

Re:Frame

**A visual arts analysis and
opportunities report for
Brighton & Hove**

Cultural Associates Oxford
November 2025

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Front cover Flight of the Langoustine, Pierre Dimantopoulos

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List of abbreviations

ACE	Arts Council England	GoMA	Glasgow: Gallery of Modern Art
BHCC	Brighton & Hove City Council	HERA	Healing, Expressive and Recovery Arts
BHCA	Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance	LVEP	Local Economy Visitor Partnership
BVAC	Brighton Visual Arts Coalition	MCCA	Mayoral Combined County Authority
CAO	Cultural Associates Oxford	NPO	National Portfolio Organisation
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	PAN	Planning Advice Note
DACS	Design and Artists' Copyright Society	S106	Section 106
DYCP	Developing Your Creative Practice	VVAF	Vancouver - Visual Art Foundation
GI	Glasgow International Festival	WEVAA	West of England Visual Arts Alliance

Foreword

Brighton & Hove is a city defined by its creativity, diversity, and independent spirit.

Our visual arts sector is not just a source of inspiration and pride, it is a vital force that shapes our city's identity, drives economic growth, and strengthens our communities. As Cabinet Member for Culture, I am delighted to introduce this Visual Arts Analysis and Opportunities report, which sets out a bold vision for the future of visual arts in our city.

This council is steadfast in its support for the arts and culture. We recognise that a thriving visual arts sector is essential to delivering the ambitions of our Corporate Plan: building a fairer, greener, and more inclusive city. Visual arts foster community cohesion, support health and wellbeing, and provide opportunities for learning and participation for all. They are central to our efforts to tackle inequality and ensure that everyone in Brighton & Hove can share in the city's creative life.

The value of visual arts extends far beyond culture. Our creative industries contribute over £1.5 billion to the local economy and support more than 16,000 jobs. The sector is a magnet for inward investment, attracting talent, visitors, and businesses from across the UK and beyond. As we look to the future, the visual arts will play a central role in shaping the city's brand and identity, supporting our ambitions for sustainable growth, regeneration, and international recognition.

This report is a call to action at a pivotal moment. The visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove has shown extraordinary resilience and innovation in the face of significant challenges ranging from the impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis to reductions in funding and the loss of key venues. Yet, as this analysis makes clear, the sector remains vibrant, ambitious, and ready to seize new opportunities. It reflects the voices and ambitions of artists, organisations, and communities across Brighton & Hove and sets out clear recommendations and practical steps to strengthen our creative infrastructure, support talent, and embed art in every aspect of city life.

As a council, we are committed to working with our partners to deliver on these ambitions and will continue to champion the visual arts, advocate for investment, and ensure that creativity remains at the heart of Brighton & Hove's future.

Councillor Birgit Miller
Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Brighton & Hove City Council

Arts Council England is proud to have worked with Brighton & Hove City Council and partners in the visual arts sector on this report and the consultative process which underpinned it.

Our 'Let's Create' strategy sets out a vision that by 2030, England will be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. As the development agency for culture and creativity we believe that the arts and culture sector can play a meaningful role in placemaking – through our cultural institutions being their best and by giving artists the support to thrive.

Brighton & Hove is known for many things, one of which is being a deeply creative and colourful place to work and play. It remains a magnet for talent, attracting artists from other parts of the country and internationally. It is consistently ranked in the top three or four places in the country for the number of applications and awards from our individual artist funds (alongside places like Hackney and Bristol). No city can take that talent pool, and the ecology which surrounds it, for granted.

In this time of unprecedented headwinds for the arts and culture sector we felt it was important to support the sector to take a step back and think deeply about the state of play for the visual arts sector; to make some space to craft a focussed vision for what might be possible next. In a place that is so rich in so many different disciplines we have seen how similar exercises into music, arts and digital industries have given new impetus to sector development. Not every part of the country has the critical mass and raw ingredients like Brighton & Hove does. It is clear from this report that ambition and imagination remains strong in the city, and that there is a collective appetite to work in new ways to position our sector in the very best way for the future.

Peter Heslip
Director, Visual Arts / Director, Brighton Office, Arts Council England



Right Artist-Sophie Abbott at Phoenix Art Space
Credit Rosie Powell

Introduction

Background

Brighton & Hove has a long-established reputation for the visual arts, sustained by art schools, universities, colleges, and a thriving independent scene that has nurtured new work and talent for decades. Its visual arts are shaped by a distinctive ecology of galleries, artist-led spaces, studios, and collectives, complemented by flagship cultural institutions and educational anchors that have trained generations of practitioners and curators. This connected landscape enables year-round making, exhibitions, and public engagement, from community-embedded initiatives to nationally profiled programmes, and underpinned by active networks for artist development, residencies, and commissioning across the city. The city's festival calendar and vibrant public-realm culture embed art in everyday life, while ongoing collaboration between practitioners, organisations, and educators continues to foster experimentation, inclusion, and high standards in contemporary practice.

However, more recently, the infrastructure for visual arts provision across Brighton & Hove has undergone impactful changes, and strengthening the visual arts sector has been identified as a high priority for artists, stakeholders, and organisations.

In response to this, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), with support from Arts Council England (ACE), Brighton Visual Arts Coalition (BVAC), and Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance (BHCA), commissioned Cultural Associates Oxford (CAO), to analyse the city's visual arts sector in order to set out a confident and sustainable future.

The brief¹ was clear: map and analyse visual arts in Brighton & Hove; identify established and exemplar practice, leadership, gaps in provision, and opportunities for development; and produce a forward-looking, practical plan that supports artists, organisations, and communities, champions innovative partnerships, and places the city's visual arts at the heart of its cultural, social, economic, and civic life.

To undertake this research and mapping, CAO designed a research framework² and undertook desk research³, alongside an extensive consultation process. This included Project Board meetings⁴, one-to-one interviews with key thought leaders in, or relevant to the sector⁵, a detailed online survey⁶ and two, day-long, in person Innovation Sprint workshops⁷. Throughout the report the ACE definition of the visual arts has been used to define its scope,

1 The brief for this work can be found in Appendix 1

2 Details of the approach and methodology CAO took when undertaking the research can be found in Appendices 2-3 of this report.

3 A list of desk research sources can be found in Appendix 4

4 CAO met 8 times with the Project Board. Project Board members included: Chenine Bhathena, Lewis Church and Marie Tulley-Rose (Brighton & Hove City Council), Karin Janzon (Hove Civic Society), Lucy Day (Phoenix Arts Space), Sherry Neyhus (Arts Council England), Hedley Swain (Brighton & Hove Museums), Stuart Hedley (University of Brighton), Dr Cara Courage (creative consultant-director and researcher), Ivan Clarke (Millimetre Limited)

5 CAO undertook 8 one-to-one interviews with: David Blandy (artist), Peter Heslip (Arts Council England), Maureen Paley (Maureen Paley Gallery), Kerry Lemon (artist), Lord Steve Bassam (Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust), Simon Vaughan (Creative Giants), Joe Hill (Towner Eastbourne), Richard Upton (Creative Developer). A summary of key points which surfaced during these conversations can be found in Appendix 7

6 Completed by over 300 Brighton & Hove based artists. A summary of survey questions and responses can be found in Appendices 5 and 6

7 Attended by 20 people on day 1 and 23 people on day 2 - details of those attending can be found in Appendix 9



Left Grant Foster at Phoenix Art Space 2025, photo by Bernard G Mills

which includes visual arts events such as exhibition or collections of art, photography or sculpture, and events which include video or electronic art. Visual arts activities include painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, photography as an artistic activity, as well as making films or videos as an artistic activity and using a computer to create original artworks or animation. Craft practices and craft exhibitions are also encompassed by this definition, including textile crafts, wood crafts and calligraphy, pottery or jewellery making but excluding craft markets. Efforts have been made throughout to engage with, and document both the subsidised and commercial arts ecosystems within Brighton & Hove, as well as the full breadth of activities covered by this definition.

Key themes have emerged through the analysis. The sector's strengths include a strong creative reputation, a skilled talent base, high public participation, and significant contributions from established venues and grassroots organisations, alongside clear opportunities for cross-sector partnerships, digital innovation, and enhanced support for early-career and emerging artists. At the same

time, the sector faces significant challenges: affordable, sustainable workspace is increasingly scarce, funding remains uncertain, and access inequalities persist, while economic pressures, especially the cost-of-living crisis and creative space closures, pose real risks. Yet the city's visual arts community continues to adapt and show resilience, laying foundations for sustainable growth.

This report, [Re:Frame - A visual arts analysis and opportunities report for Brighton & Hove](#), offers a clear evidence base to guide future strategic investment and policy in the city's visual arts ecosystem, which builds on existing strengths. It calls for: securing and expanding affordable creative spaces; investing in talent development; improving the visibility and inclusion of the city's diverse visual arts talent; and building financial resilience through new commissioning models, diversified income, and deeper partnerships across sectors and with business and philanthropy. It also provides a detailed overview of the sector, highlighting its breadth, dynamism, and critical role in shaping a sustainable, distinctive future for Brighton & Hove.

Re:Frame - A visual arts analysis and opportunities report for Brighton & Hove

Report structure

Re:Frame - A visual arts analysis and opportunities report for Brighton & Hove has three sections, which draw directly on the research and consultation process:

Section 1: Analysis of the Visual Arts Sector in Brighton & Hove, sets out the context for understanding the current landscape of visual arts in the city and presents a detailed picture of the sector's strengths, achievements, and ongoing challenges.

Section 2: Desired Outcomes and Key Opportunities for the Visual Arts Sector in Brighton & Hove, maps priority opportunities, proposes future strategic directions, and translates strategy into action with evidence-based solutions tailored to the current funding and policy landscape, including a realistic timetable for implementation.

Section 3: Appendices provide data, stakeholder voices, and the evidence base that underpins the sector's ambition, rooting the report in collective experience.

Visual Arts, Brighton & Hove - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

This SWOT is based on findings from desk research, survey responses, interviews and workshops. A detailed breakdown of the research and data collected is given in the third section of this report, **Appendices**.

Strengths

- Brighton & Hove is renowned for its creative identity - driven by a young, diverse and economically active community, the city displays a strong sense of creativity through its annual calendar of festivals, events and venues as well as its traditions and history.
- A rich creative ecosystem – with over 230 cultural and creative spaces in Brighton & Hove, including music, digital innovation, festivals, and outdoor arts.
- A community of artists and makers actively contributing to the local economy – with creative jobs accounting for 7% of all employment. 19% of businesses are creative or cultural which is significantly higher than the UK average⁸.
- Brighton & Hove has the highest concentration of people working in arts, culture, and heritage occupations outside of London – the number of creative companies registered per 1,000 population is higher in Brighton & Hove (26.02) compared to the national average (9.30).

⁸ While Brighton & Hove is renowned for its community of visual artists, the available data does not separate out visual artists. Most of this 7% are likely to be in the digital, performing arts, and software sectors.

Weaknesses

- Real-terms reduction in public funding, loss of key venues in 2023 and exhibition programmes - closure of the Brighton CCA gallery, ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status for Fabrica and Lighthouse not being renewed in the last funding round, and closure of ONCA and New England House are emblematic of the sector's vulnerability to economic headwinds and external forces.
- Absence of a major, flagship visual arts venue and pipeline for nationally regarded curatorial talent in Brighton & Hove - diminishes the city's profile domestically and internationally, and limits opportunities for artists to exhibit their work at scale alongside other artists.
- Insufficient join-up and visibility across the sector - diminishes the ability for the visual arts to speak with one voice and integrate into other areas of policy development on a local and national level
- Private vs public funding – need for greater awareness and understanding of how both sides can work together to support the sector - as opposed to separately.

Opportunities

- Build resilience, foster collaboration, and secure the future of the visual arts in Brighton & Hove – through the outcomes set out in this report, ensuring the city continues as a vital part of the UK's creative system.
- Build on BHCC's Economic Plan that recognises culture as a core imperative and outlines ambitions for its contribution to the city's future growth - transforming the economy by evolving a bigger and more diverse visitor market and fostering a sustainable, healthy, and thriving creative economy.
- Build on existing high levels of engagement with cultural activities in Brighton & Hove - higher on average than in the South East and England.
- Utilise existing infrastructure and assets - such as the city's Regency architecture, extensive seafront, The Living Coast (the UK's only urban UNESCO Biosphere Reserve) and independent, creative spirit as raw materials for a dynamic cultural offer.
- Build on the existing networks - that exist across the sector in the city, notably BVAC, which supports the visual arts sector.
- Devolution – the formation of a new Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex represents an opportunity to better coordinate cultural strategy and investment with other areas in the county.

Threats

- Lack of affordable, flexible workspace - high property prices and limited availability are driving artists out of the city.
- High living costs and fragmentation of the sector - adds to the precarity of practising artists.
- Decline of dedicated exhibition spaces and the reduction in opportunities for public engagement - further restrict the visibility and viability of visual arts practice.
- Existing organisations are under increasing pressure due to falling investment, rising costs, and unstable funding environments - capacity support needs to prioritise staff wellbeing, sustainable workloads, and joined-up investment.

Section 1: Analysis of the Visual Arts Sector in Brighton & Hove

Setting the scene

Existing offer

Visual arts ecosystem

Brighton & Hove features notable creative strengths, including hubs like Phoenix Art Space, which provides over 100 affordable artist studios and hosts around 52 exhibitions annually, alongside a lively programme of community events and courses that invite participation from across the city. Businesses like Atelier Beside the Sea on Brighton beach offer workshops and exhibitions for locals and visitors, and the visual arts ecosystem is further strengthened by studio groups and collectives like APEC Studios, Brighton Artists Network, and Red Herring Studios which provide essential affordable workspace and foster collaboration and professional growth among artists.

The city is also home to a huge number of artists and practitioners, from Turner Prize winners to individual makers and leading artists who are regularly featured across public and commercial galleries such as Phoenix Art Space, ACCA, John Marchant Gallery, Kellie Miller Arts, and Maureen Paley: Morena di Luna.

The city's calendar is defined by major art events. The Brighton Festival in May is one of England's largest multi-arts festivals, transforming the city into a canvas for exhibitions, installations, and performances that blend the historic with the cutting-edge. Artists

Open Houses, a now-global movement founded in Brighton over 40 years ago, runs alongside the Brighton Festival and Brighton Fringe, and sees nearly 200 venues open their doors each May, allowing the public to explore art in the spaces and places where it has been created (homes, studios, and gardens) while generating significant sales for independent artists. October is a further highlight, with Dreamy Place (formerly Brighton Digital Festival) - the annual creative technology and digital culture festival, and the biennial Photo Fringe open platform photography festival known for its inclusive participation, and pathways for early-career and underrepresented lens-based artists, showcasing visual arts in the city.

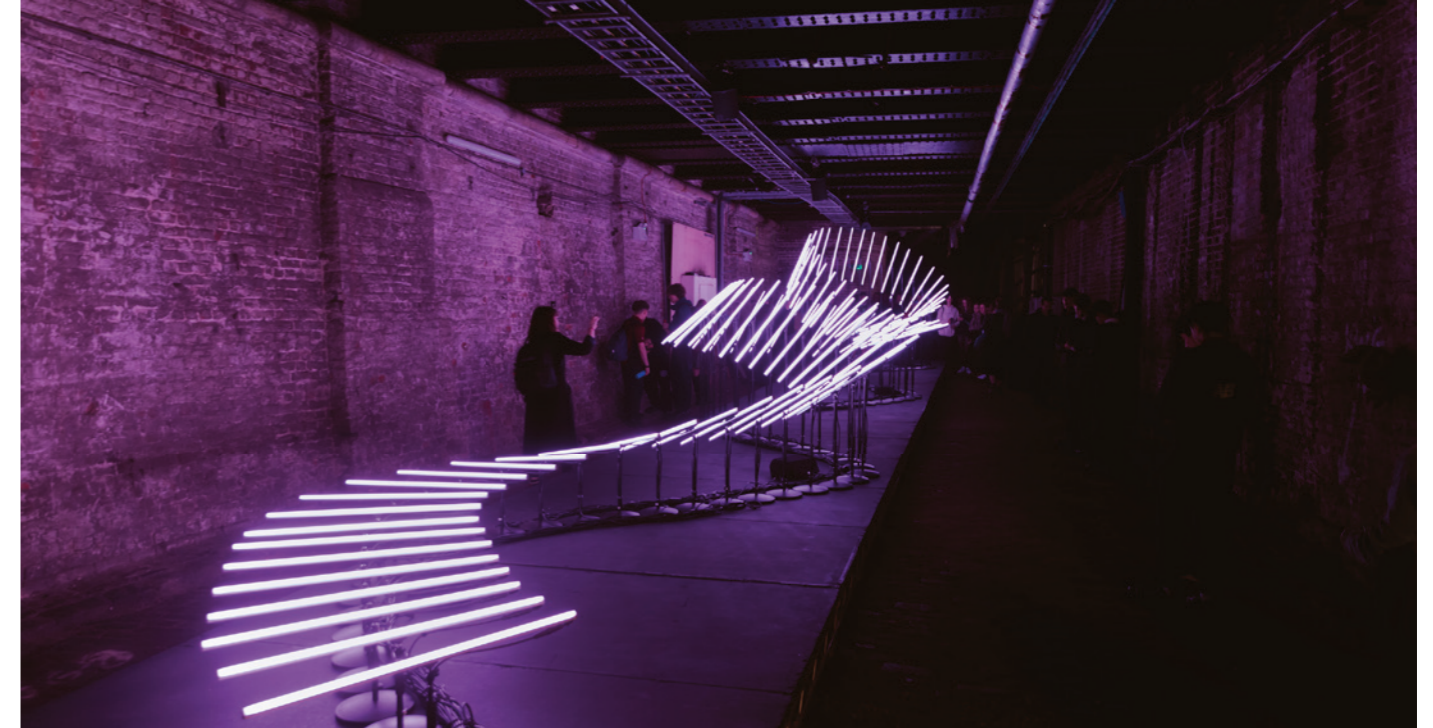
Notably, Brighton & Hove Museums have been diversifying approaches to representing the visual arts. Recent years have seen new opportunities and commissions for artists through temporary installations and murals, often intersecting with social history or design themes. For example, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery regularly hosts exhibitions and artist commissions; the Royal Pavilion has established itself as a venue for exhibitions, with recent immersive and artist-led shows such as COLOUR in 2025 and a range of multimedia art events that respond to the site's unique heritage; and Hove Museum of Creativity, known for its nationally recognised craft collections, has

a strong tradition of engaging contemporary artists, particularly through partnerships and special projects.

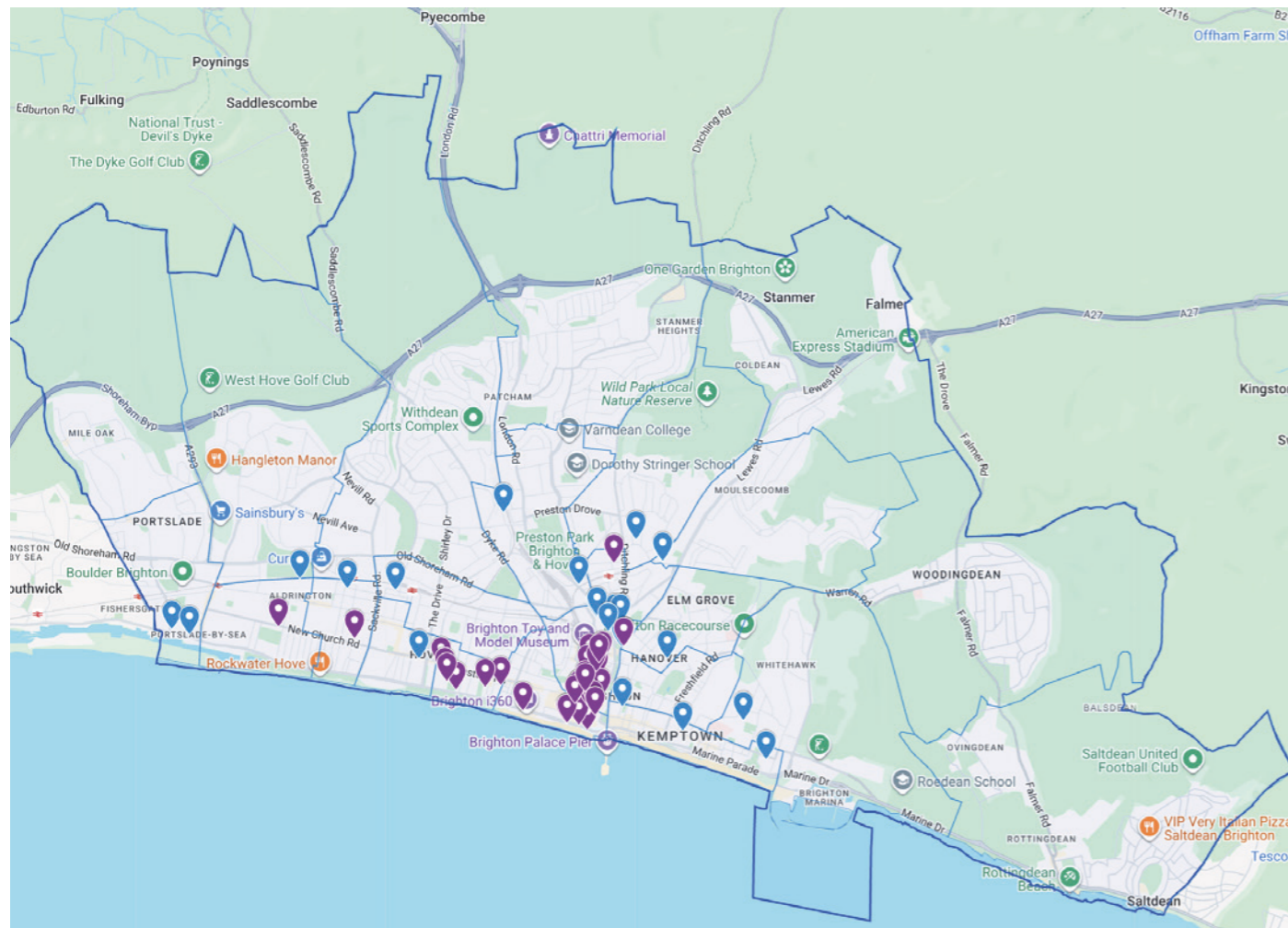
The Brighton Art Fair, at the Brighton Dome Corn Exchange, provides direct access to both emerging and established artists and their work, enabling commissions, and on-the-spot purchases in a curated, high footfall setting. Taking place annually in autumn, exhibitors are selected from open submissions, with over 100 stands presenting painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture and mixed media.

Below is an indicative map of galleries (shown in purple) and artists' studios (shown in blue) in Brighton & Hove. Please note that the list may not be exhaustive and is only indicative. Where data is available on each studio's website, an estimate of the number of current artists using each studio is included in brackets after the studio name. There is an estimated total of 324 artists across the below 25 studios.

Right Collectif Scale, Dreamy Place 2024, photo by Rosie Powell



Map of Galleries and Artists' Studios in Brighton & Hove



[View an interactive version of the map here⁹.](#)

⁹ Please note that this is an indicative list of artists' studios based on desk research and may not be exhaustive. Where we have been able to find data on numbers of artists per studio it has been added.

