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# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL OUTDOOR EVENTS STRATEGY TO 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many places claim to be unique or special. The City of Brighton and Hove truly is: as a heritage resort nestling at the foot of the South Downs National Park, it is home to recognised attractions such as the Royal Pavilion, the Brighton Palace Pier and the British Airways i360. The city is famous for its vibrant cosmopolitan lifestyle and a reputation for openness and diversity.

Events and festivals are acknowledged in improving the quality of life of a local population. They provide occasions for expressing collective belonging to a group or a place, creating opportunities for drawing on shared histories, cultural practices and ideals. They are also an important element in the marketing and development of tourism. They provide an additional reason for tourists to visit a particular location and can also be a key factor in a tourist's decision to choose one destination over another. They provide enjoyable 'things to do' for visitors, allow informal and rewarding contact with the local community and provide new cultural and sporting experiences for visitors. All of these things bring money into the visitor economy supporting local jobs and local businesses. Many of the considerations for staging Events are set out below:

Social

Cities around the globe have increasingly recognised these benefits and so have developed extensive events programmes. The last fifteen years or so have seen a remarkable rise in the number of events and cultural festivals in cities throughout Europe and elsewhere. Evidence, including from places such as [London](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#), [Canada](#) and [Adelaide](#) shows that a properly resourced events programme, with a distinctive creative vision, and staged in an interesting and accessible location, can generate significant profile, attract new visitors and deliver substantial economic benefit.

Unlike permanent attractions, stadiums and museums, festivals and events are fleet of foot; they're able to switch venues and upscale programming if necessary. They're also much more inclusive. Many are free to the public, utilise existing public spaces and cultural assets, spark interactions among community members and nurture positive images of urban areas.

Successful events cities offer festivals and events which are connected to the place inspired by its location, history, heritage, people and living culture. They deliver authentic, high quality events which for the most part can only be found and experienced in that way in that particular place.

Cities which nurture this approach – even for those events which are bought in rather than home grown – tend to be more successful and sustainable. Not only as a tourism destination but also a place to live, work, study and invest in.

Brighton & Hove hosts many hundreds of events throughout the year. Some events are targeting a local audience (though visitors might go to them during a visit such as Burning of the Clocks or the Children's Parade); some are more commercial touring events that attract a regional audience because the city is the most convenient location to experience the event (such as the Ladyboys of Bangkok or the Moscow State Circus); and a few are signature events that are unique to Brighton & Hove and high profile, with the ability to attract visitors to the city and shape the reputation of the city (such as the Half Marathon and Pride).

The City Council is relooking at the city's future, its priorities, approach and the delivery structures needed to realise its potential. This Outdoor Events Strategy has been developed in response to the Brighton Visitor Economy Strategy and to align with the Cultural Framework. It is designed to work with the Brighton & Hove Economic Strategy and Action Plan, and the Greater Brighton Inward Investment and Export Strategy and inform the 20-year Vision for Brighton and Hove.

Brighton & Hove has the ambition to build the range and scope of events staged in the city to deliver a year-round programme of high quality, distinctive events which will appeal to visitors and residents and support the promotion of the city across all its agendas.

## 2. OUTDOOR EVENTS TO 2024

Outdoor events already play an influential role in the city's wider economic development and social agenda and this strategy outlines a future in which they can play an even stronger role supporting community wellbeing, the city's profile, reputation and economic growth.

Outdoor events help make Brighton & Hove a more vibrant and interesting place to live, work and study in - they bring people together and shape a strong sense of identity. They provide opportunities to stimulate tourism and economic growth.

Events also have wider cultural and social benefits on our society. They strengthen identity and pride, impact positively on health and wellbeing, and enhance educational outcomes and economic opportunities.

### VISION

The vision represents what needs to be achieved over the next 5 years. It recognises the breadth of impact and benefit that a well-run outdoor events programme can deliver. But it centres that on achieving greater focus on 'quality', 'distinctiveness' and 'impact'.

*Over the next 5 years the Brighton & Hove Outdoor Events Strategy will deliver events that create distinctive experiences for residents and visitors and that support the image as a 'Free-Thinking' city with a reputation for high quality events. It is about thinking bigger and smarter and growing sustainably with economic and social benefits felt by our residents and businesses*

### OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives we propose for Outdoor Events in Brighton and Hove to deliver the vision are focussed on achieving a balanced approach where outdoor events are not the end in themselves but rather a vehicle through which other city-wide needs are met:

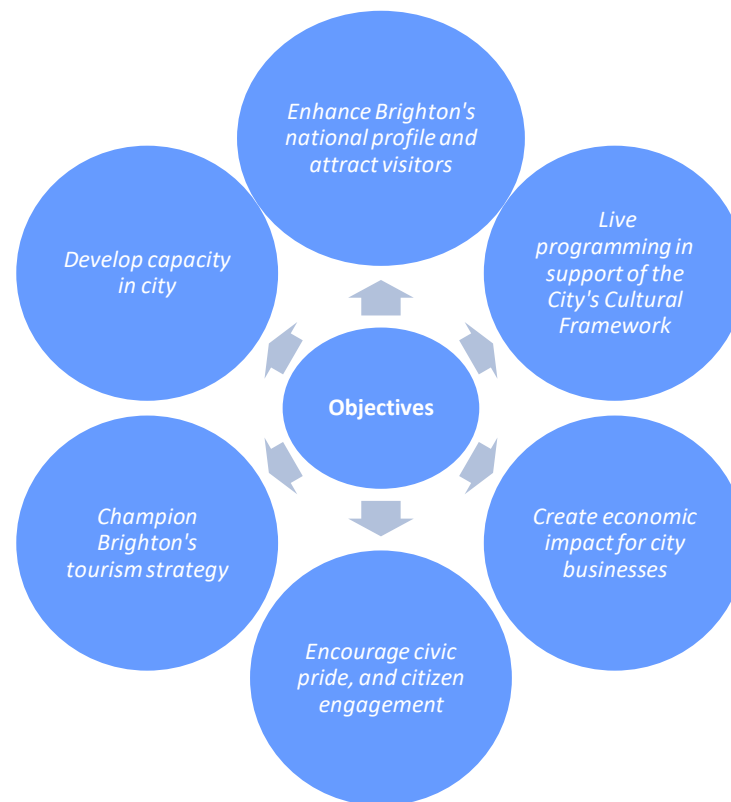
Outdoor events in Brighton & Hove will:

