

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Cabinet

## Agenda Item 133

**Subject:** Brighton & Hove Outdoor Events Strategy

**Date of meeting:** Thursday, 12 February 2026

**Report of:** Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism

**Lead Officer:** Name: Corporate Director- Operations

**Contact Officer:** Name: Ian Baird

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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 Council Plan sets out the vision for Brighton & Hove to be a city to be proud of, where the unique character of the city is protected as a distinct location to visit, where the creative and artistic spirit is celebrated and supported by a growing and sustainable economy. This sits alongside the determination to improve and maintain our green and open spaces and ensure people feel a sense of belonging. The city's exciting programme of events supports these ambitions and the delivery of the Council Plan.
- 1.2 This report sets out the strategic direction for outdoor events in Brighton & Hove for 2026–2036. The Strategy appended to this report outlines how the events programme aligns with the Council Plan, the Economic Development Plan, and wider regional priorities.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees the Outdoor Events Strategy 2026–2036 (Apx n1).
- 2.2 Cabinet endorses the ongoing development and delivery of the programme, including strengthened partnership working, enhanced community engagement, and the actions intended to protect the natural environment and maximise economic benefit.

### 3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The citywide Events programme in Brighton & Hove has a local-global reputation and makes us a city to be proud of. The event programme, shaped by the Council Plan, 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 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 Events Industry Forum (EIF) "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.
- 3.3 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 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.
- 3.4 Over the past five years, the strategic approach of the Outdoor Events Team has cemented Brighton & Hove as a premier destination on the south coast, renowned for its vibrant and varied event offerings. Events have demonstrated a significant boost to local economies, as seen in similar regions where visitor spending has increased by 30% during major events. Research has also shown that community events can increase local engagement by 40%, fostering a strong sense of belonging among residents. Brighton & Hove's commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in event delivery has proven to be a key driver of community cohesion and economic vitality. With a focus on creating memorable experiences, the city's appeal to diverse demographics continues to grow, further solidifying its reputation on both national and international stages.
- 3.5 The new strategy sets a vision for an event programme to enhance nature, culture and healthy lives. This vision directly feeds into the council aims of being a fair and inclusive city and a healthy city that helps people to thrive.
- 3.6 While the previous policy (2019-2024) focussed primarily on consolidating the existing programme and setting guidelines around safety and sustainability, this new policy aims to create an events landscape that is market leading.
- 3.7 The approach is structured around nine priority areas as detailed in the table below:

Work Area	Priority	Action	Deliverable
DIVERSIFICATION	Encouraging diverse events and developing homegrown organisations	Identify cultural gaps in existing programme	Map events against population data
		Identify and work with communities to encourage peer-to-peer training and development opportunities	Develop target list of event types, specifically new genres of event, to pursue
		Identify and work with communities to encourage peer-to-peer training and development opportunities	Identify organisations in the city with capacity for growth
		Expand fee reduction to support events that match priorities	Identify under-represented communities and link to experienced operators through forums (I.e. May events, Christmas Operators etc)
		Expand fee reduction to support events that match priorities	Offer incentives to commercial operators for support to developing sectors
FAIR AND INCLUSIVE	Ensuring events are fair and inclusive to all	Work with attitude is everything to develop minimum acceptable standards within the events charter	Realign fees and charges to prioritise target areas
			Establish relationship with AIA and examine current requirements
		Identify and work with local accessibility champions to assess and enable event organisers	Instigate regular meetings with Brighton Centre staff to identify and adapt best practice
			Contact local advocacy groups for disabilities
			Work with communities to examine barriers to participation and communicate with organisers to find mitigations
		Identify barriers to attendance due to economic disadvantage	Create schedule of site inspections and visits to identify areas of concern and develop reasonable adaptations
			Review event locations to encourage equal access
			Review policies around concession and ticket allocations for low-income families
			Explore the creation of apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities in the programme for excluded groups

