



Budget EIA Workshop Report

The views of Brighton & Hove Youth Council on the
BHCC Budget 2012/13 - Equality Impact Assessment

December 2011

Article 12 UNCRC – Children and young people have the right to express opinions on matters which affect them and to have those opinions taken seriously.





Brighton & Hove
City Council

Contents

- Introduction
- Executive Summary:
 - Main Findings
 - Recommendations
- Consultation Analysis & conclusion
- Appendices

Listening to Young People from Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove EIA: reflections of young people aged 13 – 25

Introduction

About this report

The purpose of the report is to highlight the views of young people on the proposed service changes and impact to young people and the wider community around 6 key areas identified in the Budget 2012/13 – Children's Services, City Regulation and Infrastructure, Housing, Adult Social Care, Resource and Finance and Communities.

The following details the potential impact and specific changes to each key area as identified by service managers.

Impact and service changes

1. Children's Services

Impact

- Protection of funding for carers and respite care
- New Youth Services strategy
- Targeting of those most in need
- Provision of services to schools

Specific changes

Looked after children, Education Welfare, Sure start, and Youth Employability.

2. City Regulation and Infrastructure

Impact

- Less revenue spend but more capital spend on transport and the public realm
- Review of refuse & recycling service
- Increases in fees and charges
- Less subsidised bus routes
- Closure of less used public toilets

Specific changes

Less spend on preventative highway maintenance and reduction in street lighting and street cleaning.

3. Housing

Impact

- Efficiency savings on Supporting People provision and repairs contract
- Protection of the Preventing Homelessness Grant
- Use of leasing for temporary accommodation

Specific changes

Rent and service charge increases, staff restructures in private sector housing renewal and commissioning.

4. **Adult Social Care** **not about reduction in services but about doing things differently*

Impact

- Personal budgets
- More independent living
- Targeted services to those with most complex needs
- Activity rather than building based services

Specific changes

Transport and accommodation.

5. **Resources and Finance**

Impact

- Efficiency savings in accommodation, ICT and other internal services
- Development of woodland burial site
- Reorganisations in Registration Service and Life Events team
- Reduction to Benefits Service
- Hove Town Hall no longer to be used as ceremony room
- Review of fees and charges in Bereavement Services and Register Office

6. **Communities**

Impact

- Generation of income
- Changes to library opening hours
- Withdrawal of Mobile Library
- RNIB subscriptions for individuals
- Family Intervention project changes
- Reduction in sports development projects
- Access Manager post
- End of 8-13 year olds youth pilot projects

Service Information

Brighton and Hove City Council Budget 2012/13 - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The council is currently setting the budget for its spending in the city over the next two years. The amount of money available is less this year and next so changes must be made in the way we offer services. BHCC want to make these changes as fair as possible to everyone.

As part of this process BHCC are committed to identifying the potential for positive and negative impacts of budget changes on different groups in the city – and then using that information to make decisions.

BHCC would like views from groups and individuals in the city on:

- what should be considered in the budget-setting process, and
- what actions might help to reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts.

All services areas which might be subject to a change have completed an Equality Impact Assessment screening document for the budget proposals in their area.

BHCC Budget EIA consultation

Following a presentation to the full Youth Council at their monthly meeting on 7th December 2011 young people signed up to a consultation workshop to discuss and explore service changes and impact.

On the 13th December, 11 young people from the Youth Council – 5 female and 6 male, 3 are BME – attended a two hour workshop, facilitated by the Participation Team, a volunteer and the Youth Service Manager.

Following a brief introduction and presentation the group divided into 2 smaller groups, jointly facilitated by youth workers and the young people themselves, to discuss the 6 areas. Each group focused on 3 areas each, main points of impact and addressed 5 key questions. The groups then rotated. The views of each group were written down on flip chart and then both groups were brought back together at the end to feedback their views as a whole to each other.

Their important messages and suggestions will be given to BHCC Head of Equalities.

The following are the 5 questions that formed the focus of the consultation:

- **Are they the right ones?**
- **What other impacts are possible?**
- **Are the actions identified the right ones?**
- **What else would help?**
- **What is the likely overall impact?**

Executive Summary

The following consultation findings summarises responses to 5 key questions and main impact points of the Budget EIA.

