

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 56

Subject: Women's football in Sussex

Date of meeting: Thursday, 16 October 2025

Report of: Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration

Lead Officer: Name: Alison McManaman Corporate Director - Operations

Contact Officer: Name: Ian Baird – Outdoor Events Development Manager
Email: Ian.Baird@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that key details of the items for consideration were received after the statutory publication deadline.

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report seeks to outline the significant positive benefits of hosting major international sports competitions in the City and empower officers to actively pursue similar projects.
- 1.2 After run-away success as a host city for Men's and Women's Rugby World Cups in 2015 and 2025 respectively and the UEFA Women's Euro's in 2022 Brighton and Hove has cemented a reputation as a key host city location for international sport. Adding future major internationals to the city's portfolio will generate worldwide exposure, foster social and cultural impacts and create a growing sporting legacy for the city.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees that international sport, and specifically Women's sport is a great asset to the city and has produced positive outcomes for our residents.
- 2.2 Cabinet agrees to empower officers to actively seek future opportunities for the city and work with national and local partners to continue to expand Brighton & Hove's reputation as a premier international destination.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 When Brighton and Hove hosted the UEFA Women's European Cup in 2022, it leveraged the highest Gross Value Added (GVA) yield of any host city of £8m due, in part, to extended stays and overnights from fans. With

this impressive track record, Sussex will be ideally placed to become a major visitor hub for future competitions.

- 3.2 Beyond GVA, the benefits across many sectors in the city are clear as detailed below.
- 3.3 **Increased Tourism:** The influx of international visitors boosts local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and retail outlets.
- 3.4 **Global Media Exposure:** Worldwide coverage of events enhances Brighton & Hove's reputation as a premier destination for sports and tourism.
- 3.5 **Social Impact:** Hosting international athletes, particularly within Women's sport, increases active lifestyles in the city and inspires the next generation to participate. In post competition resident surveys after the Women's European Cup, 76% said hosting WEURO made them feel positive about where they live and 72% said hosting WEURO made them feel happier
- 3.6 **Volunteer Opportunities:** Major events provide numerous volunteer opportunities, fostering community engagement and skill development.
- 3.7 **Community Engagement:** Hosting international sport brings the community together, creating a sense of pride and unity.
- 3.8 **Environmental Initiatives:** Events promote sustainability and environmental awareness through various initiatives. For example, the citywide tree planting project funded as part of the 2025 WRWC
- 3.9 **Funding and Budgeting** While each competition has specific targets regarding Host City contributions the positive impacts far outweigh the cost implications. Any submission would need to be considered carefully to examine the current budget pressures at the time of application.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Brighton and Hove City Council could choose not to actively pursue international competitions and therefore reduce spending but not enjoy the additional benefits detailed in Section 3 of this report.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Outdoor events team actively engage with communities across the city on a quarterly basis. Feedback from past events and the appetite for future activity is always a key subject of these conversations. Major international events are generally well received by communities across the city.
- 5.2 Where possible, any new application or bid would always be presented at these and other community meetings to ensure suitable fit for the city and its diverse communities.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as the report does not relate to a specific proposal or event. Where specific events or proposals are identified and brought forward for decision by Cabinet, these will be reviewed for financial and legal implications.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 15/10/2025

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implication arising from this report as the report does not relate to a specific proposal or event. Where specific events or proposals are identified and brought forward for decision by Cabinet, these will be reviewed for legal and financial implications.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted: 15/10/25

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 Contracting to major events will often have significant requests to the host city and with long timelines there can be some variance in actual delivery cost against planned budgets. Detailed risk registers should always be maintained on major projects.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 International sport has strong reputation for enhancing community ties and welcoming people with protected characteristics.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Brighton & Hove have committed, from 2026, to enter into the Green Events Code of Practice (GECOP) pilot programme. Over the next 12 months all outdoor events will be required to carry out detailed tracking of environmental impacts and sustainability practices. This process will form the basis on which future improvements will be secured. The outdoor events team remain committed to driving better practices across the programme and for Brighton & Hove to be at the forefront of best practice in the industry.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 Brighton and Hove, through its 10-year physical activity and sport strategy 'Let's Get Moving' (2024-2034) has a vision of being one of the most active cities in England 'where everyone has the opportunity, the encouragement, and the environment to move more, live well and be healthy'.
- 11.2 In 2023-24 according to the Active Lives survey 26% of Brighton & Hove residents attended 2 or more live events in the last year, above that of the England average.

- 11.3 Large scale sports events inspire residents to adopt healthy lifestyles and become more physically active. They can foster a sense of community and a celebration of well-being in the city. The 2022 UEFA Women's Euros inspired more than half of local residents and 2 in 5 spectators and tournament volunteers to do more sport and physical activity generally. Since the tournament Sussex has double the number of female friendly clubs and 1,200 women now play recreational football. Large scale tournaments have a social impact on the city with 74% of local residents feel that the tournament has brought their local community closer.
- 11.4 In 2025, Brighton & Hove are one of the proud host cities of the Women's Rugby World Cup and in support of the Legacy programme as a city we hope to inspire 2500 new women/girls to participate in rugby. To support the event, 140 volunteers were also recruited known as the 'Seaside Scrum'.
- 11.5 As a city we're aware of the health benefits that 'moving more' has on our residents such as reducing all causes of mortality by up to 30%, cardiovascular disease by up to 35% and depression by up to 30%. We also know that being physically active helps people manage long-term health conditions.
- 11.6 International local events can provide inspiration for residents, be a catalyst for moving more, support the Prevention, support social cohesion and reduce loneliness, support the local economy and provide job or volunteer opportunities.

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 None at this time

13. Crime & disorder implications:

- 13.1 No significant impact

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Hosting international sport creates huge opportunities for the city and wider region. Increasing community cohesion, international brand recognition and significant health benefits for the population. Brighton and Hove have become a key destination for international sport, and particularly women's sport and continuing to actively seek to enhance that reputation is likely to generate increasing benefits.