

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 102

Subject: Open Spaces Events Programme 2025

Date of meeting: 14 November 2024

Report of: Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism

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Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The events programme is spread across open spaces in the city and takes place in many of our main parks and city streets over the course of the year. Outdoor events play a pivotal role in the vibrancy and economic vitality of a city. They not only provide residents and visitors with opportunities for recreation and cultural engagement but also stimulate local economies by attracting tourists, generating employment, and fostering community spirit.
- 1.2 Events transform public spaces into lively hubs of activity, showcasing the city's unique character and heritage. Furthermore, they contribute to the social fabric by bringing diverse groups together, promoting inclusivity, and encouraging civic pride. In essence, outdoor events are essential for enhancing the quality of urban life and driving sustainable development.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet

- 2.1 Support the strategic policy approach taken to make Brighton & Hove a vibrant city and a city to be proud of in delivery of the open spaces events programme for 2025 in line with the Outdoor Events Strategy (Apx n2)
- 2.2 Delegates authority to the Corporate Director, City Services, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture Heritage and Tourism, to grant landlords consent to the annual programme (Apx n1) and make any alterations

to the published events programme as necessary, including approving new applications in accordance with the Outdoor Events Strategy and cancelling events if required.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The citywide Events programme in the city and its local-global reputation makes us a city to be proud of. The event programme is led by the corporate plan and delivers against multiple policy areas, ensuring we are a vibrant city, a city to be proud of, and promoting and protecting the creative dynamism that makes Brighton & Hove unique.
- 3.2 The event programme is key to delivering on the 10-year imperative set out in the Economic Development plan “A creative destination worthy of the best small city in the world”. Outdoor events are vital in establishing and evolving the reputation of the city as a national and international leisure and creative destination. Events contribute significantly to the economic impact for the city, boosting the visitor economy, offering new and different reasons to study, work, and visit the city. And events create joy.
- 3.3 The Visitor Economy Strategy 2018-2023 highlighted the economic contribution of tourism to the city’s economy at £886m per year which supports 21,000 jobs. The economic impact of events staged in the city is largely measured through associated hotel, leisure and retail spend, demonstrably enhancing the day and nighttime economies and supporting local businesses. Outdoor events are cited in the 2018 EIF (Events Industry Forum) “Value of Events” study a key factor in attracting inward investment and attracting students and workers to the city region. Our events programme additionally offers numerous talent platforms, which help the city attract and retain local talent and support growth across the industry.
- 3.4 Events bring our residents together inclusively. The social value of a successful events programme is evidenced in national research. A recent Audience Agency study revealed 68% of participants felt more connected to their community after attending local events. In addition to this a well delivered outdoor event programme is vital to support local business and continue to attract a workforce to the city. The 2018 EIF “Value of Events” report estimates £225 spend per visitor to events in the SE region, directly supporting local business and Eventbrite found that 77% of millennials attend live events for experiences and consider them important.
- 3.5 The current Outdoor Events Strategy (Apx n2) focusses on a low-risk approach to event delivery in the city with Brighton & Hove City Council acting as a landlord and facilitator, rather than funding and producing events inhouse. This has significant gains in managing workload for a small team in the council and gives certainty around income levels. An alternative approach to this is explored further in section 4 of this report. The current events strategy document is under review, and a revised policy paper will be brought to Cabinet in the new year.

- 3.6 The council's outdoor events team aim to propose a balanced programme both geographically and in terms of event genre, with a push towards low impact, high return promotional activity. The programme features 3 major national profile events (for example the Women's Rugby World Cup, Brighton Marathon), ten key festivals (including the May Festivals, On the Beach), and over 150 diverse community or promotional events. It aims to maintain the estimated £120m economic impact on the region, whilst allowing space for the city to continue to develop its reputation as a key creative destination for creative industry workers and visitors.

