

# Brighton & Hove: Fairer, greener, more productive

An economic plan to build  
on our strengths and adapt  
to a better future

2024-2027

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# Summary – building on our strengths and adapting for a better future

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This new economic plan provides the foundation for how the council and its partners will engage to support, diversify, adapt and grow the economy of Brighton & Hove over the next three years.

It is a plan which recognises the challenges we face as a city in the UK economy in 2024, as well as the shared ambition of our partners to work differently to reflect this context. It is developed around the idea of a new economy for Brighton & Hove, a ten-year journey to becoming a city which is more competitive, productive, fairer, and greener.

It recognises that our city is well placed to thrive in activities which will be critical to the UK and that we can do this in a way which is more inclusive and equitable, accelerating our journey to net zero. It is underpinned by Community Wealth Building principles, and the ambition to see a just transition and greater social purpose embedded in our approach to the economy.

It identifies the areas where there is potential and headroom for economic growth and new investment; aspiring for our city to be world renowned in our existing and emerging strengths. It promotes the scaling of our small businesses, alongside new approaches to celebrating and marketing the city. Importantly, it recognises the missed opportunities created by the inequality of the city and the ambition to enable more of the city's communities to be more active in our economy.

This plan will not be delivered solely by Brighton & Hove City Council. It is underpinned by new partnerships and approaches, which explicitly challenge and evolve from how we have worked in the past. It recognises that Brighton & Hove should define its own economic future, that we are a genuinely unique city in the national context and that this can work to our advantage.

Whilst this is a three-year plan, it commences a ten-year strategic journey informed by the following imperatives:

## **10-year Imperatives**

1. Capitalise on our digital competitive advantage
2. Build community involvement as a response to poverty and economic inequality
3. Decarbonise and create a more regenerative economy
4. Build a stronger, more inclusive labour market
5. Celebrate our city and welcome investment
6. A world-leading creative destination worthy of the UK's best small city
7. Build new knowledge partnerships to benefit all of our communities
8. Thrive within a city region with a clear economic identity

For these to be achieved, we will need to make changes to the way we work both within the council and alongside our partners. The focus of our economic plan 2024-2027 will be to guide this transition.

Our activity for the next three years is underpinned by the principles of Community Wealth Building. This means fundamentally changing systems and approaches to ensure that Brighton & Hove's economy evolves with the purpose of improving the city and the lives of its residents. Our action will be framed within this context, and is defined by the following specific, achievable missions.

**By 2027 we will have:**

1. Worked with existing companies (including micro and freelance) to better focus Brighton & Hove's role in a future economy, whilst helping to de-risk diversification, decarbonisation and growth
2. Given local people greater opportunity to influence neighbourhood economies as a foundation for greater participation in Brighton & Hove's economy
3. Ensured that decarbonisation is an acknowledged priority across our economy, creating a more circular and regenerative economy for the city.
4. Ensured residents and employers benefit from the provision of employment and skills support which is linked directly to the needs and opportunities within the local economy.
5. Radically improved our external proposition, international profile and investor experience, to deliver enhanced levels of investment in the city
6. Evolved our role as a destination; altering perceptions and protecting core visitor, heritage and creative & cultural assets
7. Developed a closer three-way relationship between universities, council and business. Driving knowledge exchange and tackling the city's prevailing challenges
8. Created a shared economic vision with our neighbours and a shared long-term plan of action for the City Region economy

Adopting a mission focussed approach means we must be focussed both on new ways of working and new projects. We have set out new partnership and collaboration arrangements, but also committed to specific priority actions which define our strategy.

Alongside the continued growth in output and productivity, our assessment of economic success will be broader in considering what a good future looks like. This will consider broader perceptions of economic value, exploring links between our economy and wellbeing, environment, nature, culture and housing. Built upon the foundations of community wealth building, this is a new type of plan both in terms of our values, and what we value.

# Making the case for a new approach to the economy

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In the five years since our last economic strategy, there have been fundamental changes in both the national and local economy.

Our evidence base reflects on the current position from which this plan will be delivered. It tells us that we need to work differently and adapt to this new context, but that Brighton & Hove is well placed to diversify and grow as a result of emerging opportunities in the UK.

## Recognising the National & Local Challenge

Our economic plan cannot exist in a vacuum. The UK economy is in a period of stagnation. Real wages have not grown in the last 15 years; income inequality is growing across the country; taxes have increased; and foreign direct investment has declined by 11% since Brexit.

Our city is impacted by these larger structural challenges. For residents, the city is becoming increasingly unaffordable, with those on average incomes no longer comfortably able to afford to own or rent a home within Brighton & Hove. The rising cost of essentials means that in real terms pay is decreasing, and certain places and communities are disproportionately impacted by these wider economic challenges.

In areas such as Hangleton and Knoll, Whitehawk, Bevendean and Moulsecoomb, which have the lowest average earnings in the city, these challenges are most acute. These areas are also often further away from essential services, and housing stock can be of poorer quality, meaning residents are more likely to be exposed to fuel poverty and food insecurity. It can be difficult for residents in these areas to access opportunities within our city centre, due to barriers such as caring responsibilities, transport costs, journey times and not having the required skills. This has become a much more significant consideration since we last produced an economic strategy.

Commercially, there are fewer businesses scaling up relative to other UK cities. Availability and quality of commercial space is a persistent barrier for businesses seeking to grow, whilst the availability of local talent is highlighted as a barrier by many of our small businesses, despite the presence of two universities and expansive provision for 16-18 year-olds.

In addition to this, the biggest collective economic challenge we face is the climate crisis and the need to transition to a decarbonised economy. Failure to do this will increase costs for business and act as a drag on the economic growth of our city. The next three years are critical for addressing this.

## Recognising our Competitive Advantages

Despite these challenges, Brighton & Hove has brilliant small businesses and, in the last five years, has seen an increase in larger employers. The number of jobs in our digital and creative sectors has grown by over 35%<sup>1</sup> since 2015 and the survival of our new businesses is high, with 44% of new businesses surviving over 5 years<sup>2</sup>. This resilient, digitally enabled small business community is at the heart of our competitive advantage as we look to the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Business Demography, ONS, 2022

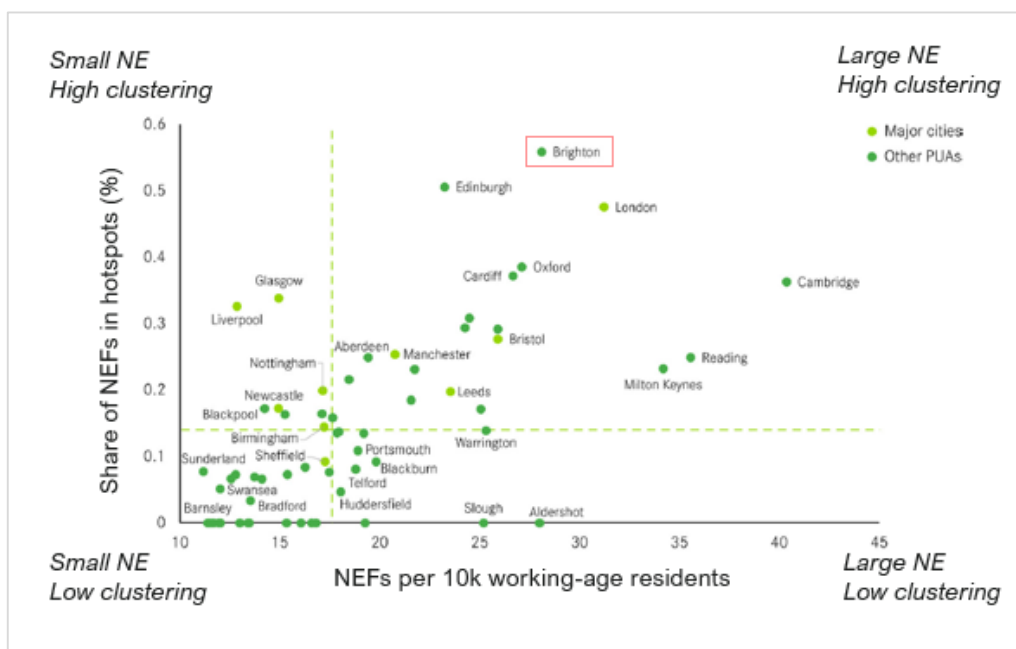


Our visitor economy has bounced back from the impact of Covid and our brand has been boosted by an internationally renowned football club, growing tech conferences and a broadening festival offer. We have all of the ingredients to be one of the best small cities in the world.