Studios and creative workspaces include (shown in blue):

- 19a Art Space and Gallery (14)
- Albert Mews Studio (9)
- APEC Artist Studios (15)
- Artspace Brighton
- Brighton Art Space (13)
- Brighton Open Market Studios (12)
- East Side Print
- Fabricate Studios Brighton (3)

Galleries include (shown in purple):

- 19a Art Space and Gallery
- 35 North Contemporary Fine Art
- Adelaide Salon
- Artista Cafe and Gallery
- Atelier Beside The Sea
- Brighton Art Space
- Brighton Museum & Art Gallery
- Brighton Photography
- Cameron Contemporary Art
- Castle Fine Art
- Clarendon Fine Art Brighton
- Cloud Gallery Fine Art - Brighton

- Lawrence Art Studio
- Making it Out (Portside Studios)
- North Star Studios (9)
- Phoenix Art Space (124)
- Red Herring Studios (15)
- ROBERTSON YARD STUDIOS (15)
- Rocket Artists (35)

- Crane Kalman Brighton
- Daniel Laurence Artworks
- Fabrica
- Family Store
- LOCK IN BRIGHTON
- Gallery40
- Gallery DODO
- Helm Gallery
- Hove Museum of Creativity
- Indelible Fine Art
- io gallery - brighton designers and makers ltd.
- John Marchant Gallery
- Kellie Miller Arts Gallery
- Labyrinth Gallery

- Rodhus Creative Studios (20)
- Studio 106 (17)
- Studio Greenhouse (10)
- Studio Unfold (3)
- The Brighton Studio (4)
- The Draw Studio
- The Open Studios
- The Studio Upstairs
- North Star Studios
- Pottery Gagliano (6)

- Liberation Art Gallery
- Morena di Luna
- Organ Projects
- Paxton+Glew Contemporary Art Gallery
- Phoenix Art Space
- SOHO Fine Art
- Sussex County Arts Club
- The Brighton Box Gallery
- The Fishing Quarter Gallery
- The Regency Town House
- They Made This
- Two Kats and a Cow
- Whistleblower Gallery

Public art

Brighton's visual arts scene is also deeply embedded in its public spaces. Brighton & Hove Council's **One Landscape, Many Views: Public Art Strategy 2022-2032**¹⁰ offers a framework for public art commissioning and Section 106¹¹ (s106) contributions help provide funding for new commissions that enhance the urban environment. Significantly, Brighton & Hove Council is one of the few local authorities in the country with a dedicated s106 obligation for Public Art, meaning that developers working on major construction projects are required via the planning system, to invest in providing public art as part of their developments. Recent s106 public art projects have included four major commissions at MODA Hove Central¹², and new sculptures at residential developments in Preston Road, Lyons Close, Black Rock and Rottingdean. The Black Rock art commissions, a series of both permanent and temporary installations which directly draw upon Brighton's local heritage, ecology, and LGBTQIA+ legacy, led by the city council with funding from Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, have contributed to the revitalisation of one of the city's key waterfront sites¹³.

Commissioned work spans the public realm, across both outdoor civic spaces, parks, and development sites, as well as indoor environments such as galleries, museums, and creative hubs. Examples of innovative approaches taken include ambitious community led art initiatives such as Hove Civic Society's Hove Plinth, a seafront platform that curates a changing programme of contemporary sculpture, relocates major works to permanent

¹⁰ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/Public%20Art%20Strategy%202022-2032%20online%20version.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/city-regeneration/regeneration-information-developers-and-construction-industry-professionals/developer-contributions>

¹² <https://modagroup.com/projects/hove-central>

¹³ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2024/new-black-rock-beachcombers-sculptures-installed>

public sites, and engages residents and visitors through learning and participation events¹⁴. Of similar prominence is *Beside the Sea* by internationally renowned photographer Martin Parr and celebrated local artist JJ Waller, who were commissioned as part of Brighton Festival 2025, with support from BHCC, to create a large-scale public art installation which transformed ordinary travel into an artistic experience by pasting over 65 vibrant images onto the roofs of bus shelters around Brighton & Hove - visible only from the top deck of the city's double-decker buses¹⁵. Such projects demonstrate how ambitious commissions can reach a wide and diverse public outside of traditional gallery spaces.

A defining feature of Brighton & Hove's visual arts landscape is its internationally renowned street art scene. The city's streets, particularly in areas like North Laine, Kemptown, and London Road, are alive with ever-changing murals and striking graffiti. Works by artists such as Banksy, Cassette Lord, The Postman, and Minty have turned Brighton's urban spaces into open-air galleries, attracting street art enthusiasts from across the globe. Guided tours, social media, and community-led projects such as the Urban Art Wall, ensure that street art is a living part of Brighton's creative identity - celebrating diversity, championing social messages, and reflecting the city's inclusive ethos. These vibrant works serve as a powerful platform for local voices and cultural expression, although are increasingly under pressure in the changing city-centre.

¹⁴ <https://hoveplinth.org.uk/>

¹⁵ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2025/iconic-seaside-exhibition-city-bus-shelter-roofs>

Right Lydia Stonehouse, at Phoenix Art Space photo by Alun Callender



UNESCO Biosphere

Brighton & Hove's status as part of The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere which presents unique opportunities for the visual arts to contribute to placemaking and sustainability. The Biosphere covers 700km² of the Sussex Coast and includes 13km of coastline in the city, including the Brighton & Hove seafronts and parts of the South Downs National Park. It is notably the UK's only urban UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Initiatives such as the Living Coast Artist Residency foster collaboration between artists and scientists to explore environmental themes and local ecosystems¹⁶. Nationally and internationally renowned Brighton & Hove-based visual artists, such as Emma Critchley (based at Phoenix Art Space), are increasingly engaging with themes of ecology, climate change, and environmental stewardship. Dreamy Place highlights the intersection of digital innovation and creative practice, featuring installations and performances that engage with new technologies and digital culture, often in dialogue with environmental themes. Semiconductor, an artist duo also based at Phoenix Art Space, exemplify the city's creative partnerships through their internationally recognised work with CERN and the UK government, translating scientific data into immersive art experiences¹⁷. Such projects and practices not only raise awareness of the Biosphere's value, but also rightly position Brighton & Hove as a leader in environmentally and technologically engaged art.

Supporting talent development

Phoenix Art Space, Brighton Dome, and both the University of Sussex and University of Brighton regularly commission new works by

¹⁶ <https://fabrica.org.uk/events/the-living-coast-stream-to-sea-artist-residency-2024>

¹⁷ <https://arts.cern/artist/semiconductor/> and <https://arts.cern/semiconductor-were-ultimately-interested-in-nature-and-looking-out-for-the-unknown/>

local and international artists, creating platforms for experimentation and deeper artistic engagement, whilst championing both existing and emerging talent. For example, Brighton Dome's Anita's Room¹⁸ offers week-long residencies that support works-in-progress, giving artists space, time, and technical resources to develop bold ideas. Phoenix Art Space combines studio awards and exhibitions to commission artists from under-represented groups and emerging graduates: its own award for artists from under-represented groups who experience intersecting forms of discrimination; and a second in partnership with the University of Brighton sponsored by CASS Art. The University of Brighton and the University of Sussex further extend this pipeline through artist-in-residence schemes, research-led commissions, and student-facing projects that connect academic inquiry with contemporary practice.

Every summer, graduating arts students present work in the University of Brighton Summer Shows, transforming Grand Parade, Edward Street and Mithras House into public galleries building on a deep-rooted infrastructure shaped by University of Brighton School of Art, founded in 1859 and among the UK's oldest art schools. Now the University's School of Art and Media, it has nurtured generations of internationally recognised artists, designers, and makers, establishing Brighton & Hove as a centre for creative practice and cultural innovation.

¹⁸ <https://brightondome.org/get-involved/artist-support/anitas-room/>

Current challenges

The visual arts offer in Brighton & Hove spans a broad spectrum, from intimate artist studios to public exhibitions and internationally recognised festivals. However, the city's visual arts sector has suffered notable setbacks in recent years, including:

- The closure of ONCA, a Brighton-based arts charity that bridged social and environmental justice issues with creativity from 2012 - 2024.
- Two of six Brighton-based ACE supported visual arts organisations (Fabrica and Lighthouse) not having their NPO funding renewed from 2023.
- The closure of the University of Brighton's Centre for Contemporary Art (BCCA gallery) in 2023 as a programmed space because of financial pressures on higher education.

- Photoworks Festival, a dedicated festival for international photography, reducing the scale of its work in the city post-pandemic¹⁹.
- New England House, the world's first high-rise industrial business centre with an emphasis on the Creative, Digital and Information Technology sectors (which housed over 100 small-to-medium enterprises) closing for structural refurbishment, and its creative businesses and artists being required to relocate.

Despite this, there is an abundance of creativity and activity that can be further built upon, enhanced and amplified for the benefit of the city, its residents, communities and visitors.

¹⁹ N.B. Photoworks is due to return in 2026.



Right Postcard Exhibition, Gallery DODO, 2024, photo by Bernard G Mills

Space and infrastructure for visual arts

Brighton & Hove features a strong network of studio providers, catering to a range of different practices and career stages. Studio spaces at Phoenix Art Space, Rodhus, Red Herring and Artspace Brighton are in high demand, and the individual communities at each present an opportunity for further collaboration, expansion and engagement with the needs of artists across the city.

But despite these strong creative foundations, access to the physical spaces needed for creative practitioners is a challenge, and is characterised by limited availability, high prices, and limited flexibility in lease arrangements. Specifically, production spaces for creative manufacturing, particularly for the visual arts, craft and performance represent the main gap in the cultural space provision. This is highlighted in the survey undertaken as part of this research: ‘finding affordable space to rent as a studio / workspace’ was selected as one of the most challenging aspects of being a visual artist in Brighton & Hove, by 71.3% of respondents.

This scarcity of appropriate space has led to concerning trends, with creative practitioners reported to be leaving the city, and local

organisations seeking rehearsal, development, and production space further afield. Moreover, there is a limited amount of public or commercial space available for exhibiting visual art on a larger scale. While the potential of outdoor and under-utilised indoor spaces is acknowledged as a possible solution, the current situation poses a threat to the ongoing flourishing of the sector.

In 2022 the **Space to Grow** report²⁰ assessed the situation of the city’s creative and cultural spaces. It concluded that both young and established creative practitioners are at risk of leaving due to a low supply of affordable workspace. Brighton & Hove has also witnessed the closure of a significant number of independent cultural spaces, with research indicating at least 16 closures in the past 10 years, a number likely underestimated. These closures are attributed to long-term pressures, the impact of the pandemic, inflation, and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

Education in the visual arts

Brighton & Hove offers rich pathways within higher and further education for fine art and related visual disciplines, spanning

²⁰ https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/pan2qoezzddwj2t81jo3l/FINAL-REPORT-We-Made-That_257_Brighton-Space-to-Grow_Report_FINAL-230302.pdf?rlkey=yiquyhaoaq4qxq490llyu3nml&e=1&dl=0

undergraduate to postgraduate study and practice-based learning. The University of Brighton’s School of Art and Media delivers a wide spectrum of subjects from Fine Art and Painting to Photography, Illustration, and Design, with dedicated studios, specialist libraries, and an internationally significant Design Archives, plus public shows that showcase graduate work each year. Notable alumni connected to the University of Brighton include Turner Prize winning artists Helen Cammock, Keith Tyson, and Rachel Whiteread, alongside artist and author Alison Lapper MBE, reflecting the school’s longstanding contribution to UK visual culture.

Progression routes and portfolio-building are well supported across the city. Brighton Metropolitan College (Brighton MET) provides broad Art & Design courses across disciplines, while Kings School of Art & Design is an approved centre for UAL Level 3 and 4 Diplomas in Art and Design, preparing learners for specialist higher study. Phoenix Art Space complements formal education with short courses for a range of skill levels, portfolio development opportunities, exhibitions, and studio awards that bridge students and graduates into the professional ecosystem. A recurring studio award co-run with Cass Art, the University of Brighton and Phoenix Art Space gives recent graduates rent-free studio space and an exhibition, and the annual Platform Graduate Award, also at Phoenix Art Space, reinforces the city’s training-to-practice pipeline.

The education landscape has however undergone significant change. A decade of frozen tuition fees, rising operating costs, and high inflation have increased financial pressure on providers, contributing to difficult decisions and reduced provision. Within this context, Brighton Centre for Contemporary Arts (Brighton CCA), housed at, and funded by, the University of Brighton, closed in 2023 after a short but impactful run (2019–2023)

as a free, open venue for exhibitions, projects, and research that supported artist practice and cross-disciplinary dialogue.

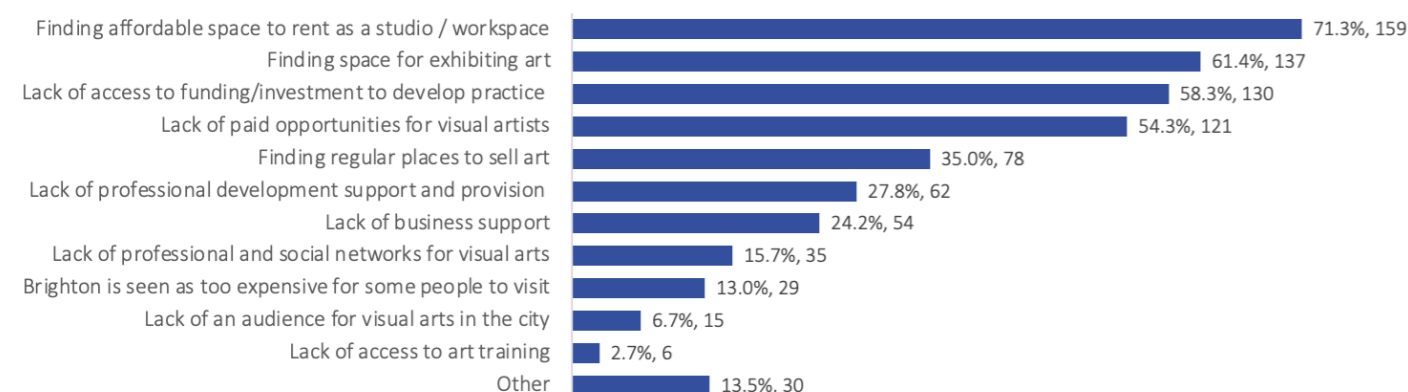
Nationally, pipeline concerns are acute. Entries to arts GCSEs have fallen markedly since 2010, shrinking the pool of young people progressing into creative further and higher education²¹. When combined with wider cuts to arts funding, the cost-of-living crisis, and inflationary pressures on institutions and learners, these trends create material barriers to both accessing and providing high-quality visual arts education. Addressing this requires coordinated action across schools, further education, higher education, and the city’s cultural infrastructure to sustain equitable routes into the sector.

There is also a strong network of training and skills development arts practice offered by organisations across the city outside of formal education contexts. This includes the training and workshop activity of organisations like Phoenix Art Space, as well as dedicated and long-running venues like Sussex County Arts Club, which has offered sessions to develop skills around painting and life drawing to amateur and professional artists in the city since 1944. Other venues offer similar classes in other crafts and mediums, such as The Mud House, which offers a range of pottery and ceramics classes. There is significant crossover and cross-pollination between this accredited provision and skills-based learning offer.

Overall, Brighton & Hove has strong roots, and bolstering educational assets through sustained investment in facilities and teaching, bursaries and studio pathways, and partnerships is pivotal to maintaining a resilient, inclusive pipeline for the next generation of artists and makers.

²¹ <https://artlyst.com/news/arts-return-to-national-curriculum-ending-fourteen-year-exile/ But with curriculum changes afoot there is hope for turning this around.>

Survey responses to the question ‘What, in your opinion, are the most challenging aspects of being a visual artist in Brighton & Hove?’. Respondents selected up to 5 options. Number of responses = 223.





Left Grant Foster at Phoenix Art Space, 2025, photo by Bernard G Mills

National Portfolio funding is only one piece of the ACE funding picture. National Lottery Project Grants (for both individuals and organisations) and Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) for individuals, are both major sources of funding for the visual arts in Brighton & Hove, as demonstrated in the table below²³.

²³ Please note that 2018-19 only had three funding rounds (Rounds 1-3), whereas 2019-20 had four funding rounds (Rounds 4-7).

Funding for the visual arts

The research indicates a real-term reduction in overall public provision and investment in the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove. This aligns with a broader national trend of decreasing government spending on culture. Between 2009-10 and 2022-23, local government revenue funding for culture in England decreased by 48%, and ACE's core government funding in England also saw an 18% reduction per person in real terms. Despite this trend, and overall standstill grants being the norm, ACE has continued to support the visual arts in Brighton & Hove.

ACE's flagship National Portfolio programme currently provides core funding for 16 organisations in Brighton & Hove alone. NPO funding is not guaranteed from funding cycle

NPO Funding Data for Brighton & Hove

NPOs ALL DISCIPLINES	NPO FY2019						NPO FY2023						% Change B&H	% Change All SE
	BRIGHTON & HOVE			ALL SE			BRIGHTON & HOVE			ALL SE				
	No.	Annual Award	%	No.	Annual Award	%	No.	Annual Award	%	No.	Annual Award	%		
Museums	2	£994,507	23%	14	£6,674,404	16%	1	£711,360	16%	16	£6,776,466	15%	▼ -28%	▲ 2%
Visual Arts	3	£560,882	13%	20	£6,389,020	16%	4	£734,970	17%	24	£7,009,140	15%	▲ 31%	▲ 10%
Combined Arts	3	£1,481,566	35%	24	£7,153,132	18%	1	£1,171,080	26%	35	£10,996,245	24%	▼ -21%	▲ 54%
Dance	2	£820,168	19%	7	£3,739,542	9%	2	£835,259	19%	11	£4,790,524	11%	▲ 2%	▲ 28%
Libraries	0	£0	0%	2	£349,745	1%	0	£0	0%	3	£737,404	2%	-	▲ 111%
Literature	1	£124,192	3%	5	£932,800	2%	3	£346,477	8%	8	£1,282,199	3%	▲ 179%	▲ 37%
Music	0	£0	0%	8	£4,242,395	10%	3	£392,479	9%	14	£4,240,411	9%	-	▼ 0%
Not discipline specific	1	£100,000	2%	6	£3,560,581	9%	1	£72,229	2%	8	£1,771,744	4%	▼ -28%	▼ -50%
Theatre	1	£150,927	4%	17	£7,419,738	18%	1	£168,750	4%	29	£10,610,999	23%	▲ 12%	▲ 43%
Total	13	£4,232,242		£40,461,357		16	£4,432,604		148	£48,215,132		▲ 146%	▲ 234%	

to funding cycle and in the current round (from April 2022) there were changes in that for two Brighton visual arts organisations their funding was not renewed while two existing Brighton NPOs moved into the Visual Arts category (as the creative emphasis of their work had evolved) and one additional organisation joined the Visual Arts portfolio.

A breakdown of NPO funding to Brighton & Hove based organisations is provided in table below²². While funding has shifted across artforms in the city, visual arts and museums (in this case the Brighton Museum and Gallery) still receive one-third of all NPO funding coming into the area.

²² The NPO funding data in this table has been provided by ACE. Please note that the figures for FY2023 for 'ALL SE' include the 9 organisations that transferred into the South East region from London in 2023.

ACE Project Grant Funding and Developing Your Creative Practice Grants for Brighton & Hove (non-NPO)²⁴

		2018-2019			2022-2023		
		BRIGHTON &	BRIGHTON &	ALL SE	BRIGHTON &	BRIGHTON &	ALL SE
NLPG	Awards	8	39	337	2	40	310
(small grants)	Success Rate	47.1%	51.3%	54.0%	20%	49.4%	42.5%
Organisations	Avg Award	£11,981	£13,742	£13,272	£27,005	£26,179	£24,730
	Total Awarded	£95,846	£535,926	£4,472,718	£54,010	£1,047,176	£7,666,190
NLPG	Awards	9	58	364	9	33	242
(small grants)	Success Rate	20.5%	43.3%	48.2%	42.9%	35.5%	35.7%
Individuals	Avg Award	£12,678	£12,591	£11,670	£21,241	£19,688	£21,418
	Total Awarded	£114,103	£730,301	£4,247,710	£191,171	£649,695	£5,183,197
DYCP	Awards	3	6	63	21	51	327
Individuals	Success Rate				27.6%	26.3%	27.5%
	Avg Award	£9,567	£9,297	£8,745	£10,193	£10,074	£9,442
	Total Awarded	£28,700	£55,783	£550,917	£214,044	£513,754	£3,087,440
		2019-20					
DYCP	Awards	5	18	100			
Individuals	Success Rate						
	Avg Award	£8,944	£9,374	£9,059			
	Total Awarded	£44,719	£168,733	£905,923			

²⁴ For NLPG - 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 data were used for consistency to match the same years as the NPO data. For DYCP - 2019-2020 (instead of 2018-2019) data was used as this was the first year with 4 DYCP Rounds (Rounds 4-7), making it more comparable to 2022-2023. DYCP data before 2020 is not available, so no 'Success Rate' data is shown

As you can see from the data above for 2022-2023, Brighton & Hove receive significant funding through National Lottery Project Grants. The data above compares funding for our smaller grants funding (most typically accessed by artists and small visual arts organisations). Across all funding strands (including larger Project Grants) in the same period, Brighton & Hove received £2.3m – the largest amount across any South East location and almost three

times the next highest region (Thanet £801k). In the same year, looking specifically at Project Grants to the Visual Arts, £245,181 was granted in Brighton & Hove, more than Thanet (£197k) and Hastings (£94k).

As you can see above, in a typical year there are around 50 Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) grants awarded with a total value of

around 500k. In the year 2022-2023, almost half of these awards supported the visual arts, demonstrating ACE's commitment to supporting the development of visual artists in Brighton & Hove. Furthermore, Brighton & Hove is consistently in the top five areas in the country for visual arts DYCP awards – all including much larger communities (Leeds, Bristol, Birmingham, London).

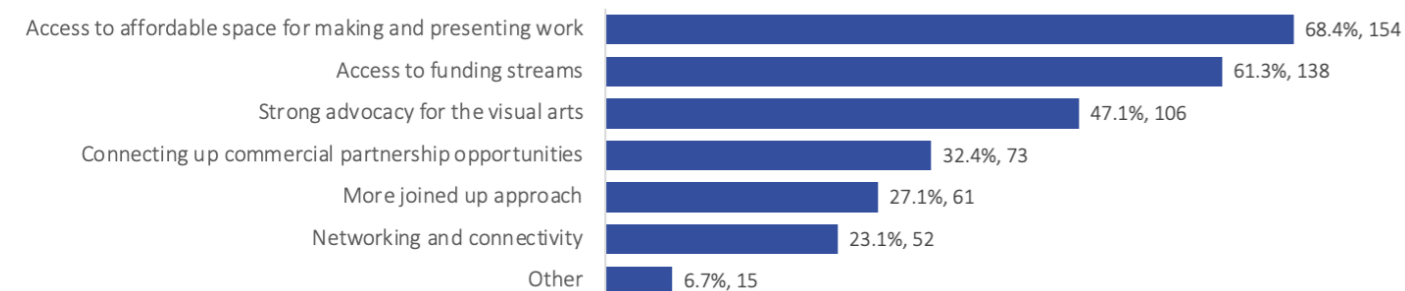
The visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove has faced reductions in income from other major sources, mirroring national trends. After a surge in emergency aid during the pandemic, national funding from trusts and foundations is now greater than pre-pandemic levels, but this is a complex picture²⁵. Demand for grants has intensified, with some major funders reporting a 35% increase in applications and a doubling in total requests compared to two years ago, even as their available funds have not grown at the same rate. This heightened competition has made access to these grants increasingly difficult for visual arts organisations.

