

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet Member Decision

Subject: Open Spaces Events Programme 2026

Date of Decision:

Report of: Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism

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Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The events programme is spread across open spaces in the city and takes place in many of our main parks and city streets over the course of the year. This report seeks sign off from the Cabinet Member for Culture Heritage and Tourism for each of the events proposed as part of the annual programme.
- 1.2 Events transform public spaces into lively hubs of activity, showcasing the city's unique character and heritage. Furthermore, they contribute to the social fabric by bringing diverse groups together, promoting inclusivity, and encouraging civic pride. In essence, outdoor events are essential for enhancing the quality of urban life and driving sustainable development.

2. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism:

- 2.1 Support the strategic policy approach taken to make Brighton & Hove a vibrant city and a city to be proud of in its delivery of the open spaces events programme for 2026 (Apx n1) in line with the current Outdoor Events Strategy (Apx n2)
- 2.2 Delegates authority to the Corporate Director, City Operations, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture Heritage and Tourism, to grant landlords consent to each individual event in accordance with the annual programme, subject to granting of any other necessary permissions.
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Corporate Director, City Operations, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, to make any alterations to the published events programme as necessary, including approving new applications in accordance with the Outdoor Events Strategy and cancelling events if required.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The citywide Events programme in the city and its local-global reputation makes us a city to be proud of. The event programme is led by the corporate plan and 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 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.
- 3.3 The 2023 economic impact study for Brighton & Hove showed continued recovery in volume of trips and related expenditure compared to 2022. The economic contribution of tourism to the city’s economy in 2023 was £1.3bn in value with over 11.8m visitors and supported 23,742 local 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 as 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The current Outdoor Events Strategy (Apx n2) focusses on a low-risk approach to event delivery in the city with Brighton & Hove City Council acting as a landlord and facilitator, rather than funding and producing events inhouse. The mix of events proposed meets this approach.
- 3.6 The council’s outdoor events team aim to propose a balanced programme both geographically and in terms of event genre, with a push towards low impact, high return promotional activity. The programme features 1 major national profile event (for example the Brighton Marathon), ten key festivals (including the May Festivals, On the Beach), and over 150 diverse community or promotional events. It aims to maintain the estimated £120m economic impact on the region, whilst allowing space for the city to continue

to develop its reputation as a key creative destination for creative industry workers and visitors.