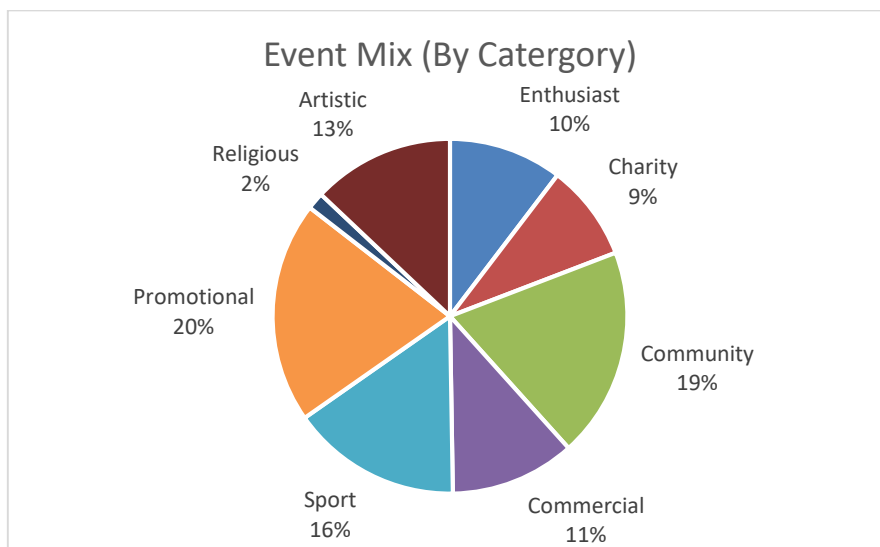


Figure 1: Split of Events in 2024/25 year

Mitigation of Risks and Challenges

- 3.7 There is a limit on the use of green space of a maximum 28 days annually. To increase scrutiny on appropriate use of spaces, a new set of equality impact assessments are being carried out on all regularly used event locations to identify key infrastructure and pressures in and around specific locations. These assessments will form part of all new event packs and must be referenced in all event delivery paperwork supplied by event producers.
- 3.8 The events sustainability commitment form (Apx n3). has been updated in 2024 in consultation with colleagues from the biodiversity and net zero teams to reflect city policy and new legislation (I.e. single use plastic ban). In addition to this, environmental impact assessments are being carried out on all spaces to ensure key biodiversity is protected in our parks and open spaces.
- 3.9 The outdoor events team continue to seek additional funding to drive our decarbonisation aims with mains power now available in 6 of the 9 key event locations in the city. Working with regeneration, installation of water and power infrastructure into city projects has become a key objective in driving Net Zero within the outdoor events sector through the City Park Diesel Reduction programme.
- 3.10 Noise Management - All planned events involving the use of amplified music will be required to provide the council with a noise management plan which

will be shared with colleagues in Environmental Protection for comment. Max. requested limit in 2024 was 75dB in line with other Unitary Councils, and events were monitored by independent expert acousticians. Event organisers will need to adhere to specific restrictions on levels of noise during the build-up, delivery and take down of their event, as well as providing the council with evidence of mitigation measures in place to reduce the impact on nearby businesses and residents. Safety is always the primary focus. See Appendix 4 for more detail.

- 3.11 Rising Costs – All fees charged to promoters are benchmarked via the LAEOG (Local Authorities Events Organiser’s Group). However, Brighton and Hove now track in line with Manchester for site hire fees, at the top end of the scale. This creates a risk in our ability to attract events. In 2024, an estimated £30,000 of income will be missed due to the city’s high fee position.
- 3.12 One of the most pressured periods for outside space in the city is May with the Festival and Fringe bringing the city to life. To maximise the city-wide benefits of this busy time the outdoor events team have established a May Festivals forum to look at cross working possibilities, share marketing opportunities and building towards a one city marketing approach. A similar approach is now being established to maximise the Winter festivals offer in the city.
- 3.13 The UK outdoor event industry currently faces significant challenges, including financial pressures and logistical hurdles. Rising insurance costs, increased security requirements, and fluctuating weather patterns are putting substantial strain on event organisers. A report from the Association of Independent Festivals highlights that over 70% of small festivals have experienced financial difficulties in the past two years due to these compounded issues. Furthermore, the impact of Brexit has led to increased import costs for equipment and goods, further exacerbating the situation (Independent, 2023). These factors collectively threaten the sustainability and growth of the outdoor event industry in the UK.

National Benchmarking

- 3.14 Benchmarking against other local authorities via the Local Authorities Event Organisers Group (LAEOG) confirms we remain comparable on all key metrics around ground reinstatement policies, land hire pricing and noise management approaches. Brighton & Hove currently tracks toward the top of comparable cities on site hire fees and manages noise limits in line with Edinburgh, Leeds, Margate and several of the key London Parks.