Nationally, a report commissioned by Design and Artists' Copyright Society (DACS)²⁶ revealed that artists' earnings are at an all-time low, with the median income for visual artists being just £12,500 a year in 2024, representing a 40%

25 <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/private-investment-culture-survey-2025-report>

26 <https://cdn.dacs.org.uk/uploads/documents/UK-Visual-Artists-A-survey-of-earnings-and-contracts.pdf?v=1732286727>

Survey responses to the question 'What support do you feel is needed to improve opportunities for visual artists in Brighton & Hove?'. Respondents selected up to 3 options. Number of responses = 225.



decrease since 2010 and 47% lower than full-time minimum wage. Significant pay disparities exist across demographics, with women and other genders earning considerably less than men, and disabled artists facing particularly low median incomes. Over 80% of artists describe their earnings as unstable.

In response to these challenges, over 4,000 artists and arts professionals co-signed a letter to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, advocating for policy recommendations to support the visual arts sector, including the introduction of a Smart Fund and the appointment of a Freelancer Commissioner. Longer-term policy goals include extending the Museum and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief, establishing a new Creative and Cultural Agreement with the EU, planning reforms to incentivise artists' studios, and investing in creative education²⁷.

Concerns around funding for the visual arts came through strongly in the survey - 'access to affordable space for making and presenting work' (68.4%) and 'access to funding streams' (61.3%) were identified as the top two areas in which support is most needed to improve opportunities for visual artists in Brighton & Hove.

27 <https://www.dacs.org.uk/news-events/over-4000-artists-sign-letter-to-dcms-calling-for-policy-changes-to-support-the-visual-arts>

Visual arts and tourism

Fairer, greener, more productive: Brighton & Hove Economic Plan 2024–2027²⁸ aims to establish the city as 'a world-leading creative destination worthy of the UK's best small city', with culture and the visual arts positioned at the heart of this strategy.

Tourism trends reveal that visitors are seeking more than passive sightseeing and instead are searching for authentic, meaningful experiences that connect them to the spirit of a place. Brighton & Hove's visual arts offer is well positioned to meet this demand, providing opportunities for visitors to engage, learn, and participate. The city's arts festivals, open studios, and public art trails encourage exploration beyond the traditional tourist hotspots, helping to alleviate pressure on the city centre and extend the economic benefits of tourism into local neighbourhoods and the off-season. Artists Open Houses, Brighton Festival, Brighton Fringe, Dreamy Place, and Photo Fringe, collectively attract significant audiences and provide platforms for artists at all stages of their careers. In 2023, Brighton Festival reported a combined audience of 120,466²⁹. Artists Open Houses featured over 1,200 artists across 180 venues, attracting more than 60,000 visitors in 2024. And, Brighton & Hove Museums, which includes the Royal Pavilion, welcomed over 400,000 visitors in 2023–24, with an increase in engagement from younger and more diverse audiences.

Visual arts audiences in Brighton & Hove tend to be younger, diverse, and highly engaged, often motivated by a desire for new experiences and cultural discovery. A significant proportion of these visitors are willing to travel over an hour, drawn by the city's reputation for creative

28 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/business-and-trade/support-businesses/brighton-hove-economic-plan-2024-2027>

29 [Brighton Dome and Festival Limited ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS for the year ended 31 March 2024](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/business-and-trade/support-businesses/brighton-hove-economic-plan-2024-2027) - please note there are no official figures available for the Festival in 2024 or 2025.



Above Esme Curtis-Lundberg, at Phoenix Art Space photo by Alun Callender

innovation and inclusivity³⁰. Interconnectedness is a key asset, encouraging longer stays and deeper engagement with the local economy.

The Sussex and Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Baseline Report³¹ recognises the

30 National and regional tourism strategies highlight a shift in visitor preferences toward authentic, participatory experiences. The Sussex & Brighton Visitor Economy Baseline Report (2023) notes that Sussex, including Brighton & Hove, is targeting audiences who are "willing and able to invest in experiential travel by tapping into their needs and motivations for breaks and holidays offering unique experiences". The city's Creative Destination Vision & Strategy emphasizes a holistic, place-making approach to tourism, aiming to ensure the city experience is "authentic, inclusive and representative of the radical creativity of Brighton & Hove"
<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/article/inline/invest-in-brighton-hove.pdf>
<https://www.visitbrighton.com/dbimsgs/Sussex%20and%20Brighton%20and%20Hove%20Visitor%20Economy%20Baseline%20Sep%202023.pdf>

31 <https://www.visitbrighton.com/dbimsgs/Sussex and Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Baseline Sep 2023.pdf> <https://townquaystudios.co.uk/a-journey-through-brightons-thriving-art-scene/>
<https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s167133/Tourism Recovery Plan APX. n 3.pdf>

importance of: sustainable travel; supporting day-trippers and overnight visitors; and promoting responsible tourism that aligns with Brighton & Hove's values of inclusivity and community pride.

Understanding the motivations of different visitor segments is fundamental to effective tourism strategy and is a core principle within the **Visitor Economy Strategy for Growth 2024–2034 (for East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex)**³². This strategy, produced by the Local Economy Visitor Partnership (LVEP), sets a 10-year vision for Brighton & Hove and the wider Sussex region and explicitly prioritises experience-led tourism using targeted marketing that addresses the diverse interests of its audiences. The appointment of the LVEP Advisory Board in May 2025 offers further opportunities for the visual arts to play a key role in this targeted marketing. Board members include representatives from Brighton Dome & Festival and the Brighton Business Improvement District, as well as visual arts organisations from outside the city such as Charleston (based in Lewes and Firle).

Brighton & Hove's distinctive appeal draws visitors attracted by the vibrancy of its art scene, creative events, and contemporary culture, as well as those who seek out the city's rich cultural heritage, museums, and varied neighbourhoods. Visual arts in the city offer potential for developing and promoting a wide range of experiences that speak to both energetic, trend-driven visitors and those motivated by deeper exploration. The development of the LVEP and a joined-up tourism offer highlights the potential of working in partnership with other visual arts organisations across Sussex and developing new partnerships across the region for the sector in the city.

32 <https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s205551/Visitor+Economy+Strategy+for+Growth+2024+-+2034+APX.+n+1.pdf>

Visual arts and economic impact

The creative industries, including the visual arts, are a cornerstone of the UK economy, contributing £126 billion in 2022³³. In Brighton & Hove, their economic impact is particularly pronounced. The city's creative industries are a major economic force and are integral to Brighton & Hove's economic strategy, as highlighted in the city's economic plan³⁴. The plan positions the creative sector as a key driver of sustainable, inclusive growth and sets out a ten-year vision to make Brighton & Hove a world-leading creative destination and recognises the sector's role not only in generating high-value employment but also in enhancing quality of life, supporting community wealth, and driving the city's reputation as a vibrant, attractive place to live, work, and visit- with a turnover of £1.55 billion, a 22% increase since 2014, and employing over 16,000 people across more than 6,100 businesses³⁵. Within Brighton & Hove, this sector is the largest in the South East, with a particularly high concentration of creative SMEs and start-ups, outpacing most UK cities outside London³⁶. As an example, the city's economic plan highlights not only the £619,071 economic contribution of Phoenix Art Space in 2023, but also the broader significance of the creative industries in driving employment, supporting freelance artists, and stimulating related industries³⁷.

Whilst these data sets include the wider creative industries sector across the city,

33 <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/contribution-of-the-arts-to-society-and-the-economy/>

34 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/business-and-trade/fairer-greener-more-productive-brighton-hove-economic-plan-2024-2027>

35 <https://greaterbrighton.com/greater-brightons-creative-industries-worth-more-than-1-5-billion/>

36 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/Brighton%20%26%20Hove%20evidence.pdf>

37 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/business-and-trade/fairer-greener-more-productive-brighton-hove-economic-plan-2024-2027>

from the evidence gathered for this report reasonable assumptions can be extrapolated for the visual arts sector³⁸. For example, with over 1,500 digital and creative businesses, the city is a recognised leader in digital innovation. This synergy is exemplified by organisations such as Lighthouse and Blast Theory, whose collaborative projects at the intersection of digital media, immersive technology, and visual storytelling have garnered international recognition. Some recent digital initiatives include augmented reality art trails, interactive installations and experiences, such as Sarah Tichjo and Niki Sumit's award winning virtual reality experience, *Soul Paint*³⁹, as well as partnerships with gaming studios such as Electric Square, which have expanded creative possibilities and audience engagement. The University of Brighton and Brighton MET further reinforce this ecosystem by equipping emerging talent with interdisciplinary skills suited to

38 Notably the visual arts have been identified as a priority sector within the UK's 2025 Creative Industries Sector Plan, as part of the wider Industrial Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-plan>

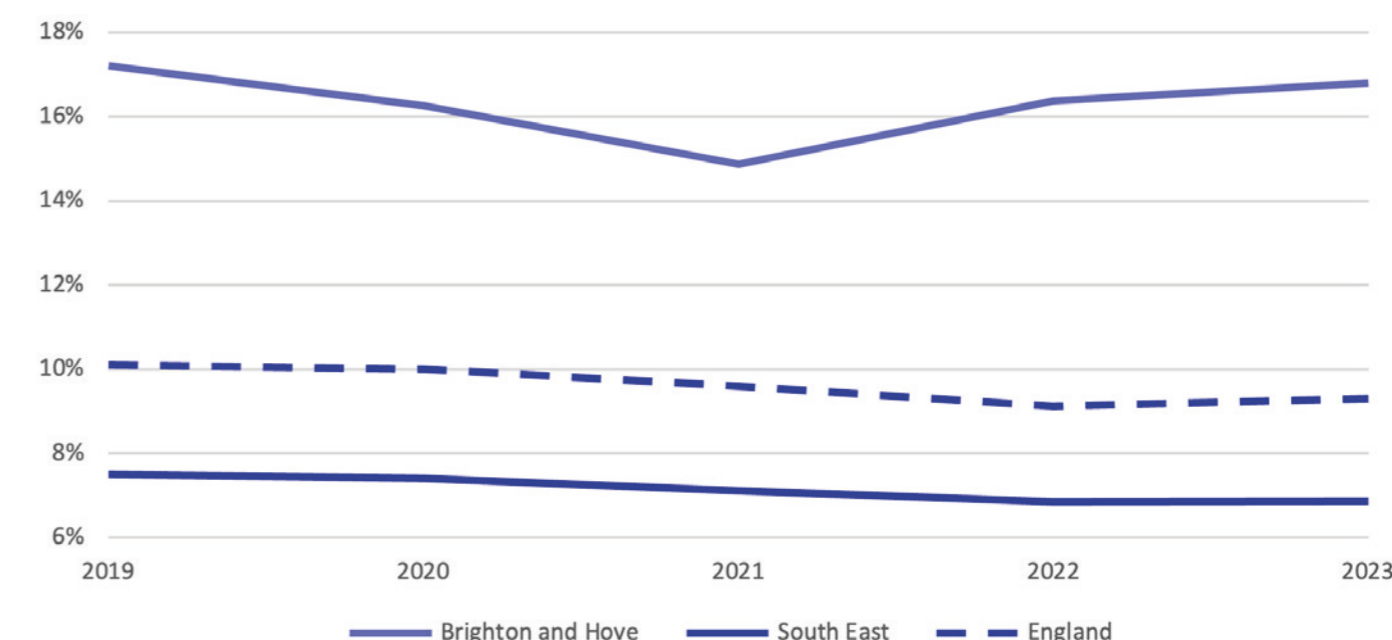
39 <https://www.soulpaint.co/>

the evolving creative economy. Notably, in 2023, Brighton & Hove's major arts festivals and events generated £25 million in economic impact, with every £1 of public investment leveraging an additional £8 in private and earned income⁴⁰.

The sector supports a thriving visitor economy, attracting cultural tourism and supporting a wide range of local businesses, from hospitality to retail. With one of the highest concentrations of people working in arts, culture, and heritage occupations outside London, the sector is vital to the city's economic resilience, growth, and distinct identity.

This strong creative ecosystem is central to Brighton & Hove's strategy for sustainable economic development and inclusive prosperity and means the city stands out as a dynamic creative industry hub.

40 This figure is estimated by Brighton & Hove City Council as reported here: <https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?id=6114>



Trends in the proportion of creative and cultural businesses in Brighton & Hove, the South East, and England from 2019 - 2023. [Arts Council England | Culture and Place Data Explorer](#)



Wider context for the framing of visual arts in the city

Brighton & Hove: demographics

Brighton & Hove is widely recognised for its vibrant and diverse population. The city is notable for having one of the largest proportions of LGBTQIA+ residents in the country, with 10.7% of the population compared to the national average of 3.2%. This reflects Brighton & Hove’s reputation as an inclusive and welcoming community for people of all backgrounds and identities.

The city also has a distinctly youthful and dynamic character, with 70.9% of its population

falling within the ‘working age’ bracket which is significantly higher than the national average. This high proportion of working-age residents contributes to Brighton & Hove’s energetic atmosphere and underpins its reputation as a hub for creativity, innovation, and economic activity.

While the majority of residents are White (85.4%), Brighton & Hove is home to a more diverse mix of ethnicities than many areas in the South East and across England. A higher proportion of people identify as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups (4.8%) and Other ethnic groups (3.1%), reflecting the city’s growing diversity. This diversity is also mirrored in our survey responses, where 85.9% of respondents identified as White and 5.3% identified as Mixed or from Multiple ethnic groups.

Above POST, a lens-based arts centre in Hove championing creativity, sustainability, education, and community established in 2025.

Indicator	Brighton and Hove	South East	England
Population (count)			
All people	277,103	9,278,065	56,490,048
Sex (%)			
Females	51.1%	51.1%	51.0%
Males	48.9%	48.9%	49.0%
Age (%)			
Population aged under 16	15.1%	18.6%	18.6%
Population aged 16 to 64	70.9%	62.0%	63.0%
Population aged 65+	14.1%	19.5%	18.4%
Ethnic group (%)			
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	4.8%	7.0%	9.6%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	2.0%	2.4%	4.2%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	4.8%	2.8%	3.0%
White	85.4%	86.3%	81.0%
Other ethnic group	3.1%	1.5%	2.2%
Religion (%)			
No religion	55.2%	40.2%	36.7%
Christian	30.9%	46.5%	46.3%
Buddhist	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%
Hindu	0.8%	1.7%	1.8%
Jewish	0.9%	0.2%	0.5%
Muslim	3.1%	3.3%	6.7%
Sikh	0.1%	0.8%	0.9%
Other religion	1.0%	0.6%	0.6%
Sexual orientation (%)			
Straight or heterosexual	80.6%	89.8%	89.4%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other	10.7%	3.1%	3.2%
Country of birth (%)			
Born in the UK	80.4%	84.2%	82.6%
Born outside the UK	19.6%	15.8%	17.4%
Household deprivation			
Household is not deprived in any dimension	47.9%	52.0%	48.4%
Household is deprived in one dimension	33.0%	32.8%	33.5%
Household is deprived in two dimensions	14.4%	12.2%	14.2%
Household is deprived in three dimensions	4.3%	2.8%	3.7%
Household is deprived in four dimensions	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%
Highest level of qualification			
No qualifications	12.4%	15.4%	18.1%
Level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications	37.4%	41.0%	39.9%
Apprenticeship	3.4%	5.1%	5.3%
Level 4 qualifications and above	44.5%	35.8%	33.9%
Other qualifications	2.3%	2.7%	2.8%

Demographic data for Brighton & Hove, the South East and England (Census, 2021). Data for B&H is shaded blue for values above the national average and pink for values below the national average

Brighton & Hove: cultural participation

Engagement with cultural activities in Brighton & Hove is much higher than in the South East and England. In 2023-24, in person engagement with the arts was higher in Brighton & Hove (93.8%) than in the South East (92.7%) and England (90.42%), highlighting a strong demand for the arts in the region.

Alongside Brighton & Hove's consistently high cultural engagement, audience data for visual arts presents a more nuanced picture. ACE's Illuminate dashboard shows annual attendance of around 103,000 for the city's current visual arts and museums (which have been in receipt of ACE funding)⁴¹. This is lower than in several other South East areas that benefit from a single major visual arts venue, for example Rother (364,000), Eastbourne (203,000), and Thanet (267,000). These comparisons are notable because these areas are smaller than Brighton & Hove, and their higher figures are largely attributable to the presence of a single, high-profile gallery acting as a major draw.

41 Audience numbers supplied by Illuminate, Arts Council England's Audience Data platform: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-creativity-and-culture/illuminate/illuminate-dashboards>

When compared with similar-sized UK cities, the same picture emerges⁴². For example, cities such as Liverpool (306,000) and Hull (380,000) record substantially higher visual arts attendances.

This suggests that Brighton & Hove is currently under-leveraging its audience potential, particularly given its scale, creative identity, and very high overall cultural participation.

Rather than indicating a lack of interest, this highlights a significant opportunity. Brighton & Hove's visual arts offer is currently distributed across many diverse spaces such as festivals, museums, public galleries, commercial galleries, studios, public art and pop-ups, meaning audience engagement is broad but not concentrated in one place. Given the city's exceptionally strong in-person arts engagement, and its role as a national visitor destination, the data suggests that audiences for visual arts could grow substantially through greater visibility and coordination of the city's visual arts offer, and by strengthening the city's position as a visual arts tourism destination.

This aligns closely with findings from the consultation which demonstrate a desire for more visual arts content, including higher-profile exhibitions, more ambitious programming, and a clearer citywide narrative.

42 Arts Council England, Illuminate Dashboard

Indicator	Brighton & Hove	South East	England
Engaged with the arts in person in previous 12 months	93.8%	92.7%	90.4%
Engaged with the arts online in previous 12 months	45.3%	38.0%	36.4%
Attended an art exhibition	49.2%	-	25.7%
Visited a public library building or mobile library in person in previous 12 months	38.0%	26.6%	25.0%
Engaged with public library services online in previous 12 months	19.3%	15.1%	14.3%
Visited a heritage site in person in previous 12 months	78.5%	70.0%	66.2%
Engaged with heritage online in previous 12 months	31.2%	25.5%	24.7%
Visited a museum or gallery in person in previous 12 months	60.8%	45.5%	43.1%
Engaged with museum services online in previous 12 months	18.9%	13.8%	13.4%

Cultural participation data for Brighton & Hove, the South East, and England. All indicators measured from May-2023 to Mar-2024. Data for Brighton & Hove is shaded blue where values are above the national average. Source: Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England Participation Survey

Brighton & Hove: cross sector connections

Brighton & Hove's visual arts sector already benefits from a compact city, a collaborative culture, and a high density of artists and creative organisations that together provide strong foundations for cross-sector working which can be built on through targeted coordination and shared practice mapping. *Daring to be different: Brighton & Hove Cultural Framework*⁴³ sets a shared plan linking culture with economic, health, and visitor strategies, with cross-sector steering participation from health, education, business, digital, and the arts to oversee delivery and champion visual arts as a citywide driver. These existing partnerships and intersections demonstrate the breadth of active routes for collaboration across the city:

Health and wellbeing

- **Arts in health partnerships:** The city is already home to ambitious initiatives such as the HERA (Healing, Expressive and Recovery Arts) Project, which brings together creative health organisations to deliver artist-facilitated workshops, residencies, and public engagement for people living with complex health challenges. For example, since 2014, the HERA Project has supported a diverse range of participants through programmes evaluated as boosting self-care (with 89% reporting improved self-management) and social connection (94% feeling more positive and better connected)⁴⁴. Delivered in collaboration with NHS primary care, these programmes provide paid opportunities for artists and robust evidence of how creative health projects can improve wellbeing, tackle social isolation, and address

43 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/online-pdf-cultural-framework-final.pdf>

44 <https://www.wellbn.co.uk/hera/> and https://cris.brighton.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/37298555/HERA_Report.pdf

health inequalities, especially in a city where incidence of mental health challenges is above the national average⁴⁵.

- **Commissioning models:** Projects like Fabrica's collaboration with Wellsbourne Healthcare CIC, where artists co-create work with young people and healthcare staff, showcase how visual arts can be embedded in clinical and community settings, with outcomes that tour nationally and raise the city's profile⁴⁶.

- **Tackling health inequalities:** Addressing health inequalities through arts-in-health partnerships is fundamental for levelling up poverty and broader social inequalities. By prioritising those communities and individuals most affected by health and economic disadvantages, partnerships with artists can help deliver targeted creative interventions that reach those least likely to access mainstream arts and health services. This not only promotes social justice but also strengthens the case for integrated, arts-led approaches as a means to improve both health outcomes and life chances across the city.

Brighton & Hove can further amplify the reach and impact of these approaches by working more strategically with its NHS trusts, Integrated Care Systems, social care providers, and public health teams. By embedding artists within mental health services, expanding social prescribing, and championing arts-based community wellbeing programmes, the city can ensure creative practice is not an 'add-on', but a core strand of its health and wellbeing strategy. This includes aligning evaluation and commissioning with NHS priorities, nurturing partnerships that cross health, culture, and social sectors, and championing sustained investment in arts-led models that

45 <https://www.creativefuture.org.uk/arts-health-and-wellbeing/hera-partnership/> and <https://www.wellbn.co.uk/article/wellbn/arts-and-mental-health-case-study-the-hera-project-healing-expressive-and-recovery-arts/>

46 <https://www.wellsbournehealthcare.org.uk/fabrica-announcement-three-tenses-the-whitehawk-great-map/>

demonstrably tackle inequality and support those most in need. This would ensure that creative practice is a core part of the city's health strategy⁴⁷.

Education and skills

The city's universities, colleges, and schools offer a strong foundation for nurturing future talent. Programmes like Future Creators (formerly Our Future City) and #BeWell already connect young people, educators, and cultural organisations, to foster resilience and wellbeing through creativity⁴⁸. There is scope to develop new apprenticeship models and modular training that link visual arts with growth sectors such as health sciences, digital, and advanced manufacturing which could include placements for artists in schools, collaborative research projects, and skills exchanges with tech and business partners⁴⁹.

Business, property, and inward investment

- **Workspace and development:** Property developers and local businesses contribute to unlocking affordable studios, exhibition venues, and pop-up spaces, with cultural provision embedded in new developments via planning policy, s106 obligations, and creative land-holding approaches that secure long-term assets.

- **Tourism and visitor economy:** Visual art contributes to year-round tourism, through public art trails, festivals, and collaborations with the hospitality sector. Joint marketing campaigns and cultural itineraries help attract new audiences and extend visitor stays⁵⁰.