- ▶ Enhance our national and international profile and reputation;
- ▶ Attract visitors to the city year-round and align with the Visitor Economy Strategy;
- ▶ Deliver measurable benefits for city businesses;
- ▶ Encourage civic pride and community cohesion;
- ▶ Develop capacity and capabilities in the city’s events sector

### ACTIONS

We have identified a small number of specific actions that we believe can help deliver the vision and objectives and which we detail in the following sections:

1. Shift the **strategic focus** into doing less better and achieving more with the limited resources.
2. An **Outdoor Events Charter** to set clear expectations from organisers and to cement the actions that are important to local communities in event planning.
3. **Capacity building** in the sector to make Brighton & Hove a centre of outdoor events excellence across the spectrum of event types and sizes. To ensure that the events team are focussed on the area of greatest opportunity with the tools and resources to help them.
4. **Events infrastructure investment** in key sites to say to the industry that Brighton & Hove is welcoming and world class.

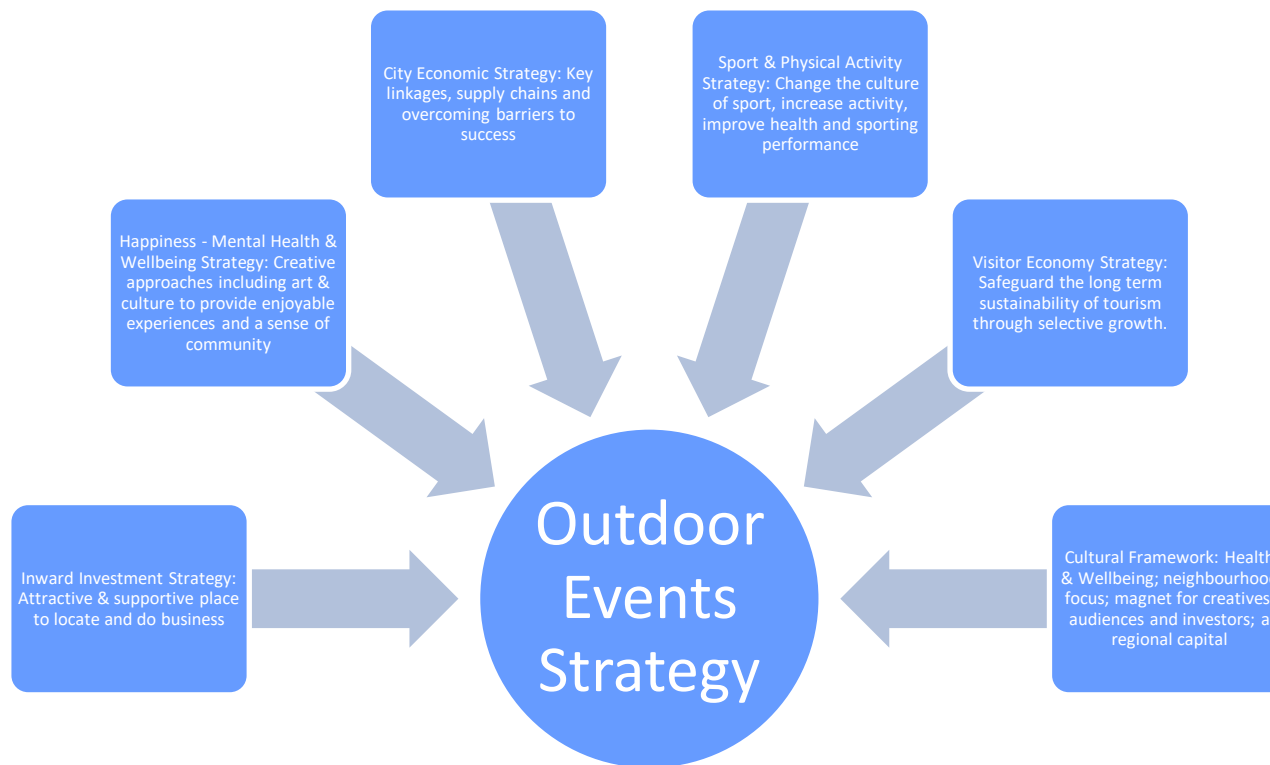


### 3. SETTING THE SCENE

We set out in this section the scale of outdoor Event delivery in Brighton & Hove and where and how this strategy fits into the current policy environment for the City.