COMMERCIAL AIMS	Develop the programme to generate increasing revenue	Maintain current fee growth trajectory	Fee growth for major commercial events to continue to track above inflation to maintain growth
		Identify new opportunities, particularly in the West of the City region	Identify diversification of downland estate use with SDNPA and key stakeholders
		Review filming policy and approach to maximise income	Engage with residents in the West of the city to identify event desire generate a call to market.
			Consider the benefits of a specific film unit within the city looking to Prioritise investment and expand opportunity
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Create policy to protect the natural environment	Work with colleagues across the council to create services packages	Ensure digitisation of applications allow for cross-department working Identify common crossover areas (Highways, Parking, etc) and potential for bulk purchasing options
		Ensure ancillary costs, parking suspension, waste management, road closures and licensing remain sustainable	Extend events logistics cross-department meetings to ensure alignment of needs Where possible, incentivise use of city council services (I.e. environmental services) to event organisers Carry out cost benefit analysis to identify tipping points in cost growth
		Create the UNESCO Living Coast event accreditation scheme	Identify key metrics for basis of accreditation Test monitoring tools and mandate impact tracking Create accreditation bands and set aspirational targets
		Work towards implementing the national sustainable events charter in line with the Sustainable Events national pilot	Apply the phase two pilot of national charter including extra provisions around ground and tree protection in green spaces
			Monitor pilot outputs and align policy with national structures
		Enhance sustainable events checklists and Environmental Impact Assessments	Continue work with LNTB (Leave No trace) and other advocacy groups to enhance measures
			Feed national programmes into existing systems to ensure

			ongoing improvement with annual review
TEST AND LEARN	Improving community ownership of events	Continue and expand Resident Forums with a mandate to create locally responsive events programmes	<p>Resident forums to be booked at least 6 months in advance and advertised via your voice</p> <p>Additional meetings to be considered around key pressure periods (i.e. Pre-May and Pre-Cabinet programme presentation)</p> <p>Create working groups to scrutinise and develop systems around key impacts (i.e. noise)</p> <p>Agendas and notes to be hosted online</p>
		Deliver on local investments by negotiating contributions from event organisers to local projects	<p>Work with event organisers to agree a percentage contribution to local priorities</p> <p>Develop plans to identify suitable governance structure for local investment groups</p>
		Create and launch the events portal on 'Your Voice' for constant feedback and improvement	<p>Generate two projects in 'Your Voice' for live responses and aspirational idea testing and development</p> <p>Ensure portals are monitored during major events to increase communication opportunities with residents.</p>
		Mandate suitable active travel provisions (bike parking, etc)	<p>Work with events to identify opportunities for bike parking/helmet lockers and other active travel infrastructure</p> <p>Review event locations and parking facilities/travel hubs to create shared travel (i.e. bike trains)</p>
			<p>Enhance event food offers to ensure equally priced healthy options available at all events.</p> <p>Increase percentage of healthy food options and low/no alcohol drinks facilities</p>
		Continue to target growth in sports and wellbeing events	<p>Maintain target of 1 major international event at least every 3 years (Major Events Board)</p> <p>Review events programme and identify space for wellness and sports events at a community level</p>
A REG ION	Ensure the events programme speaks	LVEP-Aligned Events	Maps the events programme to LVEP objectives.

	<p>directly to local visitor partnership aims and objectives</p>	<p>Strategy &amp; Action Plan</p>	<p>Identifies opportunities for pan-Sussex collaboration.</p>
			<p>Includes KPIs to measure alignment with local visitor economy goals.</p>
		<p>Regional Events Collaboration Toolkit</p>	<p>Facilitates joint planning and delivery of existing regional events (e.g., London to Brighton rallies).</p>
			<p>Standardises best practices for enhancing participant experience and operational coordination.</p>
			<p>Includes shared templates, contact lists, and timelines.</p>
		<p>Sussex-Wide Major Events Feasibility Report A report produced in partnership with LVEP that:</p>	<p>Assesses the viability of 2–3 new Sussex-wide flagship events.</p>
			<p>Includes stakeholder input, economic impact projections, and delivery models.</p>
			<p>Provides a roadmap for pilot delivery and long-term scaling</p>
<p>POLICY</p>	<p>Review of key policies across council departments central to high event standards</p>	<p>Identify key policies and departments</p>	<p>Review of current policy frameworks and mapping of responsibilities</p>
			<p>Speak with residents as part of overall consultation to identify significant areas of concern</p>
		<p>Work with relevant regulatory colleagues to review policy</p>	<p>Establish a "One Council" events policy group to develop robust policy</p>
			<p>Set clear timelines to review and draft new policy in the short-term with systems for later review with resident action groups</p>
		<p>Lead on national frameworks to standardise approach</p>	<p>Carry out a national review, as part of the establishment of Primary Authority, to seek standardisation across industry</p>
			<p>Establish national working groups to establish and share best practice</p>

### 3.8 Additional Operational Guidance

The Strategy also sets out detailed procedures for managing unsanctioned events and deviations from agreed event parameters, ensuring clear lines of escalation and coordination with Sussex Police and Safety Advisory Group partners.