The make-up of the economy is changing and we need to consider and adapt to the type of activities which might thrive in the future. The Centre for Cities (with HSBC) has identified a definition of a new economy, based on 47 technologically advanced sectors which they believe will be of critical importance to the UK. They say: “the new economy encompasses knowledge-intensive sectors at the very forefront of new technologies and innovations including software, robotics, telecommunications and gaming. Fuelling these sectors is central to improving the UK’s productivity and prosperity, and to the development of the national economy.”

In relative terms, Brighton & Hove is very well placed to capitalise on this. The city has more clustering of new economy activities than other UK cities and falls behind only London, Reading, Milton Keynes and Cambridge in terms of the concentration of new economy firms.

<sup>3</sup>Amount of Clustering and the Size of the New Economy, 2022



This, along with high rankings on perception, enterprise and inward investment assets suggests that the raw materials exist for us to evolve, grow and to be a much more significant contributor to the UK economy, as well as for local jobs, skills and growth.

However, the route to a more prosperous Brighton & Hove will not be achieved purely by backing these emerging strengths.

We need to seek balance, supporting both our new and existing sectors which already employ local people in accessible, established jobs. Our visitor economy, alongside our cultural and creative sectors is well-established, collectively employing tens of thousands of residents, contributing to the identity of our city. Similarly, our education sector is a comparative strength, bringing new people and ideas to the city, as well as supporting significant employment. We must acknowledge these sectors role both in supporting an ecosystem which is attractive to inward

<sup>3</sup> ONS, the Data City and Centre for Cities Calculations, sourced from Innovation Hotspots, Clustering the New Economy, James Evans, 2023

investment and growth, celebrating Brighton & Hove and welcoming more new people and perspectives to the city.

Brighton & Hove’s recent and historic success is underpinned by proximity to major international gateways (Gatwick Airport, Shoreham and Newhaven Ports) to the city, delivering visitors, freight and investment. This will continue to be a foundation in the city’s evolution in a new UK economy. The ability, to meet and trade will remain, critical and Brighton & Hove’s ability to operate as a genuinely accessible global hub, should remain a competitive advantage.


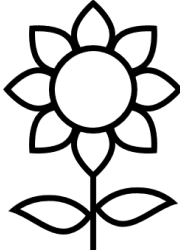
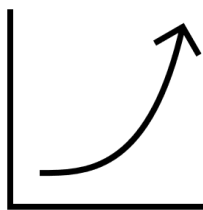
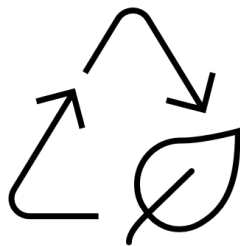
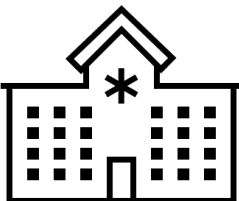
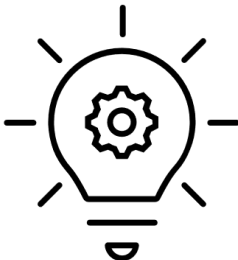
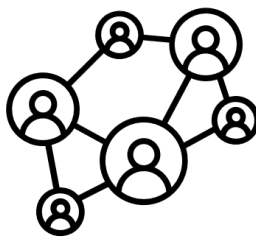
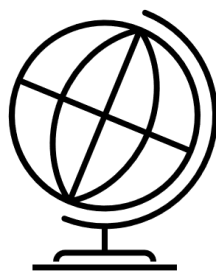
It is essential that we focus upon both the economic opportunities alongside tackling inequality and navigating the climate crisis – a new fairer, greener and more productive economy.

### Hallmarks of the Brighton & Hove Economy

Collectively, we have influence over the economy we want to create.

Whilst the UK economic growth has been negligible since 2016, our Gross Value Added has increased by 13%. Whilst this is positive, we must remain vigilant to changes in the labour market, growing inequality and the shared challenge of climate crisis. We therefore need to define what we believe is important to our city and make this part of our consideration of what we value, where we aspire to be and (most importantly) what we will do.

Based on our discussions with stakeholders and consideration of the evidence, we want Brighton & Hove to have an economy which is:

			
<p>Fairer &amp; more equal: where all people can thrive and young people achieve their potential</p>	<p>Healthy &amp; happy: where our economy supports wellbeing</p>	<p>Genuinely productive: led by ideas and good work</p>	<p>Less carbon intensive and more regenerative. Valuing nature</p>
			
<p>Institutionally strong: where businesses, public sector, education and civil society collaborate properly</p>	<p>Agile &amp; responsive: ready to change and adapt</p>	<p>Innovative &amp; creative: where ideas support change</p>	<p>Internationally recognised: where our specialisms are globally renowned and all cultures are represented</p>

These are the hallmarks of our economy, both established and emerging, the features which will make us more competitive, because we work in a better and more purposeful way. Together.





# Ten-year Imperatives

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To transition into a more competitive, fairer, productive and greener economy, we must look beyond the three years of this plan. We have therefore identified eight priorities for the next decade to help guide our economic thinking. These set out the longer term aims for the city (in the context of a changing UK and global economy) for the next ten years which our actions will contribute towards.

## **Capitalise upon our digital competitive advantage**

One in eight jobs in the UK now have some form of digital competency, with the sector worth £63bn per year to the national economy. The sector in the city is growing rapidly, but we can do more to harness its potential. We need to identify those digital businesses who want to scale up and grow in our city and support them to do so.

Over the last five years we have identified specialisms in Gaming, Simulation, Fin Tech, Content Creation and Quantum Computing – nationally important activities, with noted potential to grow. To capitalise we need to develop these as an ecosystem which enables collaboration, supports incubation and acceleration and provides the peer support needed to facilitate companies to scale and adapt in changing markets.

This is not just about commercial opportunity; it is about the role that our digital sector can play in enabling our transition and that of others. We need to better utilise the talent and ideas they provide, and partner with them to help us tackle the challenges we face. Recognising the role that the council and other anchor institutions play as customers and partners will be critical to creating the conditions for scaling in the city.

## **Build local community involvement as a response to economic inequality**

Our economy needs to work for all of our people. Currently, not all of our residents can access the opportunities within our city equally. To ensure we have a thriving economy we need to work with residents to remove the barriers they are facing; building capacity and retaining wealth locally, whilst harnessing the unrealised potential which exists in our neighbourhoods and diverse communities. This includes recognising the value and contribution of our strong community and voluntary sector.

We also need to celebrate and support the everyday, too often overlooked, economies (including childcare, builders, beauty therapists, vehicle maintenance and household repairs) within our neighbourhoods, which collectively are major employers and provide important services in our city. We need to celebrate all of our talents and skills.

## **Decarbonise and create a more regenerative economy**

To achieve our 2030 ambitions in response to climate crisis our economy needs to work within environmental limits. We need to reduce the carbon emissions of all our economic activities, creating a supportive environment to help businesses make this transition and enable them to contribute to, not extract from the wealth within our communities.

Decarbonisation will require us to think differently about the processes and systems which contribute to our economy. It will ultimately help to reduce the cost of operation and can be a differentiator for the city.

Alongside the shift to net zero, we need to make our economy more circular to reduce both raw material use and waste. With existing momentum and the natural resources at our disposal, Brighton & Hove can lead the UK in this area over the next ten years.

### **Build a stronger, more inclusive labour market**

To address inequality and provide routes out of poverty, we need to ensure that barriers to work are supported so that everyone who wants to work can do so. We need our residents to develop the skills needed to access opportunities across our economy. This will ensure there is both a pipeline of talent to grow the key sectors in our new economy, but also that there are good career paths in the foundational and visitor economies, which provide a large proportion of employment in our city.

We need to create more and better jobs that are closer to home. This will in part, mean supporting a better deal for workers in Brighton & Hove, improving employment rights and supporting employers to provide a fair wage for the city.

To do this we need to address the fundamental issues which can impact upon access to training and employment through effective provision and services which support health, learning and employment needs. These could include supporting neurodiverse and disabled residents, accessibility, healthcare, transport costs, flexibility around religious ceremonies and customs, childcare costs and language barriers.

### **Celebrate our city and welcome investment**

We need to celebrate our city more. To do this we need to raise our national and international profile and draw more investment into the city. This can include investment in the form of businesses relocating to Brighton & Hove as well as new investment into our businesses and anchor institutions.