#### ALIGNMENT TO CITY STRATEGIES

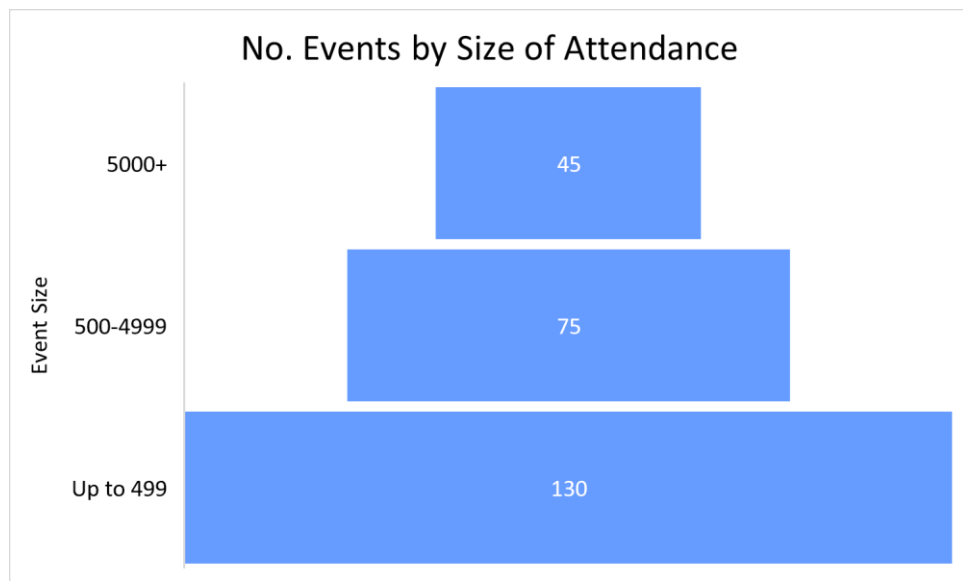
The Brighton & Hove Events Strategy supports and aligns with other major city strategies:



### OUTDOOR EVENTS NOW

Brighton & Hove is a popular city for events using a variety of large open spaces. The city is host to approximately 250 outdoor events a year attracting over one million attendees. Of these approximately 40-45 can be classified as major events, ranging across performing arts, leisure sports (predominantly running and cycling), food & drink, circuses, and automotive rallies. These events command large attendances in excess of 5,000 visitors or participants, of which 11 exceed 20,000 attendees. Examples include Pride, Brightona, Historic Commercial Vehicles and Brighton Festival and Fringe. At the other end of the scale nearly half of all events in the annual programme are community or local charity events mostly attracting fewer than 500 attendees.

The breakdown is illustrated as follows:



“The cultural offer of Brighton & Hove has and is central to its success and serves to make the city an attractive place to live, work and visit. The inherent character of the place – the Brighton experience – has a clear impact on the impression we make on opinion-formers in the wider region, nationally and internationally. It is equally important to our residents, whose sense of identity is influenced by the physical environment, our rich heritage, the natural assets of the coast and south downs, the city’s sense of fun and tolerant attitude; the opportunities for enjoying a different (and better) kind of life.”

Brighton & Hove Cultural Framework



The events programme has historically developed as a 'receiver' of events rather than shaping the annual programme as a proactive originator or facilitator. This receptive approach has led to a large number of similar event types such as automotive rallies and participatory leisure sports.

Whilst positive for the participant or enthusiast, through dilution of impact, these events can lose some of their resonance. They also restrict the city's ability to use prime spaces for new events - as a result of restrictive covenants on the number of days Madeira Drive can be closed for events for example – and which hinders developing an enhanced off-season programme.

There is much to commend in terms of where the city is now:

- ▶ **City as a Stage:** An attractive setting for events with amazing spaces and audience on tap some of which are unique (beach); Supporting infrastructure and experience at handling large volumes (rail, hotels, restaurants etc due to 8m+ visitors).
- ▶ **Capabilities and Professionalism:** National reputation for delivering complex and highly regarded events; strong and capable supplier network with international credentials that operate here; 'signposting' service at the city council outdoor events team that helps organisers connect with different departments, services and partner agencies. There is a wealth of experience in a range of services which include cleansing and waste, events and roads management, technical infrastructure and venues.
- ▶ **Economy and Reputation:** Seen as lively and vibrant with a 'can-do' attitude; growing success in pushing events into 'shoulders' and driving up income for City Council; deliver direct economic impacts such as employment and skills training.
- ▶ **Community:** Shows the character of the city and brings communities together; diverse programme for different communities; charitable opportunities for fund-raising.

**EVENT CLASSIFICATION**

We have classified Brighton & Hove’s events under four distinct categories and we use these in bringing focus to the actions proposed later in this strategy:

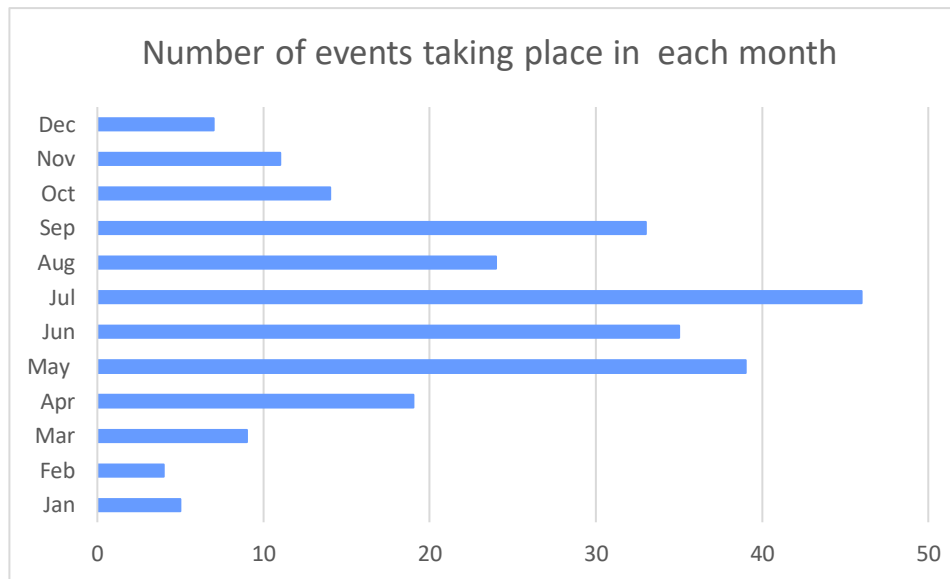
<p><b>Community Events</b></p> <p>These are small to medium community or community of interest events. Often hosted in parks, they are primarily neighbourhood focused, aimed at local residents as audiences and participants e.g. Patchfest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local interest and visits</li> <li>▶ Meet a local need</li> </ul>	<p><b>City Events</b></p> <p>These are cultural and sports activity events delivered at city level that are predominantly aimed at Brighton &amp; Hove residents with limited impact or attraction to visiting audiences beyond the city e.g. Children’s Parade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Supported by large number of locals across the city</li> <li>▶ Animate the city for a visitor</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feature Events</b></p> <p>These are events with a regional catchment or have a niche national profile that attract visitors and participants to the city either from the sub-region or as specialism enthusiasts. We suggest that Boundary Brighton, Brighton &amp; Hove Half Marathon, and nearly all automotive events (e.g. National Speed Trials, Ace Café Reunion, Mini Rally, InCarNation) are Feature Events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Niche and special interest so reach audiences from outside the local area</li> <li>▶ Recurring and one-off</li> </ul>	<p><b>Headline Events</b></p> <p>These are high profile events that draw significant numbers of London or national participants or visitors. We suggest Pride, London to Brighton Bike Ride, and Veteran Car Run.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Significant Reach and media coverage</li> <li>▶ High resource and partnership requirements</li> <li>▶ Largest economic impact</li> <li>▶ Distinctly Brighton &amp; Hove</li> <li>▶ Maybe multiple day events</li> </ul>

