

Subject:	Unleashing the Potential: Greater Brighton Creative Industries Vision
Date of Meeting:	22 October 2025
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board
Contact Officer:	Andy Hill
Name:	Greater Brighton Business Manager
Email:	Andy.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk
LA(s) affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 In April 2022, the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) agreed to develop a Greater Brighton Creative Industries Vision “the vision”. The Board agreed to establish a small working group to decide the scope of the vision and to appoint a consultant to undertake this work. The Board also agreed to allocate a small budget for the appointed consultant to formulate the vision in response to the brief prepared by the working group.
- 1.2 The vision as set out at appendix 1 of this report outlines why the Creative Industries are important for the region, particularly in the context of the Government placing the creative industries at the centre of its growth ambitions; the Government’s Industrial Strategy published in June 2025 included the Creative Industries as one of the 8 priority high-growth sectors (IS-8), referencing existing strengths and opportunities to further develop the UK’s position as a world leader for creative innovation. Digital and Technologies, which has clear overlaps with the Creative Industries, is also an IS-8 sector.
- 1.3 The vision document recognises the challenges and opportunities faced by the region, emphasising the importance of leveraging creative talent and aiming to be recognised as the best place in the UK for creative talent to succeed.
- 1.4 The vision articulates the need for a strategic approach and coordinated support for the Creative Industries, leveraging existing regional assets to address geographic inequalities and support local progressive missions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board approves the vision paper that sets out the creative identity and potential for the region as set out at appendix 1 of this report and approves the approach it outlines.
- 2.2 That the Board agrees to develop an ambitious and achievable resource plan (“resource plan”) for future activity to take the vision forward based on the

objectives set out at paragraph 3.17 of this report and framed within the context of the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy and the potential opportunity for the sector presented by devolution in Sussex.

- 2.3 That the Board gathers evidence around the opportunities for growth across urban, coastal and rural areas with a view to co-create programmes that address workforce entry and scaling up opportunities for creative businesses.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Creative Industries: Driving Growth

- 3.1 The Creative Industries are a success story for the United Kingdom. Over the past decade they have grown at 1.5 times the rate of the wider economy. They currently contribute over £125bn per annum to the UK economy. That makes them bigger than the UK's life sciences, automobile and aeronautical sectors combined. Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex's creative industries comprise 10,225 companies and a workforce of 54,428 people. In addition, around 21,000 creative freelancers live and work in our region, meaning that over 10% of employment in the region is within the Creative Industries.
- 3.2 There is significant government recognition of the economic importance of the creative industries sector in helping to drive national economic growth. This is outlined in the Government's 2024 Creating Growth: Labour's Plan for the Arts, Culture and Creative Industries. In it, they commit that, that by backing industries which are already world-leading such as the Creative Industries, to bring growth, good jobs and improved productivity to every part of the country is how the defining economic mission of the government will be achieved – to be the highest sustained growth in the G7.
- 3.3 Following on from the government's plan for the sector, the Modern Industrial Strategy highlights the UK's creative industries as one of 8 growth-driving sectors (IS-8) and acknowledges the need to drive the growth of world-leading Creative Industries in clusters across the UK, including through a £150 million Creative Places Growth Fund, new financial support for screen, music, and video games, and a new Creative Content Exchange to be a trusted marketplace for selling, buying, licensing, and enabling permitted access to digitised cultural and creative assets. To enable growth in the sector, the government will leverage UK creative industries' global comparative advantages by unlocking private investment, boosting exports, and developing its highly skilled workforce. The sector plays an important role in driving growth across regions and nations, through creative clusters and corridors across the country that spread opportunity and prosperity in communities, as well as driving growth by enhancing access to skills, spillovers, and knowledge sharing.

The Devolution Opportunity

- 3.4 Shortly after being elected in July 2024, the Labour Government set a clear ambition for devolution to reach every part of the country to support local growth and has looked to move at pace to extend and deepen devolution across England. In February this year, Sussex and Brighton was one of six regions confirmed as being on the Devolution Priority Programme, meaning that this region is moving

rapidly towards establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA), with the first mayoral elections to take place on 7 May 2026.