We need a more welcoming environment for this as well as new systems for managing those who could come to the city as well as more targeted outreach and representation to international sources of investment. We need to organise ourselves better.

### **A world-leading creative destination worthy of the UK's best small city**

We want to be recognised as the best small city in the world. To do this, we need our visitor and creative economies to evolve and deliver more value for the city whilst protecting and maintaining our vital cultural assets. This means creating a broader and deeper offer which works year-round and for 24 hours a day. It will be built upon our city's inherent creative identity, which not only creates intrigue and fun, but differentiates the city for investors and creates a competitive advantage over other locations in the UK.

New ideas and promotion must celebrate the activities where we have tradition, authenticity and pedigree. We must also demonstrate our evolving strengths in our creative identity, cultural production, visitor economy and diverse nighttime activities. The 'look and feel' of our city is crucial to our economic future.

### **Build new knowledge partnerships to benefit all of our communities**

Our economy needs to capitalise upon the knowledge and ideas generated within the city, by the universities, businesses, entrepreneurs, the public and civil society sector and NHS. This should

be harnessed to address the complex and interconnected challenges that the city faces, whilst creating economic opportunity from new ways of working.

### **Thrive within a city region with a clear economic identity**

Successful city economies typically operate in dynamic city regions. For our strategic imperatives to be achieved, we will need to adapt and build upon existing collaborative activity both within the council and alongside our neighbours.

Most of the ambitions we identify and the transitions we highlight can be accelerated and amplified by working at a regional level. In the next decade we need to adopt better systems to support regional working to create a stronger critical mass, with greater influence in the UK economy, and to help build prosperity over the lifetime of this plan.

# Our 2027 missions

This is a three-year economic plan focused on the adaptations and transitions we need to achieve our ten-year priorities. We have translated our strategic journeys into a set of missions which we believe will support the transition we need to make in the next three years.

By 2027 Brighton & Hove will have a fairer, greener, and more productive economy	
Our Strategic Journey	By 2027 we will have...
Capitalise on our digital comparative advantage	Worked with existing companies (including micro and freelance) to better focus Brighton & Hove's role in a future economy, whilst helping to de-risk diversification, decarbonisation and growth
Build community involvement as a response to poverty and economic inequality	Given local people greater opportunity to influence neighbourhood economies as a foundation for greater participation in Brighton & Hove's economy
Decarbonise and create a more regenerative economy	Ensured that decarbonisation is an acknowledged priority across our economy, creating a more circular and regenerative economy for the city
Build a stronger, more inclusive labour market	Ensured residents and employers benefit from the provision of employment and skills support which is linked directly to the needs and opportunities within the local economy
Celebrate our city and welcome investment	Radically improved our external proposition, international profile and investor experience, to deliver enhanced levels of investment in the city
A world-leading creative destination worthy of the UK's best small city	Celebrating and promoting our role as a creative destination; altering perceptions and protecting core visitor, seafront, leisure, sport, green spaces heritage and creative & cultural assets
Build new knowledge partnerships to benefit all of our communities	Developed a closer three-way relationship between universities, council and business. Driving knowledge exchange and tackling the city's prevailing challenges
Thrive within a city region with a clear economic identity	Created a shared economic vision with our neighbours and a shared long-term plan of action for the City Region economy

The remainder of this document sets out how we will organise and intervene to deliver our three-year transition and long-term strategic objectives.

# Capitalise on our digital comparative advantage

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**Work with existing companies (including micro and small businesses) to better focus Brighton & Hove's role in a future economy, whilst helping to de-risk diversification, decarbonisation and growth to become a truly digital city**

## Rationale

Brighton & Hove already has a comparative advantage in the quality of entrepreneurship, particularly in the digital sectors which are so important to the future of the UK economy.

Enabled by our freelance and microbusiness community, we have an agility and diversity which can support resilience, diversification and growth in a period of national economic uncertainty. Scaling these activities offers perhaps the most significant growth opportunity available to the city.

Our small business community has told us they want to play a more significant role in the future of their city. Evolving specialisms, a heritage of two decades of creative and digital support, and a new generation of companies starting in the city provides the foundation to deliver significant positive activity.

Digital and 'Createch'<sup>4</sup> activity is growing at a faster rate than London, with Brighton & Hove now having the biggest concentration of Games companies outside of London. The city's biggest employment sectors, Health, Financial Services, Education and Tourism, all need to rapidly become more digital, creating opportunities for local collaborations in FinTech, Med Tech, and through adaptation to AI. Local demand, national prominence and momentum, provides a potent and timely opportunity for the city.

Barriers to this opportunity are, however, both familiar and persistent. There is still a lack of scale up within the micro business base, perpetuated by a shortage of move on space within the city centre and reported skills gaps within the local labour market. We need to offer small digital businesses (and small businesses more generally) influence in supporting the growth of their sector and companies, as well as in the city as a whole.

## Supporting a New Economy

Brighton & Hove's micro businesses (particularly those in digital sectors) are at the heart of a new economy, not only for the city, but potentially for the UK as a whole. A new approach needs to give these companies a more prominent role, with a greater mutual understanding of their contribution to a rapidly evolving economy.

## Strategy

We will work more closely with our digital businesses and particularly small and freelance companies. We will seek to engage them in the evolution of the city and work with them to help us innovate our responses to the bigger challenges in the city. For those that want to grow, we will seek to support them to do so.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/createch>

## **How we will work differently**

We will seek to redesign partnerships to give micro businesses a greater say on the future of the city, creating structures and an environment where they can be contributors to the future of their city. We will focus delivery across this plan to meet their need, particularly in the provision of spaces and a workforce which can support those that wish to grow and thrive in Brighton & Hove.

## **Areas of activity**

The accompanying Action Plan sets out how we will commence our programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

- Enhance the tech cluster network, celebrating their role and providing opportunities to meet and network. Bring together existing networks in order to create a clear dialogue and ongoing feedback on the experience of being a small business within the city.
- Learn lessons from other cities and approaches to growing the tech cluster, supporting scale-up and skills. Co-produce a digital programme which supports local companies, to scale up and access new investment.
- Strengthen collaboration between business, employability programmes and schools and training providers to enrich the curriculum, provide experiences of the world of work and signpost clearer routes to accessing opportunities in the digital sectors.
- Integrate responsibilities of the LEP Growth Hub into the Business & IP Centre to deliver more comprehensive and localised business support and signposting to small businesses seeking to scale
- Work with business support providers to further develop their webinars and workshops on topics that matter to businesses and start-ups
- Work with financial institutions to explore piloting new processes and products to increase access to finance for micro businesses in the city
- Engage with other public sector partners to identify spaces which can accommodate new activity within the city, including in assets owned by the council itself
- Work with local community and civil society organisations to better understand and combat digital poverty, promoting digital inclusion.

## **Role of the City Council**

The City Council will work as a convener, bringing together partners including the tech cluster network, Brighton Chamber and the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership, to build upon and grow partnerships which enable more real time feedback from businesses.

The council will engage the sector to consider its own adaptation and think about how local businesses can support its own transition and adoption of new practices. The council will also need to change to be a better partner, leading where necessary, but be an active council.



## **Funding and Investment in Action**

There will be limited discretionary funding for businesses over this period. We will therefore work with new and existing partners to enable the increased investment directly into our business community. This could include enabling more active approaches to leasing of public spaces.

### **3 Year Indicators of Success**

- Growth in jobs
- Increased businesses
- Increased turnover reported
- Increase in businesses scaling
- Increase in investment in Brighton & Hove businesses

### **Key Partners**

This mission will be focused on the development of a tech cluster ecosystem necessitating this to be led by a partnership between Brighton & Hove City Council, Eagle Labs, Silicon Brighton and Brighton Chamber, together with the Business & IP Centre, University of Brighton, University of Sussex, Brighton MET, Sussex Innovation, Brighton Ai, Plus X Innovation, Digital Brighton & Hove and others.

# Build community involvement as a response to poverty and economic inequality

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Give local people greater opportunity to influence neighbourhood economies as a foundation for greater participation in Brighton & Hove's economy.

## Rationale

When considering the economy of Brighton & Hove, it is easy to focus on the city centre and the seafront. It is the activity in these places which has defined the economy of the city over the last three decades and this is where investment has been focused.

