

Outdoor Events Strategy 2026-2036

1. Introduction

The citywide Events programme in the city and its local-global reputation makes us a city to be proud of. The event programme, led by the corporate 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.

The event programme is key to delivering on the 10-year imperative set out in the Economic Development plan “A creative destination worthy of the best small city in the world”. Outdoor events are vital in establishing and evolving the reputation of the city as a national and international leisure and creative destination. Events contribute significantly to the economic impact for the city, boosting the visitor economy, offering new and different reasons to study, work, and visit the city. And events create joy!

The Visitor Economy Strategy 2018-2023 highlighted the economic contribution of tourism to the city’s economy at £886m per year which supports 21,000 jobs. The economic impact of events staged in the city is largely measured through associated hotel, leisure and retail spend, demonstrably enhancing the day and nighttime economies and supporting local businesses. Outdoor events are cited in the 2018 EIF (Events Industry Forum) “Value of Events” study a key factor in attracting inward investment and attracting students and workers to the city region. Our events programme additionally offers numerous talent platforms, which help the city attract and retain local talent and support growth across the industry.

2. Value of Events – UK Perspectives

Events bring our residents together inclusively. The social value of a successful events programme is evidenced in national research. A recent Audience Agency study revealed 68% of participants felt more connected to their community after attending local events. In addition to this a well delivered outdoor event programme is vital to support local business and continue to attract a workforce to the city. The 2018 EIF “Value of Events” report estimates £225 spend per visitor to events in the SE region, directly supporting local business and Eventbrite found that 77% of millennials attend live events for experiences and consider them important.

3. 2019-2024 Strategy Reporting

In 2019 the Outdoor Events Team presented a clear strategic direction with 5 intended outcomes.

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

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.

In the 2019-2024 strategy, 5 clear actions were identified to help support the outcomes above. Against this metric the strategy was successful in delivering in part or in full against all 5 areas.

- Shift the strategic focus into doing less better and achieving more with the limited resources

By focussing on growth areas and working more closely with partner organisations and statutory bodies the events team have identified key growth events and maximised benefits for the city. A focus on shifting events to a multi-day format, encouraging overnight, rather than day visitors, local hospitality businesses can see significantly increased benefits.

In addition, the events team have established better working relationships internally at the council to increase efficiency and streamline the events booking and commissioning process utilising corporate knowledge and capacity effectively.

- An Outdoor Events Charter to set clear expectations from organisers and to cement the actions that are important to local communities in event planning.

The Charter was instigated in 2019 and has been revised periodically over the term of the strategy. This has been successful in setting minimum requirements of event organisers and has been useful in pushing the standards expected.

- 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.

Due the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 the industry has struggled to maintain and increase capacity. Brighton & Hove, however, have been able to resist the national trend of decline due to its unique offer as a city. While the overall number of events in the city has remained largely constant to pre-pandemic levels, we have increased capacity on a few events to become headline activities.

- Events infrastructure investment in key sites to say to the industry that Brighton & Hove is welcoming and world class

The outdoor events team have moved on several projects to ensure our infrastructure meets the needs of the modern industry. Working with highways and regeneration teams the city now boasts 6 potential event sites with sustainable power and water connections in place, reducing reliant on diesel power production and minimising HGV traffic to the city.

4. Events Strategy and City Priorities

A well-designed outdoor events strategy directly supports and enhances several key regional and unitary authority policies in Brighton & Hove. For example, the Brighton & Hove City Council Plan 2023–2027 sets out ambitions for a vibrant, inclusive, and economically sustainable city, which are advanced by an events programme that boosts the visitor economy, supports local businesses, and fosters civic pride. The City Plan’s focus on creative dynamism and community cohesion is reinforced by events that bring residents together and attract national and international attention. The Economic Development Plan’s imperative to position Brighton & Hove as “a creative destination worthy of the best small city in the world” is realised through outdoor events that drive year-round tourism, talent retention, and inward investment. These strategies are referenced throughout the Outdoor Events Strategy, particularly in sections discussing alignment with the Council Plan, City Plan, and

Economic Development Plan. By integrating outdoor events into these frameworks, the city maximises economic, social, and reputational benefits, ensuring policies are not only met but amplified through creative and inclusive programming.

5. Resident Feedback

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

In response to feedback from residents, the inclusion of more family-friendly events has been prioritised. By incorporating activities and entertainment suitable for children and parents alike, these events foster a sense of community and encourage greater participation from residents. Family-friendly events contribute to the overall well-being of the community by offering opportunities for families to spend quality time together, engage in recreational activities, and build lasting memories. This focus on inclusivity and community engagement helps to strengthen the social fabric and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

In response to resident's feedback in 2023/24 on the need for grounds to be reinstated with more speed after events, a new framework to outsource grounds reinstatement has been put in place. This will enable us to move the groundworks forward more quickly, although is still weather dependent.