Risk Profile and Risk Planning

- 3.15 Key to the safe operation of events in the city is the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). Chaired by Regulatory Services the SAG is an open forum consisting of all blue light services and key internal departments where event plans are scrutinised, and advice can be shared to enhance safety and share best practice. Attendance at the SAG is mandatory for events that meet the appropriate threshold via the regional shared matrix.

- 3.16 Operation of events often cuts across a wide range of city departments and services, having impacts on CityClean, Highways, Sport Services, Parking, Regeneration and many others. To ensure the best outcomes for residents the Outdoor Events Team have established a cross-council forum that meets quarterly to identify efficiency opportunities and ensure best practice and practical learning from all events in the city. Work with highways and regeneration teams on planning for Valley Gardens 3 and Madeira terraces are great examples of where good inter-department communications can enhance outcomes.

Commercial Value

- 3.17 The event and filming programme in the city, continues to thrive. Featuring on average around 200 events and over 400 incidences of filming across the city, the bulk of income, however, remains tied to a narrow band of activity. Over 25% of annual income (£150,000) is generated in July alone and 50% (circa £300,000) of annual income comes from only 10 annual events in the city.
- 3.18 Focusing income generation on a small band of events provides significant benefits for enabling community groups to create new work on lower fees. By concentrating resources and efforts on a select number of high-revenue events, organisations can generate a stable and substantial income stream. This approach allows for better financial planning and resource allocation, ensuring that the necessary funds are available to support community-driven projects.
- 3.19 By focussing revenue generation on these key events, we can charge lower fees to smaller, community-focused events. This enables local groups to participate and create new work. This not only fosters creativity and innovation within the community but also promotes inclusivity and diversity by providing opportunities for a wider range of participants to showcase their talents and ideas. Ultimately, this strategy helps to build a vibrant and dynamic cultural landscape, where both large-scale and grassroots events can thrive and contribute to the overall enrichment of the community.
- 3.20 With the establishment of a new team in 2022, event income has increased dramatically with an income target of £611,420 predicted in 2024/25. There has been no significant increase in the number of events since 2017. The outdoor events team continue to seek new opportunities for events with proven economic benefits and seeking to expand existing events to increase tourism spend.

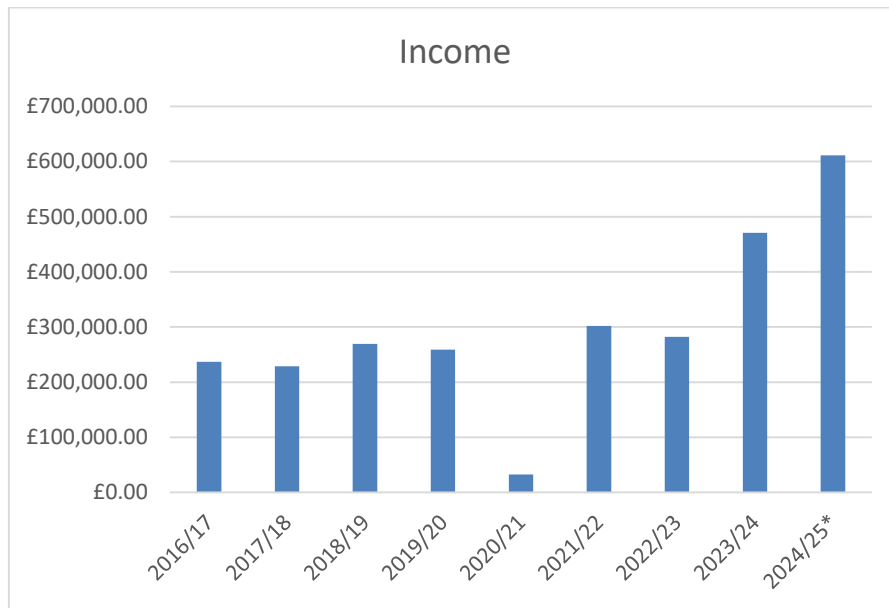


Figure 2: Event Income 2016 to 2025

3.21 Members should note that, due to the previous committee agreement to landlord’s consent for the Brighton and Hove Pride CiC events, which included detail of ongoing methodology and permissions for those events, they are not included in the body of this report. Pending the start of phase 2 of the engagement process around Pride celebrations in the city, an additional report will be generated outlining the future plans for Pride.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 Moving to a high-risk, high-reward system of producing events in-house has positive and negative considerations compared to a low-risk, low-reward system of leasing land to third-party organisers.