The actual notes and list of comments can be seen under Appendix 1*

Main findings and recommendations

Children's Services

This was expectantly an area that the young people have experience; felt was important and directly affected them. Young people highlighted

- The needs of vulnerable people, including respite care for carers to give families a deserved break.
- They also felt that those most vulnerable should get more opportunities, regardless of any changes to the budget.
- More interesting activities need to be provided also.
- Sure Start was considered to be very important to parents.
- Some also felt that all areas need to be provided for, not just the obvious ones in need.

On the subject of youth employability, young people felt that employers need to be more accepting to young people, as they need to gain experience for jobs later on in life.

City Regulation and Infrastructure

This was a very popular subject of discussion and young people demonstrated their awareness of the needs of others and how this area affects the wider community.

- More power given to the local authority (decentralising) to have a say and make decisions on issues locally.
- More influence on being able to use capital money to fund revenue projects and vice versa.

Bus transport systems in the city were the biggest issue with the young people.

- They felt that local bus routes should be more subsidised, as it is more beneficial to improve certain routes.
- Changing or reducing bus routes – especially school buses - could have a negative effect, such as even more overcrowding, less frequency and more people using their cars instead.
- Creating and maintaining cycle lanes in the city is also important.

Improving the quality of public toilets and provision of baby changing facilities is an important issue, as is keeping the streets consistently clean and street lighting provided and maintained in essential areas.

Housing

Further explanation of this service was needed as it may not be something they have direct experience as young people.

- Rent or service charge increases should be avoided, as it could create more inequality.
- Everyone should be entitled to a bare minimum standard of living and not go without what is essential.
- Council building contracts should be renegotiated, to get the best deal possible.
- Try to create more temporary accommodation in Brighton & Hove.
- Vacant properties in the city should be made into affordable housing.
- Need to keep Sussex Central YMCA as a viable housing option.

Adult Social Care

- They felt that there should be a more practical approach to personal budgets and independent living.
- Needs to be more sheltered accommodation and that unused accommodation should be used for sheltered housing.
- They suggested more activities to take place in sheltered accommodation too.
- Resources need to be focused more towards those in need, with enough provision and a degree of consistency of staff working with those with more complex needs.

Resources and Finance

- It was generally felt that those that earn a higher wage or receive big bonuses – such as Bankers – should pay more towards things, including the Bereavement Service. This service shouldn't charge more and provide a grant to those below a certain level of earnings.

Young people felt impact and changes for the service needed to be explained in more detail as the information provided was unclear “*which cuts are proposed to the benefits service.*”

Young people said that a woodland burial site is a good idea, but it is important to concentrate on looking after the living first.

Communities

A lot of discussion was had around Communities.

- Access to affordable activities was a big issue, as activities are too expensive already.
- If fee's increase, such as Music fee's, then this could increase inequality.
- The Family Intervention Project is too important to cut. Families should be supported, as feel this will have a detrimental effect on young people in the long term if they're not.

The group felt that it is important to have services operating from key community buildings more, such as Schools and Leisure Centres. Young people use or would use libraries in their schools more than separate dedicated buildings, so cutting opening hours in these would not have too much effect on young people.

Existing projects were agreed to be more important than setting up new ones at the moment. These are important to young people, especially being healthy. Less duplication of projects or services as well, spreading them out across different areas was felt to be a good idea. If they help peoples future, then that is more important than just having short term 'fun'.

Extra services such as for parents and toddlers are thought to be important too.

Consultation Analysis and Conclusion

The young people who took part embraced and engaged well in the consultation, contributing very useful and constructive varied feedback, which helped to make an interesting and lively debate. Even when opinions were conflicting, they respectfully listened.

Young people understood the basis of the impact cuts will have on service areas but further explanation was needed to summarise an otherwise a long and complex document.

Due to the tight timeframe a 'drop-in' session was organised. This was very well received as it enabled greater participation of young people; some were able to join in later or leave earlier. Young people's voice may have been lost if times of attendance were strict and restrictive. The presentation given the previous week proved beneficial as it gave them a better understand of the 'refresher' at the beginning of the session and the purpose of the consultation. This in turn allowed more time for discussion.

