

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet Member Decision

Subject: Re:Frame Visual Arts Analysis 2026

Date of Decision: 14th May 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism

Contact Officer: Name: Lewis Church, Strategic Manager for Arts, Culture & Creative Industries

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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 ReFrame is a report on the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove co-commissioned by the City Council and Arts Council England.
- 1.2 It was initiated in response to risks to the sector and aims to strengthen the resilience, responsiveness and future development of visual arts activity in Brighton & Hove.
- 1.3 Its completion reflects the council priorities of stimulating a flourishing local economy; generating sustainable economic growth and developing talent; and promoting and protecting what makes Brighton & Hove unique, as well as creating a 'city to be proud of'.

2. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism:

- 2.1 Agrees that the report is ready for publication and general release through both council and stakeholder channels, following approval from the project advisory board and Arts Council England.
- 2.2 Agrees that the Council is supportive of the sector and working collaboratively to advocate for partnerships, investment and growth.
- 2.3 Agrees to support communications on this report through key events and media communications.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Following several high-profile closures of visual arts organisations in the city, and concerns expressed by the sector around sustainability, Arts Council England and Brighton & Hove City Council jointly recognised the challenges

facing the visual arts sector, and the need for robust data and a coordinated strategy to help respond to these pressures.

- 3.2 B&H City Council was awarded a grant from Arts Council England strategic funds to facilitate a visual arts analysis to understand the current landscape, identify green shoots and understand how to support and strengthen the sector in the future. The Culture Alliance provided additional funding to support the fees/access costs of freelancers to engage in this work.
- 3.3 Consultants Cultural Associates Oxford were tendered with a brief to map and analyse visual arts provision in the city; understand gaps and opportunities; propose practical, evidence-based interventions to place visual arts at the heart of the city's cultural, social, economic and civic life; and identify exemplar practice and leadership.
- 3.4 Re:Frame was completed with extensive buy-in and consultation from the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove. Cultural Associates Oxford (CAO) held two public consultation events and undertook one on one interviews with key stakeholders. CAO also issued a public survey, to capture the input of the wider sector and identify recurrent issues.
- 3.5 Desk research completed for the report included a comprehensive review of relevant existing material from the City Council, Brighton & Hove Visual Arts Collective and Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance, including current research, previous consultancy reports, business plans, relevant internal procedures and policy documents. A full list of consulted documents is included in Re:Frame, pp.79-80 (Appendix 1).
- 3.6 Findings from the sector engagement revealed significant challenges for the visual arts sector, reinforced through the consultation activities and desk research.
- 3.7 The most frequently cited challenge is a lack of affordable creative workspace in the city, with additional concerns around insufficient business and professional development support, a lack of connectivity in the visual arts community in the city, and a perception that the visual arts are not as valued as the performing arts.
- 3.8 To resolve these challenges, Re:Frame proposes 7 key outcomes with associated recommendations to be actioned by the sector and stakeholders.
- 3.9 3 outcomes reflect the desire to establish Brighton & Hove as a leading centre for the visual arts:
 - Developing high profile international visual arts programming
 - Establishing a multi-platform marketplace for visual arts sales
 - Building collaborative, culture-led public art commissioning.
- 3.10 4 outcomes are focused on preserving and strengthening the existing sector in the city:
 - Creating a city that is attractive for artists to work in
 - Nurturing visual arts talent through a robust career system and thriving incubator pathways

- Stronger partnerships and cross-sector collaboration
- Establish coordinated strategic leadership for the city and for Sussex

3.11 The recommendations are wide ranging and focused on delivery from the sector. A clear direction to the consultants at initial inception was that recommendations should not depend on additional financial investment from the City Council or Arts Council England and should be actionable independently of these institutions. This is reflected in the final report.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 The city council could decide not to publish or endorse the report.

4.2 Choosing not to publish would result in reputational damage to the council and could risk future strategic working with stakeholders, including Arts Council England.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 Extensive consultation was undertaken by Cultural Associates Oxford during the development of the report.

5.2 This included a public survey, one to one interviews with key stakeholders, and two group 'Innovation Sprint' events.

5.3 The survey was posted on the Culture in Our City website and distributed through the networks of project board members. It was live from Wednesday 26 February to Monday 17 March 2025 with 227 respondents.

5.4 Nine 1:1 interviews were held in 2025. The full list of interviewees and their relevance to the project is detailed on p.99 of ReFrame (Appendix 1).

5.5 CAO designed two 'Innovation Sprint' workshops as part of the consultation process. These sprints were designed to move the conversation on, so that together participants can help identify workable solutions that will support the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove. These events were held on Thursday 3rd & Friday 4th April 2025 at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton. There were 43 attendees across both events and efforts were made to ensure a balance of artists, curators and organisations with representatives from funders and other political stakeholders. A full list of attendees is available pp.105-107 of Re:Frame (Appendix 1).

5.6 Bursaries for the participation of freelancers were offered through the Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance. 10 bursaries were offered and accepted.

5.7 A full breakdown of the consultation process is available within the Re:Frame report section 3, pp. 72-107 (Appendix 1).

6. Financial implications

6.1 Whilst the recommendations within this report do not have direct financial implications, Appendix 1 outlines a range of potential funding options to support delivery. This includes the potential use of existing core council

budgets for Arts and Culture. Any funding decisions must be considered within the context of the current financial climate, with requests for council funding subject to careful assessment of affordability and the wider impact on the Council's overall financial position.

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garoghan Date consulted :13/05/2026

7. Legal implications

7.1 No direct legal implications have been identified

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted: 21/04/2026

8. Risk Implications

8.1 Failure to proceed with the project may result in the requirement to return secured and spent external funding, which could impact the council's ability to resource future projects and reduce the likelihood of success in future funding bids

9. Equalities implications

9.1 When assessing the visual arts sector in the city, a clear direction to the consultants was the need to adhere to council responsibilities around responsible data collection and to equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the research and production of the report.

9.2 The desk research conducted by the consultants included engagement with council documents and public information which documented the demographic and economic distribution of Brighton & Hove, including the Brighton & Hove Council Plan (2023) and Economic Development Plan (2024), the 2021 Census, Annual Population Survey and Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. This knowledge was used to inform outreach and targeting of underrepresented areas and communities within the city.

9.3 This was reflected in the open access survey, which was designed to gain as broad a range of data from the visual arts sector in the city as possible, and avoid reproducing any existing inequalities of representation, such as disproportionate representation of regularly funded organisations.

9.4 At the Innovation Sprint events, an application and selection process ensured that a diverse representation of the sector was achieved. Bursaries to attend were offered to freelancers via the support of the Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance, and represented organisations were balanced to include those engaging a diverse range of audiences and communities. A full statement on the selection and balancing of this invite list, including all attendees is included in Re:Frame (Appendix 9, pp.111-117).

10. Sustainability implications

10.1 There are no sustainability implications for this decision.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

11.1 There are no public health implications for this decision.

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

12.1 If the analysis is not published future funding applications and procurement relationships with consultants may be affected.

13. Crime & disorder implications:

13.1 There are no crime and disorder implications to this decision.

14. Conclusion

14.1 Re:Frame is a robust analysis of the visual arts sector in the city, undertaken in collaboration with Arts Council England and other stakeholders within the city. Approving for publication will allow the sector to engage with its recommendations and provide a data set for future advocacy for inward investment.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Re:Frame: A Visual Arts Analysis for Brighton & Hove.
2. Re:Frame Executive Summary