The Outdoor events team are committed to continuing the programme of regular resident forums and dates/locations for this engagement programme will be shared with specific local interest groups such as a resident association, park run groups and "Friends of" groups in the coming weeks.

The full programme once confirmed will be listed on the council and Visit Brighton websites.

6. Focus of the new strategy - Vision, Mission and Objectives

AN EVENT PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE NATURE, CULTURE AND HEALTHY LIVES

Work Area	Priority	Action	Deliverable
DIVERSIFICATION	Encouraging diverse events and developing homegrown organisations	Identify cultural gaps in existing programme	Map events against population data
			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
			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
			Realign fees and charges to prioritise target areas
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	Establish relationship with AIA and examine current requirements
			Instigate regular meetings with Brighton Centre staff to identify and adapt best practice
		Identify and work with local accessibility champions to assess and enable event organisers	Contact local advocacy groups for disabilities
			Work with communities to examine barriers to participation and communicate with organisers to find mitigations
			Create schedule of site inspections and visits to identify areas of concern and develop reasonable adaptations
		Identify barriers to attendance due to economic disadvantage	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
			Engage with residents in the West of the city to identify event desire generate a call to market.
		Review filming policy and approach to maximise income	Consider the benefits of a specific film unit within the city looking to Prioritise investment and expand opportunity
	Create a favourable working environment for partners to maintain the cities market position	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
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Create policy to protect the natural environment	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	Resident forums to be booked at least 6 months in advance and advertised via your voice
			Additional meetings to be considered around key pressure periods (I.e. Pre-May and Pre-Cabinet programme presentation)
			Create working groups to scrutinise and develop systems around key impacts (I.e. noise)
			Agendas and notes to be hosted online
		Deliver on local investments by negotiating contributions from event organisers to local projects	Work with event organisers to agree a percentage contribution to local priorities
			Develop plans to identify suitable governance structure for local investment groups
		Create and launch the events portal on 'Your Voice' for constant feedback and improvement	Generate two projects in 'Your Voice' for live responses and aspirational idea testing and development
			Ensure portals are monitored during major events to increase communication opportunities with residents.
PUBLIC HEALTH	Ensure events promote and enable healthy lifestyles and active travel	Mandate suitable active travel provisions (bike parking, etc)	Work with events to identify opportunities for bike parking/helmet lockers and other active travel infrastructure
			Review event locations and parking facilities/travel hubs to create shared travel (i.e. bike trains)
		Enhance event food offers to ensure equally priced healthy options available at all events.	Continue to mandate equally priced healthy food options
			Increase percentage of healthy food options and low/no alcohol drinks facilities
		Continue to target growth in sports and wellbeing events	Maintain target of 1 major international event at least every 3 years (Major Events Board)

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

			Establish national working groups to establish and share best practice
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7. Diversification

PRIORITY: ENCOURAGING DIVERSE EVENTS AND DEVELOPING HOMEGROWN ORGANISATIONS

Actions

- Identify cultural gaps in the existing programme and align with the City Anti-Racism policies
- Identify and work with communities to encourage peer-to-peer training and development opportunities
- Expand fee reduction to support events that match priorities

This priority is about making sure events are more varied and supporting local organisations. The plan is to find out what kinds of events are missing, what communities would like to see, and work with directly with community members to help them learn from each other and grow. For example, this could mean helping local music shows, neighbourhood art displays, or food festivals that celebrate different cultures. Lowering fees for these events also makes it easier for everyone to take part and helps create a lively, welcoming events programme for the whole city.

8. Fair & Inclusive

PRIORITY: ENSURING EVENTS ARE FAIR AND INCLUSIVE TO ALL

Actions

- Work with attitude is everything to develop minimum acceptable standards within the events charter
- Identify and work with local accessibility champions to assess and enable event organisers
- Identify barriers to attendance due to economic disadvantage

Making sure events are fair and inclusive means everyone can join in, no matter their background or abilities. This priority is about working with groups like Attitude is Everything to set basic standards and teaming up with local accessibility champions to help organisers make events better for all. Good examples include having areas for wheelchair users at festivals, providing sign language interpreters at shows, and making sure you can get into venues without any steps. These practices help create events that welcome and include everyone in the community.