Our evidence, however, has shown we have significant inequalities in our neighbourhoods. In places like Hangleton & Knoll, Whitehawk, Bevendean, Moulsecomb and South Portslade, median annual incomes can be more than £5,000 lower than the national average; life satisfaction can be low and health limited; and there is a deficit in key services and local employment opportunities.

This is not just a problem of deprivation and poverty; it is a missed opportunity. Residents disengaged or unable to access the labour market means a loss of talent when our businesses are desperate for good employees; a lack of service provision limits opportunities for residents to move into employment and training; historic inequalities diminish the trust and civic pride which is needed to drive collaboration and enterprise.

Despite these challenges, the city's neighbourhoods (including the city centre itself) are also vital hubs for our 'everyday economy' and the location of many of our small business owners. Too often overlooked, many local businesses provide key services locally, such as childcare, which keep our city going. Trades, such as construction, plumbing, electricals, which often operate out of these locations, will be vital in supporting our transition to a greener economy.

Within our neighbourhoods we need to ensure that local businesses, residents and public services organise and work together to reduce inequality, strengthen local economies and support the growth of the economy across the city.

## Supporting a New Economy

A new economy for the city will be more local, more asset focused and more optimistic, centred around local people and organisations. In line with the findings of the city's Fairness Commission, Accessibility Strategy, Anti Racism Strategy and research on employability amongst our LGBTQ+ communities<sup>5</sup>, we will recognise the talent and enthusiasm which exists in the city's communities, ensuring that responsibility within economies can be devolved, where possible, to provide more targeted local solutions.

Our new economy will be reliant on the involvement of the small businesses and talent which is located in our neighbourhoods. These will be a key source of the skills and services needed for the transition to a greener and fairer economy, where wealth is retained in the city.

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<sup>5</sup> [Spotlight on... Brighton & Hove - Sussex Community Foundation](#)

## **Strategy**

Based on the evidence we have collected, our initial focus will be on Whitehawk, Hangleton, Moulsecoomb, Coldean and Bevendean. As we consider the city centre in other parts of this plan, we will also ensure we recognise and respond to residents living there, to provide similar local focus.

We will develop coalitions of relevant agencies who respond directly to local issues, seeking to devolve delivery to community level. We will seek to build community power, creating greater stewardship of local economies, as well as better support for our local businesses.

We will seek to build on the foundations already provided by the council's Community Development team and our active civil society organisations. We will capitalise upon the success of the council's engagement initiatives to better understand and coordinate in response to local issues.

## **How we will work differently**

Our focus will be built around a new set of locally derived outcomes, which are more focused on local needs, assets and aspirations. Working with partners, we will build capacity within local communities and civil society to respond to the economic challenges and opportunities which exist in each place. This will act as a foundation for local people to engage more fully with the wider city economy.

## **Areas of activity**

The accompanying Action Plan sets out how we will commence our programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

- Work with residents in target neighbourhoods to create a framework for measuring local economic success. In particular, develop a greater consideration of health, wellbeing and life satisfaction within the consideration of our economic aspirations
- Develop more consistency across local engagement to provide feedback on the experience of living in the Brighton & Hove economy. Focus in particular on existing themes of cost of living and health and wellbeing, alongside a focus on access to services and local needs.
- Develop local coalitions of civil society partners and anchor institutions to enable 'Total Place' coordination of resources and more efficient delivery.
- Develop capacity within local areas to support greater involvement in local economies. Test new approaches to community business and participatory budgeting to support opportunities for more practical engagement.
- Work with community partners and anchor institutions to explore the most effective ways of connecting residents, students, employers and staff with volunteering opportunities across the city, including our heritage, cultural and visitor assets
- Deliver direct business engagement in target areas, link these companies into the wider support infrastructure of the city and city region

- Build on existing food and circular economy activity at a local neighbourhood level to decrease food poverty and provide opportunities for local people to engage with the city's climate response
- Work with Black & Racially Minoritised owned businesses to understand opportunities to better engage these companies, evolving mainstream support to better meet their needs
- Continue to advocate for working residents to be paid a real living wage through promoting the Brighton & Hove Living Wage campaign in conjunction with the Brighton Chamber

## **Role of the City Council**

The City Council has already responded proactively to the economic challenges faced by residents, through a Cost-of-Living Plan and Fairness Fund. The Community Development team also plays a critical role as a convener of activity and is well placed to act as a fulcrum between other public, civil society and private sector partners.

BHCC holds data and insights which will be critical to effective planning and leadership, therefore coordinating council departments and other partners (particularly NHS Sussex) will be a critical function. The council also has the relationships with local organisations which will sit at the heart of this activity and can act as a broker for advice to local businesses through the Business & IP Centre.

## **Funding and Investment in Action**

The City Council is committed to prioritising future resources to address gaps in local provision. We will work with anchor institutions to bend existing resources where possible to support a broader economic focus, supporting a 'Total Place' approach to the economy which unites budgets in service of the local economy.

Where and when resources are available from central government, foundations and philanthropic investment, we will seek to broker investment to grassroots organisations within our target areas.

## **3 Year Indicators of Success**

The success in supporting greater local economic activity must be judged on the depth of impact as well as the scale of outputs achieved. Across all measures of impact, it will be critical to track diversity and representation in the city, ensuring that activity drives fairness and reflects the profile of the city. Core areas for focus include:

- Increase in local business activity in neighbourhoods
- Increase in number of collaborative projects
- Increased participation in training
- Initial improvements in life satisfaction
- Increase in wealth retained in local neighbourhoods

## **Key Partners**

Brighton & Hove City Council and CVS will act as the convener of activity supported by NHS Sussex and civil society partners. Collaboration will be supported by the Brighton & Hove Connected Partnership.

In due course a wider partnership of public, private and university partners can be supported to engage with city neighbourhoods to create more direct links to the opportunities in the rest of the city.

# Decarbonise and create a more regenerative economy

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Ensure that decarbonisation is an acknowledged priority across our economy, creating a more circular and regenerative economy for the city.

## Rationale

In 2024 any economic plan has to provide a platform for decarbonisation. The next three years will be crucial to our city's journey to net zero. We need to respect the limits of the planet and find new ways of valuing the natural resources which are often overlooked in a conversation about economy.

Brighton & Hove City Council has declared a climate and biodiversity emergency and has a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. We are a designated UNESCO Biosphere, and the natural environment is a strong part of our identity as a city; a key reason why people visit and live in Brighton & Hove and it needs to be seen as an important economic asset.

Net zero is a central consideration when thinking about a transition to a new economy, and there will need to be fundamental changes to ensure that this ambition is met. Our businesses will need to be supported to make the adaptations necessary to reduce their carbon footprint and adapt to changing government legislation. We will also need to support our residents to gain the skills needed to access new green opportunities, or to upskill in their current roles.

There is also an immediate commercial need to act. Our research shows that 41% of our commercial space will not be fit for purpose by 2027 based on current Minimum Energy Efficiency (MEES) legislation – this creates significant pressure on our already tight commercial property market, particularly in the city centre. Doing nothing presents a significant economic risk to the city, potentially undermining our future diversification and growth.

Since the last strategy, we have made good progress in the development of the circular economy within the city, working with civil society partners and other organisations to think about how resources are used and reused in our economy. This needs to be further embedded, to ensure that circular practices are adopted within all areas of our economy. This alongside the necessary major investment which will facilitate decarbonised transport and energy systems can become a key part of our city's identity.

By supporting our workers and businesses to adapt, we can ensure that our city and residents are well-placed to benefit from the transition to net zero.

## Supporting a New Economy

A new economy for the city needs to be green, circular and enabled by a just transition which benefits all residents and businesses – building wealth within our communities. We need to consider more fully the resources we use and the implications of our economic activity on nature and ecology around us and throughout value chains. Becoming greener and using less resources is already a fundamental business support need, with the overall costs associated with climate and ecological crisis a key cost consideration for everyone in the city.



## Strategy

We will continue to develop our business support and engagement to ensure that all activity has some focus on the transition to net zero. We will also scale what we already do well, becoming better in circular economy, working with larger business, investment partners and anchor institutions to continue to mainstream this work within our economy.

## How we will work differently

We will plan for a decarbonised economy, developing the case for investment which make Brighton & Hove a more resilient city and economy. This will include aligning the Circular Economy Action Plan further within our practices. We will consider key climate metrics and their suitability to become indicators of our ambitions for economic transition.

