

Southampton City Council

Organisational Assessment (Summary version)

Dated 9 December 2009



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for an independent overview
of local public services

Southampton City Council

Overall, Southampton City Council performs well

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

Description of scores:

1. An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements, Performs Poorly
2. An organisation that meets only minimum requirements, Performs Adequately
3. An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Well
4. An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Excellently

Summary

Southampton City Council performs well. It has made very good progress on protecting the environment by making streets cleaner, reducing car use and reducing the amount of waste and carbon dioxide produced. It has expanded its innovative energy scheme, which provides heating and cooling for the city by using a sustainable, natural energy source beneath the city. It has made excellent progress on delivering affordable and decent housing, with 372 affordable homes built this year helping residents who cannot afford market-price housing. However, education results are mixed and Ofsted report that Southampton's children's services are performing adequately.

Southampton scores 3 out of 4 for managing its performance. The council is improving the economy and regeneration of the area by offering advice to local people and businesses and improving housing estates such as Thornhill. It has set up a jobs scheme to give apprenticeships to local people who find it hard to get employment. The speed and accuracy of benefits payments have continued to improve, and it has introduced initiatives and support for people who are unable to pay their rent or mortgage.

It continues to perform well with equality issues, helping to ensure more vulnerable people are not disadvantaged. For example it has increased bus travel to hospitals and improved its system for reporting racial incidents. The council has also worked with landlords to improve the standards of houses. Adult Social Care is rated as performing well by the Care Quality Commission.

The council manages its finances well in order to deliver its priorities. It scores 3 out of 4 for use of resources. It has effective reporting arrangements which helps it to maintain spending within budget. The council offers good value for money with its services, and saved £7.9 million last year. Costs are relatively low compared with other councils. Financial standing, risk and asset

management are sound, and this supports the achievement of long-term objectives. The council manages external funding well, receiving £15.6 million last year for various projects.

Political and managerial leadership is good. Councillors and officers work well together. Groups including partners have been set up by the council to address key challenges facing the city such as the local economy and carbon emissions. A councillor post for 'safeguarding children' has been created, giving the welfare of children a clear focus. It manages its risks well and maintains a good system of internal control. This helps it to deliver innovative projects effectively. It has a well-publicised awareness of fraud and corruption policies.

The council works well with partners and has many examples of how joint-working increases capacity. For example, through working together, the region has received £3.6 million in funding towards estate regeneration schemes to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged communities. The Safe City Partnership focuses on key issues of improving safety in neighbourhoods, tackling alcohol related harm and improving the safety of children and young people, which are tackled by all partners working together. The council has also worked with others to introduce an advert-based scheme used to allocate council and housing association homes for residents.

The council still has more work to do to address the city's issues, but is carrying out its plans to address these. It is working with partners to enhance cultural activities in the city and to secure the funding needed to deliver major regeneration schemes. Work to improve community safety continues to be successful, and most types of crime are reducing, but violent crimes are still too high. Education results are below average but are getting better and the council is working to effectively tackle the city's high number of young people not in employment, education or training. It is also working well with partners to reduce the high number of teenage pregnancies.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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