### EVENT CALENDAR

The city’s calendar of events is predominantly weighted to the summer months, with over 70% of events taking place between May and September. Only 10% take place between November and March. The calendar is very much driven by event organisers who in order to ensure the viability plan their events when there is the expectation of better weather conditions and a seasonal rise in visitors to draw upon as audiences and participants.

### EVENT FEE INCOME

Currently the income from hire charges generated from events and (to a lesser extent) markets across the city is £180,585, with 246 events licensed and/or directly organised by the council. Events income is secured by the Outdoor Events team and funds the delivery of the events programme across the city supporting community and local events and the wider work of the events team.

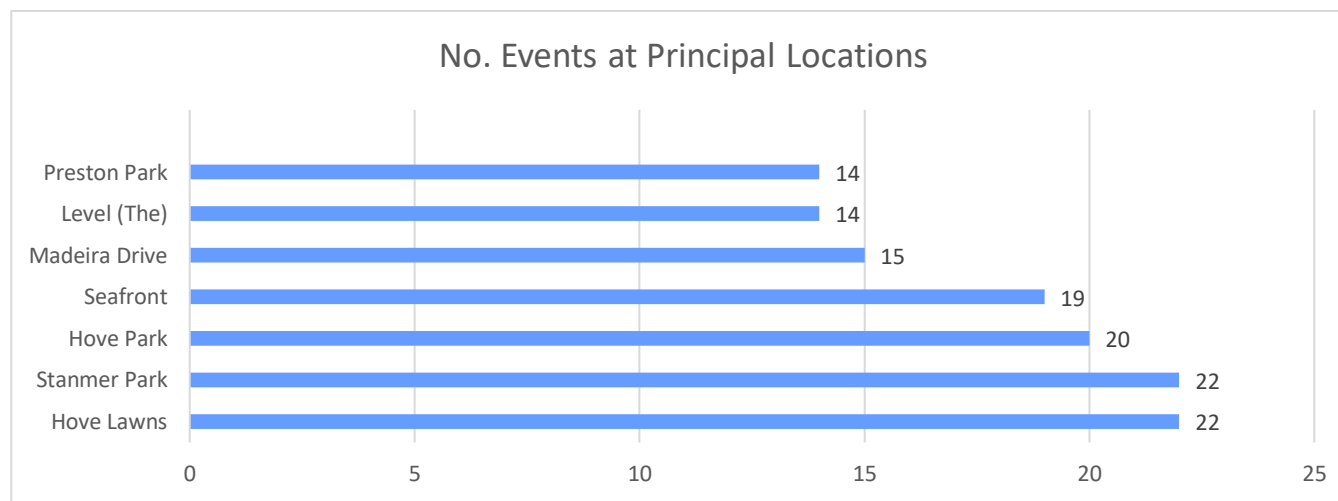


### EVENT VENUES

The city’s outstanding prime parks, green spaces and seafront are suitable for hosting events across a wide range of sizes and genres and are a key selling point to event promoters and attendees. Brighton & Hove has approximately 147 parks and greenspaces across the city, of which the largest used for events are Preston Park, Hove Lawns and Stanmer Park. Along the seafront Madeira Drive, a road which runs east of Brighton Palace Pier to Black Rock, is an important venue for many motoring, running and cycle participation events.

In 2017, thirty five different event spaces were utilised for outdoor events that were managed through the Outdoor Events office. Of these, seven principal public event spaces hosted 10 or more events.

This demonstrates a spread of activity across the main event spaces with no single location bearing an excessive amount of activity.