## Areas of Activity

The accompanying Action Plan sets out how we will commence our programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

- Evolve the Circular Economy Action Plan, positioning Brighton & Hove as better, more effective actor
- Develop a deeper understanding of commercial retrofit needs and a route map to delivery. Explore the development of new investment vehicles to enable institutional investors (including those based in the city) to support the delivery of this
- Through our City Employment and Skills Plan, support residents to train and retrain in the skills we will need to enable mass retrofitting of our commercial and housing stock
- We will embed circular economy and decarbonisation within council services and procurement (including road maintenance, estate management), allowing BHCC to demonstrate practical leadership in our city
- Convene and support new and existing large employers investors with strong pedigree in circular economy (such as Ingka, Brighton & Hove Albion and L&G), to play a more prominent role in the city's journey to a more regenerative economy that also helps to build wealth within our communities
- Through our Growth Hub, explore ways of providing direct support for businesses seeking to decarbonise operations
- Consider the city and regional green infrastructure needs, creating clear plans to support investment into the environmental resilience of the city's economy
- Embed circular economy into local and neighbourhood partnerships, supporting local people and businesses to play a more effective role in addressing ecological and climate crisis

## Role of the City Council

Brighton & Hove City Council will lead by example through the adoption of circular practices internally. There is also potential to use staff time to encourage other large businesses within the area to adopt greener practices.

We will act as an advocate for a strong circular economy within Brighton & Hove, to ensure that our progress and innovation as a city within the circular economy receives national recognition. Acting on circular economy principles will demonstrate how greenhouse gas emissions can be cut in buildings, energy use and consumption. We will engage more closely with government, institutional and philanthropic investors to understand their role in supporting projects and long-term investments in the structural and systems changes we need to make.

### **Funding and Investment in Action**

We will seek to identify and apply for funding streams to support circular economy work within the city and improve our messaging to encourage inward investment within this area.

We will work more closely with institutional and other funders to understand their role in supporting projects and long-term investments in the structural and systems changes we need to make.

### **3 Year Indicators of Success**

- Increase in the proportion of our commercial buildings which are EPC B and above, protecting supply of space for business
- Target a decline in yearly scope 1 emissions across the city's business base, with evidence of a decrease in the cost of doing business through annual surveys
- Decrease in the operational carbon emissions associated with the visitor economy
- Increase in number of residents completing green skills courses and finding employment
- Increase in waste intercepted and reused in the local economy

### **Key Partners**

This mission will be led by the Circular Economy Steering Group convened by Brighton & Hove City Council. It will require the collaboration of key businesses within the city; Brighton & Hove Albion FC, Ingka, Amex and L&G will all need to be advocates for our strategy and the pursuit of a more regenerative economy, alongside groups representing small businesses and specific sectors.

The Cost-of-Living action group, Civil Society groups and CVS more generally, will enable links to community level projects and interventions, whilst Brighton & Hove Food Partnership can provide links to a key aspect of the city's nascent regenerative economy through the emerging Food Strategy.

# Build a stronger, more inclusive labour market

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**Ensured residents and employers benefit from the provision of employment and skills support which is linked directly to the needs and opportunities within the local economy**

## Rationale

Brighton & Hove's labour market is highly qualified (45% of residents having degree level qualifications or higher), however businesses across our economy face challenges in finding candidates with the right skill sets. This is true in all activities, but particularly pronounced in those sectors in which we could diversify and grow in the next ten years. Failure to mobilise the city and regional workforce will impact upon businesses ability to scale and our ability to capitalise on the opportunity we have at this moment in time.

This is reflective of a national challenge. According to the Institute of Employment Studies there will be 3.4 million fewer people in work by 2040 due to an ageing population and there are already 500K fewer young people than in 2013. Unemployment remains above pre-pandemic levels and there are record numbers of young people not in education or employment. National policy changes to work visas and salary thresholds for migrant workers will impact upon the supply of overseas workers.

Businesses consistently report that they struggle to find the right people with the right skills. This is limiting the ability of our specialist sectors to grow and respond to the demands of a new economy, limiting our competitiveness as a city.

Within Brighton & Hove, as reflected nationally, economic activity has risen but many residents have long-term health and work limiting conditions whilst others are not actively looking for work. Evidence shows that there are significant spatial inequalities in terms of qualifications and economic activity. Within some parts of the city more than one in five residents have no qualifications.

Those out of work are at greater risk of becoming further disengaged from the world of work. Certain groups including disabled people, low qualified, ethnic minority groups, LGBTQ+, lone parents, and residents aged 50+ face disproportionate barriers to work. The impact of technological advancements on the local economy, is one of our comparative advantages, but it also will change the labour market in a way which could exacerbate inequality in the city, remaining aware and agile to this is key.

Mobilising our population to enable our sectors to compete, grow and respond to the demands of a new economy is essential. Tackling this is about equality but is also about the talent which is not supported or mobilised in the city. Given the demographic changes expected in our city, this is not only needed to improve outcomes for our residents but is an economic necessity.

The city benefits from a strong ethos of collaboration, across education and training, employer representative groups, technology-focused networks and employability and careers provision. These stakeholders can inform and influence how we respond to these changes.

Brighton & Hove has two highly esteemed universities, and in uncertain economic times, we need to lever even more value from these assets. Graduate retention could be higher and we aspire to more spinouts (of innovation and businesses), investment, growth and job creation. We need to

support our universities and further education colleges (including Brighton MET and Institute Of Technology) to have a more significant civic function in the context of the city economy; redesigning their role will be crucial to a more responsive, competitive and equitable city economy.

## **Supporting a New Economy**

Transformational changes in our local economy and labour market will be driven by environmental, technical and demographic shifts. The workforce will need to change and adapt to support the transition to a new economy, particularly considering the climate crisis. In all sectors we will need new skills to support participation in new types of jobs

The city will need to strengthen connections and be more collaborative to create the routes of progression in a changing economy, to enable employers to access the skilled workers they need and residents to access new economic opportunities.

## **Strategy**

We will bring together businesses and education providers to collaborate on creating a new city-wide approach which responds to and anticipates the workforce needs of the new economy. This will ensure there are tangible and transparent development pathways for our residents.

## **How we will work differently**

Through the City Skills and Employment Plan we will facilitate collaboration and partnerships with a clear focus on education, skills and employment for a new economy.

## **Areas of Activity**

The accompanying Action Plan sets out how we will commence our programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

- Publication of a new City Skills and Employment Plan. This will provide the foundation for collaboration between stakeholders including training providers and local businesses across our core and foundational sectors to meet the skill needs of residents and businesses
- Through the Careers Hub, we will inspire and prepare young people for the world of work and increase their understanding of the local economy through strengthening links between education and businesses.
- Support progression into employment and education for young people and adults, ensuring activity is aligned to the everyday economy to meet recruitment needs
- Deepen the collaboration between our post 16 and post 18 education and training providers, maximising relationships with industry to enrich the curriculum
- Explore the development of an inclusive economy charter to which companies can commit to good work standards and a commitment to ongoing training. It will be developed in collaboration with employers, business representative bodies and experts and include information and resources for employers.

- Review provision and employability support to ensure it is reaching our areas of greatest inequality. Support residents that face barriers to participate in the local offer, so that everybody who wants to work can do so.

## **Role of the City Council**

Brighton & Hove City Council will act as a convenor, facilitator, enabler and funder. We will publish and monitor the City Employment and Skills Plan and oversee its ongoing delivery.

## **Funding and Investment in action**

Brighton & Hove City Council will create and facilitate the delivery of a new City Employment and Skills Plan which will set out priorities for the city to inform opportunities for resource and funding, working collaboratively with stakeholders to progress the action plan.

## **3 Year Indicators of Success**

Success measures will be developed through the City Employment and Skills Plan, but could include:

- Decrease in unemployment and economic inactivity
- Decrease in those Not in Education Employment or Training
- Participation in and achievement of apprenticeships
- Growth of Skills Bootcamp provision locally
- Successful implementation of Universal Support across the city

## **Key Partners**

This mission will be led by the City Employment and Skills Steering Group overseen by Brighton & Hove City Council. It recognises the key role of VCS through direct delivery and as representatives of residents. The city benefits from strong existing collaboration across education and training, employer representative groups, technological focused networks, Departments of Education, Work and Pensions and employability and careers providers, including University of Sussex, University of Brighton, Chichester College Group (incorporating Brighton MET), post 16 colleges and independent training providers, large employers, Brighton Chamber, B&H Cultural Alliance and Sussex Chambers of Commerce as Employer Representative Board for the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

# Celebrate our city and welcome investment

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**Radically improve our external proposition, international profile and investor experience, to deliver enhanced levels of investment in the city**

## **Rationale**

With a national decline in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and domestic inward investment in the last decade, we are now in a much more competitive environment when it comes to attracting and retaining businesses in the city. Currently, we do not promote ourselves confidently enough and do not have the processes to convert opportunities.