Positive Considerations

4.2 **Control and Creativity:** Producing events in-house allows for greater control over the event’s content, quality, and execution. This can lead to more innovative and unique events that better align with the organization’s vision and goals.

4.3 **Higher Revenue Potential:** High-risk, high-reward events have the potential to generate significant revenue if successful. This can provide a substantial financial boost and support other community initiatives.

4.4 **Brand Building:** Successfully hosting high-profile events can enhance the organisation’s reputation and brand, attracting more visitors and participants in the future.

Negative Considerations

4.5 **Financial Risk:** High-risk events require significant upfront investment and carry the risk of financial loss if they do not attract enough attendees or face unforeseen challenges.

- 4.6 Resource Intensive: Producing events in-house demands considerable time, effort, and resources, including staff, equipment, and logistics. This can strain the organisation's capacity and divert attention from other projects.
- 4.7 Uncertainty: The success of high-risk events is uncertain, and external factors such as weather, economic conditions, and competition can impact their outcome.
- 4.8 On the other hand, the current policy of leasing land to third-party organisers offers a low-risk, low-reward methodology:
- 4.9 Steady Income: Leasing land provides a predictable and steady income stream with minimal financial risk.
- 4.10 Reduced Responsibility: The responsibility for organising and managing the event lies with the third-party organisers, limiting the burden on the organisation's resources.
- 4.11 Limited Revenue Potential: While the financial risk is lower, the revenue potential is also limited compared to producing events in-house.
- 4.12 Ultimately, the choice between these two approaches depends on the organisation's risk tolerance, resources, and long-term goals. A move to a new system would require significant shift of policy and agreed funding. This is not viable in the immediate future because of the council's financial position.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 Consultation is taking place with Ward Councillors, Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, South East Coast Ambulance Service, NHS Trust, Environmental Health & Licensing, City Parks, Civil Contingencies, Sustainability and Highways.
- 5.2 Detailed consultation will also follow as the events are developed between the respective event organiser and our partner agencies. Monitored closely by the council's outdoor events team.

Test and Learn

- 5.3 Regular resident forums initiated throughout 2023 and 2024 have given the events department useful insights into public perception of the events programme. In the past two years the outdoor events team have responded to this feedback by introducing a number of key new policies and approaches. Creation of a new framework contract, to come into force in 2025 will help to ensure the most efficient and high-quality reinstatement work can be carried out on park spaces that are used for event use. New working relationships with Environmental Health have also enhanced protections around food safety and noise control ensuring residents are both safe and are responded to quickly where concerns are raised.

- 5.4 In response to feedback from residents, the inclusion of more family-friendly events has been prioritised. By incorporating activities and entertainment suitable for children and parents alike, these events foster a sense of community and encourage greater participation from residents. Family-friendly events contribute to the overall well-being of the community by offering opportunities for families to spend quality time together, engage in recreational activities, and build lasting memories. This focus on inclusivity and community engagement helps to strengthen the social fabric and enhance the quality of life for all residents.
- 5.5 In response to residents feedback in 2023/24 on the need for grounds to be reinstated with more speed after events, a new framework to outsource grounds reinstatement has been put in place. This will enable us to move the groundworks forward more quickly, although is still weather dependent.
- 5.6 The Outdoor events team are committed to continuing the programme of regular resident forums and dates/locations for this engagement programme will be shared with specific local interest groups such a resident associations, park run groups and “Friends of” groups in the coming weeks.
- 5.7 The full programme once confirmed will be listed on the council and Visit Brighton websites.

Social Value Impact

- 5.8 Events can affect the way places are perceived and people’s relationships with their place of residence, making them feel connected to it. Events act as vehicles to bring people together, encouraging social contact leading to enhanced individual wellbeing and more resilient communities. People benefit from participating in events, but also by volunteering and getting involved in planning and organising them locally, helping to build capacity of communities to organise events and other projects in the future.
- 5.9 Involvement in events can enhance people’s quality of life by providing enjoyable, sociable experiences to look forward to and reflect on as well as encouraging personal development to equip people with skills, confidence and knowledge to help them in their lives.
- 5.10 Events are not universally appreciated and there may be some associated negative effects that diminish their social value, including disruption to everyday routines.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Staff time required in implementing these events will be contained within existing Outdoor Events budgets.
- 6.2 The Outdoor Events budget does contain an income target of £0.550m for fee incomes. Though the events within this report mostly relate to the 2025 period, by entering into formal agreements and determining fees, this will contribute to achieving the income target for the 25/26 financial year.

- 6.3 Any significant variations to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 26/09/24

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Council is authorised under section 8 of the East Sussex Act 1981 to close parks in its area for up to 28 days a year in order to facilitate the staging of shows/events. Further, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 allows "the use of any land for any purpose for not more than 28 days in total in any calendar year and the provision on the land of any moveable structure for the purposes of the permitted use".

- 7.2 Should any event require road closures or certain other traffic management measures a traffic regulation order under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 will be required.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted 04/10/24

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 The Events Programme caters for people from all sectors of the community as there are a diverse range of events that are staged in the city each year. Issues such as physical access to an event and designated viewing areas are developed and detailed in event plans where applicable. Major event organisers will be required to complete an Equalities Impact Assessment.

9. Sustainability implications

- 9.1 All events are planned and staged in accordance with the statutory powers and planning obligations as set out in the Outdoor Events Strategy 2019-2024 (see Apx 2). A new Outdoor Events Policy is currently in development and will be in place by January 2025.

- 9.2 The nature of outdoor events means that they often involve a range of potential sustainability impacts (both positive and negative) from travel, energy and water use, food, local economic and social impacts, use of outdoor spaces and green spaces and production of waste. Event organisers continue to be strongly encouraged to sign up to the Council's Sustainable Event Commitment, helping them to improve sustainability at their events. (see Apx n3). The Sustainable Events Programme is certified to the international standard for environmental management ISO 14001.

- 9.3 The Sustainable Events Programme also meets the requirements of the British Standard for Sustainable Events that was developed for the London 2012 Games and helped them deliver a highly visible sustainability programme, particularly around event waste recycling and encouraging people to use public transport. The standard was superseded by the

International Standard ISO 20121 and the council's programme has been amended to meet the requirements of the new standard and help the council continually improve its engagement with event organisers to improve sustainability and encourage innovation.

- 9.4 Environmental Impact Assessment and Action plans will be required to be undertaken by organisers wishing to stage their events in the city.
- 9.5 All applications for events to be held on council land will be reviewed by the Council's outdoor events team to assess the potential impact and risk of the event to Brighton & Hove City Council land. Factors such as location, size, type of event, and what ground protection measures the event organiser has confirmed will be considered when agreeing if a reinstatement bond is required, and the value of this bond. A third party contractor via the new framework agreement will be responsible for all ground reinstatement. It is important to recognise that the impact on our open spaces by some events is inevitable, but the positive social and economic impacts of these events outweigh the immediate effects on the land.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 10.1 Outdoor events have a positive impact on the health and well-being of participants and spectators. However, events will need to meet covid safe requirements if they are able to take place.
- 10.2 Initial landlord's consent for outdoor events is determined by the council many months in advance, however, whether any event can go ahead is still very much dependent on all the safety and event permissions being in place at the time of the event.
- 10.3 Officers attend regular meetings held by the Sussex Resilience Forum, to ensure consistency as a region in relation to guidance, advice and information being given to event organisers with regards to Public Health concerns. It is recognised regionally that keeping visitors and residents safe is our priority.

Other Implications

12. Crime & disorder implications:

- 12.1 Sussex Police are involved in both the consultation and planning of all major events through the SAG. Final consent is never issued without broad agreement from Police Safety Advisory Group colleagues.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 Events continue to form a significant part in the council's overall tourism strategy. As well as bringing substantial cultural and economic benefits to the city, people experience civic pride when major recreational, sporting and entertainment events take place in their locality.

- 13.2 Officers will ensure that all events meet the requirements of the new Outdoor Events Policy, including the need for all event organisers to sign up to the Outdoor Events Charter and subscribe to new sustainability goals. This will be monitored carefully via the internal major events working group.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. 2025 Outdoor Events List
2. Outdoor Events Strategy 2019-2024
3. Revised Sustainability Commitment Form
4. Use of Green Spaces for Commercial Activity Briefing