47 <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-creativity-and-culture/health-and-wellbeing/creative-health-wellbeing> and <https://www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2024/10/SDP-Public.pdf>

48 <https://greaterbrighton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/8042-Greater-Brighton-Annual-Report-2023-2024-FINAL.pdf>

49 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6863f18b3464d9c0ad609ddf/Skills_England_-_sector_evidence_on_the_growth_and_skills_offer.pdf

50 <https://www.visitbrighton.com/plan-your-visit/visitor-information/work-with-us/tourism-research>

Technology and digital innovation

- **Digital platforms:** Following the closure of Wired Sussex, activity continues through co-developed platforms for networking, showcasing, and selling art, including collaborations associated with Dreamy Place and Brighton Dome / Artists Open Houses⁵¹.

- **Cross-disciplinary practice:** Artist / technologist / designer collaborations produce interactive installations, immersive experiences, and data-driven public art, reinforcing the city's creative leadership at the intersection of visual culture and digital practice.

Public realm, placemaking, and urban development

- **Integrated public art:** Work with planners, architects, and developers embeds ambitious public art in regeneration projects, transport hubs, and green spaces, animating the cityscape, supporting local artists, and strengthening civic pride⁵².

- **Community-led projects:** Cross-sector alliances with community organisations ensure that public art and placemaking initiatives reflect local identities and priorities, fostering inclusion and ownership⁵³.

Net Zero, and the biosphere

- **Net Zero and the natural landscape:** Brighton & Hove's 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme⁵⁴ underpins efforts to reduce emissions, restore nature, and build climate resilience. It spans city operations, creative projects, and regeneration

51 <https://brightondome.org/creative-technology/>

52 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/Public%20Art%20Strategy%202022-2032%20online%20version.pdf> and <https://untitledpractice.com/valley-gardens/>

53 <https://trustdevcom.org.uk/amazing-community-art-project-whitehawk>

54 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/climate-action/climate-action-what-were-doing/brighton-hove-city-council-2030-carbon-neutral-programme-annual-report-2022-2023>



schemes⁵⁵. Leading institutions such as Brighton Dome & Festival have implemented 100% renewable energy, green restoration practices, and public engagement around sustainable behaviour in the cultural sector⁵⁶. Programmes such as this which encourage the use of sustainable materials in exhibitions, with guides for exhibitors at venues outlining appropriate materials, recycling protocols, and supplier choices, demonstrate the leading role the city plays within climate action.

- **Championing biosphere-led partnerships:** The Living Coast biosphere⁵⁷ initiative brings together over 40 organisations from conservation, business, education, voluntary sectors, and the arts, offering tremendous opportunities. Cross-sector collaboration strengthens large-scale community engagement with biodiversity, marine regeneration, and climate action on issues like water conservation and environmental education.

- **Community climate action and cultural engagement:** City-wide initiatives, such as

55 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/climate-action/climate-action-what-were-doing/brighton-hove-city-council-2030-carbon-neutral-programme-annual-report-2022-2023#tab--introducing-the-2030-carbon-neutral-programme>

56 <https://brightonfestival.org/about-the-festival/supporting-the-environment/>

57 <https://thelivingcoast.org.uk/#:~:text=A%20designated%20urban%20biosphere%20reserve,and%20makes%20life%20here%20possible.>

'Climate for Communities'⁵⁸ and 'Our City, Our World'⁵⁹, empower residents, artists, and schools to lead climate action, develop curriculum-linked climate literacy, and create green cultural programming.

- **Climate action/climate leadership:** To accelerate climate leadership, it is essential that climate action features in every aspect of cultural planning: sustainable materials should be a standard in exhibitions and events, along with developments to reduce waste and champion circularity; climate literacy must be embedded in all skills planning and artistic practice, ensuring education and training programmes equip students, artists, and sector professionals with the skills to address climate challenges; public art, events, and placemaking should lead by example in using durable, appropriate materials and championing green messages throughout the city's regeneration and cultural landscape; ongoing partnership between the arts, education, planning, and climate experts is vital to keep Brighton & Hove evolving as a creative green beacon. This is an example of where businesses are able to support artists with skills development, as mentioned above.

58 <https://www.communityworks.org.uk/whats-new/new-partnership-programme-climate-for-communities/>

59 <https://www.ourcityourworld.co.uk/>

Above Play Back Forward, Portals by Annis Joslin and Chahine Fellahi, photo by James Kirby

Section 2: Desired Outcomes and Key Opportunities for the Visual Arts Sector

Positioning the Visual Arts Sector

Building on the strong foundations demonstrated in Section 1 of this report, Brighton & Hove's visual arts sector clearly has the talent, ambition, and community spirit to excel even further. Realising this potential will require bold leadership, sustained investment, and a willingness to experiment and collaborate across boundaries. By embracing both the opportunities and the issues that need consideration, the city can secure its continuing place as a leading creative destination - one that values, supports, and celebrates the power of visual arts in civic life. Whilst recent years have sharpened many of the cumulative challenges that the sector faces, opportunities around new leadership and emerging networks in the city, devolution, and a greater focus on collaboration across the sector creates momentum and a moment for change that the city can capitalise on.

Arising from this research and consultation process, Cultural Associates Oxford (CAO) has identified seven key sector outcomes and ambitions for Brighton & Hove which are explored in detail within this section of the report. Each outcome represents a strategic end-goal for Brighton & Hove's visual arts sector, which is then underpinned by a clearly defined 'ambition' that explains the specific change or intervention required to achieve it. In summary:

- **Outcomes describe the vision and offer a direction of travel for the city**
- **Ambitions are actionable levers through which each outcome can be delivered.**
- **Potential opportunities and challenges have been identified for each outcome and its accompanying ambition.**



Above Lydia Stonehouse at Phoenix Art Space, photo by Alun Callender.

- **Case studies are then given for each ambition exemplifying best-practice experiences from elsewhere in the UK and abroad.**

The final part of Section 2 offers a phased implementation plan with identified actions - ranging from those which can happen quickly, through to those which require deeper preparation or policy change, and involve longer-term systems leadership.

Together, these outcomes and ambitions, and the accompanying implementation plan, set out the practical roadmap required to ensure Brighton & Hove remains a vibrant and dynamic centre for visual arts that provides opportunities for local and international artists to thrive.

Outcomes and Ambitions

Summary Table

Outcomes	Ambitions	Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Outcome 1: A city that is a high-profile and well-regarded international centre for visual arts</p>	<p>Ambition: High profile integrated visual arts programming</p>	<p>Build stronger, integrated visual arts programming, attracting national/international talent; growing audiences; raising the profile for the visual arts in the city. This could be achieved across major venues like Brighton Dome and Brighton & Hove Museums through initiatives such as appointing a joint Contemporary Curator.</p>	<p>Fragmented sector leadership and/or uncoordinated programming may dilute impact; limited resourcing and competition for external curatorial talent; risk that legacy ‘stop-start’ planning undermines continuity.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: A city which is home to a recognised and successful visual art marketplace</p>	<p>Ambition: Multi-platform marketplace for the exhibition, presentation and sale of visual art</p>	<p>Develop a coordinated, multi-platform marketplace by connecting galleries, studios, pop-up and digital initiatives; broaden exhibition, sales and career opportunities for diverse artists; position the city as a destination for art-buyers and collectors.</p>	<p>Reliance on ad-hoc pop-up activity and dispersed selling venues risks lack of visibility, sustainability and coherence; artists face barriers around space access, promotion, and market development; economic constraints limit growth.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: A city where art is embedded in its life and fabric</p>	<p>Ambition: Stronger partnerships and cross-sector collaboration</p>	<p>Create a regular cross-sector partnership forum; broker partnerships between artists, education, health, business, and property; launch a digital resource hub with shared assets and event calendars; maximise sector advocacy and connectivity.</p>	<p>Fragmentation and duplication within sector networks hinders collaboration; absence of unified strategy and broker support; risk that funding and advocacy efforts remain dispersed and sector resilience is undermined.</p>
<p>Outcome 4: A city that is attractive for artists to work in</p>	<p>Ambition: Creating dynamic places and spaces for artists to create work in</p>	<p>Unlock affordable studios, workspaces and exhibition venues by expanding ‘meanwhile’ use, enhancing planning policy, and digital mapping; create a citywide, flexible ecosystem of creative spaces across neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Rising residential and commercial property prices, loss of creative space, and complex regulatory barriers could limit affordable provision; lack of sustainable long-term workspace models threatens retention; uneven distribution risks exclusion.</p>

Outcomes

Outcome 5: A city with a strong local ecosystem where diverse talent thrives

Outcome 6: A city that is an ambitious and innovative leader in public art

Outcome 7: A city with a strong and unified vision for visual arts

Ambitions

Ambition: Nurturing visual arts talent through a thriving incubator and career ecosystem

Ambition: Collaborative, culture-led public art commissioning

Ambition: Coordinated strategic arts leadership for the city and for Sussex

Opportunities

Establish a new Visual Arts Incubator; develop mentoring, skills and career development pathways; prioritise inclusion for under-represented artists; link artists with local industry and education; build sustainable talent pipeline.

Leverage new partnerships with developers, arts and cultural bodies, businesses, and residents to embed ambitious, landmark public art; align with 'One landscape, many views' strategy; foster civic pride and identity.

Establish a Brighton & Hove Visual Arts Leadership Group; develop Sussex-wide commissioning vehicle aligned to devolution processes; empower visible champions and ambassadors; embed visual arts in city-region strategies and investment plans.

Challenges

Social/economic barriers restrict entry and progression for young, diverse, or under-represented artists; absence of joined-up, cross-sector support impacts retention; insecure funding for professional development.

Delivery depends on sustained cross-sector commitment and robust funding; risk of underutilised or irregularly commissioned spaces; fluctuating commitment from developers and challenge of navigating policy and regulatory barriers.

The city's historic stop-start cultural planning and political churn poses risk to continuity; lack of clear accountability and sector-wide buy-in may mean strategic plans do not translate into lasting action; opportunity for devolution and regional partnership may be missed without clear leadership.

OUTCOME 1: A city that is a high-profile and well-regarded international centre for visual arts

The city's network of visual arts spaces and organisations demonstrate enormous potential for national and international reach when strategically connected and resourced. By focusing on collaborative working, amplifying the profile of visual art, and increasing the visibility of living artists, Brighton & Hove can build further recognition as a creative city. There is strong enthusiasm for a greater number of ambitious, accessible, and visible public spaces offering high-quality exhibitions and activities, complimenting what is already on offer.

Consultation findings reveal both the vibrancy and evolving needs of the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove. Feedback and ideas from Innovation Sprint workshops and wider stakeholder engagement highlighted several positive and impactful next steps:

- Build on the city's studio culture and existing artist networks by strengthening connections. Supporting these formal and informal networks will enable greater collaboration, shared programming, resource sharing, and national and international visibility.
- Explore the potential for deeper integration of visual arts within the year-round programming of Brighton Dome and Brighton & Hove Museums, optimising use of the city's major cultural assets and increasing access for stakeholders at all stages of their careers, including local artists and curators.
- Maximise the use of existing venues and public spaces for contemporary visual arts, exploring opportunities for pop-ups, residencies, and partnerships to expand exhibition potential

citywide, rather than focusing exclusively on new large-scale capital projects.

- Actively invite and support nationally and internationally renowned curatorial talent to collaborate in and with the city, bringing fresh perspectives, new audiences, and raising the profile of Brighton & Hove.

Many stakeholders identified the aspiration to establish a dedicated, high-profile contemporary visual arts venue, one that would position the city alongside regional exemplars such as Towner Eastbourne, Hastings Contemporary, Turner Contemporary and Pallant House Gallery. Survey respondents express both pride and aspiration, particularly for a major or flagship gallery for contemporary art. As one respondent wrote "Brighton has great artists but would benefit from a central gallery for major exhibitions." Another shared, "*Other cities have flagship spaces that attract high quality shows and debate, Brighton deserves the same.*"

Such a venue would provide a central platform for ambitious programming, curatorial leadership, and increased visibility, strengthening Brighton & Hove's reputation on both a national and international stage.

However, research findings also address the challenges this presents, as realising a flagship venue of this scale would require significant investment and coordinated effort over many years. Realistically, large-scale capital funding is unlikely to be secured even within the medium-long term, and for this reason, other strategic opportunities and activities identified through the consultation have been used to articulate how Brighton & Hove can realistically and practically achieve wider recognition as a national and international centre for visual arts in the short-medium term (1-5 years) - notably, the ambition for *high profile integrated visual arts programming as set out below.*



Above Moncia Ross Unqueit Woman at Phoenix Art Space, 2025, photo by Bernard G Mills

That said, the sector should remain open and responsive to opportunities to bring a major gallery to the city. Engaging in dialogue around gaps in the city's visual arts offer, and ways in which a major gallery could complement existing activity, will ensure that should an opportunity present itself through, for example, private investment, Brighton & Hove can capitalise upon it.

AMBITION: High profile integrated visual arts programming

There is significant opportunity in the short-medium term to increase the city's national and international visibility through stronger, more integrated visual arts programming across major venues in the city. Greater connection and coordination between larger institutions would support the ambition of Brighton & Hove growing its profile as a visual arts centre and in turn compliment the work taking place in other galleries, venues and festivals.

This could be achieved through Brighton Dome and Brighton & Hove Museums pursuing

a collaborative approach, deepening their partnership and jointly advancing the visual arts across their respective sites. These are two of the city's most prominent cultural institutions, and each have a highly regarded and rich history of diverse programming. The Brighton Dome is a leading multi-arts venue, presenting over 600 events annually across music, theatre, dance, comedy, literature, spoken word, visual arts, film, and digital arts, and is central to the Royal Pavilion Estate. Brighton & Hove Museums, meanwhile, offer a wide-ranging programme of exhibitions and events across several sites, including the Museum & Art Gallery, Hove Museum of Creativity, and the Royal Pavilion. Integrated collaboration could include:

- **Jointly appointing a new post of Contemporary Curator:** The two organisations could consider including a joint proposal within their next Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding application for a shared Contemporary Curator post.
- **Attracting national and international curatorial talent:** Alongside a potential shared role, the partnership would establish clear

opportunities and invitations for nationally and internationally recognised curators to collaborate with, guest-curate, or undertake residencies in Brighton & Hove, in dialogue with the city's artists and communities.

Rationale

- *Existing strengths:* Both institutions have an established track record in presenting visual arts, and their complementary audiences and resources offer a robust platform for ambitious new partnerships.
- *Audience development:* Integrating visual arts more fully into both institutions' year-round programming will broaden their collective reach, deepen engagement with existing audiences, and foster new connections between communities, art forms, and practitioners.
- *Strategic alignment:* A joint approach aligns with ACE's Let's Create strategy, which emphasises partnership, inclusion, and the visual arts as a foundational element in vibrant, resilient communities.

Implementation

- *Shared Contemporary Curator:* This post would develop and deliver integrated visual arts programming across both institutions, and with other partners across the city, and have responsibilities including:
 - Curating exhibitions and installations that connect with the Dome's live events and the Museums' collections and sites and joint ambitions for public art.
 - Fostering partnerships with local, national, and international artists.
 - Developing public engagement initiatives, workshops, and digital content to reach

and involve diverse audiences with appeal nationally and internationally.

- *Inviting external curatorial talent:* The partnership would proactively seek to host guest curatorships, artist-curator exchanges, and collaborative projects with renowned curators and cultural organisations from across the UK and internationally, enriching the local offer with global perspectives, and encouraging creative dialogue.
- *Joint programming:* The new curator, with support from guest and visiting curators (including those working in other contexts across the city), would facilitate cross-venue thematic seasons, commissions, and artist residencies, utilising both institutions' unique spaces, collections, and audiences and taking advantage of the pipeline of creative talent in the city.

Potential Impact

- *Cultural capacity building:* Strengthening collaboration between Brighton Dome and Brighton & Hove Museums will build cultural momentum, making the city a leader in interdisciplinary contemporary arts practices.
- *Raising the city's profile:* Hosting nationally and internationally renowned curators and showcasing ambitious, integrated visual arts programming will raise Brighton & Hove's status as a destination for visual arts, attracting new visitors and critical attention. High-profile artists in the city should also be celebrated and showcased as part of the collective offer of the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove.
- *Audience growth:* Integrated programming and international engagement will broaden audiences, encourage repeat attendance, and deepen community participation across diverse groups.

- *Sustainable practice:* A shared curatorial approach and cross-institutional programming will maximise existing resources, create greater resilience, and set an innovative model for visual arts delivery in the city and nationally.
- *Sector leadership:* This collaborative model, with its emphasis on sustainable local partnership and bold international collaboration, will serve as an inspiration for other cities, highlighting the unique benefits of shared curatorial leadership in contemporary visual arts.

CASE STUDIES: High profile integrated visual arts programming

The two case studies below help visualise how this integrated approach could work in Brighton & Hove. Both demonstrate that integrated visual arts programming, whether via public sector leadership or an entrepreneurial consortium, can significantly raise a city's reputation, draw international audiences, and deliver sustainable impact.

1. Glasgow: Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) & Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art

Glasgow has built its reputation as a contemporary visual arts centre in part through a strong partnership between GoMA and the Glasgow International Festival (GL). Both are overseen by Glasgow Life, an arms-length charity managing the city's cultural portfolio. This integrated approach gives the city a unified, high-profile visual arts platform through year-round exhibitions at GoMA and city-wide events via the Festival.

Governance: Glasgow Life coordinates strategy, resources, and governance (Board of Trustees).

GoMA is one of Glasgow Museums' flagship sites, while GL is managed by its artistic director and team, both benefiting from City Council oversight.

Programming & Delivery: GoMA and GL co-curate major exhibitions, residencies, and commissions, often thematically linked and featuring both local and international guest curators/artists. Joint marketing and outreach expand audience engagement, whilst the Festival's resources support GoMA's capacity for ambitious contemporary art projects. Shared programming strengthens connections between festival visitors and year-round museum audiences.

Funding: Primarily funded by Glasgow City Council through Glasgow Life, with additional support from Creative Scotland, sponsorship, project grants, and earned income (e.g. ticket sales).

Impact: Glasgow is now internationally recognised for cutting-edge visual art. The jointly delivered projects have fostered critical attention, artist development, and tourism, with increased public engagement and sector resilience and this collaborative model is now regarded as a benchmark for UK city-wide visual arts partnerships and has inspired similar strategies elsewhere.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove:

Glasgow's integrated model shows how a city can grow national and international profile by aligning a flagship venue with a major festival under a single civic framework, combining year-round exhibitions with periodic, citywide moments to concentrate attention and build audiences.

2. Rotterdam: Kunsthal Rotterdam & Kunstblock Partnership

Rotterdam's Kunsthal is a major independent

institution drawing broad audiences with innovative, entrepreneurial exhibitions. It is an anchor partner within Kunstblock, a collaborative of independent art spaces based in the Witte de Withkwartier art district. Together, they create integrated, high-profile contemporary arts programming that activates the city centre.

Governance: Kunsthal is an independent foundation with its own board. Kunstblock is an association of partner organisations, each autonomous but aligned via collaboration agreements for shared programming, marketing, and events.

Programming & Delivery: Kunsthal delivers internationally-oriented shows and educational programming, while Kunstblock partners co-deliver events such as Art Evenings, joint exhibitions, citywide festivals, and neighbourhood pop-ups. Both institutions share audience development strategies and frequently invite national/international curators, artists, and collectives for collaborative projects. Together they offer regular cross-venue thematic weekends, open houses, and street-level art which have enlivened the area and elevated Rotterdam's profile.

Funding: Kunsthal mixes municipal funding with significant private/corporate sponsorship, Friends schemes, ticketing, and retail; Kunstblock activities secure additional event and project sponsorship, business partnerships, earned income, and targeted grants.

Impact: The district draws a wide and diverse international audience, increases creative tourism, and amplifies exposure for both emerging and established artists. This entrepreneurial approach has made Rotterdam's art sector more financially

resilient, dynamic, and capable of rapid, collaborative responses to opportunities.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove:

This case study demonstrates how an anchor institution working in partnership with a cluster of independent spaces can animate a cultural district through shared programming, joint events and coordinated audience development, increasing footfall, resilience and international appeal. For Brighton & Hove, adapting this consortium model could lead to energising visual arts in the city as well as creating a more entrepreneurial, partnership-led platform for contemporary visual arts.



Right Esme Curtis-Lundberg,
photo by Alun Callender

OUTCOME 2: A city which is home to a recognised and successful visual art marketplace

Consultation with artists and stakeholders highlights the vital role of spaces, both physical and digital, in enabling artists to exhibit, connect with buyers, and build sustainable practices. The changing landscape of gallery provision with the closure of several public exhibition spaces has been challenging, but does provide an opportunity to rethink and revitalise the city's visual arts marketplace.

Feedback from artists and the wider sector consistently emphasises the importance of expanding opportunities for exhibition and sales. Many report that finding accessible and suitable spaces for showing their work is an ongoing challenge, especially for more

experimental or larger pieces such as sculpture. These space constraints can shape creative output and influence the types of visual art that find public audiences. Research findings reveal the value of more visible, flexible, and accessible selling platforms, matched by the city's distinctive culture of pop-ups, festivals, and independent galleries. *"Brighton could become an open gallery if we used more pop-up and public spaces to show and sell,"* one respondent suggested, while another noted the opportunity in *"connecting buyers with artists directly, not just through traditional galleries, but in shops, hospitality venues, and online."*

The city's success stories, such as Artists Open Houses, high-profile festivals, longstanding independent galleries, and creative collectives, have built strong audiences and set the tone for innovation and collaboration. As another respondent noted, *"Pop-up shows, exhibitions in shops, and selling through venues like cafes or hotels has always been part of Brighton's art*

scene. Building on this can really open up new markets.”

Interviews and survey responses reveal a strong appetite for initiatives that make it easier for artists to build their presence and client base within the city. While pop-up and temporary exhibitions do occur, artists would welcome more reliable avenues for the public to encounter and purchase their work. The financial sustainability of local artists, and the cultural vibrancy of Brighton & Hove as a whole, rests in part on regular, visible platforms for artists to connect with buyers and collectors.

Ambition for the visual arts marketplace extends beyond traditional gallery spaces and there are opportunities to be found in optimising Brighton & Hove’s distinctive public spaces, high street venues, and digital platforms to create new ways for audiences to experience and acquire art. There is enthusiasm for collaborative models and inventive partnerships that expand audiences and champion the value of locally made work. Stakeholder ideas and recommendations emerging from the research, interviews, and collaborative workshops include:

- Facilitate and support access to temporary exhibition venues in vacant buildings, retail units, or commercial spaces, opening new and unexpected platforms for artists and increasing footfall in diverse neighbourhoods.
- Build on existing city-wide public art initiatives to present work in high-visibility public settings, creating fresh opportunities for artists to showcase and sell their work beyond traditional venues.
- Encourage stronger partnerships between existing arts organisations, galleries, commercial buildings, studios, and festivals to maximise use of available spaces, expand exhibition opportunities, and reach wider, more diverse audiences.