- 3.5 Under the new devolution framework, The Sussex and Brighton MCCA will have eight 'areas of competence' to which powers will be devolved. Economic regeneration, and skills & employment support are two of these areas and are of significance to the Creative Industries.
- 3.6 Elsewhere, devolution has empowered regions to tailor cultural and creative sector development to local needs, unlocking economic and social value. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has strategically used its devolved powers to embed culture and creativity into its regional development agenda. The [CreateGM](#) Culture Strategy (2024–2030) sets out how Greater Manchester will protect, develop, and democratise culture, heritage, and creativity over the next five years. The Creative Industries Sector Development Plan (2025) outlines Greater Manchester's strategic vision to grow and sustain the creative industries as one of four sectors identified as having the greatest growth potential. Current live projects include [Inspire](#), a £300,000 small grants programme for creative freelancers and small culture, heritage, and creative businesses, which launched in January 2024, with the twin aims of building resilience in the grassroots creative economy and expanding access to funding/supporting sector diversity. The [Greater Manchester Culture Fund](#) provides funding to not for profit, voluntary organisations, that provide cultural experiences or work that has significant social impact across the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester. 28 organisations are set to receive a share of £7 million investment over the next two years, which will provide stability and long-term support for cultural delivery.
- 3.7 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) has embedded culture and creativity into its devolution agenda, using its powers to drive innovation, education, and inclusive growth. Through strategic leadership and targeted initiatives, LCRCA is positioning the region as a national and international hub for creative excellence. Liverpool City Region has committed to spending the equivalent of 1% of its annual £30 million devolution funding from government to support cultural activities. This "[Percent For Culture](#)" commitment guarantees sustained investment in cultural programming, supporting long-term planning and sector resilience, and embeds culture as a core component of regional development, not a discretionary add-on. This City Is Ours, a new crime drama from the creators of The Crown, is the latest project to receive investment from the Liverpool City Region Production Fund. The Production Fund, supported by £3m from the LCRCA, aims to stimulate local film and TV production, and so far has created around 400 FTE jobs and supported over 30 trainees.

Development of a Creative Industries Vision for the City Region

- 3.8 The Greater Brighton & Coastal West Sussex Creative Industries Vision set out at appendix 1 is the culmination of several pieces of work around the Creative Industries. Building on the work of the Fuse Reports (2013-15), through 2019/20 a substantial amount of research and consultation on future collaboration to strengthen the Creative Industries was led by Dr Josh Siepel from the Policy and Evidence Centre at the University of Sussex. The research examined the scale of the creative industries clusters operating across Greater Brighton.

- 3.9 The research indicated relative strengths across creative industries subsectors in the Greater Brighton area, including in Adur, Arun and Crawley, as well as in other parts of the region. These includes subsectors such as broadcast media (TV and radio), computer software, animation, and music. There is an opportunity identified for strategic collaboration around sharing skills and talent, inward investment, space for business growth and accessing investment, and the potential for this opportunity is widened through the prospect of devolution.
- 3.10 Following agreement in April 2022, a working group was established to scope the outcomes sought from the vision and prepare a brief for the work. They were drawn from Board member authorities and included some industry representation.
- 3.11 The group recommended that the vision be sufficiently well developed to demonstrate partnership in key areas where initiatives at city region level will make a significant difference for creative industries businesses. However, the vision would not seek to solve every challenge faced by creative industries businesses in the city region. This would be a major undertaking and may not provide a good return on investment.
- 3.12 The goal is to realise the potential that this region clearly has to become home to a world-class Creative Industries sector. Greater Brighton should aspire to be the best place in the UK for anyone, whatever their background, to build a fulfilling career in the Creative Industries.
- 3.13 Creative businesses in the city region need to be able to compete effectively and to scale-up their enterprises, creating and safeguarding employment. There is a need to ensure people from every town and every community get an opportunity to develop their capabilities to the full.
- 3.14 To realise this ambition, the vision sets out the need to commit to three clear targets;
1. That everyone in the region gets a chance to understand and experience the opportunities in the Creative Industries.
 2. That anyone in our region can access the training needed to start and grow a career in the Creative Industries.
 3. That we support our creative entrepreneurs to build successful businesses and organisations.
- 3.15 At a time when resources everywhere are limited, it is more important than ever that we coordinate our Creative Industries support effectively and existing regional assets are leveraged for the benefit of the sector and our communities – helping to address geographic inequalities. By articulating a vision to create the right scale and identity for supporting our creative and cultural industries we can meet the identity, ambition, and evolution of these innovative sectors to support local progressive missions.
- 3.16 Research shows that the region already has many of the resources, organisations and infrastructure that are needed to build a successful Creative Industries sector. However, they often go unrecognised, are unevenly distributed and not sufficiently coordinated. The vision document explains how we might leverage these existing