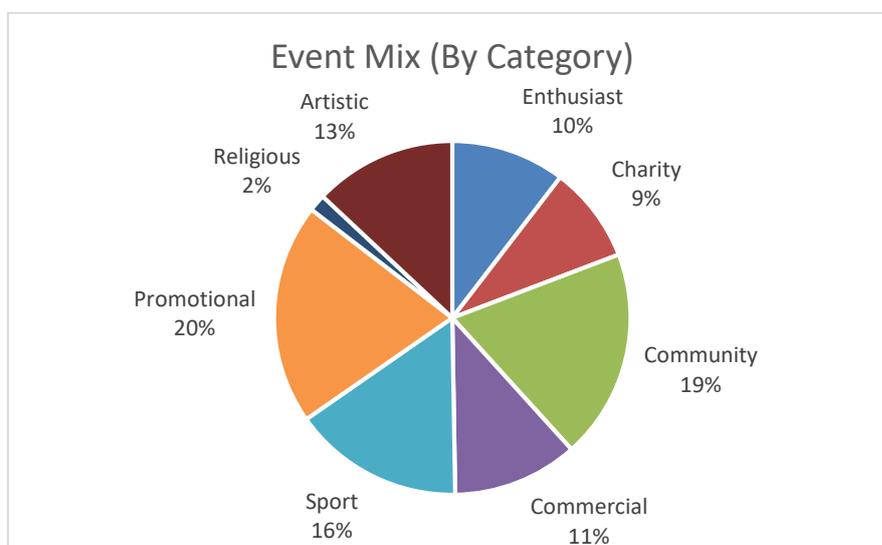


Figure 1: Split of Events in 2024/25 year

Mitigation of Risks and Challenges

- 3.7 There is a limit on the use of green space of a maximum 28 days annually. To ensure appropriate use of spaces, a new set of equality impact assessments are being carried out on all regularly used event locations to identify key infrastructure and pressures in and around specific locations. These assessments will form part of all new event packs and must be referenced in all event delivery paperwork supplied by event producers.
- 3.8 The events sustainability commitment form has been updated in 2024 in consultation with colleagues from the biodiversity and net zero teams to reflect city policy and new legislation (I.e. single use plastic ban). In addition to this, for the 2026/27 season Brighton and Hove will be joining the national trial of the Green Events Code of Practice (GECOP) pilot scheme which will place the city front and centre in the drive to achieving a sustainable sector.
- 3.9 Noise Management - All planned events involving the use of amplified music will be required to provide the council with a noise management plan which will be shared with colleagues in Environmental Protection for comment. Max. requested limit in 2025 was 75dB in line with other Unitary Councils, and events were monitored by independent expert acousticians. Event organisers will need to adhere to specific restrictions on levels of noise during the build-up, delivery and take down of their event, as well as providing the council with evidence of mitigation measures in place to reduce the impact on nearby businesses and residents.
- 3.10 One of the most pressured periods for outside space in the city is May with the Festival and Fringe bringing the city to life. To maximise the city-wide benefits of this busy time the outdoor events team have established a May Festivals forum to look at cross working possibilities, share marketing opportunities and building towards a one city marketing approach.

Risk Profile and Risk Planning

- 3.11 Key to the safe operation of events in the city is the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). Chaired by Regulatory Services the SAG is an open forum consisting of all blue light services and key internal departments where event plans are scrutinised, and advice can be shared to enhance safety and share best practice. Attendance at the SAG is mandatory for events that meet the appropriate threshold via the regional shared matrix.

Commercial Value

- 3.12 The event and filming programme in the city, continues to thrive. Featuring on average around 200 events and over 400 incidences of filming across the city, the bulk of income, however, remains tied to a narrow band of activity. Over 25% of annual income (£150,000) is generated in July alone and 50% (circa £300,000) of annual income comes from only 10 annual events in the city.
- 3.13 With the establishment of a new team in 2022, event income has increased dramatically with income target of £0.637m forecast for 2025/26. There has been no significant increase in the number of events since 2017. The outdoor events team continue to seek new opportunities for events with proven economic benefits and seeking to expand existing events to increase tourism spend.

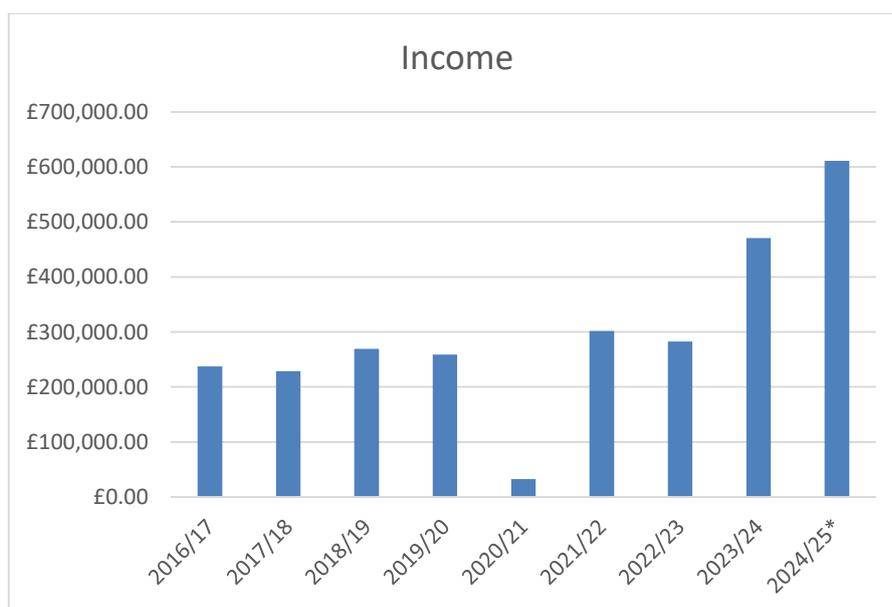


Figure 2: Event Income 2016 to 2025

- 3.14 The member should note that, due to the previous committee agreement to landlord's consent for the Brighton and Hove Pride CiC events, which included detail of ongoing methodology and permissions for those events, they are not included in the body of this report. Pending the start of phase 2 of the engagement process around Pride celebrations in the city, an additional report will be generated outlining the future plans for Pride.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Cabinet member may choose to deny permission for one or several of the proposed events in isolation.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 Consultation is taking place with Ward Councillors, Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, South East Coast Ambulance Service, NHS Trust, Environmental Health & Licensing, City Parks, Civil Contingencies, Sustainability and Highways.
- 5.2 Detailed consultation will also follow as the events are developed between the respective event organiser and our partner agencies. Monitored closely by the council's outdoor events team.