- Support the emergence of new artist-led exhibition spaces, whether as part of a larger arts hub, in accessible community locations, or through pop-up models that respond to where audiences gather.

- Explore and investing in virtual exhibition platforms that enable Brighton & Hove artists to present, sell, and promote their work to local, national, and international audiences. Perhaps partnering with existing selling platforms, such as Gertrude.

By championing a dynamic mix of permanent, temporary, and digital spaces for the exhibition and sale of art, Brighton & Hove can further develop its reputation as a destination for collectors, buyers, and art lovers. Prioritising visibility, accessibility, and sustainability for artists will not only strengthen the local market, but also help build a resilient creative economy and a thriving public and visual art culture for the city.

AMBITION: Multi-platform marketplace for the exhibition, presentation and sale of visual art

The city’s artists are looking for new and more visible opportunities to exhibit and sell their work, reflecting a shared ambition to build an active and sustainable marketplace for visual art. Its resilient visual arts community continues to activate new spaces, develop pop-up projects, and build audiences through a mix of gallery, festival, and digital platforms.

In the short- to medium-term the existing ecosystem could be further strengthened by connecting artists with a wider range of exhibition, sales, and partnership opportunities, drawing on Brighton & Hove’s creative energy and entrepreneurial culture; and positioning the city as a destination for buying, selling, and

experiencing art through a coordinated, multi-platform marketplace.

The ambition is to build on existing assets and ways of working, creating a marketplace that meets artists, buyers, and audiences across the city and online. This could include:

- **Coordinating new partnerships** between commercial galleries, artist collectives, studios, and independent venues to deliver high-profile joint selling and exhibition programmes.
- **Activating meanwhile spaces, pop-up galleries, and hospitality settings** for regular exhibition and sales events, particularly in partnership with business improvement districts and local retailers.
- **Partnering with an existing art selling platform** and negotiating a B&H presence as part of their offering.
- **Collaborating with existing events** such as major festivals, open house trails, and art fairs to showcase and sell work from a diverse range of artists.

Rationale

- *Existing strengths:* Brighton & Hove’s history of artist-led entrepreneurship, innovative use of temporary spaces, annual art events, and commercial gallery activity already provides the foundations for growth.
- *Audience development:* Integrating art for sale into public space programmes, hospitality venues, festivals, and an accessible digital platform will broaden audiences, encourage art-buying among locals and visitors, and develop deeper ties between artists, communities, and buyers.

Implementation

- *Coordinated partnerships:* Formalise collaboration between commercial galleries, studios, and business partners to co-curate exhibitions, sales events, peer mentoring, and cross-promotion, maximising reach for all artists.
- *Pop-up and meanwhile spaces:* Secure use of vacant shops, hospitality venues, and civic spaces for temporary sales and exhibition programmes, making it easy for artists to participate and buyers to discover new work.
- *Retail and hospitality engagement:* Work with high street businesses, hotels, restaurants, and cultural venues to display and sell local art in dynamic settings, integrating visual art with the daily experience of the city.
- *Public and outdoor art:* Citywide public art initiatives to commission, present, and sell art in parks, markets, seafront, and neighbourhood centres, bringing art into everyday life and supporting direct sales/commissions.
- *Digital platform development:* Partner with local tech and creative agencies to develop or upgrade a centralised digital platform that lists artists, selling opportunities, and exhibitions, facilitating online discovery and sales and serving as a digital hub for buyers regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- *Festival and trail integration:* Strengthen integration between existing festivals, open house events, and independent venues to create a sense of the ‘city as gallery’ experience for audiences and buyers.
- *Utilise the London art market:* Ensure coordinated activity with London art moments, such as FRIEZE art fair, to capitalise on the international buyer market. Ensure potential future advertising campaigns align.

Potential Impact

- *Cultural capacity building:* Increased collaboration between artists, galleries, studios, and business partners will create a resilient and innovative sales ecosystem.
- *Raising the city's profile:* Showcasing an ambitious range of visual art for sale, both in-person and digitally, will consolidate Brighton & Hove's reputation as a destination for art buyers and collectors.
- *Audience and market growth:* New, visible selling opportunities, across platforms, will draw in new audiences, expand the collector base, and help artists develop sustainable practices.
- *Sustainable creative economy:* A thriving, multi-channel marketplace supports economic resilience, encourages experimentation, and helps artists at every stage of their careers to flourish.
- *Sector leadership:* This multi-platform model, building directly on what already exists, will serve as inspiration for other cities seeking to integrate digital innovation, place-based activity, and broad-based partnership in their visual arts marketplace.

CASE STUDIES: Multi-platform marketplace/s for exhibition, presentation and sale of visual art

1. CONDO - A collaborative, multi-platform art marketplace

CONDO is a gallery-sharing initiative launched in London in 2016 as an alternative to traditional art fairs. Each year, commercial and independent galleries across London open their doors to visiting galleries from around the world, co-hosting collaborative exhibitions that combine in-person presentations, extended citywide programming, and online promotion. In 2024–2025, CONDO brought together 49 galleries across 22 venues, exemplifying a model that scales up the visibility and sales opportunities for artists and galleries alike.

Governance: CONDO is neither a single organisation nor a permanent venue, but a self-organising network underpinned by mutual agreements between participating galleries. Each edition is coordinated through communal resource sharing, strategic scheduling, and collective programming, with participating galleries agreeing to host, share, and promote one another's exhibitions.

Programming and delivery: CONDO operates as a month-long, citywide exhibition in which London galleries act as 'hosts', providing their physical exhibition spaces to 'visiting' international galleries. Shows may be co-curated or involve space-sharing, encouraging collaboration, experimentation, and mutual support. Sales are handled directly by each participating gallery, with no central commission, enabling artists to benefit from pooled audiences and broadened collector networks. CONDO's model leverages the city's existing geography with visitors travelling across multiple neighbourhoods to experience art in both well-established and up-and-coming spaces, with a single unifying campaign and events programme tying it all together. Throughout the event, participating galleries collaborate on in-person viewings, artist talks, and online features, making use of digital

channels to extend reach and sales beyond local audiences. All spaces are open free of charge to audiences.

Funding: As opposed to relying primarily on public sector funding, CONDO is sustained through minimal contributions from visiting galleries to cover running costs (such as website and technicians), with host galleries providing space and resources in kind. The initiative's collaborative business approach reduces financial and logistical barriers for young galleries and emerging artists, making ambitious international projects feasible even on modest budgets. Further income is derived through direct artwork sales, supported by increased visibility and footfall for both hosts and visitors.

Impact: By sharing resources and audiences, it has made the market more accessible for smaller, less commercially-oriented galleries, while expanding the international reach and collector base for all participants. The model has inspired similar initiatives in cities including New York, Shanghai, Athens, and Mexico City, demonstrating a scalable approach for other places seeking to boost their cultural profiles and support artist sustainability, without the high overhead and exclusivity of traditional art fairs. CONDO's collaborative model exemplifies how cities can build a joined-up, resilient art marketplace by connecting and amplifying existing creative assets, utilising both physical and digital platforms, and prioritising partnership and generosity over competition.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: There is an opportunity here to extend and build on what is already achieved through Artists Open Houses. Adapting the CONDO model could directly support the creation of more spaces for local artists to exhibit their work by unlocking venues and networks beyond traditional galleries. This could be done by focusing on partnerships with national and regional galleries and collectives (rather than international participants). Brighton

& Hove could establish citywide exhibitions where local commercial galleries, artist-run initiatives, independent venues, and non-traditional spaces (such as shops, cafés, hotels, or public buildings) jointly host and co-curate exhibitions. This would expand the number and diversity of exhibition opportunities without the burden of creating new permanent galleries.

The model also encourages peer-to-peer and inter-city artist swaps, gallery 'takeovers', and collaborative programming, meaning that local artists gain both solo and group show opportunities in spaces they might not otherwise access. For example, Brighton-based artists could show in Manchester or Bristol through reciprocal arrangements, while those cities' artists exhibit in Brighton, broadening visibility for all those participating.

Extending exhibition venues into retail, hospitality, high street, and public settings creates more physical platforms for local artists to showcase and sell their work. Further, digital collaboration offering coordinated citywide marketing, exhibition listings, and online sales platforms, ensures that every participating venue, regardless of size or profile, can reach wider audiences and buyers. Local artists benefit from central promotion, social media campaigns, and integrated sales channels, all amplifying their opportunities to exhibit and earn income.

2. Vancouver - Visual Art Foundation (VVAf) and Art Vancouver

VVAf, a non-profit, has dramatically raised Vancouver's profile as a visual art hub through its annual event, Art Vancouver. This fair brings together regional and international galleries and artists, creating a unified marketplace that boosts the visibility and sales potential for all involved.

Governance: Led by a small team, VVAF coordinates Art Vancouver through partnerships with artists, galleries, and sponsors. Participation is based on collaborative agreements, with shared promotion and programming.

Programming and Delivery: Art Vancouver is Western Canada’s largest art fair, hosting dozens of exhibitors and public programming. It is complemented by mentoring, workshops, and public art pop-ups that support year-round artist engagement and career development.

Funding: VVAF is sustained by ticket sales, booth fees, grants, sponsorship, and donations. Shared resources keep the model inclusive and accessible.

Impact: VVAF’s approach has expanded opportunities for artists and galleries, strengthened Vancouver’s cultural reputation, and brought economic and community benefits to the city.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: The city could build on the existing Brighton Art Fair, adopting this model by launching inclusive art fairs that showcase local talent, paired with networks, mentoring, and collaborative events, all designed to grow the local art marketplace and bring broader recognition.

OUTCOME 3: A city where art is embedded in its life and fabric

Right Alexander Ardisson, photo by Alun Callender

The research highlights a consensus among survey respondents, interviewees and participants in the Innovation Sprint workshops, that partnerships with property developers, local businesses, healthcare, universities, civic organisations and commercial galleries are essential for the visual arts community in Brighton & Hove. Cross-sector collaboration is also seen as crucial for accessing resources and creating opportunities.

The Economic Plan for Brighton & Hove⁶⁰ cites the need to “*work collaboratively across our different sectors*” as a core imperative for transforming the economy. This overarching strategic goal for the city acknowledges the importance of collaboration and provides an opportunity for advocating further the role of the visual arts in economic development. For example, in actively developing and nurturing relationships with property developers to secure workspace and public art opportunities.

Survey respondents emphasise the importance of partnerships with local businesses, as many talented artists struggle to get seen, suggesting businesses could open their spaces or create wall space for artists. Leveraging the benefits of creative activities for wellbeing and to create paid opportunities for artists was also frequently surfaced during our research and consultation process alongside other ideas which include:

- Enhance connectivity and collaboration within the existing visual arts sector by better resourcing existing networks and leveraging funders’ priorities.
- Prioritise effective partnerships with a focus on safeguarding artists and organisations.

⁶⁰ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/business-and-trade/support-businesses/brighton-hove-economic-plan-2024-2027>



- Actively develop and nurture relationships with property developers to secure workspace and public art opportunities.
- Foster partnerships with universities for professional development, business skills, and bridging the art/science divide.
- Engage local businesses for potential sponsorships and collaborations.
- Explore partnerships with healthcare providers to leverage the benefits of creative activities for wellbeing and create paid opportunities for artists.
- Create an action-oriented alliance of stakeholders to promote visual arts events and public art developments.

AMBITION: Stronger partnerships and cross-sector collaboration

Brighton & Hove’s visual arts sector is rich in creative assets, and is home to a diverse community of artists, collectives, and cultural venues. Yet, with so many strengths spread across different networks and disciplines, there is still an opportunity to further enhance connectivity, increase awareness of existing resources, and optimise the impact of every investment, ensuring that creativity is leveraged for the greatest collective benefit.

Actively empowering and supporting organisations such as Brighton Visual Arts Coalition (BVAC), Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance (BHCA), Phoenix Art Space, Fabrica, University of Brighton, University of Sussex, Brighton MET, and Brighton Dome & Festival, and nurturing cross-sector collaboration can unlock new partnerships, share knowledge, and maximise the city’s creative potential. This joined-up approach will foster a more connected, resilient, and visible visual arts community which is able to advocate effectively, attract new investment, and contribute fully to Brighton & Hove’s vibrant cultural and economic life.

This ambition can be achieved by:

- **Establishing a regular, cross-sector Visual Arts Partnership Forum** convened by BVAC/BHCA, where city partners from business, property, education, health, and culture map assets, set shared priorities, and design collaborative public projects.
- **Creating a brokering and partnership service** within BVAC or via the existing Culture in Our City platform to actively connect visual artists and organisations with property developers (for workspace and public art), healthcare providers (for wellbeing programmes), local businesses

(for sponsorship, commissions, and exhibitions), and tourism partners (for joint marketing and events).

- Supporting collective funding and advocacy efforts across the sector, increasing the city's capacity to attract investment from major cultural, health, and economic funders, and to mount high-profile, inclusive, cross-disciplinary initiatives.

- Launching a public-facing digital platform and campaign that makes Brighton & Hove's visual arts ecosystem visible, accessible, and connected showcasing opportunities, success stories, and the everyday integration of art within the city.

Implementation

- *Brokerage to include early engagement with developers on s106 public art obligations and opportunities (signposting to the Public Art PAN), and identification of complementary routes (including potential CIL/non-CIL sources) for wider public realm enhancements where appropriate.*

- *Convene a citywide Partnership Forum for visual arts and cross-sector stakeholders at least twice a year.*

- *Develop and staff a brokering function (within BVAC or via a digital platform) to match artists and organisations with cross-sector opportunities and partnerships.*

- *Launch a citywide digital resource and opportunity hub, mapping venues, workspaces, equipment, skills, and event programming.*

- *Support pilot partnership projects embedding artists in businesses, healthcare, education, and city development initiatives, with a focus on sustainability and paid opportunities.*

Potential Impact

- *Stronger sector advocacy and sustainability:* A connected, resourced sector speaks with a unified voice, attracting greater investment and reducing duplication.

- *Resilience and legacy:* Effective collaboration and resource-sharing across existing networks to futureproof Brighton & Hove's creative ecosystem, ensuring art remains central to the city's evolving identity.

CASE STUDIES

1. Manchester Culture Partnership, embedding art through citywide cross-sector collaboration

Manchester's Culture Partnership exemplifies how a city can strategically embed the arts within its civic, economic, and social life by bringing together leadership from the local authority, major cultural institutions, creative businesses, education providers, healthcare organisations, developers, and the voluntary sector. Established by Manchester City Council, the Partnership fosters a culture where visual arts and creativity are fully integrated into urban development, community wellbeing, and the evolution of Manchester as a modern, vibrant city.

Governance: The Partnership operates through shared leadership, co-chaired by representatives from both the city council and key cultural organisations, with a board whose membership spans the creative, academic, health, business, and community spheres. Regular forums and working groups promote open participation and collective ownership.

Programming and delivery: Through this approach, Manchester delivers a wide spectrum of cross-sector creative projects. Large-scale collaborations, like Factory International, bring together artists, developers, local business, and universities to create new cultural infrastructure and landmark public artworks. Visual artists are routinely embedded in healthcare and community settings, contributing to patient wellbeing, staff training, and public health initiatives through the Manchester Arts and Health Partnership.

The Partnership has built strong relationships with property developers, ensuring that public art and creative design are consistently part of new developments. A dedicated brokering service helps match artists to opportunities ranging from public realm commissions to meanwhile use of empty spaces and business-sponsored exhibitions.

Resource sharing is a central principle for the model, with coordinated marketing campaigns, digital resource banks for sustainability and skills, and collaborative programming across city festivals and seasonal events. These joint efforts heighten the impact and visibility of visual arts citywide.

Funding: Financial support for the Partnership and its projects comes from a blend of city council core funding, private sponsorship, s106/CIL allocations from developers, earned income, and a range of targeted joint fundraising efforts involving health, education, and national grant programmes. This broad funding mix provides a stable foundation and enables a proactive response to city needs.

Impact: Manchester's collaborative model ensures that visual art and cultural activity now reaches across the city, from regeneration areas, and healthcare settings, to community spaces. Well over half of new public realm

developments incorporate commissioned art, while cross-sector initiatives such as Creative Breaks and citywide skills campaigns have engaged tens of thousands of participants every year.

The Partnership's flexible structure proved especially effective during challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic, enabling a coordinated response, efficient advocacy for sector support, and rapid deployment of resources. Importantly, cultural participation has grown among previously under-represented groups, and new routes have opened for artists to develop careers within and beyond the traditional visual arts sector.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: By supporting sector networks, developing brokering mechanisms, and aligning partners around a shared cultural strategy, Manchester shows how a city can make visual art an indispensable part of its life and identity.

2. City Arts Nottingham, from artist network to citywide cross-sector collaboration

City Arts offers an example of how an artist-led network has evolved into a cornerstone of citywide cross-sector collaboration. Founded in 1977⁶¹, as a grassroots network seeking to democratise access to art, City Arts has grown into a respected catalyst for community transformation known for breaking down barriers between artists, residents, public services, and civic partners. Over nearly five decades, it has become integral to Nottingham's cultural landscape, embedding the creative voice of local artists into health, education, regeneration, and city planning.

⁶¹ City Arts Nottingham first had an office building in 1977, when it was established as the Nottingham Community Arts & Crafts Centre in Hyson Green, at the site now occupied by the New Art Exchange. This was the organisation's original base and served as its premises for many years, supporting both artistic and community activity. After several moves City Arts settled into its current city centre building at 11-13 Hockley in 2014.

Governance: City Arts is governed as a charity with a team of sector professionals and a board including community and artist representatives. Its *Framework for Voices* actively consults with community panels, ensuring that decision-making is shared between artists, grassroots groups, and strategic partners. Regular collaboration with city authorities, NHS and health providers, universities, and the voluntary sector keeps the organisation responsive and relevant.

Programming and delivery: Collaboration is the driving force behind City Arts' diverse programming. Core initiatives, like the *Citizen Artists* strand, place creativity at the heart of wellbeing, skills development, and social inclusion. *Your Place* takes a community-led approach, co-designing projects with residents that bring culture directly to neighbourhoods, often activating spaces far from the traditional cultural core. Artist development remains central, especially for those who are marginalised or under-represented.

Cross-sector working is embedded throughout City Arts' model. It takes creative practice into a broad range of settings including schools, hospitals, and museums, delivering positive mental health projects, public art commissions, and strategic input into Nottingham's city-making priorities.

Funding: City Arts draws on a blend of project grants (from trusts and UK lottery funds), city council commissions for public engagement, earned income (via training and workshops), and business or university partnerships.

Impact

- City Arts has widened access to creative opportunity across Nottingham, especially for those facing cultural, social, or economic barriers.

- Marginalised artists have been able to return to and develop creative careers thanks to targeted artist development and public commissioning.

- Partnering with the NHS and mental health providers, City Arts delivers creative health interventions that now inform strategy citywide. Its civic role has grown and City Arts now sits on city forums, and contributes to regeneration plans.

- The collaborative, power-sharing model has grown deep trust with residents and partners.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: City Arts Nottingham shows how a locally grounded artist network can become an engine for cross-sector partnerships and citywide impact. By holding space for artists and residents at the centre of decision-making, working fluidly across health, education, business, and policy, and focusing on shared ownership of both strategy and outcome, City Arts has helped embed creativity into the heart of the city.

OUTCOME 4: A city that is attractive for artists to work in

The research highlights the need for artists to be able to find affordable spaces to live and work, as well as studio and workspace, and notably the perception is that a shortage of space has led to visual artists leaving Brighton & Hove. Even though the city rightly prides itself in its existing hubs like Phoenix Art Space, survey responses identify finding affordable space to rent as a studio/workspace as a significant issue.

Identifying a lack of suitable venues and affordable space is a potential gap in resource and provision remains a significant issue. For example, the *Space to Grow*⁶² report, identified key needs and proposed recommendations, specifically “*delivering affordable workspace through the planning system*,” and “*improving how existing spaces are used*”. Survey and interview responses echo this, with numerous respondents listing “*affordable space to rent as a studio/workspace*” as a key need. Indeed this is one of the most challenging aspects of being a visual artist in Brighton & Hove according to 71.3% of respondents to the consultation survey.

Ideas for addressing this surfaced during the Innovation Sprints, from ensuring long-term availability of spaces, utilising a mix of funding, and collaborating with developers, to strategically locating artists in diverse neighbourhoods. One respondent suggests opening up the use of empty office blocks for artists and arts organisations. Another proposes that the Council should encourage the repurposing of derelict buildings, for example empty banks into community hubs and studio spaces. Key ideas for addressing the challenge include:

⁶² Space to Grow <https://cultureinourcity.com/resources/space-to-grow-brighton-hove-space-for-culture/>, Brighton & Hove City Council

- Consider meanwhile spaces in empty shops for artists to work and exhibit temporarily, minimising set-up costs.

- Improve how existing spaces are used and explore repurposing empty commercial or council-owned buildings at low rents and exploring how/whether the council can apply for government relief on business rates for repurposed empty spaces.

- Advocate for rent control to make living and working in the city more affordable for artists. Create a Creative Land Trust or similar model to protect arts spaces in perpetuity from political instability.

- Deliver affordable workspace through the planning system by leveraging partnerships with property developers and considering mixed-use developments⁶³.

⁶³ We note that Brighton & Hove City Council previously appointed Augarde & Partners to carry out research during Sept-Dec 2023 to build a business case for a Creative Land Trust for Brighton & Hove but that this concept has not progressed further.

AMBITION: Creating dynamic places and spaces for artists to work in

Brighton & Hove's creative identity arguably rests on its ability to offer artists accessible, affordable, and inspiring spaces in which to make, develop, and present their work. This ambition is to create a joined-up, citywide ecosystem of studios and workspace models that encourage and support artists to thrive at every stage of their careers.

Building on tested approaches, such as pop-up studios, meanwhile use of vacant properties, partnerships with local landlords, and national innovations around workspace and property models, the next step is to scale up and embed flexibility, affordability, and accessibility

throughout the city's creative infrastructure.

Central to this ambition is the transformation of underused or empty spaces, both public and commercial, into creative workspaces, and ensuring that provision is resilient, widely distributed, and futureproof. This could be realised by:

- **Expanding the meanwhile use** of empty shops, offices, and civic or commercial buildings, brokering access for artists and collectives to establish low-cost, short-term studios and exhibition spaces.

- **Working with property owners and landlords** through council-led brokerage and partnership schemes, ensuring that temporary agreements can convert to longer-term opportunities wherever possible.

- **Embedding affordable creative workspace provisions into the planning system**, utilising s106, CIL, and other planning gain mechanisms to ensure that major developments deliver dedicated workspace for artists as a core condition.

- **Exploring and supporting a range of sustainable workspace models**, including, but not limited to, re-visiting the idea of establishing a Creative Land Trust to help secure space for artists and arts organisations in the long term, in partnership with local and national funders, philanthropists, and property owners.

- **Developing business rates relief, grant incentives, and technical support** to make it easier for small collectives and artist-run organisations to manage and activate new spaces.

- **Creating a digital platform** to map available spaces, broker opportunities, and connect artists, landlords, and local communities, ensuring transparency and ease of access to

workspace citywide.