A report by Irwin Mitchell named Brighton & Hove the most attractive city outside of London for FDI and ranked it highest in the nation for growth potential. This recognition, however, has not translated to actual investment and growth. Although the Southeast was the top location for foreign domestic investment projects outside of London in 2023, the Coast to Capital LEP attracted only a small proportion of those projects.

Developing this plan has illustrated the exciting initiatives and success stories in Brighton & Hove: world beating businesses, nationally significant knowledge exchange, innovation and university spin outs, successful events, superb culture and globally significant digital conferences. We have, however, heard repeated feedback that awareness of these successes was too low and that we are not as confident as other UK cities in talking about our assets.

We do not currently have a formal process for welcoming potential businesses and investors and recognise the need to better position the city for future success.

## **Supporting a New Economy**

New economies will be led by new investment. The city needs to be better positioned to attract this and make this stick in Brighton & Hove and the city region.

Nationally and internationally, businesses and institutional investors are becoming more aware of their contribution to places in which they invest and operate and particularly the ability that place has in supporting them to achieve their social and environmental goals.

A digitally enabled, socially focused economy with proximity to markets and a strong visitor economy combined with excellent natural environment is the fulcrum of Brighton & Hove's offer. These are tried and tested ingredients in those cities globally which have a reputation for innovation and competitiveness. We need to organise ourselves better.

## **Strategy**

Raise the profile of Brighton & Hove, recognising and celebrating successes in the city, redeploying resource to prioritise clearer signposting and an enhanced welcome to potential investors.



## **How we will work differently**

We will develop a refreshed narrative focused on our assets and comparative advantage. We will be progressive in our outlook, promoting our city as one with an economy which is fairer, greener and more competitive than other cities in the UK. Our diversity is also a strength.

We will align more effectively with our City Region partners creating a more coherent and collaborative offer, with a more effective, follow up and aftercare service for those seeking to locate and invest in the city.

## **Areas of Activity**

The accompanying Action Plan sets out how we will commence our programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

- Understand the strengths and weakness of the current inward investment pitch and work with partners to identify areas of focus
- Develop a new brand and identity for the city's inward investment pitch which encompasses the city's role as an entrepreneurial hub, a university city, a creative destination, a digital powerhouse and a progressive city
- Develop a business prospectus using digital assets to more directly targeted at specific needs of businesses, and reflecting the new digital economy
- Work closely with the Department for Business and Trade and institutional investors, developing our proposition, processes and routes to market
- Provide specific resource to track and follow up investment leads, being more proactive in a competitive UK market
- Provide more effective brokerage between small businesses and potential angel and venture capital investment

## **Role of the City Council**

Brighton & Hove City Council will spearhead the refresh of this approach, convening partners to establish a shared identity and vision for external communications.

The City Council will increase communication and joint working with DBT and regional partners, such as the City Region, around routes to market. It will establish an enhanced offer to businesses and investors who are interested in the City.

## **Funding and investment in action**

The City Council is committed to increasing the amount of investment in Brighton & Hove. It will use its resources to amplify activities which are already happening and to bring partners together to deliver new projects. We will provide named contacts to support and welcome potential new investors in the city.

We will seek financial and in-kind contributions from our anchor institution partners, avoiding duplication and recognising the collective benefit of improved welcome and perception.

### **3 Year Indicators of Success**

- Establishment of a dedicated inward investment resource within the City Council
- Increased number of investment enquiries into the city
- Increased profile and engagement and evidenced FDI activity
- Increase in leverage of public and private funding into the city

### **Key Partners**

This mission will be led by Brighton & Hove City Council in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. Likely to include as a minimum:

VisitBrighton, Brighton Chamber, Department for Business and Trade, Develop: Brighton, Greater Brighton Economic Board, Business & IP Centre, Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership

# A world-leading creative destination worthy of the UK's best small city

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**Celebrating and promoting our role as a creative destination; evolving perceptions, innovating and protecting core visitor, seafront, leisure, sport, green spaces, heritage and creative & cultural assets**

## **Rationale**

Brighton & Hove has always been the epitome of alternative thinking, innovation, creativity and leisure, complemented by its iconic coastal location, unique natural setting and un-paralleled cultural heritage. Our difference has always been the lifeblood of our unique identity, attracting visitors, driving economic growth, and fostering innovation. Our versatile destination offer is a foundation for future investment and competitiveness and critical in our journey towards being the UK's best small city.

We welcome millions of visitors every year, generating over one billion pounds of investment into our city, supporting jobs, employment and creating a busy citywide ecosystem. Brighton & Hove Albion alone, has become an established international brand contributing an estimated £600m annually to the city economy. The club is a huge asset, an example of what we need to celebrate and elevate as the city thinks about brand, perception and offer.

As we strive to establish our credentials as the UK's premier small city and a global creative destination, investing in and growing our diverse offer will be fundamental and positioning ourselves as a 21<sup>st</sup> century city is vital.

To transform our economy, we must evolve a bigger, more diverse visitor market; we need to think and behave differently, and overhaul our approach, to build a visitor economy fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And a creative economy that is sustainable, healthy, secure and thriving, rooted in our city, Sussex, South East England, strengthening connectivity with the capital; and speaking to a global audience.

## **Supporting a New Economy**

New visitor and creative economies for the city need to be rooted in what makes us unique, our local people, talent, independence, entrepreneurialism, and creative freelance economy. Driving value (economic, social and commercial) from this will be crucial to the city's distinctiveness and competitiveness.

Brighton and Hove needs to be more of a test bed, a place for talent and collaboration, a creative destination that is open and accessible, a gender beacon, a place that represents the diversity of the city, and connects our offer in a way that mirrors how we want visitors to experience the city. We need to collaborate with the best and brightest thinkers and creatives to help us continue to promote and capture our difference and influence investment.

A new fairer, greener and productive economy needs to be tangible; the look and feel of our city is crucial to our residents, visitors and businesses. If we aspire to be the UK's best small city, we need the best city centre and to highlight the tapestry of neighbourhoods that support this and provide the best arrival and welcome. We need a city where all aspects of our strategy are realised; where circular, foundational and visitor economies interact; where new opportunities for residents meets new investment into the city.

## Strategy

If we aim to elevate our city's international reputation and ambition, we must prioritise dynamic year-round visitor experiences across the city's neighbourhoods, including new and different experiences in the evening/night time economy (6pm-6am), to ensure Brighton & Hove remains an attractive place (or series of places) for creative professionals to thrive.

We must adapt and safeguard our physical assets, from our grassroots music venues and artist studios to our large scale production spaces, investing in new creative hubs supporting the whole industry and nurture our creative workforce at all levels. It's imperative for the city to protect our creative infrastructure and our talent base, from the grassroots to the major elite. In addition, we need to support adjacent sectors which collectively underpin our destination identity such as our hospitality, accommodation, and restaurant sectors as they contribute to the vibrancy of the city.

We will seek to deliver a Creative Destination plan that is forward looking, fair and inclusive; inspiring sustainability, promoting health and wellbeing, celebrating our natural environment, and amplifying existing best practice. Our starting point will be the amazing talent and vital civic engagement in the city which underpins deep sense of place with a stronger, more contemporary vibrant feel.

We will work collaboratively across our different sectors and our wider city region: to build new and imaginative strategic partnerships; horizon scan for new opportunities; develop ambitious ideas and interventions that can attract and leverage investment that will improve our ageing infrastructure, create new spaces to grow for our workforce and develop new destinations for our visitors. We will use the assets, planning tools and licensing policies in our gift to realise positive change, especially across the nighttime economy.

## How we will work differently

Our work will be reliant on a collective approach to partnership, visioning, and entrepreneurialism.

We will use our powers as convenor and facilitator to develop new innovative partnerships to help shape our ambitions, drawing together communities, sectors, partners and businesses with a stake in the visitor and creative economies, locally, regionally, and nationally. We will develop a set of clear outcomes and clear actions for how we intend to deliver our plan together as a city. We will put resource into positioning the city as a destination of choice for investors and ensure that we have the systems in place to support our strong inward investment propositions.