Social Value Impact

- 5.3 Events can affect the way places are perceived and people's relationships with their place of residence, making them feel connected to it. Events act as vehicles to bring people together, encouraging social contact leading to enhanced individual wellbeing and more resilient communities. People benefit from participating in events, but also by volunteering and getting involved in planning and organising them locally, helping to build capacity of communities to organise events and other projects in the future.
- 5.4 Involvement in events can enhance people's quality of life by providing enjoyable, sociable experiences to look forward to and reflect on as well as encouraging personal development to equip people with skills, confidence and knowledge to help them in their lives.
- 5.5 Events are not universally appreciated and there may be some associated negative effects that diminish their social value, including disruption to everyday routines.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The 2025/26 income budget is £0.650m with £0.587m received to date. The forecast for the year is £0.637m a minor pressure of £0.013m against the budget. The income varies significantly over the seasons, of the £0.587m received to date 87% is received in the first 6 months of the year. Opportunities for events in the second half of the year are limited by the weather conditions.
- 6.2 The forecast is included as part of the councils financial monitoring processes.
- 6.3 The recommendations in the report will enable a more strategic approach to be taken ensuring the current level of income is secured, in addition to this it will enable growth to ensure income is maximised. This growth will form part of the councils MTFs, helping to create a financially sustainable council over the next four years.

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garoghan Date consulted:
05/01/2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 While the implementation and delivery of the specific events which comprise the events programme may require legal agreements, 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 Events Programme caters for people from all sectors of the community as there are a diverse range of events that are staged in the city each year. Issues such as physical access to an event and designated viewing areas are developed and detailed in event plans where applicable. Major event organisers will be required to complete an Equalities Impact Assessment.
- 9.2 In addition to the above the new GECOP assessments will also assess event accessibility against a range of factors as designed in collaboration with Attitude is Everything, a leading event accessibility charity.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 All events are planned and staged in accordance with the statutory powers and planning obligations as set out in the Outdoor Events Strategy 2019-2024 (see Apx 2). A new Outdoor Events Policy is currently in development and will be in place by February 2026.
- 10.2 The nature of outdoor events means that they often involve a range of potential sustainability impacts (both positive and negative) from travel, energy and water use, food, local economic and social impacts, use of outdoor spaces and green spaces and production of waste. Event organisers continue to be strongly encouraged to sign up to the Council's Sustainable Event Commitment, helping them to improve sustainability at

their events. The Sustainable Events Programme is certified to the international standard for environmental management ISO 14001.

- 10.3 The Sustainable Events Programme also meets the requirements of the British Standard for Sustainable Events that was developed for the London 2012 Games and helped them deliver a highly visible sustainability programme, particularly around event waste recycling and encouraging people to use public transport. The standard was superseded by the International Standard ISO 20121 and the council's programme has been amended to meet the requirements of the new standard and help the council continually improve its engagement with event organisers to improve sustainability and encourage innovation.
- 10.4 Environmental Impact Assessment and Action plans will be required to be undertaken by organisers wishing to stage their events in the city.
- 10.5 All applications for events to be held on council land will be reviewed by the Council's outdoor events team to assess the potential impact and risk of the event to Brighton & Hove City Council land. Factors such as location, size, type of event, and what ground protection measures the event organiser has confirmed will be considered when agreeing if a reinstatement bond is required, and the value of this bond. A third-party contractor via the new framework agreement will be responsible for all ground reinstatement. It is important to recognise that the impact on our open spaces by some events is inevitable, but the positive social and economic impacts of these events outweigh the immediate effects on the land.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 Outdoor events have a positive impact on the health and well-being of participants and spectators. However, events will need to meet covid safe requirements if they are able to take place.
- 11.2 Initial landlord's consent for outdoor events is determined by the council many months in advance, however, whether any event can go ahead is still very much dependent on all the safety and event permissions being in place at the time of the event.
- 11.3 Officers attend regular meetings held by the Sussex Resilience Forum, to ensure consistency as a region in relation to guidance, advice and information being given to event organisers with regards to Public Health concerns. It is recognised regionally that keeping visitors and residents safe is our priority.

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 Events continue to form a significant part in the council's overall tourism strategy. As well as bringing substantial cultural and economic benefits to the city, people experience civic pride when major recreational, sporting and entertainment events take place in their locality.
- 13.2 Officers will ensure that all events meet the requirements of the new Outdoor Events Policy, including the need for all event organisers to sign up to the Outdoor Events Charter and subscribe to new sustainability goals. This will be monitored carefully via the internal major events working group.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

- 1. 2026 Outdoor Events List
- 2. Outdoor Events Strategy 2019-2024