- **Supporting equitable distribution of affordable studios and workspaces in neighbourhoods** across Brighton & Hove, so that artists from all backgrounds and disciplines can access space close to home, audiences, and collaborators.

Implementation

- *Audit and identify a pipeline* of vacant or underused properties suitable for creative reuse, in partnership with the Council and local property networks.

- *Establish an accelerator* for meanwhile and pop-up use, offering model licensing agreements, legal support, and hands-on brokerage to reduce barriers for artists and landlords alike.

- *Enhance planning policy* by embedding clear affordable workspace requirements and guidelines in planning policy and s106/CIL negotiations and monitor delivery through Council and cross-sector partnership.

- *Clarification on planning* routes ensuring the city's specific s106 obligation for public art is distinct and continues post-CIL, focusing on physical, permanent, on-site/immediate vicinity artistic elements in line with the Public Art PAN⁶⁴; exploring how affordable creative workspace can be secured via planning policy, conditions and/or obligations and negotiated case-by-case - while workspace provision can draw on s106/CIL.

- *Facilitate partnership forums* with developers, local landlords, business improvement districts, and arts organisations to drive new workspace opportunities.

⁶⁴ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/public-art-planning-advice-note-pan10>

- *Expand business rates relief*, grants, and advisory support for creative collectives and studio providers, including training in cooperative management and fundraising.

- *Launch and promote a digital hub* for matching artists and organisations to available spaces, and for publicising new workspace and studio opportunities.

- *Promote a citywide, inclusive approach* prioritising not just the city centre but neighbourhoods throughout Brighton & Hove. Link workspace provision to community outreach and engagement projects.

Potential Impact

- *Retention and attraction of artists*: A visible, flexible ecosystem of affordable workspace will help artists stay, grow their practice, and embed themselves in Brighton & Hove.

- *Urban and economic renewal*: Revitalising empty or neglected premises as creative spaces boosts footfall, local business, and civic vitality.

- *Equity and inclusion*: Ensuring access to workspace in a range of locations and at a range of price points broadens participation and invites diversity across the city's creative sector.

- *Creative sector resilience*: Diversifying workspace models through temporary, permanent, collective, and trust structures will build long-term sector stability and innovation.

- *Reputation and profile*: Proactive, visible action to support artists and creative workspace will reinforce Brighton & Hove's reputation as a progressive, creative city and a desirable place for artists to live and work.

CASE STUDIES

1. East Street Arts, Meanwhile Spaces for Artists (Leeds, West Yorkshire)

East Street Arts has gained a reputation for transforming empty and underused buildings into affordable, flexible studios and maker spaces for artists. Over the past decade, their Meanwhile Spaces initiative has activated more than 500 vacant retail, office, and commercial premises across Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Kirklees, and Harrogate, supporting over 2,000 artists directly and catalysing the creation of 79 permanent studio sites. Their approach tackles high property costs and workspace shortages through partnership brokerage, business rates relief, and artist-led management, contributing to urban regeneration and artist retention.

Governance: A not-for-profit charity, East Street Arts manages the programme with support from local councils, commercial landlords, and community partners. Their team acts as an intermediary, negotiating meanwhile leases (temporary, low-cost agreements) and handling practicalities such as insurance, utilities, and legal compliance. They share learning and insights nationally and are seen as sector leaders in artist workspace brokerage and sustainability.

Programming and delivery: Artists and collectives are matched to spaces according to need and practice, with flexibility to use sites as studios, exhibition spaces, project venues, and for public engagement. A key aspect is cross-disciplinary use with visual artists working alongside designers, makers, musicians, and community groups. Projects often focus on relevance to local neighbourhoods and regenerate neglected high streets with creative activity. The programme encourages self-governance, with artists supported to form co-operatives or manage day-to-day operations, aided by East Street's legal, practical, and

business support. Where successful, spaces may be transitioned from ‘meanwhile’ to permanent provision.

Funding: The scheme leverages a mix of charitable funding, modest studio rents, business rates relief for landlords, and grants from ACE and local authorities. Landlords benefit from reduced business rate liability; artists gain flexible, low-cost workspace. East Street Arts pools resources, offers basic fitouts, and works to keep entry costs minimal.

Impact:

- Over 500 buildings across West Yorkshire activated for cultural and social use.
- More than 2,000 artists have been accommodated since the programme began.
- 79 permanent studio hubs established for long-term use, transitioning from temporary provision.
- The Art Hostel in Leeds, run by East Street Arts, hosted 10,170 guests from 117 countries between 2016–2018, increasing overnight stays and arts tourism in the city.
- Significant contributions to urban regeneration, footfall, and local business, as well as increased collaboration and social capital among artists and residents.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: East Street Arts’ model demonstrates how a city can practically unlock vacant or underused properties through partnership brokerage, supportive policy, and flexible leasing. Key relevant aspects include: activating council-owned or commercial spaces citywide; brokering access and support for artists; embedding affordable workspace requirements in local planning; empowering artist-led collectives to self-manage; and

building pathways from temporary to permanent creative hubs.

2. Outer Spaces, Meanwhile Spaces for Artists (Scotland)

Outer Spaces has rapidly built a reputation for transforming empty and underused commercial buildings into free, temporary studios and project spaces for artists. Established in 2021, the programme now activates more than 120 vacant retail, office, and light industrial premises across 13 Scottish local authorities, supporting over 900 artists directly through agile licences, artist-led use, and public-facing activity. The approach tackles workspace shortages and high costs by brokering landlord partnerships, leveraging charitable rate relief, and enabling flexible, self-managed occupation that contributes to high-street renewal and artist retention.

Governance: Outer Spaces manages the programme with partners including local authorities, commercial landlords, and cultural organisations. The team acts as an intermediary, negotiating month-by-month ‘meanwhile’ licences and handling practicalities such as onboarding, insurance guidance, basic compliance, and logistics. Learning is shared across sites, with Outer Spaces widely recognised as a sector leader in meanwhile brokerage and building sustainable, low-barrier access to workspace.

Programming and delivery: Artists and collectives are matched to spaces by practice and need, with the flexibility to use units as studios, exhibition/project venues, and for public engagement. Cross-disciplinary use is common, with visual artists working alongside designers, makers, musicians, and community groups in high-street and office locations.

The programme encourages self-governance, supporting artists to co-manage day-to-day operations while Outer Spaces provides brokerage, light-touch building support, and a rolling programme of commissions, professional development, and storefront activations. When opportunities emerge, spaces transition from temporary to longer-term use, sustaining local creative ecosystems.

Funding: The scheme leverages a blend of charitable advantages (including business rates relief), landlord in-kind support, targeted grants, and selected social investment to keep access free for artists and overheads low. Outer Spaces pools resources to offer basic fitouts, utilities arrangements, and shared facilities where possible, minimising entry costs for artists and incentivising landlord participation through reduced void costs and improved stewardship.

Impact:

- 120+ vacant buildings activated for cultural and social use across 13 local authorities since 2021.
- 900+ artists supported with free, flexible studio and project space.
- High-street and office district activation through public-facing exhibitions, commissions, and workshops.
- Progression pathways for graduates and early-career artists via commissions, fellowships, and partnerships.
- Reduced vacancy blight and security costs for owners; increased visibility and civic pride in local centres.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: Outer Spaces’ show how vacant or underused property can be utilised at pace through dedicated brokerage,

supportive policy, and flexible licensing. Key relevant elements include: activating council-owned and commercial spaces across neighbourhoods; brokering access and light-touch support for artists; aligning with business rates relief to lower costs; empowering artist-led management and co-operatives; and building pathways from temporary ‘meanwhile’ hubs to longer-term provision as part of a mixed ecosystem of affordable workspace. The approach complements planning routes (including policy, conditions and/or obligations) by delivering visible impact quickly, while longer-term models (such as a Creative Land Trust) and the s106 public art obligation progress in tandem.



OUTCOME 5: A city with a strong local ecosystem where diverse talent thrives

This outcome draws upon ideas and thinking from across the other outcomes, as it is overarching in its ambition. However, given the importance of career development progression - a concern for visual artists and makers staying in Brighton & Hove after higher education, and indeed an issue across the UK - it warrants articulating separately. The survey contains numerous responses that touch upon the challenge of building a sustainable career as a visual artist in Brighton & Hove with respondents and interviews discussing the need for, “*professional development support and provision for artists*” and more specifically, “*Mentoring opportunities for young people to then invest their skill into the economy locally. Skills building around funding, networking*

and professional development in the creative industries. Skills building around cultural leadership programmes.” Local organisations, such as Lighthouse, are making strides in addressing this, stating commitment to “*reforming an arts scene that too often holds back talented young people for economic and social reasons.”* Outcome 4 above addresses the issue of space, but retaining talent in the city is complex and nuanced involving many factors.

The *Space to Grow* report identifies “*limited availability of space, high prices and the lack of flexibility in lease arrangements*” as the most pressing challenge and main cause for both new and established creatives to leave the city.

One artist states in the survey, “*All the active and engaged young artists (the potential next gen of curators and directors) move away to somewhere more interesting and artistically viable...*”. Another comments that they feel there are limited opportunities in Brighton &

Hove’s visual art scene, and that this, coupled with low wages in arts organisations, results in “*only affluent people can afford to work here meaning there’s no diversity to bring new ideas and push the industry forward.*”

Outcome 5 recognises Brighton & Hove’s track record of collaboration across the arts, and puts forward the need for exploring opportunities for shared training and development across cultural sectors, to run alongside Outcome 4 in order to fully address social and economic constraints.

Ideas for change which emerged through our research and during the consultation which support this include:

- Development of a new incubator for emerging artists.
- Focus on involving younger and under-represented artists and creatives in strategic plans and initiatives.
- Improve how existing spaces are used to provide development opportunities for emerging artists.
- Create further mentorship and skill development opportunities for artists.
- Develop new pathways into local industries for visual artists to work and earn a living.
- Campaign for the survival and growth of the arts in higher education institutions.

Left Lydia Stonehouse at Phoenix Art Space, photo by Alun Callender

AMBITION: Nurturing visual arts talent through a thriving incubator and career ecosystem

Brighton & Hove’s reputation as a creative city depends on the ability of its local artists and makers, from new graduates to established practitioners, to build sustainable, rewarding, and ambitious careers within it. The research demonstrates a shared ambition to build a vibrant, supportive ecosystem for career progression, where diverse visual arts talent can thrive and contribute to the city’s culture and economy.

Drawing on the city’s track record of creative collaboration, a next step is to build on current provision (notably that provided by Lighthouse and Phoenix Arts Space) and establish coordinated, cross-sector support for professional development, skill-building, and entrepreneurial growth. This means recognising the social and economic barriers facing young and under-represented artists, and connecting talent with accessible opportunities, mentors, and pathways into local creative industries. This ambition can be realised by:

- **Establishing a new Visual Arts Incubator**, offering regular support programmes, including mentorship, skills development, portfolio reviews, and business advice for emerging and early-career artists, delivered in partnership with local organisations, universities, and creative businesses (and building on existing work in the city providing support to artists).
- **Prioritising opportunities for younger, diverse, and currently under-represented creative professionals, particularly artists and curators**, making sure that the city’s next generation is actively involved in programming decisions, strategic planning, and high-profile public commissioning.

- **Leveraging existing creative spaces and public venues to host residencies**, showcase new work, and provide training in areas such as fundraising, networking, marketing, and leadership.

- **Developing structured mentorship** connections between new graduates, early-career artists, and established professionals which match lived experience with career guidance and sector insights.

- **Building further pathways and placements** for visual artists into relevant local industries, including digital/creative tech, design, media, education, and commercial galleries and by opening alternative routes to sustainable livelihoods.

- **Advocating for sustained investment in creative education** and connecting education providers with the sector in the city.

- **Developing locally-led leadership development** to nurture the next generation of curators, cultural producers, and decision-makers.

Implementation

- *Convene a citywide partnership* (council, universities, local education authorities, arts organisations, funders, business networks) to design and deliver the Visual Arts Incubator and related career development activities.

- *Audit available spaces* (studios, galleries, commercial spaces, educational venues, community hubs), in order to identify opportunities for skills-building and peer learning.

- *Develop a digital platform* (or build on an existing one connected to a network like the BHCA or BVAC) to publicise development

opportunities, match mentors and mentees, and signpost industry links and commissions.

- *Secure resources and advocate for creative opportunities* in higher education and local cultural leadership.

- *Pilot targeted leadership and management skills programmes* for young, diverse and under-represented artists, linked to real opportunities in Brighton & Hove.

Potential Impact

- *Retain and attract next-generation talent:* Offering meaningful professional development, mentoring, and access to industry raises the city's appeal to emerging artists, keeping creative graduates local.

- *Diversity and inclusion:* Making space for under-represented artists and leaders broadens the range of voices, perspectives, and energy shaping Brighton & Hove's visual arts scene.

- *Sector resilience:* A permanent, cross-sector incubator and training infrastructure builds capacity, entrepreneurial confidence, and leadership for the whole creative ecology.

- *Economic and civic benefit:* Creative professionals are able to establish sustainable careers, contribute to local industries, and invest their skills back into Brighton & Hove's cultural life.

- *Raising the city's profile:* By backing its own talent, Brighton & Hove strengthens its reputation as a vibrant, inclusive, and future-facing home for creative careers in the visual arts.

CASE STUDIES

1. The NewBridge Project - Artist-Led Incubation and Ecosystem, Newcastle upon Tyne

The NewBridge Project is an artist-led community, driving the retention and development of visual arts talent in Newcastle and Gateshead. Established in 2010 and now based in the Shieldfield Centre, NewBridge provides affordable studios, creative workspaces, skills-building, public programming, and leadership opportunities for more than 100 emerging and established artists each year. Its approach is fundamentally collaborative: NewBridge draws on cross-sector partnerships, with Newcastle University, local authorities, property owners, businesses, and the neighbourhood, to sustain a holistic, inclusive incubator model that grows year-on-year.

Governance: NewBridge is a not-for-profit led by a diverse board and a Programme Committee of five paid creative practitioners (three of whom are local North of Tyne residents). Members shape decisions and programmes, ensuring leadership is rooted in the needs and ambitions of the city's creative talent. Governance benefits from strong local strategic connections, particularly with Newcastle University, the North of Tyne Combined Authority, and local business and community partners, deepening its ability to respond to sector challenges and secure new resources.

Programming & Delivery:

- *Incubator and professional development:* The Collective Studio is an 11-month incubator for 25-33 artists and creative practitioners (annually), offering affordable workspace, peer-led learning, workshops, mentoring, and exhibition opportunities. The programme is flexible, supporting both recent graduates

and those returning to creative practice, and is shaped each year by the participants themselves.

- *Paid artist leadership:* Every two years, 3-8 paid Programme Committee members (local artists) are recruited to co-develop public programmes, exhibitions, and policy, with tailored support and project budgets, building skills, confidence, and clear leadership pathways.

- *Public engagement:* The 2025 exhibition 'In a Pinch', co-created by Collective Studio and Newcastle University students, showcased the next generation of practitioners, as did events like 'Resounding Diasporic Sonic Worlds', further connecting local talent with international perspectives.

- *Year-round programming:* Studios, exhibitions, youth programmes (such as Shieldfield Youth Programme), bookshop, and public events foster continual learning, skill-sharing, and social impact—bringing Newcastle's artists together with residents, visitors, schools, and city partners.

- *Expanding spaces:* The project continues to broker "meanwhile use" agreements for empty retail and commercial units, expanding available studio provision at flexible membership rates for full, shared, or hot-desking models.

Funding: NewBridge is financially resilient, sustained through studio rents, modest project grants (e.g. Garfield Weston Foundation, university partnerships), business rates relief, local authority and Combined Authority partnerships, in-kind support, and a smaller share of targeted national or ACE grants. The growing diversity of local support and earned income strengthens its independence and flexibility.

Impact:

- More than 100 studios in active, affordable use for artists in 2024–2025, with 24/7 access and on-site specialist facilities (darkroom, ceramic, print, wood workshop).
- The Collective Studio and leadership programmes support over a dozen early-career artists annually, with alumni building sustainable practices and national profiles.
- NewBridge’s exhibitions, open studios, Late Shows, and public activities welcome thousands of visitors each year, nurturing creative skill, confidence, and civic pride.
- The model, which is artist-led, agile, and networked, enables rapid response to changing space needs, market conditions, and sector opportunities, ensuring continuity for Newcastle’s visual arts community.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: Although there are synergies between Phoenix Art Space and NewBridge, it still provides an interesting example for how local artist-led organisations, academic institutions, civic authorities, and business communities can co-create an affordable, resilient incubator for developing and retaining visual arts talent, without dependence on major, centralised public funding. Its approach of paid leadership pathways, peer-driven incubators, creative re-use of space, and equitable citywide access underlines that, with strong cross-sector partnership and an emphasis on artist agency, a city can build a vibrant, inclusive ecosystem where diverse talent flourishes and feels invested in the future.

2. Bow Arts consortia model, cross-sector collaboration for arts education and artist support, London

The Bow Arts consortia model is a nationally recognised approach to integrating artists and arts organisations into education, supporting artist livelihoods, and building resilient creative communities. Established and delivered by the charity Bow Arts (celebrating 30 years in 2025), the consortia model has facilitated deep partnerships between schools, artists, and local communities across 17 London boroughs, impacting thousands of students, teachers, and creative practitioners.

Governance: Bow Arts operates as a charitable trust, overseen by a Board of Trustees and dedicated staff. The consortia model brings together groups of schools (both formal and informal partnerships) to shape annual programmes, prioritise professional development, and share resources. Leadership is collaborative: artists, teachers, and community partners design bespoke projects, supported by regular feedback, data collection, and public celebration.

Programming and delivery:

- *Collaborative partnerships:* Schools pool resources to achieve economies of scale, enabling each to commission bespoke, artist-led education projects tailored to student and curriculum needs. Partnering allows for annual collaborative projects, joint Arts Award schemes, after-school and holiday programmes, and ongoing CPD for teaching staff.
- *Artist-led education:* Professional artists and Bow Arts educators deliver tailored workshops, from sculpture and printmaking to digital and socially engaged art, ensuring creative learning is embedded and accessible. In 2024, Bow Arts delivered over 1,300 artist-led projects, reaching 8,500 children and young people and 500+ teachers in 78 schools.
- *Community engagement:* Pupils and teachers participate in public exhibitions and celebration

events, sharing achievements across schools and with the local community. This builds collective pride, strengthens school-to-school relationships, and celebrates creative engagement.

- *Artist support:* Revenue from Bow Arts’ 17 studio sites (providing over 1,000 affordable artist workspaces) is reinvested to subsidise education and community projects. The business model brings together artist career support with social impact, and provides significant financial savings for education partners through shared resources and economies of scale.

- *Professional development:* Teachers benefit from year-round CPD and creative skill development, with 115 teachers accessing training in a recent year, reporting positive transfer to classroom practice.

Funding: The model leverages a blend of studio income, school contributions, and significant external funders (e.g., Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s Teacher Development Fund, and grants from the Creative Workspace Resilience Fund). At least 20–25% of education project costs are routinely subsidised by studio artist rents.

Impact:

- Over 10 years, Bow Arts consortia have supported more than 7,000 young people, 500 staff, and delivered over 100 bespoke projects in Newham alone; 900 pupils and 18 teachers participated in the Poplar Consortium in 2024–25.
- Each participating school saves an average of 22% of project costs, while ensuring every student benefits from annual bespoke, artist-led activity.
- The Poplar Consortium, Thamesmead Consortia, and other area-based models have

set new standards for creative partnership, with communities reporting sustained arts engagement, improved student confidence, and positive pedagogical shifts in schools.

- The business model is financially resilient, with additional community renewal achieved through affordable workspace and a social enterprise approach supporting both artists and school partners.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: Bow Arts’ Consortia Model demonstrates how cities can unlock affordable space for artists, deliver high-quality arts education, and build inclusive, sustainable creative ecosystems through partnership, shared resource models, and local reinvestment. Brighton & Hove could explore connecting local schools and arts organisations, activate vacant or underused council spaces for creative activity, and leverage artist studio income to subsidise education work. The model’s proven track record shows how financial efficiency, cross-sector collaboration, and embedded artist support can power both educational excellence and a thriving local arts infrastructure.

OUTCOME 6: A city that is an ambitious and innovative leader in public art

The research highlights that while there are notable public art initiatives in Brighton & Hove, visual arts in public spaces could be given even greater prominence.

The city's *One landscape, many views: Public Art Strategy 2022-2032*⁶⁵, sets out the mission for Brighton & Hove "to become the UK's leading city for remarkable, sustainable public art and public realm, with inclusivity at the heart of our work," but there is recognition that realising this ambition "will require...partnerships, with developers, arts and cultural organisations and businesses, the City Council, artists, makers and craftspeople, and above all with the residents of the city." As articulated in the strategy and emerging from the consultation that was undertaken whilst developing it, "Public art makes cities what they are... it will play a central role", but delivering this depends on focused commitment, collaboration, and keeping it a sustained priority.

Brighton & Hove is one of only a few local authorities in the country to maintain a specific s106 obligation for public art, mandating that developers include public art commissions or other opportunities for artists in any development above a certain size. The exact scope and wording of these obligations are detailed in the *Public Art PAN*⁶⁶ and align to the principles outlined in the Public Art Strategy: *sustainability, quality, local significance and investment in our creative community*. S106 funds for public art must be spent on physical and permanent 'artistic components' (commissioned artworks, street furniture or

65 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-arts/arts-and-culture/public-art-strategy-2022-2032>

66 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/public-art-planning-advice-note-pan10>

other landscaping elements designed by an artist) artistic infrastructure (e.g. outdoor galleries) and have to be located on site or in the immediate vicinity of the development that triggered the obligation.

The use of s106 agreements and the CIL are practical tools, but survey respondents emphasise that "investment in the built environment should be matched with creative capital, leaving a positive and lasting cultural legacy citywide." There is agreement that significant potential exists for public art to play a greater role in the city's identity, and that it should be more fully "embedded... into the fabric of the city to reflect Brighton & Hove's unique history, its diverse communities, its creativity, its innovation and its energy."

Consultation participants highlight the need for more visible, high-quality public art so that, "the city itself becomes the gallery" and "further builds Brighton & Hove's reputation as an innovator in terms of public art commissioning."

There is a sense that public art can do more to "create connections between people, places and ideas" and "enable a shared understanding," but that at present, such connections are uneven. The need expressed is that public art should "help foster a sense of local identity," be "participatory," and reflect the principle that "public art, in all its diversity, can mediate all spaces as places."

There is a consistent thread within the consultation seeking more prominent, well-maintained, and ambitious landmark works. As summarised by one respondent, "Creating the opportunity to have a voice, you need to be able to walk a space and see yourself, recognise yourself, recognise your history, recognise your contribution to the space."

Stakeholder ideas and recommendations emerging from the research, interviews, and



Above Esme Curtis-Lundberg at Phoenix Art Space, photo by Alun Callender

collaborative workshops include:

- Develop a city-wide public art programme with murals, sculpture trails, and interactive digital installations.
- Secure funding to leverage working with property developers to deliver ambitious public art commissions.
- Launch an annual public art commission. Integrating visual arts more prominently into existing festivals such as Brighton Fringe.
- Develop a new public art trail along the seafront promenade, building on the programming of Hove Plinth with new commissions.