9. Commercial Aims

PRIORITY: DEVELOP THE EVENTS PROGRAMME TO GENERATE OVER £1M IN REVENUE BY 2035

Actions

- a. Maintain current fee growth trajectory
- b. Identify new opportunities, particularly in the West of the City region
- c. Review filming policy and approach to maximise income

This priority is all about making the events programme bigger and better to bring in revenue for the city. The idea is to keep increasing fees in line with what's been working, but also find fresh opportunities, especially out west, where there's lots of untapped potential. A good example of best practice is reviewing how we handle filming in the city – making it easier and more attractive for film crews can mean more shoots and more income. It's also smart to look for new kinds of events that haven't been tried before or to support pop-up markets and local festivals that draw bigger crowds. By being open to new ideas and making the most of what we already have, the city can boost its income while giving everyone more to enjoy.

PRIORITY: CREATE A FAVOURABLE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR PARTNERS TO MAINTAIN MARKET POSITION

Actions

- a. Work with colleagues across the council to create services packages
- b. Ensure ancillary costs, parking suspension, waste management road closures and licensing remain sustainable

This priority is all about making sure our partners have a great working environment so they can keep leading the market. It means teaming up with different council teams to put together helpful service packages, and making sure things like parking, waste collection and road closures don't become too costly or complicated. Good practice looks like offering bundled services that save organisers time and hassle, keeping parking suspensions simple and affordable, and making waste management easy — for example, providing clear recycling stations at events. When we get these basics right, it helps partners focus on putting on brilliant events without being distracted by extra admin or unexpected costs.

10. Preserving the natural environment

PRIORITY: CREATE POLICY TO PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Actions

- a. Create the UNESCO Living Coast event accreditation scheme
- b. Implementing the national sustainable events charter in line with the Green Events Code of Practice Pilot (GECOP)
- c. Enhance sustainable events checklists and Environmental Impact Assessments

This priority is all about looking after our natural spaces while hosting events. It means coming up with policies that keep the coast, parks and green areas healthy for everyone. Good practice examples include setting up the UNESCO Living Coast event accreditation, which rewards events that care for the environment, and using the national sustainable events charter so we're always following the latest green standards. It's also about making sure organisers fill out improved checklists and Environmental Impact Assessments, so we know events aren't harming local wildlife or the landscape. By working together like this, we can have great events without costing the earth.

11. Test and Learn

PRIORITY: IMPROVING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF EVENTS

Actions

- a. Continue and expand Resident Forums with a mandate to create locally responsive events programmes
- b. Deliver on local investments by negotiating contributions from event organisers to local projects
- c. Create and launch the events portal on 'Your Voice' for constant feedback and improvement

This priority is all about getting the community more involved in shaping local events. The idea is to make sure residents have a real say, whether that's through regular forums where people can share ideas or by asking event organisers to give back to neighbourhood projects. Good practice looks like using platforms like 'Your Voice' so locals can easily give feedback and help events improve, and making sure organisers support things the community cares about, like upgrading a park or funding local activities. When people feel their views matter, events become something everyone can be proud of.

12. Improving Public Health

PRIORITY: ENSURE EVENTS PROMOTE AND ENABLE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Actions

- a. Mandate suitable active travel provisions (Bike parking etc)
- b. Enhance event food offers to ensure equally priced healthy options available at all events.
- c. Continue to target growth in sports and wellbeing events

This priority is all about making sure events help people live healthier lives and encourage getting around in greener ways. It means making it easy for everyone to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to events—think plenty of bike racks and safe paths. Good practice includes offering tasty, healthy food at the same price as less healthy options, so everyone has a fair choice, and putting on more sports or wellbeing events that get people moving. When events make it simple to be active and healthy, everyone wins.

13. A regional approach

PRIORITY: ENSURE THE EVENTS PROGRAMME SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO LOCAL VISITOR PARTNERSHIP AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Actions

- a. Integrate with the LVEP strategy and seek pan-Sussex collaboration
- b. Maximise cross working with other authorities on existing regional events to enhance customer and participant experience (I.e. London to Brighton Rallies)
- c. Work with LVEP to develop Sussex-wide major events opportunities

This priority is all about making sure our events fit in with what the wider region wants to achieve, not just our local area. It's about teaming up with groups like LVEP and working with others across Sussex so we can put on bigger and better events together. Good practice looks like joining forces with neighbouring councils for established events—think London to Brighton Rallies—so everyone's experience is improved. It also means working on new, Sussex-wide major events and making sure we're all pulling in the same direction, which helps bring more visitors and gives locals something to look forward to.

