Scheme** for houses in multiple-occupation and a **Selective Licensing Scheme** in 4 wards. Over 8,000 properties in the city are covered by the licensing schemes.

In 2024/25 we invested £2.28m to provide **adaptations to help disabled council tenants** stay in their homes with 232 adaptations completed. We also allocated £2.03 million in Disabled Facilities Grant funding to help private renters and homeowners, with 171 adaptations delivered.

We agreed to a £30.8 million **investment in sustainability measures for council homes** over the next five years, including improved insulation and other energy efficiency measures. As part of this programme, over 400 solar panels have already been installed on council homes with a further 170 to be fitted by the end of March 2025. We also contacted over 647 landlords between April and December 2024 to **enforce energy efficiency standards in the private sector**.

Increasing housing supply

Homes for everyone, a new housing strategy for 2024 to 2029, was approved in October 2024. This sets out five priorities for tackling the city's housing crisis and delivering accessible, affordable and high-quality homes for everyone in Brighton & Hove. In 2023/24, **1,075 homes were delivered across the city**, the highest number since 2013. 318 (24%) of these were affordable homes, including 127 new council homes at Denman Place in Coldean. A further 62 former council homes were bought back by the council.

226 affordable homes were delivered in 2024/25. This includes **95 additional council homes** including 21 homes purchased at the St Aubyn's development in Rottingdean. Construction has also begun on 294 affordable homes with a further 137 in the design phase. In 2024/25, **145 privately owned homes** that had been empty for over a year were **brought back into use**.

Improving housing support for residents

We have established a **new housing advice and triage service** leading to increased homelessness preventions and early interventions. We have also improved progress against our key customer service measures, including almost doubling the number of applications processed per month on the Housing Register. We **recommissioned our rough sleeping and single homeless support services** to reduce levels of rough sleeping and improve move-on from temporary into settled accommodation.

We agreed a **new housing allocation policy** to increase opportunities to prevent homelessness, simplify the process for applicants and increase the transparency of our decision-making. The new policy gives greater priority to people fleeing domestic abuse and to serving and former members of the armed forces.

Working with our partners, **we completed a pilot of a new integrated service model for people who are homeless with multiple and compound health and social needs**. The evaluation of this pilot will help inform the development of our new homeless and rough sleeping strategy

We developed a **new joint protocol to improve our response to homeless 16- and 17-year-olds**. A **care leavers' housing protocol** was also agreed, ensuring that every one of our looked after children has a firm offer of accommodation which meets their needs on leaving council care. As a City of Sanctuary, we met our goal of **resettling at least 42 Afghan households** (186 individuals) by the end of March 2025.

We supported tenants to access the benefits they are entitled to, **reducing rent arrears and improving rent collection**. We worked with the Community Safety Project to establish four pilot projects to **reduce anti-social behaviour**. We have undertaken **targeted work to reduce fly-tipping and tackle litter** on our estates.

Outcome 3: A city that helps people to thrive

A better future for children and young people

Our goal is to keep children safe, for no child, young person or family to be left behind, and to provide high quality, inclusive, and accessible services.

Keeping children and young children safe and ensuring no child or family is left behind

Ofsted inspectors confirmed in 2024 that the council delivers **outstanding children's services to our most vulnerable families with strong social work and family help**.

We've refreshed our **Corporate Parenting Strategy** and further strengthened ways for children in care and care leavers to have their voices heard.

We've **launched a local Mockingbird project to support foster carers and children in foster care**. The project provides a network of experienced foster carers to support the children in care much like an extended family, giving respite care when foster carers need a break.

Developing our prevention and family support offer

Our Family Hubs offer support to all families in Brighton & Hove with children aged from 0 to 19. Young people with special educational needs or disabilities can receive services up to age 25. Some 27 community and partner organisations also offer their services at our four hubs across the city. Over the last two years, 3414 people accessed support from the Family Hubs.

Our health visitors provide a proactive, universal service for all children 0-5 years and for vulnerable populations targeted according to need.

They work with families to identify individual health needs, enhance health and reduce health inequalities. Our most recent figures show that over 12,000 people were in contact with our Health Visiting Service over the year.

We have embedded a Right Support at the Right Time model alongside a relationship-based practice model across all our children's services. The approach covers universal provision for all children, more structured and focused help where a child has additional needs, and specialist services to address acute or chronic need.

We have brought together our Mental Health Support Teams and a new school-based counselling pilot into a single Schools Mental Health Service. This enables a graduated approach to **mental health support for children and young people**. The service has also increased its voice and participation work to understand and incorporate the views of different groups of young people.