AMBITION: Collaborative, culture-led public art commissioning

Brighton & Hove's public art sector thrives on grassroots creativity, active civic and community organisations, and a spirit of co-creation in the public realm. The shared ambition is to be more ambitious about the city's public art offer and to integrate, maintain and promote it in more coherent ways. This culture-led approach draws inspiration from Brighton & Hove's existing cultural assets, and sets the stage for international artistic exchange and innovation.

Building on the existing Public Art Strategy, and success stories like Hove Plinth and Hove Civic Society's 'Sculpture in Our City' framework, the next step is to develop a commissioning model that:

- **Amplifying the city's cultural assets**, communities, and creative energy.
- **Embedding the knowledge and expertise of a diverse range of community and cultural groups** (including civic societies, neighbourhood alliances, cultural associations, and grassroots collectives).
- **Leveraging planning mechanisms**, including s106/CIL.
- **Attracting national and international artists** who are invited to collaborate with, and be inspired by, the city's culture, spaces, and stories.

This ambition could be achieved by building effective partnerships between the council, a wide spectrum of community-connected groups, cultural bodies, developers, and international networks. The result being a public art programme that is firmly culture-led and responsive to local identity and heritage, while also being outward-looking and globally relevant. This could include:

- *Formally including civic societies, creative collectives, neighbourhood and community groups, and arts organisations as co-commissioners* or advisors within the public art steering group, granting them meaningful roles in major project decision-making.

- *Developing new consultation and co-creation protocols*, ensuring commissioning briefs are shaped by local cultural expertise, while also being deliberately open to national and international artists.

- *Further strategic use of s106* to fund a mix of commissions, from locally embedded works to international landmark projects which are brokered between developers with artists, demonstrating both local resonance and international calibre.

- *Creating a transparent and active resource bank of local and international artists, and curators*, encouraging vibrant cross-cultural collaboration and exchange by building on the strong networks which already exist in and outside of the city.

- *Facilitating skills-building, and commissioning training* for community-based and cultural partners, so they can actively participate in project design, artist selection, and ambitious international commissioning processes.

- *Partnering with the city's existing festivals, and public art events* to platform new works and major commissions, positioning Brighton & Hove as a leading stage for world-class, culture-led public art (linking with Outcome 1's ambitions for visual arts programming).

- *Launching city-to-city artistic exchanges and residencies* (building on Outcome 2's Ambition), welcoming acclaimed international artists to work collaboratively with local partners and communities.

Rationale

- *Planning and delivery context:* A key enabler for raising quality and consistency is Brighton & Hove's specific s106 public art obligation, governed by the Public Art PAN. While CIL will replace other s106 obligations as it is introduced, the s106 public art obligation remains in place. CIL is broader in scope and geography and faces higher competition across infrastructure priorities. Together, these mechanisms can help structure a pipeline from site-specific commissions to complementary, public realm improvements.

- *Existing strengths:* The city's track record, exemplified by projects like Hove Plinth, reveal the value of culture-led commissioning at the intersection of grassroots and cultural expertise. Scaling up this model with an international outlook could increase Brighton & Hove's artistic profile in the UK and internationally.

- *Audience development:* Public art that authentically reflects the city's cultural story vitally engages both local communities and visitors. International commissions, festival links, and exchanges offer the potential to enhance Brighton & Hove's global presence.

- *Strategic alignment:* The approach aligns directly with ACE's Let's Create and the city's Public Art Strategy by focusing on participation, dynamic place-making, and cultural collaboration, underpinned by innovative use of planning opportunities.

Implementation

- *Inclusive partnership protocols:* Structure commissioning panels to include diverse local groups, artists, civic leaders, and international advisors, with a clear mandate to raise ambition and broaden perspective.

- *S106/CIL brokerage:* Offer accessible guidance

and proactive brokerage so developers can fund commissions embracing both local culture and world-class artistic practice.

- *Project pipeline:* Publish an open, evolving pipeline of sites and theme briefs, developed through community consultation, and ensure that open calls appeal equally to local and international artists.

- *Resource bank and training:* Develop a public directory of artists and partners, and provide commissioning/curatorial training for community and cultural organisations to encourage broad collaboration.

- *Festival integration and exchanges:* Use the platform of city festivals to commission flagship public artworks and to invite international artists for residencies, exchanges, and public engagement.

- *Evaluation and legacy:* Measure success via both local impact (participation, skills, civic pride) and international outcomes (press/profile, visitation, artist mobility).

Potential Impact

- *Civic and creative capacity:* Broader, deeper community involvement in the commissioning process will build skills, diversify voices, and strengthen Brighton & Hove's culture-led identity.

- *Raising the city's profile:* A truly collaborative, culture-led commissioning ecosystem will produce public art that is powerfully local and inspirationally international, reinforcing Brighton & Hove as a beacon for creative public art.

- *Sustainable funding:* Proactive use of s106/CIL and developer commissions ensures a healthy pipeline of new works and long-term sector resilience.

- *A city alive with culture:* Public spaces across the city will be animated by ambitious, imaginative, and distinctive culture-led public art, attracting new artists, new audiences, and fresh critical attention.

CASE STUDIES

1. Creative Folkestone, the Triennial and culture-led public art

Folkestone has become an internationally recognised model for ambitious, collaborative, and culture-led public art commissioning. Championing large-scale, community-engaged, and globally relevant programming, the town's flagship event, the Folkestone Triennial, anchors a year-round vision for culture and creativity embedded in the public realm, every three years.

Governance: The lead partner is Creative Folkestone, an independent charitable trust established in 2002. The charity oversees the Triennial, manages the Creative Quarter (which includes over 90 buildings for studios, workspace, and homes), and delivers year-round cultural programming. Governance is provided by a Board of Trustees, chaired by Sir Roger De Haan, with strategic liaison to Folkestone & Hythe District Council, ACE, local partners, and property/landowners. Local authority funding, charitable grants (including s106/CIL on occasion for major developments), earned income, and philanthropic support underpin the model.

Programming & Delivery: The Folkestone Triennial, launched in 2008, is the UK's largest recurring exhibition of new public art commissions. Curators invite internationally significant and emerging artists to create

ambitious, site-specific works including sculpture, installations, digital interventions, performances, and participatory projects, which transform Folkestone's public spaces, seafront, parks, and historic sites. Commissions respond to the town's unique stories: its history, landscape, social fabric, and environmental context. Year-round, Creative Folkestone delivers residencies, artist-led education, and participatory projects, working with schools, local groups, youth, and residents. Many Triennial works become permanent fixtures, building the Folkestone Artworks collection, the UK's largest urban outdoor exhibition of contemporary art.

Funding: Creative Folkestone is sustained by a mix of public funding (from Folkestone & Hythe District Council, ACE, and occasional government funding), philanthropy (notably the De Haan Charitable Trust), grants, and income from workspace lettings, event ticketing, and sponsorship. s106 has been used to support some public realm improvements in partnership with the council.

Impact: The Folkestone Triennial has generated over £100 million in local economic impact over the past two decades. Each edition features up to 18 artists from around the world, with works installed in unexpected locations (disused railways, churches, towers, parks, and along the seafront) attracting international attention. The 2025 Triennial foregrounds themes of landscape, migration, and community, and is curated to make Folkestone 'an open-air gallery'. Audiences are frequently over 220,000 and the Triennial is cited as a benchmark for culture-led regeneration and creative placemaking across Europe. Its legacy includes:

- Elevation of Folkestone's profile as an innovative and creative coastal destination.
- Transformation of the public realm, with world-class permanent artworks by Antony

Gormley, Tracey Emin, and Cornelia Parker, for example.

- Strengthening of local economies, businesses, and creative industries through sustained investment and programming.
- Inclusive creative opportunities such as participatory projects, open studios, education, and festivals, which directly involve Folkestone's communities.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: Folkestone showcases how culture-led public art commissioning can transform a city's identity, civic landscape, and international profile. It exemplifies how sustained partnerships between an independent trust, local authorities, and international artists can revitalise the public realm, drive economic regeneration, and place contemporary art at the heart of a place.

2. Nantes, France: The city where public art shapes urban life

Nantes has transformed itself from an industrial port city in decline to one of Europe's great exemplars of ambitious, citywide public art and cultural leadership. Over the past three decades, Nantes has moved beyond one-off events and flagship buildings to embed contemporary art in the everyday life, identity, and economy of the city. This transformation has been achieved through visionary cultural policy, sustained public investment, partnership across local government and creative industries, and innovative programming that fuses public art, tourism, urban regeneration, and civic pride.

Strategic leadership, vision and ambition: In the late 1980s city leaders decided to drive regeneration through culture and creativity rather than traditional infrastructure. The city rejected the idea of a single 'national

gallery' instead making the city itself an open-air gallery. The annual 'Le Voyage à Nantes' festival, launched in 2012 and coordinated by a dedicated public company (SPL Le Voyage à Nantes), has become the core delivery vehicle, commissioning both temporary and permanent public artworks along a signature citywide trail. Many temporary works are retained, growing a collection that is across neighbourhoods, waterfronts, and civic spaces.

From art playgrounds and architectural interventions to artist-designed shop signs, Nantes has made contemporary art a living part of civic identity. Each edition of Le Voyage à Nantes is shaped through collaboration with park services, local business, and residents, ensuring that public art brings tangible benefit and pride. The green trail physically links artworks to communities, connecting the city through creativity. Major permanent art trails, such as Estuaire (Nantes–Saint-Nazaire), insert ambitious site-specific artworks into both the urban and riverside landscape, extending the city's creative presence well beyond its centre.

Governance and funding: Nantes's approach features integrated, cross-sector governance. Le Voyage à Nantes is a public company established by the city and metropolitan government. Project funding draws from municipal, regional, European, and private sources, and major projects (such as Les Machines de l'île) have received substantial public and private investment, thanks to a civic commitment to the role of culture in urban life. Art is integrated with planning, ecology, tourism, education, and social policy, creating sustainability and wide benefit.

Impact:

- Nantes is accredited as being an international exemplar for public art-led regeneration, with more than 100 permanent and 60+ annual temporary works now found in its public realm.

- Le Voyage à Nantes attracts more than three million visitors per year, generating upwards of €60 million for the local economy annually and invigorating city identity.

- The city's reputation, population, and economy have seen major growth, with public art cited as a driver of both community pride and external investment.

- Landmark works have reimaged former industrial districts into dynamic cultural and commercial neighbourhoods.

- Public art has become a community asset with local people and communities participating in curation, and artworks anchoring new gathering spaces across Nantes.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: Nantes offers a blueprint for harnessing public art as a driver for urban regeneration, civic pride, and city branding. Its success is grounded in visionary leadership, a dedicated public commissioning body, and collaborative planning across government, artists, business, and local residents.



OUTCOME 7: A city with a strong and unified vision for visual arts

A strong, coherent and shared strategic approach will be essential for underpinning the preceding Outcomes in the report, and for ensuring the next chapter for visual arts in Brighton & Hove. The city's visual arts sector demonstrates energy and ambition, with many survey respondents, interviewees and Innovation Sprint participants highlighting the depth of leadership and experience in local networks, organisations, and communities. There is a clear appetite to harness this energy and move forward together, ensuring that the vision of Brighton & Hove's visual arts leaders, translates into both citywide and sector-wide progress.

Consultation respondents voice the importance of catalysing action, but note a desire for clarity

on next steps and on who will drive momentum and the need for *“long term planning”*. Many highlight the need for a cohesive overarching city strategy suggesting that, *“A Council cultural strategy is required to contextualise all cultural activities, priorities and identify funding and delivery mechanisms, considering cross programming, greater collaboration, and reflecting that artforms and many artists’ practice is broad.”*

There is recognition that greater cohesion and unity will unlock impact and resilience. As one contributor said, *“There’s a need for joined up thinking and doing; building strong, creative and dynamic relationships. Learning from other cities. Investment of time, energy and funds made more equally and not just to the usual big Brighton tourist heritage sites & buildings. Invest in local people and talents. Let’s make Brighton exciting and forward thinking.”*

Ideas for articulating a strong and unified vision

for visual arts in the city were clearly identified throughout our consultation process. The ideas which surface include:

- Continue the Project Board steering this research and look to expand it as a forum for continued discussion and collaboration to keep this roadmap on track. Alternatively, establish regular governance forums or a city-region visual arts leadership group, bringing together key sector, council, and regional partners to align priorities, share information, and monitor progress. This could build on the work of an existing group, such as the Brighton & Hove Visual Arts Coalition, aligning with their ambitions.
- Develop a visual arts leadership programme for people working in the visual arts to support their ability to develop and implement policy and lead their organisations.
- Appoint a Visual Arts Ambassador within Brighton & Hove City Council to advocate for the sector locally, regionally, and to participate in regional and devolution negotiations, advocating for dedicated cultural investment, policy levers (such as business rates reform and workspace provision), and opportunities for joint programmes that benefit Brighton & Hove's visual arts.

- Embed visual arts as a core priority within all city strategic plans: economic, regeneration, tourism, education, and health to ensure visual art and culture shapes policy at every level.

Significantly, the landscape for city and sector leadership is evolving rapidly. The approval in 2025 of a new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) for Sussex, including Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, and West Sussex, will fundamentally reshape local strategic power, governance, and investment. From 2026, this new regional body, steered by a directly elected

Sussex Mayor and representatives from all partner councils, will hold devolved powers and resources across critical areas: economic growth, planning, transport, skills, housing, environment, and (potentially) culture.

For Brighton & Hove, Sussex devolution offers both opportunities and challenges. The city will gain a greater voice in strategic planning with decisions and investments once made in Westminster being shaped closer to home, with input from local partners across the creative and visitor economies. The devolved funding includes the promise of a 30-year capital fund offering the possibility for the city's visual arts sector to advocate for investment in cultural infrastructure, space, skills and sector development. Whilst elections for the Mayor of Sussex and Brighton were paused until 2028, work to establish the authority continues and targeted investment funding will be made available from 2026.

Although our consultation did not directly address Devolution, the Outcomes and Ambitions in this report could be used as a starting point to make this case for investment. Brighton & Hove must be quick to articulate a bold, unified vision for visual arts: one that is championed not just locally, but as part of the wider Sussex offer. With new regional forums for strategic planning, investment, and joint commissioning, the city will need to ensure visual arts are embedded in every conversation about regeneration, economic growth, and civic identity.

The ability to broker partnerships with neighbouring authorities, universities, and business will become essential for leveraging joint funding and amplifying impact while

Left Martin Goya Business DJs at Fabrica Gallery, Dreamy Place 2023

safeguarding the distinctiveness and dynamism that set Brighton & Hove apart. The city will need to advocate for representation and resource allocation that reflects the central role of arts and culture in its own economy and identity. With structural change ahead, this is also an opportunity to shape governance, for example, proposing sector-led leadership groups, city-region visual arts forums, or joint cultural strategies as central pillars of the new regional framework.

If Brighton & Hove's visual arts sector is organised, visible, and forward-looking, it will be able to influence new strategic structures, draw down greater resources, and secure a place for creativity at the heart of Sussex's ongoing economic and cultural ambitions.

AMBITION: Coordinated strategic arts leadership for the city and for Sussex

Brighton & Hove could be recognised as both the catalyst and the anchor for a unified, forward-looking vision for visual arts, driving excellence, connectivity, and regional impact across Sussex. The city's ambition is to move beyond fragmented planning and to champion a powerful, city-owned visual arts strategy that inspires confidence, secures investment, and positions Brighton & Hove at the heart of the region's creative future.

Brighton & Hove has an opportunity to position itself as a lead in shaping and piloting a Sussex-wide visual arts commissioning vehicle, a collaborative structure that empowers local artists, leverages collective resources, and delivers ambitious projects reflecting the distinctiveness and energy of the city and the whole region. **By focusing on strong leadership, clear governance, and clear cross-sector partnerships, the city will be able to channel creative vision into coordinated action** ensuring that visual arts are central to regeneration, placemaking, and economic growth.

Implementation

- *Regional leadership:* Brighton & Hove can develop its role as a major centre of visual arts practice in Sussex by taking a leading role in strategic regional conversations on culture. This should be achieved through open and collaborative dialogue with regional partners and should ensure visual arts are embedded in all strategic growth, planning, and regeneration agendas at local and regional levels.
- *Commissioning vehicle design:* Drive the development and piloting of a Sussex Visual Arts Commissioning Vehicle, a formal structure or consortium co-owned by Brighton & Hove and Sussex partners. Responsibilities include pooling investment (public, private, CIL), commissioning landmark city-region projects, and coordinating delivery of cross-boundary initiatives. Would need to explicitly align with Brighton & Hove's maintained s106 public art obligation as a baseline commissioning lever for site-specific works, while exploring complementary use of CIL (recognising its broader competition) and other public/private funds for wider public realm and cross-boundary projects.
- *Embedding in strategy:* Actively embed visual arts as a strategic priority in city and Sussex-wide growth agendas, regeneration plans, the combined authority's investment programmes, and all relevant sector forums.
- *Visible champions:* Appoint and empower visible champions (such as a city Visual Arts Ambassador or co-chairs from the sector and civic institutions) to lead on advocacy, partnership-building, and external promotion, both locally and in the new combined authority.
- *Operational partnerships:* Build targeted alliances with other Sussex local authorities, anchor cultural and educational institutions, business networks, and funders, focused on practical opportunities for joint programming,

shared space, and innovative funding models.

Potential Impact

- *Strategic city-region influence:* Brighton & Hove will play a pivotal role in shaping cross-Sussex priorities and investments. The city's leadership will ensure visual arts are embedded in all strategic growth, planning, and regeneration agendas at local and regional levels.
- *Amplified investment and ambition:* A city- and region-wide commissioning vehicle, underpinned by a strong, unified vision, will enable the sector to unlock new levels of public and private funding, drive ambitious cross-boundary projects, and elevate the scale and visibility of visual arts activity.
- *Stronger sector cohesion and advocacy:* Unified leadership and regular partnership forums will break down silos, reduce duplication, increase collaboration, and inspire confidence within the sector. The model will ensure that diverse voices, from grassroots to major institutions, are included and heard.
- *Community and economic impact:* By positioning creativity and visual art at the heart of Sussex's identity, Brighton & Hove will nurture local talent, foster inclusive participation, support skills development, and contribute to economic growth through increased cultural tourism, investment, and creative enterprise.
- *National and international reputation:* Leading the region's visual arts strategy and commissioning will reinforce Brighton & Hove's brand as a centre of innovation, collaboration, and cultural leadership, attracting artists, collaborators, and audiences from across the UK and beyond.

CASE STUDY: Bristol & the West of England: Providing strategic leadership and regional presence in visual art.

Bristol offers an example of how strong city-based leadership in the visual arts can catalyse regional influence and help steer decision-making at the level of a combined authority. Over the last decade, the city's collaborative and forward-looking approach, including the launch of the West of England Visual Arts Alliance (WEVAA), has grown into a model for coordinating strategy, commissioning, and advocacy across an entire city-region.

Strategic Leadership and Regional

Collaboration: Bristol's visual arts ecosystem is built on partnership - WEVAA, co-led by Spike Island and Visual Arts South West, brought together Bristol City Council, universities, local authorities, and arts organisations across the West of England. Their shared vision centred on making the region progressive, sustainable, and inclusive for visual arts, focusing on artist development, fairer access, and a joined-up approach to programming and commissioning. The city's longstanding emphasis on cultural leadership, through the 'One City' Culture Board and collaborative frameworks, primed Bristol to play a convening role as ambitions shifted from local delivery to a regional scale.

City leadership to regional impact:

As governance shifted with the formation of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, Bristol's visual arts leaders were well placed to play a significant role. The city's long-established cultural networks and policy experience meant that, rather than competing, Bristol convened and represented partners from Bath, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire under joint priorities for culture and visual arts. WEVAA's achievements in commissioning, artist support, and advocacy helped shape the cultural objectives for the combined authority, ensuring that visual arts were recognised as a

pillar for talent, place-making, and economic renewal for the wider region.

This leadership translated into direct influence on new flagship regional programmes such as Culture West, a £3.1m initiative designed and delivered by the Combined Authority in partnership with city-based and regional partners. Bristol's visual arts organisations acted as delivery leads and strategic advisers, co-designing projects and aligning them with regional targets for artist opportunities, sector resilience, and wider community participation. The experience and capacity built through the city's networks and the WEVAA programme fed directly into the region's Cultural Plan and into the establishment of the West of England Cultural Compact.

Programming and Commissioning: With this joined-up strategy, the region has been able to:

- Commission cross-county public art, skills and mentoring, and collaborative exhibitions, building visibility and connectivity beyond a single city focus.
- Create regional talent development and bursary programmes, prioritising local artists and underrepresented groups across all West of England authorities.
- Embed creative development in city-region regeneration, spatial planning, and major investment aligning visual arts initiatives with broader growth and placemaking across the whole combined authority area.

Impact: Through this approach, Bristol and the West of England have:

- Enabled and fostered new artist opportunities, career pathways, and public art projects accessible across urban and rural communities.
- Ensured that visual arts are embedded in the

West of England Combined Authority's business plans, economic strategies, and large-scale funding bids.

- Inspired other sub-regional collaborations, including new alliances for music, digital creativity, and community co-commissioning, each benefitting from a strategic model rooted in Bristol's initial leadership.

Relevance for Brighton & Hove: Bristol's journey from a city with strong internal networks to a regionally recognised leader demonstrates how thoughtful strategic leadership, inclusive alliances, and proactive engagement with devolution can elevate visual arts beyond local boundaries. By chairing and steering alliances, helping set regional priorities, and co-designing commissioning vehicles, Bristol ensures the visual arts remain central to the region and its combined authority's plans.

Right Grant Foster at Phoenix Art Space, 2025, photo by Bernard G Mills



Implementing the outcomes: designing a way forward

Below is an outline implementation plan to strategically inform decision making and coordinate activity across the city and partners, turning the seven outcomes in this report into a phased plan for delivery. It is designed to guide leadership, investment choices, and operational planning, ensuring existing assets are leveraged first while laying the groundwork for long-term system change and regional influence.

In the short term, immediate gains can be made by building on existing networks, spaces, and partnerships, consolidating integrated programming and audience growth (Outcomes 1–3), while laying devolution groundwork for strengthened strategic leadership (Outcome 7), so that the sector is ready to influence and deliver within new regional governance.

Medium-term commitment should secure the enabling infrastructure for growth from affordable workspace, and a culture-led public art pipeline, through to a visible talent and careers ecosystem, embedding Outcomes 3, 4, and 5 through planning policy, brokerage, and coordinated programmes.

Long-term focus is to position Brighton & Hove firmly as a leader within the visual arts across Sussex, operating a coherent city-region model that sustains profile, investment, and inclusive participation over time (Outcome 7, with reinforcing impacts across Outcomes 1–6).