### SWOT ANALYSIS

A summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for outdoor events in Brighton and Hove gives some insight into what needs to happen. It highlights the importance of outdoor events and the role they play in supporting broader economic, health, cultural and tourism agendas and also the challenges that need to be overcome if outdoor events are to reach their full potential.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Attractive setting for outdoor events with amazing and unique spaces</li> <li>▶ Seen as lively and vibrant with a 'can-do' attitude</li> <li>▶ Large catchment for audiences and participants</li> <li>▶ Supporting infrastructure and experience at handling large numbers</li> <li>▶ Good reputation for delivering complex and highly regarded events</li> <li>▶ Strong and capable supplier network with international credentials that to operate here</li> <li>▶ Dedicated events service at BHCC that signposts other departments and partner agencies</li> <li>▶ Direct economic impacts and employment benefits</li> <li>▶ Brings communities together and offers a diverse programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Events programming results in quantity not quality and does not necessarily align to city's needs e.g. Oct-Mar.</li> <li>▶ Negative event impacts such as noise, waste, access, disruption etc. can feel overwhelming at peak times.</li> <li>▶ Perception that Events can be seen as a source of higher income despite delivery costs and organiser risk. Events felt to be damaging local trade in the short term despite building reputation and attractiveness year-round.</li> <li>▶ Organisational capacity is restricted by hundreds of small events that take up a lot of the team's time and limit capacity to be more strategic</li> <li>▶ Infrastructure not embedded in the main event spaces (e.g. power).</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increasing the impact from the visits that the events generate, getting visitors to stay longer and spend more and supporting local business.</li> <li>▶ Building a stronger community and delivering events that go out of their way to achieve this.</li> <li>▶ Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities</li> <li>▶ Organisational/financial – maximising income and developing the capabilities of communities and organisers to take greater responsibility for events</li> <li>▶ Responsible - minimising the negative impacts of events while maximising the potential benefits</li> <li>▶ Reputation – raising the profile of Brighton &amp; Hove as a city to live, work, invest, study and visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ City Council's financial position continues to be very challenging</li> <li>▶ Events under threat due to cuts and grant funding pressure</li> <li>▶ Investment in festivals and events in competitor destinations</li> <li>▶ Lack of distinctiveness and duplication with an oversupply of events (running/cycling)</li> <li>▶ Local residents' attitude to events when daily life disrupted</li> </ul>

## COMPARATOR LESSONS

To inform this Events Strategy, we looked at two comparator UK cities, Liverpool and Oxford, that are recognised as exponents of good practice in the strategic co-ordination and promotion of events. Though not directly comparable they nonetheless provide insights into the ways in which other cities use the power and profile of events to further economic and community objectives.

### Liverpool

Liverpool City Council acknowledges the huge impact culture is having in transforming the City and sees the major events programme as a backbone of its cultural activity. The Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy Strategy to 2020 identifies Liverpool's cultural offer as the driver for visitor growth and the main priority for marketing the metropolitan area's visitor offer.

Major events in Liverpool are managed by Culture Liverpool a department of the City Council. Its strategy for events is fewer but larger events and festivals that attract large attendances delivering economic impacts.

It produces 10 events plus manages a further 5 programmed by external promoters. It also delivers major LCC civic events. Smaller community events in the city's parks and green spaces are managed by the Council's Parks management.

The annual programme and budget are drawn up by the events team and makes an investment case to the Council's cabinet based on economic impact, city profile and fit with cultural programme. Culture Liverpool raises significant commercial income for its events. Since 2013 a commercial and marketing team within Culture Liverpool has generated over £6 million in cash and in-kind support.

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*"I have great ambition for this city and culture to me is the rocket fuel for its continuing regeneration...We know the feelgood benefits and the economic impact that culture brings, it sustains and attracts jobs and is the lifeblood of the fast-growing visitor economy. Liverpool has well documented evidence on the importance of culture to the economy and the return on investment the arts generate."*

*Mayor Joe Anderson*

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## Oxford

The City of Oxford has a population 158,000 of which one third is aged 18 to 29 with 32,000 students enrolled for full-time studies in two universities. It has 10 wards that are amongst the 20% most deprived in England, and the 5th highest percentage of working-age residents claiming benefits.

It is the seventh most visited city in the UK attracting circa. 7 million visitors each year. It is a popular day visitor destination for historic heritage and cultural assets but only has 1 million overnight stays. Oxford City Council recognises 3 distinct audience profiles: Students; Visitors; and Residents. The latter has been a core focus reflecting the City's desire to use events to deliver important social impacts around deprivation and diversity.

However, in an evolving events strategy, the future focus will be on developing major events to increase dwell time of visitors in order to deliver greater economic impacts.

The City Council's events team manages and co-ordinates around 300 events a year held on council land. Only circa. 15 are considered large, as the City is limited by the availability of dedicated event space restricting major event development. Oxford City Council directly delivers 4 core major city events: May Morning, St Giles Fair, Christmas Light Festival & Alice Day.

## Comparator Conclusions

Comparator cities present a number of consistent themes which Brighton & Hove can learn from:

- ▶ Primarily for citizens recognising that local audiences are what sustain the event and ensure they support public sector funding decisions
- ▶ Successfully challenged/changed external perceptions, and increased pride and self-confidence of residents in their city
- ▶ Exploit the authenticity and distinctiveness of the city
- ▶ Provide a crucial stimulus to tourism
- ▶ Major headline events supported by a year-round programme of smaller events.

## 4. ACTION 1 - STRATEGIC FOCUS

This strategy will build on a year-round, multi-layered portfolio of events that deliver distinctive experiences for visitors and residents and supports economic development and profile building priorities. It argues for a mixture of established successful events, new events which can be developed and national/international events which we will be trying to attract to the city. In most instances the council will work in partnership with one or more organisations to support the delivery of these events. This may mean doing fewer events of greater benefit.

### KEY AIMS

The aims of this approach are to:

- ▶ Differentiate Brighton & Hove in a competitive and overcrowded market for event audiences;
- ▶ Ensure Headline Events’ profile, attendance and impacts are not diluted by an excess of similar events;
- ▶ Develop new opportunities that fill gaps outside the core summer months in the annual calendar.

To support these Key Aims we propose that the city’s events are classified in a framework of four distinct groups:

#### Headline Events

These are 3 or 4 (or even 5) big impact annual cultural and sporting highlights which showcase the city. The aspiration should be for events that can be classified as ‘distinctively Brighton’ that: display excellence in quality and high levels of ambition; deliver high economic impact; attract large audiences; achieve significant media coverage; and generate more overnight stays in the city.