We've also **invested in youth services provision across the city**, securing new youth clubs in communities where they are needed.

Supporting the provision of high quality and inclusive education from early years through to adult learning

We celebrated Brighton & Hove achieving the nation's **highest take up of Early Years Free Entitlement among disadvantaged 2-year-olds**.

Overall **academic outcomes for pupils across the city are in line or above national averages at all levels**. Reading outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are above the national average in our primary schools.

In the past year we consulted on and agreed **changes to school admission arrangements aiming to improve choice and make the process fairer and more equitable**. We introduced a new Free School Meals priority and made important changes to secondary school admissions, with a new oversubscription criterion to assist in tackling educational disadvantage.

We are proud to have implemented a **comprehensive anti-racist education training programme** for school governors and staff to support schools develop an anti-racist approach to education. We also deliver a **nationally recognised environmental education programme**.

We have **extended our special educational needs and disability online information offer**, launching our Connect with Digital Family Hubs service to help parents, carers, and young people find and access family support more easily.

Working with partners to deliver ambitious employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities

We secured **Turing Scheme funding for several local young people to take up international study and work placements**, unlocking life-changing experiences for those taking part. Our **new city careers website** provides employment advice, tips on successful job hunting and sign posting to other sources of information and support.

A recent Ofsted inspection of our Adult Learning offer has praised Ofsted has praised the service's 'ambitious vision' and 'inclusive training'.

Living and ageing well

Our goal is to promote and improve health and wellbeing, to reduce health inequalities, and to support people to live independent and fulfilling lives

Enabling people to live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives

In August 2023 we launched the Age and Dementia Friendly Business Recognition Scheme with a toolkit that **supports organisations to take simple steps to become more inclusive and accessible to people with dementia**. We continued to fund the Ageing Well Service 50+, **offering information and advice, befriending, group and one-to-one activity, as well as volunteering opportunities and health promotion for older people**. Last year the service supported 4,466 service users. Last year, 480 referrals were made from our seniors housing schemes to help residents maintain their health, safety and wellbeing.

Each autumn we deliver the two week Ageing Well Festival with over 4,000 people attending 149 events at 58 venues across the city in 2024. We also deliver a two-week summer TAKEPART Festival, offering around 4,000 people of all ages an **opportunity to take part in community sport, dance, exercise, and physical activity**. We worked with 24 community dance groups to create Dance Active, Brighton & Hove's key celebratory intergenerational dance events involving 210 participants from ages 7 to 77.

We have **increased access to community mental health support** for adults with mental health and wellbeing needs through the UOK service, delivered by a network of local community and voluntary sector partners. We have also **increased access to structured treatment for people experiencing harm from drug and alcohol use**. The service has supported over 2,770 adults to access treatment.

We jointly commissioned the Trust for Developing Communities and the Hangleton and Knoll Project to deliver the **Community Health Inequalities Programme (CHIP)** to work with communities in the most deprived areas in the city to **reduce barriers to and increase residents' confidence and uptake of health and well-being services**. In 2023/24 this programme had over 8000 attendees at health events across the city with 770 health checks, 987 clinical referrals and 2168 prevention referrals.

We commission the Sussex Community Foundation Trust **Oral Health Promotion team** who last year provided over **62 different sessions on oral health** in a variety of settings, they also provided support for toothbrushing at breakfast clubs, training for nursery staff and information for parents and carers on toothbrushing. The team also worked **with older and vulnerable residents with poorer oral health** including providing bespoke advice, including a mobile service for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers groups, people experiencing homelessness and refugees and asylum seekers.

We have provided an **agile response to threats to health for our residents**, for example the roll out of the Mpox vaccination programme to higher risk people.

Providing joined up services to ensure everyone has access to the information, advice and services they need

We have developed an **online self-service Adult Social Care Hub** to make it easier for people to find information and advice about support options. We reviewed and developed council web pages on Adult Social Care to **improve customer experience and give key information** at the earliest stage. We also reviewed phonelines and referral pathways **to help direct customers to the right service** at the first available opportunity.

We now have an Easy Read Information Hub on the council website **to make information more easily accessible for people with learning disabilities**. We also added British Sign Language resources to our website **to support those who have hearing loss to access information about our services**.

We helped **2,046 older people to link in with services and activities** via the Ageing Well service single point of contact. Our seniors housing schemes have offered residents a range of activities and events to keep well and maintain social connectivity.