14. Policy as a priority

PRIORITY: REVIEW OF KEY POLICIES ACROSS COUNCIL DEPARTMENTS

Actions

- a. Identify key policies and departments
- b. Work with relevant regulatory colleagues to review existing policy
- c. Lead on national frameworks to standardise approach

This priority is about taking a good look at the most important policies across all council departments to make sure everything lines up and works well together. It means getting the right people around the table, talking to those who deal with the rules, and checking if there are better ways of doing things—like using national guidelines so everyone's on the same page. Good practice could be departments meeting regularly to swap ideas, reviewing old policies to make sure they're still fit for purpose, and making it easier for staff to follow the same standards no matter where they work in the council. It's all about keeping things clear and joined up, so everyone benefits.

15. Managing the unexpected (Protest, memorials and unsanctioned events)

The following procedure is to be followed in event of an unsanctioned event being reported as planned or being discovered on Brighton & Hove City Council land.

It is important that all staff and members within the council inform the outdoor events team immediately of any event they are made aware of and are unsure as to whether it is officially sanctioned. The sooner we are informed of an event the more opportunity and options there are for action to be taken.

Unsanctioned use of public land for organised events can fall into several categories and the process to deal with each differs. Examples of possible unsanctioned events include:

Car Rallies

Planned but unsanctioned gatherings are generally flagged by Sussex Police when gathering information from social media. These will generally take place in established private car parks or often, in Brighton, on Madeira Drive. Where an event is planned for Madeira Drive, we will always use powers contained within the East Sussex Act to close the road and prevent access to all vehicles. Organisers will be informed via Sussex Police and increased highway officers are usually deployed.

Where no advanced warning is received a rally may take place on the public highway. While there is no crime or antisocial behaviour linked to such an event BHCC would not usually act and monitoring of the activity would fall to Sussex Police resource.

Community Events (Over 100 people and including infrastructure)

Any unsanctioned event taking place on public land can be liable to both an injunction and a claim for damages. The method will depend on the nature of the event and the location. The following procedure should be followed:

- a) Events Team to legal advice to understand the designation of the location. Where a location falls within the Public Walks and Pleasure Grounds bylaws regulations allow action to be taken to remove persons or equipment from the area
- b) Where time is available there is potential to seek an order of possession. This would require sheriffs of the court to enforce
- c) Comms teams should be briefed to ensure all parties are aware the event is unsanctioned and an agreed line to the press formulated
- d) Safety Advisory Group (SAG) partners should be informed as Sussex Police or East Sussex Fire & Rescue (ESFRS) may have additional powers to prevent the event taking place or seize equipment
- e) Internal reporting must be followed to ensure the on-duty Gold is informed of the situation and briefed of all planned action
- f) Any action is likely to require police support to be closed so it is likely that some event may be allowed to continue where no action can safely be taken
- g) Where an event is allowed to run it should be monitored and key personnel details taken for future action

Protest with excessive Infrastructure

Where a protest event is planned, we are usually informed via the protest contact at SAG. Protests are usually allowed where there is no fixed infrastructure, but it is possible that additional infrastructure may be deployed on the day of the protest with the intention of occupying a location. Any action in this scenario would be Police led, and steps 3-7 above should be followed. Current bylaws prohibit political protest in any park except for The Level.

Unsanctioned additional elements of a granted event

Where an existing and granted event are acting outside of the agreed parameters of their event management plan (EMP) the conditions of the landlord's consent agreement can be applied allowing officers to either prevent the event from taking place or forcing the removal of the unsanctioned elements. Again, any cancellation of an event should only take place in close consultation with SAG partners as unintended consequences are highly likely that may have serious public order ramifications.

16. Conclusion

Brighton & Hove's Outdoor Events Strategy 2025–2035 sets a confident and forward-looking path for the city, showing how a more diverse, inclusive, sustainable and community-shaped programme can strengthen both local pride and economic vitality. The findings demonstrate that by building on the achievements of recent years—expanding cultural variety, improving accessibility, supporting homegrown talent, protecting natural spaces, and aligning with regional and national ambitions—the city can deliver events that are richer in impact and more meaningful for residents and visitors alike. With stronger partnerships, greener practices, enhanced public health outcomes and deeper engagement with communities, the strategy points to a future where outdoor events not only enliven the city but help it thrive socially, environmentally and economically, creating a vibrant calendar that truly reflects and celebrates the spirit of Brighton & Hove.

NOTES:

1.2.2 Champion programme development of event creation, curation and promotion, strengthening the overall calendar of events across Sussex to create immediacy for booking, to animate the destination and drive visits all year-round Medium/ Long An all year round economically sustainable visitor economy, maximising the opportunities that events bring to the local economy

LOCAL – COUNTY CONTEXT BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL:

Brighton & Hove City Council Plan 2023-2027

Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Strategy 2018-2023

Brighton & Hove Economic Strategy 2018-2023 – new Economic Strategy in development

Brighton & Hove Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019- 2030

Local Transport Plan – developing fifth Local Transport Plan to 2030