

Brighton & Hove - The Connected City

A summary introduction to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Brighton & Hove

Vision

Brighton & Hove - the connected city. Creative and dynamic, inclusive and caring. A fantastic place to live, work and visit.

Welcome to our Community Strategy – The Connected City

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the fourth edition of our Sustainable Community Strategy for Brighton & Hove. Our city is a wonderful place with an international reputation as a 'must see' destination. Celebrated for its diversity and its energy, it has weathered the long period of slow growth in the UK economy well compared to many other UK locations.

Since the publication of the last strategy in May 2010, partnership working has supported falling unemployment and high levels of satisfaction with the city among its citizens and with visitors. However, we face many challenges and are still some way from ensuring that everyone achieves their full potential in life.

Some of the challenges highlighted in previous community strategies are still with us, among them climate change, transport and pupil achievement. However, the city's resolve to address them is evident and captured in detail in other plans underpinning this overarching strategy.

Brighton & Hove has earned a fine reputation for successful partnership working, and this will become even more important as the public sector goes through revolutionary changes and the private sector slowly emerges from the torpor that has gripped it for the past five years. Vital too, will be the voluntary & community sector as it develops its role of providing key services.

With the development of the wider city region, working with our neighbouring local authorities to pool ideas, resources and solutions will be increasingly important.

This updated strategy is intended to be a 'living document' evolving and adapting to meet changing circumstances. In this summary booklet you will get a flavour of our ambitions and our priorities for the future of our extraordinary city while the website will give greater detail. We hope you enjoy the read!

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Tony Mernagh
Chair of Brighton & Hove Connected

Brighton & Hove - The Connected City

Brighton & Hove has long aspired and broadly succeeded, to connect people with place, business with community and opportunity with equality. These connections and the value they generate, whether in better public services, stronger communities, growth of the economy, shared information, reduced cost, or the bringing together of partnerships are ever more important as we think about our city and its place in the world.

Our city is located between the sea and the South Downs National Park. It is known for its easy-going approach to life, quirky shopping, restaurants, festivals and beautiful architecture. Many people choose to come and live in the city for the opportunities it offers. However, Brighton & Hove is one of the most deprived areas in the South East and has a population with significant inequalities and health needs.

One of the world's first seaside resorts, Brighton & Hove is famous for its vibrant, cosmopolitan lifestyle with a very strong arts and cultural offer. The city is also a major European business conference and tourist destination which attracts around 8.5 million visitors per year and supports established cultural activities such as the Brighton Festival, exhibitions and community based events.

In 2011, there were 273,400 people living in the city with a predicted increase to 291,000 by 2030. The greatest increase is in those aged 25-34 and 50-59. There will also be more children under 15 years old and slightly more people aged 75 years or over.

Brighton & Hove has a flourishing community and voluntary sector, made up of over 1,600 groups and organisations, which provide services and support to citizens of the city. They work with public and private sector partners to ensure that those who are in need have their needs met. The local community and voluntary sector is a vital part of our local economy as well as our support services. A citywide survey, known as the City Tracker, highlighted that 93% of people who use local charities and community groups were satisfied with the services they receive. The national survey of charities and social enterprises also reports a greater understanding, respect for and valuing of the community and voluntary sector organisations in Brighton & Hove by its public sector partners than other comparable areas, demonstrating good relations between the different sectors in the city.

Our city is a key part of a much wider economic geography that stretches to Lewes and Newhaven in the east, Shoreham and Worthing in the west and north towards Hassocks, Burgess Hill and Crawley. Within this area, there are approximately 780,000 residents, of which over 470,000 are aged 20-64 years. This is part of the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area.

Benefiting from and supporting that core offer are two successful universities, an innovative business community driven by a busy throng of entrepreneurs, a mass of savvy independent traders and a whole raft of artists, creative people and opinion

shapers. This world-class university offer provides the fourth best qualified workforce in the UK, which has fuelled knowledge intensive growth through the Creative, Digital and Information Technology (CDIT) Sector. Our city also benefits from emerging opportunities in environmental industries, proximity to London, Gatwick Airport, two Channel ports within the city region and good infrastructure links northwards.

Our city has an international reputation, growing influence and a reach far beyond its geographical size. It seeks attention and looks for opportunities to make itself known, not least because one of our most important economic drivers is tourism, with 8.5 million visitors attracted each year by our vibrant cultural and environmental offer.