Some 4,231 people have **accessed local health and wellbeing advice and services** for stopping smoking, reducing alcohol intake, losing weight or becoming more active through our Healthy Lifestyles Team and the Let's Get Moving programme. We are proud to be one of the most active cities in the country. We also **improved services and support** available through our partnership with the Hangleton and Knoll Project, including **developing skills and confidence in local people to access support**.

Ensuring there is safe, effective, sustainable and high-quality health and care provision in the city

We have worked to **prevent lengthy hospital stays by supporting people with complex needs** through the work of the new Admission Preventions team, freeing up much needed A&E bed space in the Royal Sussex County Hospital. We also delivered a 'Stay Strong, Steady, and Independent' campaign, working with over 20 partners and offering over 140 free activities and training courses to improve people's strength and balance and reduce the risk of falls. In collaboration with NHS Sussex and our community health partners in the Integrated Care Partnership we have delivered the first phase of the **new Integrated Community Teams and our Multiple Compound Needs service transformation programme**.

We worked in partnership with Healthwatch to **deliver the Homecare Checks service**, regularly visiting and interviewing people in the city who receive homecare services, to ensure the quality of services are monitored and supporting people's wellbeing. We also supported providers in the city to **provide good quality and safe care** with support from our Quality Monitoring Team.

We **improved the response times for people who need equipment** delivered by Community Equipment Service to ensure safety and support wellbeing. We also led the **development of a new multi-agency risk management framework** supported by the Safeguarding Adults Board. The new framework strengthens partnership working across the city to **support people experiencing multiple disadvantage and risk of harm**.

We introduced a **new requirement for our care providers to sign up to the Skills for Care LGBTQ+ Learning Framework**. We extended funding for an accommodation service to **support people returning to the community from mental health hospitals**.

We have launched a new assessment & commissioning tool to use in partnership with local providers. The tool will support **improved quality assurance and contract monitoring**, as well as supporting providers to identify improvement actions for their services.

Outcome 4: A responsive council with well-run services

Our goal is to be a learning council, responsive and with well-run services, a council that listens to its communities and delivers positive outcomes for the city.

Meeting the needs of our residents and other customers

Over the last two years, **we have made significant progress with improving access to council services and enhancing our customer's experience.** Listening to feedback on how much some customers value face to face interaction **we have extended in person support**, including new helpdesks in two libraries to support residents who are unable to access council services online or by phone. In addition, our four Family Hubs offer face-to-face assistance for a wide range of needs. A specialist homelessness helpdesk is now available to support people experiencing homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

For customers who prefer to access our services online or by phone we have improved our offer with **free access to computers and telephones now available at all four family hubs and 13 libraries**, so those without personal devices can still connect with council services. We have **introduced a new telephone system with features requested by customers** including queue position updates and call recording.

We have sought feedback from residents and other customers on our plans and services with a range of methods, including standing consultation groups including our tenant and leaseholder forums, the older people's forum and the youth council. We have held public events, inviting participants to Reimagine Brighton & Hove and to take part in a budget simulator event to help us make decisions about future spending. Our new digital engagement platform *Your Voice*, helped us consult on our housing strategy, proposed school allocation policy changes, and much more. We also conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys to track our improvement journey over time.

Our ways of working

We have **worked to recruit and retain a diverse, skilled workforce which reflects the communities we serve.** With a major organisational redesign, we have put in place a new leadership structure and learning framework to better deliver our priorities within the constraints of our budget. We have made good progress with our People Strategy, having seen improvements in the BME and disability pay gaps, as well as an increase in the council's BME, disability and LGBT staffing levels.

Developing and motivating our staff to do their best, we launched a universal and enhanced digital skills learning pathway, and our digital champions network is helping staff work confidently and effectively as we introduce new technology and systems. Improvements in staff skills have led to more efficient working and improved services for customers. We have also seen successes in our diverse talent programmes, positively supporting staff from diverse groups to progress in their careers.

Good governance and financial resilience

In 2024, **we moved to a cabinet system providing opportunity for more effective decision making and political leadership**. We have delivered safe and secure elections and by elections so that residents could exercise their right to vote in Brighton and Hove. In 2024, Brighton & Hove City Council Legal Services was named "Legal Team of the Year" at the Local Government Lawyer's Awards.

In very challenging times, **we have managed to deliver a balanced budget for the last two years, 2023/24 and 2024/25**. The newly launched **Corporate Debt Management Policy** will improve our ethical approach to effectively collecting income and the recovery of outstanding amounts due to the organisation. This is in line with the latest research evidence and **ethical collection practice to supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities**.