## Areas for Activity

The accompanying Action Plan sets out how we will commence our initial ideas for a programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

Develop a 10-year Creative Destination Plan that seeks to focus on governance, alongside the following growth areas:

- Establish a new Creative Destination National Stakeholder Board to oversee the Creative Destination Plan and inform its distinctiveness, trends and ambitions.
- Proactively address gaps in creative infrastructure and identify routes to investment.
- Ensure we use our leveraging powers such as planning and licensing to protect culture at risk.

- Improve our investment in global marketing/storytelling and international campaigns focussing on new media, filming and content creation, and expanding markets.
- Build strong foundations in collaboration as part of the Local Visitor Economy Partnership on the Sussex Strategy for Growth, setting ambitious targets for growth for first time and returning domestic and international visitors.
- Work collaboratively with city partners on Brighton & Hove's profile as a major global conferencing destination both nationally and internationally, to identify and build new markets.
- Drive a new approach to diversifying the visitor experience with a focus on experiences and campaigns across the multiple neighbourhoods across the city; and diversifying the night-time economy experience for the city, connecting daytime to night-time through the experiential economy.
- Develop an ambitious major events calendar to include a diverse range of festivals/events across the year, focussing on shoulder months, and delivering for new market segments.
- Establish a Major Events Board to oversee the current events programme, horizon scan for major new opportunities, and to advise on new cross thematic ideas.
- Develop Brighton & Hove's profile as a centre for major elite sports events, with at least one major international sporting event held every three years.
- Develop a new Investment framework and Commercial Strategy for the seafront, city parks and our open spaces, to improve our heritage capital, secure new income streams and create welcoming destinations.
- Explore the potential to either expand or encourage new BIDs, to cover a wider range of sectors and geographies, including decarbonisation of the city's visitor economy, and hospitality sector infrastructure improvements.

## **Role of the City Council**

Brighton & Hove City Council will act as a convener, making the case for working differently and linking new actors to existing partners to support new approaches. We will use our strategic influence to drive collaboration to deliver improvements, new ideas, the promotion of the city to create positive experiences for all who come here.

## **Funding and Investment in action**

To deliver a revitalised creative destination, we will take an entrepreneurial approach, working to realise the collective power of the city, its residents, businesses and major stakeholders. We will work across the public and private sectors to build vision, ensure collaboration, secure a breadth of investment opportunities and advocate for successful good growth.

### **3 Year Indicators of Success**

- Greater media coverage and new positive global narratives about the city
- An improved look and feel across the city with greater attention to our city's landscape
- More confident, secure, healthy creative industries, more space to grow and diverse workforces.
- Success in securing a wide range of investment opportunities for infrastructure projects to realise our destination ambitions.
- An attractive place for industries to build partnerships, collaborate, test new ideas and express their creativity.
- Stronger working relationships with our many communities.

### **Key Partners**

We will set up and lead a national stakeholder advisory group made of up leading agencies (UK Sport, Sport England, Arts Council England, BFI, Music Venues Trust, DCMS, LGA, VisitBritain, Creative Industries Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England) to collaborate on and develop a strategic creative destination plan with distinctive ambitions.

We will work collaboratively as part of the East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership, transforming our visitor economy landscape through a new and robust structure, with shared ambitions.

Greater value needs to be levered from the expertise within our small business base working with the Destination Experience Group, the Brilliant Brighton BID and the Chamber of Commerce, and the influence of our larger employers. Brighton & Hove Albion as a major international brand, AMEX as global HQ, Ingka as a new arrival, and others, will be given greater influence in this space to ensure that the city's destinations also serve their ambitions.

# Build new knowledge partnerships to benefit all of our communities

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**Develop a closer three-way relationship between universities, council and business. Driving knowledge exchange and tackling the city's prevailing challenges**

## **Rationale**

Brighton & Hove has a large education ecosystem, including two internationally significant universities, a growing further education offer, esteemed language schools and digitally enabled primary and secondary education. Our businesses are innovative, whilst we recognise that scale within public sector institutions can provide a platform for new ways of working.

Working together better through sharing knowledge and resources across public and private sectors, can not only come up with new solutions to our challenges, but create greater commercial benefit from collaboration.

The innovation and knowledge generated by the universities are core assets of the city, but this is not always commercialised and allowed to scale in Brighton & Hove. This means that companies leave or fail to achieve their potential, often becoming untethered from the assets and networks which could enable them to thrive in a university city.

The lack of physical space to scale, collaborate and innovate within the city is well documented, there is also however, a lack of virtual and collaborative space within the city for partners to work together and create more civic and economic benefit from shared knowledge assets.

## **Supporting a new economy**

A new economy for the city will be built on the strength of our partnerships and the ability for us to realise potential of new collaborations between public, private and academic institutions. In a new economy, this can not only act as a driver of productivity but can also support strong civic foundations of the economy and stronger public value.

## **Strategy**

Our focus will be on developing a coalition of partners for knowledge exchange around specific local challenges and opportunities. These will initially be the further education colleges, University of Sussex, the University of Brighton, the city council, NHS and our businesses.

We need to galvanise knowledge not just as a route to new business activity and greater competitiveness, but also to help the city overcome the economic challenges we face, Partners need to collaborate with and benefit from the knowledge and ideas that exist in the city. We will support a civic universities agenda and enable more open innovation in the city.

## **How we will work differently**

Universities and the wider educational community will sit at the heart of new knowledge partnerships in the city, providing challenge and ideas as the city embarks on a period of transition. We will take a broad view of the economy and economic success, uniting disciplines to inspire new ways of working.



We will work in partnership with the other public institutions in the city and within the wider region, uniting educational and public sectors. In doing this, we recognise the budget constraints we are all facing and the importance of identifying opportunities and efficiencies in working together.

## **Areas of Activity**

The accompanying Action Plan sets out our programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

- Develop new protocols (including Civic Universities Agreements) for linking council, further education colleges, universities and businesses which enables knowledge exchange linked to specific sectors and growth/diversification
- Seek to establish a 'lab'-style approach for ideas, bringing together academic, private, public and civil society institutions to provide insight and scrutiny as the city begins new strategic journeys
- Work with universities to develop their civic function integrating, teaching, learning, skills, and engagement. This will link directly to the needs of Brighton & Hove's small businesses
- Bring together partners to pool space and facilities (where appropriate) to increase the available space, facilities and resources available for small businesses in the city
- Link Higher Education and Further Education more directly into the business support and inward investment interventions proposed within this plan.

## **Role of the City Council**

Brighton & Hove City Council will act as the convenor, bringing together our universities, other public bodies and local businesses to facilitate knowledge exchange and to manage and support collaboration.

## **Funding and Investment in action**

Initial activity would need to be funded through existing budgets, with the potential to draw in sponsorship from the city's major employers. This will also rely on the corporate social and philanthropic time of universities and business.

In due course, as collaborations emerge, these may attract public and private investment.

## **3 Year Indicators of Success**

- More local people engaging with their local universities
- More knowledge exchange projects leading to scaling of businesses
- More visible university spin outs within the city, being seen to drive innovation, investments, new skills and jobs

## **Key Partners**

This mission will be facilitated by a joint approach – Brighton & Hove City Council working initially with the Universities of Brighton and Sussex, FE Colleges (including Brighton MET, BIMM Brighton

and Institute of Technology) and major employers, with the potential to expand involvement over the lifespan of this plan.

# Thrive within a city region with a clear economic identity

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Create a shared economic vision with our neighbours and a shared long-term plan of action for the City Region economy

## Rationale

In the last five years, the Greater Brighton City Region has shared many of the positive characteristics of the Brighton & Hove economy. Knowledge economy jobs have increased by 14% across the region, with Arun, Crawley and Mid Sussex growing at similar rates to the city. Creative Industries growth is outperforming the UK as a whole with strong growth in the coastal corridor.

This similarity in specialism is accompanied by consistency in challenge. Since 2018, commercial space has become more of a problem across the City Region. Crawley, Mid Sussex and Worthing have all seen a decline in office space more significant than that in Brighton & Hove. That said, the vacancy rate in larger industrial space has been increasing in the region, particularly in Mid Sussex and Crawley. Partners also observe similar challenges around recruitment in Greater Brighton, alongside the shared need to tackle the climate and ecological crisis.

There is now an increased desire to collaborate and work together on new approaches to economic and societal challenges. Examples of firms such as Universal Quantum emerging from University of Sussex being founded in the city and then scaling in the region, are seen as precursors to a more joined up approach to growth and diversification, which will be deepened through collaboration.