Our economy has endured the stresses of the global economic situation because of the strength of this unique offer. People like to come here, not only because of the 'big ticket' attractions, but because our city looks and feels different. The way we celebrate our communities, our cultural attractions, the quality of our urban environment, surrounding downland and coastal sea, all of these things direct the look and feel of Brighton & Hove.

We need however to think about our city anew, in light of the changing economic challenges and our position in a global marketplace. How do we want to progress? How will we sustain our economy? How can we enhance our attractiveness? How should we foster relationships within our city and with our neighbours? How should we look after the vulnerable and protect our diversity?

Only by working in partnership to address these issues can we sustain our city's future, and we must do it in the knowledge that we are going to be less able to call upon government support.

This is the ambition of Brighton & Hove Connected. This strategy document outlines how we intend to improve connections across the city and outside its boundaries to ensure its sustainable future and the greatest possible benefits for its citizens.

More information about the purpose and membership of Brighton & Hove Connected and our other partnerships, can be found on our website (new website address to follow in printed version)

Principles

In aspiring to better connect our city all our work is guided by two key principles. We want to increase our equality and improve our engagement.

1. Increasing our equality

Our city has many high achievers, successful businesses, knowledgeable graduates and skilled entrepreneurs. We want success to be an aspiration for everyone, whether that's a successful business, a successful family or success in employment.

For some people however, success can seem distant. For some, life has become an unmanageable series of problems so we must support those who feel furthest away from success. It's important they feel more engaged, better connected and more able to share in the success of Brighton & Hove.

In order to re-connect those in need, we must focus on the co-ordination and provision of timely and accurate advice and support, making sure it is accessible, obvious and provided to the people who need it most.

We will provide advice and support as early as we can as we know that early intervention is more efficient and gives better outcomes for people. We will also work with communities to make them more resilient and better able to deal with the issues that they face

By doing this, we can start reducing the inequality where residents in certain neighbourhoods of the city, and from different ethnic backgrounds live shorter, less successful lives than their near neighbours.

In supporting and promoting initiatives that reduce inequality we can reduce financial exclusion, extol the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and improve the lives of the most vulnerable; improving equality for the city at large.

2. Improving our engagement

Our city is dynamic, it does not stand still and it can be easy for communities, or indeed individuals to become disconnected. We work hard to ensure that the many and varied communities are aware of and appreciate one another. The diversity of our city is one of its greatest strengths and we aspire to nurture and encourage our communities to collaborate.

The success of some of our larger cultural institutions and events underlines the diversity, tolerance, acceptance and social connectedness of our communities. This coming together has been supported and encouraged by Brighton & Hove Connected in the knowledge that this is what the city expects and that success comes when all participants feel engaged and valued.

It's a particular character of the city that people and communities expect to be asked their opinion and furthermore that those opinions will be taken into account. In Brighton & Hove the legitimacy and right of communities to be heard is not questioned but encouraged with time and resources deployed to turn those opinions into actions. As a partnership we expect our members to talk to the people they provide services for and to listen and act upon what they say

It's important we communicate and engage, by doing so we seek to understand and support the aspirations of our communities. If we continue to do this effectively, the more communities and citizens can make decisions on the things that affect their live. We are committed to greater engagement and to listen harder to the messages we are offered. This is particularly important if we're to ensure we make the most effective use of diminishing resources.

Priorities

Using our five key principles as a guide, we have agreed a set of overarching priorities that we will work collectively to achieve.

1. Economy

Brighton & Hove has a strong, vibrant, healthy economy. Businesses, traders and opinion makers have worked hard and planned well to deal with the harshest consequences of the economic climate and have maintained the buoyancy of the local economy through some difficult times.

Our ability to attract investment and growth must be sustained to provide many of the things that make our city attractive. We need our economy to continue to succeed and must work in ways that are new, collaborative and exploit our assets. We have to make the best strategic use of our limited space, innovatively creating room for businesses to grow.

Good public and private sectors are better for having a strong, broad based economy. Barriers between the sectors are becoming more porous and efficiencies are being realised as both learn from each another.

Our very geography, compactness and proximity to our neighbours, a cheek-by-jowl cosiness that should thrive on good relations, is something we should exploit more strongly. The concept of a city region (a focus on the connected and functional economic area, not just administrative boundaries), takes this into account. It suggests that the combined clout of our region is something worth expressing and deploying. Sheltering under this umbrella will give us a broader reach and louder voice, profiting from an interdependent relationship and allowing us to move away from traditional funding arrangements.

We are fortunate because we have been open to this collaborative ethos for some time, having pursued a partnership approach that supports regeneration, encourages sustainable development and champions, for example, the revolutionary zeal of the digital economy.

2. Children & Young People

It is vitally important that young people get the absolute best start in life and enjoy a stable, healthy childhood, a good education, fun new experiences and the confidence, ability and opportunity to obtain meaningful employment.

Young people should both share in our city's successes and contribute towards it. The attainment of our schools and of our students is good and improving. We want to make stronger the connections between our schools and the job market, especially within digital sectors and emerging technologies.

We must address the growing inequalities within the city. Gaps in attainment dependent on where people come from or where they live are unacceptable.

A good start provides the bedrock for a happy and fulfilling life. What supports young people to thrive, makes the city thrive.

A childhood free of stress, an adolescence appropriately guided and a well managed entry into employment should be the norm. This is not always the case but we have seen a large measure of success in ensuring that young people do not become NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and there are many agencies working in the city to support and provide a great beginning.

3. Health & Wellbeing

Health & Social Care services are integral to the wellbeing of our city and its residents. Even though we are generally a young city, the needs of our older population are ever increasing. The way in which we support them alongside meeting everyone's needs is vital to the wellbeing and vibrancy of our city.

We will work collaboratively with public, private and voluntary care providers to meet the needs of the whole population in an innovative, effective and efficient way as possible. We will ensure that we maximise the use of our housing stock to provide a sound basis for delivering health, care and support services to our more vulnerable citizens.

We are a city that cares about all its vulnerable citizens and will continue to strive to ensure that our support is well directed and effectively delivered

4. Community Safety & Resilience

We all want everybody to feel safe within our city. We work hard to ensure that children are as safe as they can be and that young and old feel safe to be in the city centre at any time of the day or night.

Our city is diverse, in terms of gender, sexuality, age and ethnicity. Our community safety services work with a wide variety of groups to understand their concerns and meet their needs.

We are a very busy city and it is important that we continue to strive to make our roads and travel systems as safe as possible for all of our residents and visitors.

To improve community safety the police work with the local authority, probation services, voluntary organisations and others. We are regarded as an example of good practice for the way in which we manage our night time economy and for our work in reducing business related crime.

5. Environmental Sustainability

Available resources are finite and shrinking. We already use more than we can replace and this is true in terms of both money and our environment. The last couple of decades have made apparent how fragile our ecosystems are and

how large our impact can be without us even noticing. We still face many considerable challenges, including tackling fuel poverty, significantly reducing our carbon footprint and improving our air quality.

If we aspire to maintain the flexibility and comfort of our contemporary lifestyles our city is going to have to consider new economic models that determines more carefully and transparently the use of public money. It will need to demonstrate how we offer services with fewer resources and better connect between the various sectors that deliver them and to benefit from their co-operation. One of the ways in which we can do this, is with the creation of the Biosphere Reserve, which will aid in strengthening the quality of our local environment and enable better partnership working. This will, in turn, help to maintain and improve the environmental quality of our city while budgets are reducing.

As we all think seriously about all the resources we use to maintain the lifestyles we have become familiar with, we can develop an economy that sustains us without damaging the planet.

Partnership approach

Brighton & Hove Connected brings together council, public sector, business, voluntary sector and community leaders. It has an outstanding track record of working together on the things that matter most to the city and its surroundings, including housing, employment, transport and health.

The Partnership has created a number of specialist partnerships to take forward the ambitions and priorities set out within this strategy, among them growing the economy, promoting our cultural offer, supporting learning and connecting services and people.

The partnerships are made up of people who come from private and public sector organisations as well as voluntary and community groups that have the knowledge and skills to deliver for the city.

Partnerships build a better and fairer city

Detailed information on all our work can be found on our website: ([new website address](#) – to follow in printed version)

More information

For further information about the Sustainable Community Strategy, Brighton & Hove Connected, future plans for the city, or if you would like to get involved, please visit our website at (New web address) or contact the Partnerships Team directly:

Telephone: 01273 291128

Email: (new email address)