Short Term (0–2 years)

- **Strengthen and centralise existing visual arts networks and partnerships**

Build on the BHCA, bringing together council officers, sector leaders, education, business, and health partners to oversee delivery, ensure alignment with citywide policy, and maintain momentum. Support and coordinate ongoing discussions around a citywide creative workspace network and dedicated networks like BVAC, recognising that targeted investment, both in time and resources, can deliver quick wins for collaboration, shared goals, monitoring progress, and effective adaptation to changing circumstances.

- **Outcome 1: A city that is a high-profile and well-regarded international centre for visual arts**

Ambition: High-profile, integrated visual arts programming

Enhance collaboration between Brighton Dome and Brighton & Hove Museums, including a joint Contemporary Curator appointment, integrating programming to attract national/international curators and broaden audiences.

Rationale: Immediate potential as infrastructure and leadership are already in place.

- **Outcome 2: A city which is home to a recognised and successful visual art marketplace**

Ambition: Multi-platform marketplace for the exhibition, presentation, and sale of visual art

Coordinate galleries, pop-up venues, and festivals to expand meanwhile use and create joint selling/exhibition programmes; launch or adapt a digital platform.

Rationale: Builds directly on existing success of Artists Open Houses and existing ecosystem.

- **Outcome 3: A city where art is embedded in its life and fabric**

Ambition: Stronger partnerships and cross-sector collaboration

Launch or develop existing networks (e.g. BVAC) into a cross-sector Visual Arts Partnership Forum to broker projects, pilot digital resource-sharing.

Rationale: Can be mobilised quickly with minimal setup.

- **Outcome 7 (Groundwork phase): A city with a strong and unified vision for visual art**

Ambition: Coordinated strategic arts leadership for the city and for Sussex

Convene the Brighton & Hove Visual Arts Leadership Forum (either as a development of an existing network or as a new body). Engage in devolution consultations and formation (2026-2027) and build further relationships with Sussex authorities and cultural partners. This will include the production of advocacy materials to position visual arts at the heart of the new MCCA.

Rationale: Essential early action before the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Mayoral Authority is constituted.

Medium Term (2–5 years)

Requires formalised agreements, policy shifts, and scaled investment:

- **Outcome 4: A city that is attractive for artists to work in**

Ambition: Creating dynamic places and spaces for artists to work

Scale meanwhile space projects; embed workspace provision in planning policy; develop workspace-matching digital platform.

- **Outcome 5: A city with a strong local ecosystem where diverse talent thrives**

Ambition: Nurturing visual arts talent through an incubator and career ecosystem

Launch a new Visual Arts Incubator with mentoring and career pathways; strengthen links to local creative industries.

- **Outcome 6: A city that is an ambitious and innovative leader in public art**

Ambition: Collaborative, culture-led public art commissioning

Pilot joint public art projects with developers, businesses, and communities; continue to leverage public art requirements into planning policy; secure long-term funding streams.

- **Outcome 7 (Transition into delivery): A city with a strong and unified vision for visual art**

Ambition: Coordinated and collaborative strategic arts leadership for the city and for Sussex

By mid-term, formalise collaborative city and regional visual arts leadership structures within the MCCA and pilot a Sussex-wide commissioning framework.

Long Term (5+ years)

System-shaping leadership and region-wide infrastructure:

- **Outcome 7: A city with a strong and unified vision for visual art**

Ambition: Coordinated strategic arts leadership for the city and for Sussex

Operate a fully functional Sussex Visual Arts Commissioning Vehicle; deliver landmark cross-Sussex visual arts projects; embed visual arts into regional growth and regeneration strategies.

Phased Summary Table

Outcome Ambition	Short Term (0–2 yrs)	Medium Term (2–5 yrs)	Long Term (5+ yrs)
<p>Outcome 1: A city that is a high-profile and well-regarded international centre for visual arts <i>Ambition: High-profile, integrated visual arts programming</i></p>	Integrated programming; curator appointment	Consolidate partnerships	—
<p>Outcome 2: A city which is home to a recognised and successful visual art marketplace <i>Ambition: Multi-platform marketplace for the exhibition, presentation, and sale of visual art</i></p>	Pop-ups, digital platform, gallery collaboration	Expand into citywide network, larger sales events	Scale digital/physical marketplace
<p>Outcome 3: A city where art is embedded in its life and fabric <i>Ambition: Stronger partnerships and cross-sector collaboration</i></p>	Partnership Forum launch; digital hub	Scale cross-sector projects	Review and embed collaboration
<p>Outcome 4: A city that is attractive for artists to work in <i>Ambition: Creating dynamic places and spaces for artists to work</i></p>	—	Map spaces, pilot meanwhile studios Embed workspace policy; expand models	Secure permanent Creative Land Trust
<p>Outcome 5: A city with a strong local ecosystem where diverse talent thrives <i>Ambition: Nurturing visual arts talent through an incubator and career ecosystem</i></p>	—	Incubator pilot, initial mentoring Full programme; cross-sector links	Sustain and scale ecosystem
<p>Outcome 6: A city that is an ambitious and innovative leader in public art <i>Ambition: Collaborative, culture-led public art commissioning</i></p>	Pilot new public art partnerships; policy change	Landmark commissions	—
<p>Outcome 7: A city with a strong and unified vision for visual art <i>Ambition: Coordinated strategic arts leadership for the city and for Sussex</i></p>	Leadership Group; devolution engagement; advocacy prep	Formalise MCCA role; pilot commissioning vehicle	Operate regional commissioning & advocacy

Conclusion

Brighton & Hove's visual arts ecology is rich, resilient, and ready to take a decisive step forward. The analysis in this report confirms a city with deep creative assets: studios, galleries, festivals, education and a vibrant public realm; matched by high audience engagement and a collaborative culture that connects practitioners with residents and visitors across the year. At the same time, the sector faces material pressures: the loss and closure of exhibition spaces, constrained public funding, rising costs, and a shortage of affordable, flexible workspace. Some of the city's talent and strength remains under the radar, and there are opportunities to make the visual arts more visible across the cityscape. These realities have sharpened the case for coordinated action. This report has set out both the evidence and a practical response: seven outcomes, each with a clear ambition, that together provide an achievable plan to strengthen profile, market opportunities, public art, space, talent, partnerships, and leadership.

Delivering these outcomes will require disciplined sequencing and sustained partnership. In the short term, high-impact initiatives such as integrated curatorial programming across anchor institutions, activation of meanwhile and pop-up spaces, foundations for a coordinated sales marketplace, and a partnership forum, can build momentum quickly while improving visibility and opportunity for living artists. In parallel, a new Visual Arts Incubator can be conceived, whilst workspaces can be mapped and brokered at neighbourhood level, and digital resources can be shared making the ecosystem accessible. These early actions will demonstrate

progress, build confidence, and set the tone for collaboration.

Medium-term priorities will consolidate growth. Cross-venue seasons and invited curators can deepen national and international profile; a city-as-gallery marketplace can expand audiences and the collector base; affordable workspace models can be embedded in planning; and cross-sector projects can scale across health, education, tourism, and business. A coordinated approach to public art which is grounded in culture-led commissioning, robust use of the city's s106 obligation, and active co-creation with communities, can animate regeneration, transport hubs, green spaces and the seafront, making the city itself a visible gallery. As these strands develop, they will increase sector capacity, diversify income, and strengthen the city's visual arts proposition.

Long-term system change will secure resilience. A durable portfolio of workspace models can anchor affordable provision across neighbourhoods. A mature incubator and career ecosystem can retain graduates, widen participation, and grow leadership from under-represented groups. A Sussex-wide commissioning vehicle and a visible leadership group can embed visual arts in city-region priorities, unlock pooled investment, and sustain collaborative delivery beyond political cycles. Landmark public art, commissioned through a culture-led model, can further cement the city's profile at national and international levels. These structural shifts will future-proof the sector and ensure that opportunity is both equitable and sustainable.

The benefits extend well beyond the arts. A stronger visual arts sector will contribute to Brighton & Hove's economy through skilled employment, freelance opportunities, and the visitor offer; support health and wellbeing through creative participation; enrich learning and skills through partnerships with schools, colleges and universities; and advance climate literacy and sustainable practice aligned to the city's net zero ambitions and biosphere leadership. These cross-sector gains are integral to the Economic Plan and to the city's identity as an inclusive, outward-looking place where creativity is part of everyday life.

The path ahead is clear and achievable. By aligning leadership, committing to the phased plan, and investing time and resources in the ambitions set out, Brighton & Hove can build on and convert the existing strong creative

foundations into a coherent, confident platform for the next decade. The call to action is shared: institutions, independent spaces, education partners, developers, funders, businesses, communities and artists each have a role. If the sector moves together with focus, generosity, and pace, the city can secure a resilient infrastructure, a visible marketplace for living artists, a culture-led approach to public art, and a talent pipeline that reflects and serves all of Brighton & Hove's communities. In doing so, visual arts will remain central to the city's cultural, social, economic and civic life now and for the future.

Below Natasha Bidgood at Phoenix Art Space, photo by Hugh Fox



Section 3: Appendices



Appendix 1 - The Brief

Brighton & Hove's Visual arts sector is at a pivotal moment, primed for a confident and sustainable future. The city's creative energy and independent spirit are widely recognised, but recent years have brought new pressures—funding cuts, venue closures and economic challenges. In response, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), with the support of Arts Council England (ACE) and in association with the Brighton Visual Arts Coalition (BVAC), and the Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance (BHCA) commissioned Cultural Associates Oxford (CAO) to deliver an analysis of the city's Visual arts sector, with the aim of shaping a confident, sustainable future.

The brief was clear: to map and analyse the Visual arts in Brighton & Hove, identifying established and exemplar practice, leadership,

gaps in provision, and opportunities for future development. Our ambition is for this report to serve as a catalyst for real change: to offer Brighton & Hove a forward-looking and practical plan that supports its artists, organisations, and communities; to advocate for investment and partnership; and to position the city's Visual arts at the heart of its cultural, social, economic, and civic life.

CAO brought together a team with expertise in cultural strategy, sector research, and stakeholder engagement who:

- Conducted a review of existing research, policy, and sector data, mapping the breadth of the Visual arts landscape in Brighton & Hove

Above Flight of the Langoustine,
Pierre Dimantopoulos

- Undertook a detailed horizon scan, comparing Brighton & Hove’s offer with leading Visual arts destinations regionally, nationally, and internationally, to contextualise its strengths and challenges

- Engaged widely with the sector through surveys, interviews, workshops, site visits, walking tours, and open calls for input, ensuring that the voices of artists, organisations, audiences, and partners were central to our findings

- Analysed insights from research and consultation to identify priority needs, gaps, and opportunities

- Developed a set of practical, evidence-based recommendations, designed to be both ambitious and achievable, and to inform a dynamic roadmap for the sector’s future

- Informed through innovation sprints, 121 interviews, a sector-wide survey and insight from the project board

The report is designed to build a sustainable, inclusive, and highly visible Visual arts ecosystem—one that reflects Brighton & Hove’s independent spirit and creative energy, and that is resilient in the face of future change. And is structured to provide:

- An overview of Brighton & Hove’s Visual arts sector, including its creative context, infrastructure, education, funding, and economic impact

- A summary of what exists in the city and what can be grown, key challenges and recent changes in the sector, including the loss of spaces and funding, and the impact on artists’ livelihoods

- Insights from consultation with stakeholders across the city and benchmarking against comparable cities and models of best practice

- A set of actionable recommendations, each underpinned by evidence including consultation with the sector through various methods, and designed to catalyse positive change, strengthen resilience, and unlock new opportunities for growth and collaboration

- An ambitious but achievable roadmap for the next decade, setting out a vision for Brighton & Hove as a leading creative destination where the Visual arts are central to the city’s identity and prosperity.

Appendix 2 - CAO’s Approach to the Brighton & Hove Visual Arts Mapping Exercise: A Logic Model

At the outset of the project the CAO team together with the project Steering Group developed a project blueprint as well as a Logic Model to help ensure that there was a structured approach that would guide the

B&H Visual Arts Analysis and Opportunities

Aim: To analyse and identify actionable opportunities for the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove, which is a high priority for artists, audiences, cultural organisations, Brighton & Hove Council and Arts Council England.

Approach: The work will include:

- a mapping and analysis of the current state of the visual arts sector;
- established and exemplar practice and leadership (UK and international comparator models);
- gaps in provision;
- opportunities for development;
- practical, evidence-based recommendations for strengthening the sector in future.

The work will draw on a breadth of knowledge and expertise, captured through a mixed methodology which is inclusive and supports a diversity of contributions.

The analysis will reflect the current picture, but be future-facing in direction.

Key output: An actionable report which articulates the make-up of Brighton & Hove’s visual arts sector, with key recommendations and practical ways forward.

How the Visual Art Analysis will be used:

The report will be used to make visible, widely celebrate, advocate for and guide the future development of the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove.

Future models identified for sustaining and growing the visual arts will inform the 10-year strategy of investment and development, putting visual culture and creativity at the heart of the vision for Brighton & Hove.

Project Logic Model

Inputs

- Commissioning and support from Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton Visual Arts Coalition (BVAC), and Brighton & Hove Culture Alliance (BHCA)
- Expertise of the CAO team in cultural strategy, research, stakeholder engagement, and sector analysis
- Access to existing research, policy documents, sector data, and previous consultancy reports
Collaboration with a dedicated Project Board and key stakeholders across the city
- Engagement with local artists, organisations, audiences, and partners through surveys, interviews, and workshops.

Activities

- Evidence Gathering: Comprehensive desk review of existing research, policy, and sector data to map the visual arts ecosystem, including artists, institutions, education, audiences, and networks
- Contextual Analysis: Benchmarking Brighton & Hove against leading visual arts destinations regionally, nationally, and internationally to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities
- Stakeholder Consultation: Wide engagement through surveys, interviews, innovation sprint workshops, and open calls to ensure diverse sector voices informed the findings
- Data Analysis: Rigorous analysis of qualitative and quantitative insights to identify priority needs, gaps in provision, and opportunities for intervention
- Recommendation Development: Formulation of practical, evidence-based recommendations, ensuring each is underpinned by demonstrated need and potential for positive impact.

Outputs

- A comprehensive mapping and analysis of Brighton & Hove’s visual arts ecosystem, including infrastructure, education, funding, and economic impact
- Identification of sector challenges, recent changes (e.g., venue closures, funding losses), and their impact on artists’ livelihoods
- Benchmarking report comparing Brighton & Hove to peer cities and best practice models
- Synthesis of stakeholder consultation findings and sector-wide priorities
- A set of clear, actionable recommendations and a roadmap for sector development.

Outcomes

- Short-term:*
- Deeper understanding among stakeholders of the current state, strengths, and weaknesses of the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove
 - Evidence base to inform advocacy, investment, and strategic planning by the Council and sector partners
- Medium-term:*
- Implementation of recommendations leading to improved infrastructure, connectivity, visibility, and opportunities for artists and organisations
 - Strengthened partnerships and cross-sector collaboration
- Long-term:*
- A more sustainable, inclusive, and internationally recognised visual arts ecosystem in Brighton & Hove
 - Visual arts positioned as central to the city’s cultural, economic, and civic identity.

Underlying Principles

- Evidence-led: Recommendations are only made where there is a clear need, demonstrated through research and consultation, and where implementation are likely to have a positive social or economic impact
- Collaborative: Sector voices are central, with broad engagement ensuring the findings and recommendations reflect the lived experiences and aspirations of artists, organisations, and audiences
- Ambitious yet Practical: Designed to be both visionary and achievable, supporting real change while building resilience for the future.



Left Grant Foster at Phoenix Art Space, 2025, photo by Bernard G Mills

project and the development of this report.

Appendix 3 – Methodology

Developing the new Visual arts Analysis has been indicatively broken down into five stages, and our approach to these is as follows:

1. Evidence: scope and prepare the evidence base

We started by gaining a thorough understanding of the context for Brighton & Hove and for the Visual Arts Analysis brief. This included a comprehensive review of relevant existing material from the Council, BVAC and BHCA including current research, previous consultancy reports, business plans, relevant internal procedures and policy documents. We also visited Brighton & Hove for a walking tour to further understand the area.

Then, we mapped the existing visual arts ecosystem across: artists, artforms, institutions, education, public and private sectors, audiences, community and partner networks. Working collaboratively we tested and refined which data sets were most relevant and available to gather for comparison and analysis. Our indicative data sources included: individual organisational reports, including venues; census data for occupations, potential audiences and markets; ACE and other audience reports on cultural participation; tourism board

research; relevant higher education research; geographical mapping; relevant sector bodies reports and policy work. CAO have dedicated data analysts and used the latest AI techniques for comparing different data sets to enable effective analysis and insights.

As we started to build a picture of the landscape for visual arts in Brighton & Hove, we started to highlight possible gaps in resource and provision. This included: barriers to participation; lack of suitable venues and affordable space; funding and investment opportunities; infrastructure challenges.

At the outset of the project in this phase we identified the key stakeholders needed for collaboration throughout the project, including the Council's Chenine Bhatena, as the main client on behalf of the Steering Group, and Marie Tulley-Rose, as Project Manager. We put in place meetings and reporting structures, with key dates agreed for our monthly check-in meetings, board meetings, the deadline for submission of stage 4 evidence report, and final presentations.

2. Benchmarking: external benchmark SWOT analysis for the Visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove and surrounding area

Using and informed by the invaluable data gathered in phase 1, and drawing on the extensive visual arts sector knowledge of our

expert team, we created a SWOT analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove. This encompassed the breadth of the sector and the complexity of factors at play. During this time we built on the work started in phase 1 to identify gaps and needs in the current provision for the visual arts sector, where the impact of funding reductions has been greatest, and where targeted support could increase resilience.

As part of the benchmarking phase we scanned for potential comparable models in the south east of England, across the UK and internationally. At a relatively local level this included looking at the offer and provision of visual arts comparators including: Charleston Lewes, Towner Eastbourne, Chichester (including Pallant House), Hastings Contemporary, and Bexhill-on-Sea (including the De La Warr Pavilion). Key to this was the availability of comparable data in terms of practice and opportunities, and also looked at innovative and inspirational case studies of cities and projects where the visual arts have been a driver for place-making and formed a cultural destination brand.

By the end of this phase we had a comprehensive picture of the make-up of Brighton & Hove's visual arts sector – both the landscape of spaces and creatives, its essential characteristics, gaps and opportunities.

3. Consultation: sector engagement and consultation (of local Visual arts stakeholders)

We then took forward all the learnings from the evidence gathering and benchmarking into an open and inclusive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to gain a 360 degree view, including: artists and creatives; cultural leaders; business and commercial partners; communities and audiences. We deployed a mixed methodology to maximise the budget available, and to offer a range of ways to gather and welcome a diversity of views and ideas. Our methodology included:

- **Innovation Sprint workshops** – embracing the breadth of stakeholders with valuable contributions, we created two fast paced workshops creating and stress testing ideas for future ways of working. These workshops were co-led by highly experienced facilitators, who work closely with artists. We held these in-person, and participants were paid for their time.
- **Self-completion online surveys** – to give the opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders and audiences to contribute, we used a short survey which was shared by the Council, BVAC and BHCA with their networks, as well as via targeted social media distribution.
- **1-2-1 interviews** – 9 interviews with key



Wordclouds from What Next? Information event
which CAO attended and presented at.

Appendix 4 – List of desk research sources

Document	Source
Brighton & Hove Economic Development Plan	Brighton & Hove Economic Plan 2024 to 2027 and report 8080 Economic Plan 2024-2027 r20 .pdf and evidence base BRIGHTON & HOVE ECONOMIC EVIDENCE
Cultural Infrastructure Plan, Mayor of London	Space for Culture London City Hall
Consultation for City Plan 2041	Folder: City Plan 2041 Brighton & Hove City Council
Brighton & Hove City Council Plan	Brighton & Hove City Council plan for 2023 to 2027
Space to Grow report	Space to Grow - Brighton & Hove: Space for Culture - Culture in Our City
Public Space Public Life by Gehl	Brighton & Hove - Public Space Public Life by Gehl - Making Cities for People - Issuu
Devolution EOI	Expression of Interest in devolution submitted
Cultural Recovery Programme Evaluation	ABCD Cultural Recovery Programme Evaluation published - Culture in Our City
Culture and Place Data Explorer Detailed Report Brighton & Hove	Arts Council England Culture and Place Data Explorer
DACS Artists Earnings Report	Artists' Earnings Report by the University of Glasgow and DACS - DACS
Campaign for the Arts State of the Arts Report	The State of the Arts Campaign for the Arts
Participation Survey	Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England

Document	Source
2021 Census	Office for National Statistics
Annual Population Survey	Office for National Statistics
Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Audience Spectrum Map	The Audience Agency
How the world views the UK Anholt Nation Brands Index 2024 VisitBritain Research November 2024 & Domestic Sentiment Tracker: November 2024	Visit Britain
Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Strategy	Brighton & Hove Council
Economic Impact of Tourism 2023 Results	Visit Brighton
Sussex Visitor Economy Baseline Report	Experience West Sussex
Sussex Modern Tourism Growth Plan	Visit Brighton
International Segmentation for Sussex	Visit Brighton
Sussex & Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Baseline Report	Visit Brighton
Audiences for Visual Arts Report	Audience Agency

Appendix 5 – Interview and Survey Questions

Survey questions:

1. Name
2. Where are you based?
3. Job title or occupation
4. Organisation (if applicable)
5. If you would like to enter the prize draw for a chance to win a £25 shopping voucher, please enter your email address here
6. Are you a visual artist
7. What is your main area of artistic endeavour? Please choose from the options that are applicable to you:
 - a. Painting
 - b. Sculpture
 - c. Printmaking
 - d. Photography
 - e. Video
 - f. Design
 - g. Craft
 - h. Drawing
 - i. Animation
 - j. Ceramics
 - k. Filmmaking
 - l. Mixed media
 - m. Other
8. How long have you worked as a visual artist?
9. Did you study visual art at School, College or University?
10. Where did you study?
11. Do you have another job in any other capacity?
12. Please can you tell us what that other role is
13. What % of your time do you work as a visual artist and what % of time do you spend doing your other role?
14. Did you go directly from School / College / University into working as a visual artist? Please tell us briefly about your transition from education to work
15. If the above isn't your experience how did you get into Visual arts?
16. Have you exhibited /presented /sold your work in Brighton & Hove and if so, where?
17. Have you always been based in Brighton & Hove?
18. Why did you move to Brighton & Hove?
19. If you are not a visual artist but work in or around the sector, please state what your work in relation to the Visual arts is:
 - a. Freelancer / consultant
 - b. Educational institution - i.e. University, College
 - c. Museum or heritage organisation
 - d. Cultural or Civic Centre
 - e. Photographic or other gallery
 - f. Commercial gallery
 - g. Agent or art dealer
 - h. School
 - i. Other
20. In what ways does your organisation/ freelance work engage with the visual art community?
21. What, in your opinion, are the most challenging aspects of being a visual artist in Brighton & Hove?
 - a. Finding affordable space to rent as a studio / workspace
 - b. Lack of business support
 - c. Finding space for exhibiting art
 - d. Finding regular places to sell art
 - e. Lack of access to funding/investment to develop practice / receive commissions
 - f. Lack of paid opportunities for visual artists
 - g. Lack of an audience for Visual arts in the city
 - h. