

# Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

## Organisational Assessment (Summary version)

Dated 9 December 2009



**oneplace**

for an independent overview  
of local public services

## Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Overall, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council performs adequately

Managing performance	2 out of 4
Use of resources	3 out of 4
Managing finances	3 out of 4
Governing the business	2 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

The overall organisational assessment score is adequate because it is delivering a mixed level of service in areas that matter most to people, satisfaction levels vary but the Council delivers value for money. It is gradually improving service performance.

There is a difference between the scores for managing performance and use of resources. We decided that the score should be that overall Welwyn Hatfield District Council performs adequately rather than performing well. This is because despite the Council having robust financial aspects of the business they are not consistently delivering quality services and outcomes that matter most to local residents.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council scores 2 out of 4 for managing its performance. The Council consults with local people and knows that they want to improve the town centres, feel safe, recycle more and tackle problems with parking and traffic congestion, whilst keeping council tax as low as possible. Performance overall is variable. There are services which compare with the best performing councils, such as dealing with housing benefits applications and planning applications. There are also service areas which compare badly to others, such as recycling. There are low levels of satisfaction amongst residents, especially around the Council doing a good job, local people feeling they belong to their immediate neighbourhood, and people not treating each other with respect and consideration. Residents also feel they cannot influence council decisions. But, four out of five local people feel that Welwyn Hatfield is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

The Council is gradually improving its services. The impact of the recession poses even greater challenges, but the Council has strengthened its approach to planning, revised its budgets and improved monitoring of progress. The area is becoming safer but the area needs to be cleaner. Recycling levels have not improved and compare poorly to others and public satisfaction with litter is mixed. Affordable housing and decent homes targets are being met but are not improving.

The Council has a good approach to equalities and has a strong and inclusive approach to partnership working. It has slimmed down its management structures so that it can work more efficiently, made considerable efficiency savings over the last few years by outsourcing a number of services. Its approach to monitoring and managing its performance is improving.

The Council scores 3 out of 4 for Use of Resources. The Council links its financial planning with the corporate promises that the community helped to develop. It has low council tax and achieves this by understanding its costs, delivering excellent efficiency savings and delivering value for money. The Council manages the business and performs well in managing its staff.

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/>

Alternative formats - If you require a copy of PDF documents in this site in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call: 0844 798 7070

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ  
Telephone: 0844 798 1212  
Fax: 0844 798 2945  
Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946  
[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)



for an independent overview  
of local public services