assets in a much more effective way and support additional initiatives that will help that to happen.

3.17 The vision sets out the approach, ambition, and some essential priority areas. The next step in taking the vision forward is to prepare a resource plan for future activity. The resource plan would have the following main objectives;

- Understand the region's distributed assets and resources that, if better harnessed, can accelerate Creative Industry growth.
- Enable creative businesses in the area to compete more effectively, to scale-up, to attract investment, and to create value and employment.
- Identify what type and scale of intervention will best support growth for freelancers, organisations, and clusters. Working with prime contractors in the industry who commission the freelancers as part of their supply chains.
- Review the multi-faceted role of Higher Education Institutions (the geography includes three leading universities) and other FE and HE educational organisations and skills providers in support of the sector.
- Identify opportunities for strategic collaboration around sharing knowledge, skills and talent, space for business growth and accessing investment.
- Consult with a range of industry and other stakeholders to ensure a diverse range of voices and experiences are represented, and that Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion are an integral part of future strategy.
- Make the case for support and investment locally, regionally and nationally, including with the private sector and government.
- Setting a regional ambition for the future aligned to government's ambitions for sector driven growth and devolution.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 An alternative option is to do nothing in this instance. This not the preferred option given recent announcements by Government relating to the importance of the Creative Industries in driving economic growth, referenced above, as well as the sector's role in the sub-regional economy.
- 4.2 The establishment of the MCCA in Sussex also presents an opportunity to demonstrate the value of the Creative Industries as one of the region's key growth-driving sectors in terms of the new responsibilities and levers that that will be delegated to the MCCA. This will help to position the sector for inclusion in the future Local Growth Plan.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There has been a lot of engagement with the sector through the initial research and more recently in developing the vision.
- 5.2 The process of taking forward the recommendations will require further business engagement and stakeholder consultation.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Creative Industries are a crucial sector in the UK and regional economies. The government has acknowledged this by placing the Creative Industries at the

forefront of their growth ambitions. The Industrial Strategy and devolution in Sussex present a significant opportunity to maximise the impact and success of the sector in this region.

- 6.2 The Creative Industries Vision sets out the ambition for the region to be *“the best place in the UK for anyone, whatever their background, to build a fulfilling career in the Creative Industries.”* The vision sets out the current challenges and some of the possible interventions that can make this vision a reality.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. The development of the vision for the creative industries and the expansion into a resource plan will positively drive growth in the creative industries within the Greater Brighton region; attracting investment and creating employment.
- 7.2 The development of the resource plan is expected to be delivered within existing resources in the Board’s operational budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Haley Woollard, BHCC Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Date: 10/10/2025

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry BHCC Head of Legal (Commercial)
Date: 10/10/25

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The Creative Industries Vision is clear that for the sector to thrive, there is a need to be inclusive in both participating/engaging with culture and arts, and for those wishing to pursue a career in the Creative Industries. There is a role here for Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex partners to convene and hold space; to broker and facilitate. Working in this way can address equality, diversity and inclusion cohesively and collectively and in a way that is reflective of the populace of Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex as it is now and how it will be. Ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is an approach, not just an outcome, means it can flex and adapt as both local and national societal environments change.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 None arising directly from this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None arising directly from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Unleashing the Potential

Background Documents:

1. [The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy](#)
2. [Creative Industries Sector Plan](#)