#### Potential Development – Headline Events

This programme of annually recurring activities we suggest incorporates London to Brighton Bike Ride, Brighton Festival and Pride. In 2017 The Brighton Marathon and to some extent Pride have demonstrated an ambition to extend reach by developing additional activities and days which has increased longer stays and encouraged overnight stays. The London to





Brighton Bike Ride should be encouraged to respond similarly by adding value to their utilisation of Brighton & Hove, by building additional activity around the event in the city.

The recurring events calendar would be supported by new home grown or one-off national or international sporting events acquired under a competitive bidding process such as UEFA Women's Football or Rugby World Cup, Tour of Britain cycle race, WTC Ironman championship; Swatch FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour; or ITU Triathlon World Championship Series. Alternatively, a quick (but not cheap) way to achieve something of scale is to commission or buy in 'spectaculars' such as Liverpool's Spider or Hull's Place des Anges. Using established international companies could deliver high profile, impactful events in a relatively short time-frame.

### **Feature Events**

Established, growing or one-off events that contribute to the vibrancy, profile and tourism appeal of the city. They will be able to demonstrate how they can deliver quality and high levels of ambition, achieve greater public profile, deliver economic impact and attract visitors to the city from London and the wider sub-region. Brighton Fringe, Boundary Festival, Ace Café Reunion, Paddle Round the Pier, B&H Food & Drink Festival have the growth potential to be classified as Feature Events.

### **Potential Development – Feature Events**

A significant vacuum exists during the winter months leading up to Christmas and New Year. The potential exists to build the 'Winter Festival' brand. A distinctive, authentic and creative, promotional 'umbrella' branding that creates the opportunity to promote Brighton and Hove as a winter visitor destination. The Winter Festival programme will be essentially framed around high-profile events, (e.g. City Fireworks, Burning the Clocks, Veteran Car Run) but also integrate the City's wider cultural offer promoting theatre shows, seasonal concerts, and distinctive exhibitions. Ideas should be developed in consultation and co-operation with the Brilliant Brighton (BID) to ensure emerging ideas have the support of other business sectors such as retail. The city's creative event expertise could be used to develop high profile events during the Christmas season to enhance the City's reputation as a festive retail destination and to attract visitors. This packaging and enhancing of the existing offer is a way to support the city's Visitor Economy Strategy through improved packaging.

### **City Events**

These are events delivered at city level that although of a recognised quality are predominantly aimed at residents. They will have limited impact or attraction to visiting audiences beyond Brighton & Hove sub region but contribute to the year-round ambience of the city as a happening place.

Take Part Festival, Apple Day, Foodies Festival, Spiegeltent, and Children's Parade currently fit this category. We would group touring tented circus, Fairs and light entertainment shows as city level events. However, these events are unlikely to achieve more than modest growth in visitor impacts or engagement beyond local audiences. They should however be well-managed exemplars of sustainable events, adding to the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the city and it's neighbourhood and making the most of opportunities to support local suppliers.

### **Community Events**

These are small scale community or community of interest organised festivals and events taking place across the city. They have a capacity of 499 or less. The city council provides advice and guidance and runs several grant schemes including the Community Festivals Fund and Arts Partnership Awards which eligible organisations can apply to for project funding.

While these events have real value to local communities and should be welcomed, the limited resources of the city council should be targeted at events which deliver a wider set of impacts and many of these events will continue to look after themselves. Nonetheless the city council should support the permissions required and offer guidance and advice on best practice delivery.

### **SUMMARY OPPORTUNITIES**

- ▶ Focus efforts on making the most of events with the greatest potential to deliver economic impacts
- ▶ Encourage actions to increase the direct impact on the local economy by Headline Events with a focus on events such as the L2B Bike Ride
- ▶ Support Bids for occasional international events e.g. Rugby World Cup
- ▶ Develop the winter programme of events and packaging to present a coherent offer
- ▶ Encourage the use of local suppliers and the distinctiveness of all events that take place in Brighton & Hove

## 5. ACTION 2 - EVENTS CHARTER

The city council should create an Outdoor Events Charter as a public statement about what the city council and organisers are trying to achieve through outdoor events and how they are going about it. It is intended to help organisers understand what the city expects from them and to which they publicly commit themselves. It is also a tool to use with local communities who may be impacted by events, to show what is trying to be achieved, to highlight the approach to quality and well-managed events and to build better relationships between those delivering events and those impacted by them. We are not aware of another UK destination operating a charter such as this and it would be a 'first'.

The Charter acknowledges that the council will:

- ▶ Provide a welcoming and supportive location for events;
- ▶ Promote events that enhances the reputation and image of the city;
- ▶ Provide resources to assist the planning and delivery of priority events as well as financial support to community events;

And that the organisers will:

- ▶ Positively contribute to the quality of life for local communities;
- ▶ Maximise the economic contribution from outdoor events to the city economy;
- ▶ Deliver innovative and imaginative programming;
- ▶ Make the most of creative partnerships and collaboration that's supports city-based event producers and suppliers and strengthens capacity building;
- ▶ Promote health and wellbeing while minimising disruption to residents and businesses;
- ▶ Deliver the most sustainable events that help protect the environment as far as possible.

The city council's commitment also includes a single point of contact to all event enquiries drawing upon extensive experience gained in managing and regulating outdoor events and help facilitating end-to-end multi-agency support in the planning and delivery of outdoor events including across the different departments and responsibilities of the city council.

The city council will also aim to simplify the events application process by exploring digital services that reduce paperwork and increase efficiency and will aim to embed infrastructure in outdoor events locations, as part of new developments, that will help provide environmentally sustainable event spaces in the future.