However, with so much to cover in detail, there almost wasn't enough time for both groups to cover all of the subjects in one sitting – even though all the areas were covered between the groups. It was very intense and the group worked extremely hard.

The team of workers performed well together with the different groups, to help assist and facilitate the workshop in a meaningful and structured way to time. It was also good to have the Youth Service Manager there, who had the knowledge and experience to be able to answer young people directly – which I'm sure his face-to-face presence was appreciated by the young people there.

The findings were very useful and relate directly to the areas potentially affected by the EIA; this is a better process than using the consultation portal.

Members of the Children in Care Council were invited to attend, but unfortunately none came to the workshop. It would have been good to have their perspective, especially from care leavers around housing issues for instance.

Overall, the young people displayed a great awareness of the issues that they and the wider community face around the potential impact on equality in different area of society. They also learned a lot too.

The youth council members enjoyed the experience and seem keen to do any follow up that may be necessary – which may mean another focus workshop or taking it to wider community of young people, who they represent.

Appendix 1

EIA notes from BHYC consultation group on 13/12/11

Children's services

- Protection of carers and respite care is a good thing and has a positive impact- gives families a break which they wouldn't get without respite care
- Everyone is included in the new youth service strategy
- Giving more vulnerable opportunities no matter budget
- Looking at all areas not just obvious (in need) areas
- More interesting activities
- School nurses needed if they go schools will have a choice
- Sure start important to parents!
- Employers be more accepting to young people
- Gain experience for a later job

City Regulation and infrastructure

- Revenue and capital should be more inter-linked
- Council should have more power on local issues than the government
- Decentralising will need admin cost
- More beneficial to let bus companies subsidised bus routes
- More people using their cars if less buses
- More subsidised bus routes
- Do not cut school buses as over crowding happening already
- Target reasons why people drink more in Brighton e.g. think 25, they don't think it's the right action to take
- Congestion charge?
- Provision needed for baby changing facilities- must be available
- Street lighting needs to be maintained
- Like idea of more money on transport
- Don't get rid of age restriction barriers (Alcohol and Tobacco)
- Increase charges on certain things such as fines and museums
- Don't you dare unsubsidised bus routes, certain bus routes need reviewing. Changing bus routes have a negative effect
- If they put money up on parking people are encouraged not to drive
- Add bus routes and increase frequency on certain bus routes
- Close or improve quality of public toilets focusing on the grotty ones on the random corners. Improve quality that way people wont mind paying
- Street clean must be kept in essential areas
- Street lighting in important places such as parks and alley ways and shop road lighting
- Highway maintenance is good if needed
- Cycle lanes need to be made up for long term – more people in Brighton cycling, maintenance is a problem if roadwork timings are not good, change to before and after

Housing

- Try not to increase rent or services chargers as it creates more inequality

- Everyone should have bare minimum
- Renegotiate building contracts
- Vacant properties in the city should be made into affordable accommodation
- Should keep Sussex Central YMCA housing
- Try to make more temporary accommodation in Brighton and Hove

Adult Social Care

- Personal budgets/ independent living – practical, should be more sheltered accommodation, unused accommodation use for sheltered accommodation
- Target resources to more in need
- Activities should take place in sheltered accommodation
- Complex needs- keep same people as they are aware of people's needs- need to make sure you provide

Resource and finance

- Bereavement service shouldn't charge more- should grant exemption- should charge more to people who earn over a certain amount
- Vague info- what cuts to benefits service? – needs to be clearer
- Silly should cut bankers bonus!
- Should target those on good wage
- Woodland Burial site – it's a good thing but important to look after the living first

Communities

- Use schools and leisure centres more
- Centralization- put everything in the same place
- Important for young people and being healthy
- Less duplication- spreading out of services for different areas
- Would have a domino effect if cut as people won't be able to get to services
- Existing projects are more important than new ones
- If they help people's future that's more important than if it's just for fun
- Will increase inequality if music fees rise
- Important for young people
- Too expensive already
- Cutting hours in libraries wouldn't have too much impact- for young people they have libraries at school
- Expensive enough already
- Provide important extra services e.g. for toddlers and parents
- Definitely no increase in car parks in important places like hospitals
- Family intervention project – we believe it's too important to cut, important for equality, cutting would be bad in the long term
- RNIB loss of audio books and general decrease of funding for RNIB