The City Region is now widely seen as a mutually beneficial approach by our neighbours. For the city, its region provides more assets, space and investment potential to support a deeper conversation about the economy of the future and the infrastructure needed to deliver upon our ambitions.

By pooling our knowledge and resources we will be able to more efficiently tackle some shared challenges in the region, such as commercial space supply, housing affordability and (east – west) transport and develop a clearer vision for growth in a city and region which makes a much more significant contribution to the UK economy.

## Supporting a new economy

Successful, innovative, growing cities around the world do so within the context of a wider city region.

With issues more aligned, the success of our new economy can be better tethered to strength of our region. We cannot deliver upon our ambitions without the additional assets and expertise provided by the City Region.

## Strategy

We will bring together Greater Brighton partners and identify how we can work differently to improve city region economic outcomes. We will start to develop a different case for devolution focused on the needs of the City Region and our contribution to national economic growth.

## **How we will work differently**

Our approach to collaboration and planning cannot be achieved through the ‘traditional’ UK approach to City Region devolution. We need to reexamine and plan the Greater Brighton City Region, from the ground up creating the arrangements, partnerships and projects that all constituent authorities need to thrive.

## **Areas of Activity**

The accompanying Action Plan sets out how we will commence our programme of activity over the next three years, identifying where actions are immediately deliverable or more aspirational. This includes:

- Lead the development of a shared economic vision and case for the city region. Acknowledge the contribution of all places and assets, demonstrating the value of a deeper collaborative approach
- Develop shared plans for transport infrastructure, decarbonisation and energy, housing and commercial space
- Accelerate collaboration where a will to work together already exists (Circular Economy; Creative Industries; Workspace; Business Support)
- Use a new approach to city marketing to develop arrangements related to brand and identity, we will also seek to develop areas of shared inward investment identity and process across the city region

## **Role of the City Council**

Brighton & Hove City Council will continue to act as a convener, providing a leading role in the advancement of the regional discussion and dedicating officer resource to advancing our case for stronger regional collaboration.

## **Funding and Investment in action**

The Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) will continue to rely upon the contributions of its members to support its day-to-day costs.

## **3 Year Indicators of Success**

- Additional investment into the Greater Brighton City Region
- Development of a vision for the city region
- Collaboration and partnership working on shared projects

## **Key Partners**

This mission will be led by the Greater Brighton Economic Board, supported by Brighton & Hove City Council in partnership with:

Adur District Council, Arun District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Mid Sussex District Council and Worthing Borough Council, South Downs National Park Authority, University of Brighton, University of Sussex, Brighton & Hove and Adur & Worthing Business Partnership, Chichester College Group.

# New structures for delivery

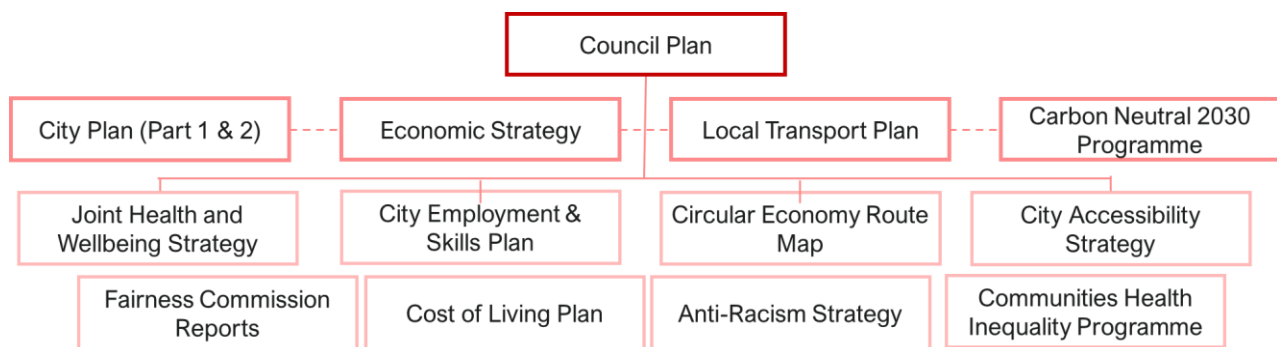
To support a mission-led approach and to think differently about our economy, we need to organise differently and create processes for collaborating, challenging and informing.

We need to develop partnership structures to support the delivery of this plan over the next three years. Below we set our proposed approach to delivering this and the function of each component.

## Brighton & Hove City Council

The City Council's role will change over the next three years. Budgets will remain extremely tight and we will think differently about how the public sector engages with this plan.

This will require greater internal collaboration within Brighton & Hove City Council, linking existing strategies from different departments to ensure that these work harder for the economy of the city.



The City Council will also be more deliberate in its roles, recognising our limitations, but also the influence and agency we hold. We will need to make choices and focus on the areas where there is headroom for growth or positive change. In part this will be driven by improved coordination and collaboration within the council, bringing together departments to reflect the breadth of its plan and its influence beyond the core economic development function of the council.

We envisage that our roles over the next three years will be:

- Convener – Bringing people together to oversee and audit project development, provide inspiration and optimism.
- Asset owner – As an owner of significant land and buildings, the City Council has a vital lever in enabling activity and supporting new approaches.
- Funder – Although financial resources are limited, the City Council is still the organisation most likely to be able to access public funding and support partners to access investment. The council can also be a more active broker of investment into business
- Advocate – The City Council will promote Brighton & Hove, its residents and institutions, making the case that ours is a different kind of city with specific comparative advantages
- Innovator – The public sector can be a leader in innovation, working with partners to pursue new ways of working
- Auditor – To deliver new approaches, we need to be better at measuring success, whilst challenging some of the traditional notions of value in our economy

## **Brighton & Hove Business Growth Board**

The Business Growth Board is the name for an evolved Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership. This Group will remain the custodian of the economic strategy in the city but will refresh and reconstitute itself to provide new voices and more diverse representation that reflects our economy.

The Board will provide insight and oversight into the process of transition set out within the plan, working on an agenda of practical projects which link to the missions of the plan. Meetings will be facilitated working groups which relate to specific tasks and decisions related to the transition of Brighton & Hove's economy.

## **Imagination and Insights Lab**

As a skilled and knowledge-led economy, Brighton & Hove has a significant number of residents who have expertise in a particular field. Partners have suggested the establishment of an Imagination and Insights group, a space where individuals can come together to provide a 'lab' function on the local economy.

Funded through local philanthropy and relying on members volunteering their time, the group could provide evidence and reflection on how the city economy is working as well as bringing examples and ideas to challenge the Economy Board and City Council to think differently about the city's economy. Its function would be to provide real time insights and intellectual scrutiny to help the plan to remain agile.

Drawing from universities, local advisors, new businesses and where relevant external expertise, the function of the group would be to provide imagination and ideas which would not normally be heard in the course of a 'typical' public sector led economic strategy process. It should aim to reflect a diverse range of voices, beyond the 'norm', with some independence from the more formal elements of policy development, but with direction to 'hack' and challenge the status quo.

## **Greater Brighton Economic Board**

Given the focus placed on the City Region within this plan, the Greater Brighton Economic Board takes on greater significance over the next three years.

There needs to be more formal links and lines of communication between GBEB and the Brighton & Hove Economic Plan to ensure the voices of neighbouring and partner authorities are better represented within the delivery of the plan.

GBEB will have specific responsibility and oversight in relation to the regional mission, and in planning for the space and infrastructure needed to accommodate new businesses and growth within the region. This process needs to be more closely tethered to the city's economic strategy.

## **Anchor Institutions Group**

We will build the city's existing networks of strategic partnerships – Brighton & Hove Connected and the City Management Board - to provide focus to the challenges and opportunities across the city and support new collaborations to engage with the missions and long-term journeys of this plan.



## **Thematic Leads**

Thematic Leads are existing groups who have some specific expertise and focus which is relevant to the delivery of this plan. They will provide action planning and monitoring support as well as insight linked to our missions, as well responsibility for the delivery of specific projects where these might emerge.

## **Neighbourhood Economy Groups**

Working with existing civil society groups to devolve responsibility for the engagement and involvement of the communities and economies which exist in Brighton & Hove's neighbourhoods. They will develop responses to the issues and opportunities identified within the more deprived parts of our city and provide insight and reflection on the experience of living and working in these places.