All event organisers above a certain threshold (500 attendees+) will be required to sign up to the Charter a suggested draft of which follows:

**BRIGHTON & HOVE OUTDOOR EVENTS CHARTER**

Brighton & Hove is a city which values outdoor events as way to bring together and value our diverse communities and to support the economic wellbeing of those communities through the jobs supported by outdoor events.

We want to host the best outdoor events possible and will work in partnership with organisers to mitigate negative impacts and maximise the positive values of the event.

We are asking all organisers of outdoor events to sign up to this outdoor events charter and to publicise their commitment through their own marketing and communications. By signing up to this charter, we agree to:

1. Plan an outdoor event that is high quality and which meets the needs of the audience.
2. Communicate our plans to residents and business who may be impacted and to deal with any concerns expressed to the best of our ability.
3. Design an event which maximises the economic benefits to Brighton & Hove, attracting visitors and getting them to stay and spend in the local economy.
4. Share plans with the City Council and any other organisations they recommend to ensure the event is well thought through.
5. Deliver a safe and secure event.
6. Deliver an event which seeks to protect the environment and which can be delivered as sustainably as possible using the Councils guidance for [Sustainable Events](#).
7. Provide a publicised contact name and number to deal with any immediate issues occurring during the event and to enable quick resolution to any problems arising.
8. Measure the economic impact of the event and provide the city council with the results using an evaluation tool such as [www.eventimpacts.com](http://www.eventimpacts.com)
9. Promote our commitment to this charter on our website.

Signed:

Position:

Organisation:

Date:

## 6. ACTION 3 - CAPACITY BUILDING

This strategy advocates a shift in resource towards outdoor events that can help the city get bigger and better impacts and recognises that as it stands a large proportion of time and resource is spent facilitating the permissions of smaller and community events that have limited economic impact.

The city council approves approximately 250 events a year, which necessitates a significant workload and time spent by the events team processing applications, facilitating consultations and supervising event preparations to ensure well-managed, safe events that mitigate negative impacts on local communities.

We also think that the sector and organisers can help the council achieve what it wants but often are unclear exactly what that is. So, we recommend bringing them on board to help find solution to the outdoor events challenges faced – whether that is programming outside of peak periods; sharing best practice in sustainable delivery; or innovating and driving out distinctiveness.

We have six specific recommendation in this Action:

- ▶ Explore digital tools that can help with event applications to improve efficiency
- ▶ Use existing digital platforms (e.g. social media groups) to connect the various organisers to support each other
- ▶ A new role in programme development using clear criteria
- ▶ Fostering the capacity and capabilities of the local sector and engaging them in the city's challenges
- ▶ Retain support from other operational teams at the Council to deliver this strategy and maintain the reputation as an attractive destination to deliver events
- ▶ Ongoing review of hire charges and fees

### MANAGING APPLICATIONS

Currently events with an expected audience capacity under 3,000 at one time, submit an Outdoor Event Application Form. The application form is assessed by outdoor events team and a Consent Form issued if permission is granted.

For large events categorised as over 3,000 people, an initial discussion is required with Events Team, followed up with submission of an Event Management Plan 6 months prior to the event. This is subject to the approval of the Outdoor Events Team and the multi-agency event liaison officers for the event.

Event organisers are required to complete a Sustainable Commitment form. Event organisers must also ensure that all required permissions and licenses are acquired as required.

Currently the outdoor events team use an email and paper-based application system for event organisers to complete that can be burdensome. Exploring the options for a digital system could provide advantages for facilitating a speedier application process, reducing the workload of the outdoor events team, providing online guidance; and facilitating more efficiently the sharing of information with stakeholders such as SAG and consultation group representatives as well as providing easy access to repeat applications in subsequent years.

In employing an online event application and management platform such as apply4 EventApp, and removing paper forms altogether, this helps in pre-empting queries from applicants and reduces the workload for the outdoor event team. For each booking, all supporting documents are uploaded and stored in the one place. Stakeholders such as police and safety advisory groups can view event calendars, event information and supporting documents.

Conscious of the limited resource at the city council it would be unrealistic to suggest new options such as monthly advice sessions for community event organisers who would have the opportunity to meet an officer to talk through their event in a surgery style meeting. So instead we recommend helping the organisers work more closely with each other and relying on the network of organisers to assist and answer questions. Social media groups for Brighton & Hove organisers which the team could set up and monitor might be one way to help organisers without adding to the burden on the events team.

**PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

The Events Unit will act as an enabler, facilitator (and occasional commissioner) rather than a direct deliverer of events. The programme would be developed and advanced through a process of stakeholder engagement and collaborative working to create and shape a high-quality annual calendar of activity. Opportunities should be taken to broker linkages among event organisers, encourage use of public spaces and manage a clash diary for the city. The outdoor events team will provide the supervision for the city’s events programme. They will be responsible for advising, supporting and in some instances investing in the city’s Signature, Feature, City and Community portfolio of events.

**CRITERIA FOR HEADLINE EVENTS**

We recommend that to ensure the objectives of the Events Strategy are achieved, the Outdoor Events team apply a robust, consistent set of criteria to deliver clarity for all event organisers on the type of events the city council wants to host. Organisers should demonstrate how their event supports the following criteria:

- ▶ Time of Year – does it help build business outside of peak times?
- ▶ Does it promote Brighton & Hove as a vibrant, contemporary city?
- ▶ Does it demonstrate distinctiveness and high quality?
- ▶ Will it generate an economic benefit for the city?
- ▶ Will it attract wide and broadly-based audiences/participants?
- ▶ Will it have the potential to attract visitors and generate spend from key target visitor markets (see Brighton VES strategy for more information)?
- ▶ Will it involve the city’s communities?
- ▶ Can it provide capacity building opportunities for sector development?
- ▶ Will the event sign up to the Sustainable Event commitments?