## 4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The new strategy is designed around our current approach to events of acting as landlord to third party producers, although it doesn't preclude the council running events or using other models of delivery. During resident forums and in conversations across directorates, it is often asked why the council do not take a more proactive approach of producing major events internally.
- 4.2 Moving away from the model where the council acts as landlord to third party producers has both positive and negative considerations compared to the current system of acting only as landlord and regulator. Running events internally gives creative control, and potential opportunities for increased income. However, this would come with greater financial risk and likely need for up front investment.
- 4.3 Whilst the current approach provides a good and steady income, and certainty with regard to responsibility and risk, the strategy allows for other models of delivery to be considered on a case by case basis.

## 5. **Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 Community engagement and consultation sit at the heart of the strategy, and the communities voice is reflected in all priorities within the strategy. The Strategy commits to regular forums, localised engagement, transparent publication of agendas and notes, and strengthened relationships with groups such as "Friends of" organisations and resident associations. The strategy has been developed through significant consultation and engagement, and the launch has been delayed to reflect the importance of incorporating feedback.
- 5.2 Principles of the strategy have been discussed at public meetings across all 4 city areas (East, West, Central and North). The outdoor events team have well established resident forums that have taken place in the above locations, quarterly for the past 3 years. Discussions at these meetings have been central to the scoping and design of the new strategic priorities and will remain the key testing ground for the progress of the deliverable outcomes. Key areas of concern raised by resident are focussed around ground protection and noise management which are both directly addressed in the new strategic aims.
- 5.3 Detail of the plan released on "Your Voice" for wider public comment and feedback.
- 5.4 The Outdoor Events Development Manager has made opportunity for all directorate leadership teams to have the plans presented in face-to-face meetings. Input from Community Cohesion, Transport, City Parks and Environmental Services have all been instrumental in refining the actions and deliverable goals of the strategy.
- 5.5 The plans have been seen by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and recommendations have been integrated into the plan. These broadly reflected the concerns raised in resident forums and also spoke to the need

for events to be focussed on the residents of the areas in which they are delivered.

## **6. Financial implications**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. However, the Outdoor Events Strategy will form a key component of delivering the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by supporting future income generation. Each event within the programme will continue to be subject to individual financial assessment, ensuring that value for money (VFM) is achieved and that associated costs and benefits are fully considered on a case by case basis.

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garaghan

Date consulted: 04/02/2026

## **7. Legal implications**

7.1 While the implementation and delivery of the specific events which comprise the events programme may require legal agreements, the approval of this Strategy is not considered to give rise to any legal implications.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 19/01/2026

## **8. Risk implications**

8.1 Due to the outcome of the Brockwell Park High Court hearing we are now seeking full planning permission for 7 locations in the city to ensure the full works of delivering events in these locations are permitted. Failure to secure that planning consent would result in a significant reduction in the time allowed for events at these locations and would be detrimental to the income potential for the programme.

8.2 Failure to align the programme closely with the needs of residents and businesses may pose a risk to the health and wellbeing of residents and the growth of businesses. The methods laid out in the strategy aim to address this risk directly.

## **9. Equalities implications**

9.1 The Strategy strengthens commitments to inclusivity, removing barriers to participation, supporting underrepresented communities, and aligning with the city's Anti-Racism Strategy.

9.2 The strategy targets diversity in the programme. To cater for people from all sectors of the community with diversity of event genre and within the range of delivery organisations and locations, the new strategy seeks to broaden participation. Major event organisers will be required to complete an Equalities Impact Assessment.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 Environmental protections are embedded through accreditation schemes, charter alignment, and enhanced monitoring to reduce carbon emissions, protect habitats, and improve sustainable operations.

## **11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:**

- 11.1 Improvements in health and wellbeing are directly targeted in the new strategy and place healthy lifestyles at the centre of event planning for the duration of the strategy. Encouraging active travel, targeting events that encourage healthy lifestyles and curating content (I.e. Food and Beverage offers) to compliment this approach will be instrumental in delivering on improved outcomes for attendees and the wider community.
- 11.2 Creation of new policy, directed by conversations with residents, will also ensure that the negative impacts of events around the environmental disturbance to those in the area are mitigated with positive wellbeing outcomes.

## **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 The Outdoor Events Strategy 2025–2035 provides a comprehensive framework to enhance the city's cultural vibrancy, economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and community wellbeing. It positions Brighton & Hove as a leader in sustainable, inclusive and innovative event delivery.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **1. Appendices**

- 1. The Outdoor Events Strategy 2025-2035