Using clear criteria, the Events Unit would engage with local, national and international external organisations and agencies to identify and bid for one-off Headline sporting and cultural events. An essential criterion would be that an external local lead or co-partner(s) is secured. The criteria are a guideline and not all potential Headline Events will meet every criterion.

**FOSTERING BRIGHTON AND HOVE’S EVENTS SECTOR**

Our Strategy recognises the importance of a vibrant, flourishing independent events sector within the city. We will embark on closer collaboration with the sector, engaging with a broader range of independent promoters, producers and venues in a similar way to that which occurs in the cultural sector.

If there is sufficient demand from the network of Brighton & Hove event organisers we may consider the delivery of an annual outdoor events conference of city-wide event stakeholders to share and exchange ideas, potentially creating new projects and complementary workstreams. This will facilitate dialogue about what the city wants from outdoor events and those attending could include professional independent promoters, creative / festival producers and leisure/sports event promoters across the spectrum of outdoor events in the city. This would need to be self-funding.

### OPERATIONAL ROLES

The Events Team's role will be to provide leadership to the sector working across the city with event organisers and producers. Their focus will be on managing partnerships, attracting and retaining events to secure and optimise the benefits to the city.

- Provide a single point of contact for event enquiries and signpost across the different departments within the city council and SAG membership
- Maintain networks & building relationships crucial in identifying and securing events
- Engage with, and act as enablers and facilitators for, independent event promoters
- Collaborate effectively with city's tourism and hospitality businesses, through VisitBrighton, to maximise the opportunity that events offer.
- Facilitate opportunities for residents' engagement through working with event producers and appropriate departments of the city council and other organisations.

It is beneficial for the city council to have nominated and named individuals in other key departments that work on outdoor events. This would include but is not limited to key staff in Parks, Cityclean, VisitBrighton, the Seafront, Highways and Environmental Health.

VisitBrighton will support and take to market signature events and growth events that reinforce the Brighton Brand, appeal to target markets and have the capability of attracting visitors now or the potential to do so in the future.

### SITE HIRE CHARGES

In 2017, 246 events hosted by the city council generated £180k for the Events budget while many community events (large and small) paid no fees for holding an outdoor event on Council land. This income forms part of the expenditure profile for the department and is used to support the wide work of the Outdoor Events Team and through them, local events.

We recommend an ongoing review of the event fees as part of the annual cycle of reviewing fee and charges and suggest that future reviews take greater account of event classification/organiser status and event capacities. Future reviews should also consider:



- ▶ Continued waiving of site fees for small community events where no road closures/ licenses are required
- ▶ Explore the potential for a non-refundable administration fee, to cover the cost of administration and compliance time which the officer takes to assess applications.
- ▶ In the longer term and for larger commercial events, the costs of the compliance and support service may need to be recharged in a format agreed upfront with the organiser.

We recognise that moving from where we are now to where we want to be can take time and helping organisers to understand future commitments and how these may scale up over 3 years is something that needs to start sooner rather than later.

## 7. ACTION 4 - EVENTS INFRASTRUCTURE

Brighton & Hove is a city that benefits from a variety of large open spaces including Madeira Drive, Preston Park, Valley Gardens, Hove Lawns and Stanmer Park. However, Brighton & Hove's principal spaces are not equipped to support major events, requiring substantial infrastructure to be brought in.

Madeira Drive, Preston Park, and the Valley Gardens have been recognised by the city council as priority event spaces. However, they need to be developed as dedicated events ready spaces capable of hosting a range of events and entertainments. This means investing in built-in infrastructure in the public realm with outdoor performance front of mind. This is necessary to fulfil the objectives set out in Section 2 of this report namely to 'Enhance our national and international profile and reputation; Encourage civic pride and community cohesion; and develop capacity and capabilities in the city's events sector.

With proposed development of Valley Gardens and Peter Pans there are already plans to ensure that these developments provide for the existing and future needs of events and event organisers. Introducing surfaces that can accommodate events, dropped kerbs for vehicle access, rail crossings for Volks alongside Madeira Drive are all examples of improvements that are needed.

We understand discrete funding for capital improvements to support events is unlikely to be forthcoming in the current climate. But the needs of events and event organisers should be considered as part of the early thinking and planning for major projects (public and private) that are taking place in and around the main event locations.

The main requirements that future development should consider would include:

- ▶ Provision of flat, open space;
- ▶ No street furniture or public art that cannot be easily moved;
- ▶ Provision of electricity power supply, data, water and drainage at appropriate underground points;
- ▶ Vehicle access for unloading;
- ▶ Performer parking;
- ▶ Security and site safety designed in.

The establishment of event ready infrastructure will also critically assist reducing environmental impacts managing energy and water more efficiently, reducing waste and carbon emissions.

## CONCLUSION

This strategy recognises that Brighton & Hove is already in a good place – it has a broad programme of events that deliver meaningful benefits to the community and the local economy and which attract visitors.

But there is an ambition to achieve more – and to be able to do so with less resource. It is of course easy to say and hard to do. This report however advocates four specific actions that we believe can help achieve this by a greater focus on ‘quality’, ‘distinctiveness’ and ‘impact’ and which will help achieve the following vision:

*Over the next 5 years the Brighton & Hove Outdoor Events Strategy will deliver events that create distinctive experiences for residents and visitors and that support the image as a ‘Free-Thinking’ city with a reputation for high quality events. It is about thinking bigger and smarter and growing sustainably with economic and social benefits felt by our residents and businesses*

**Disclaimer:** All information and analysis supplied by Blue Sail Consulting Ltd and our sub-contractors is delivered in good faith and represents our professional judgement based on the information obtained from the client and elsewhere. The achievement of recommendations, forecasts and valuations depend on factors beyond our control. Any projections, financial or otherwise, in this report are only intended to illustrate particular points of argument and do not constitute forecasts of actual performance

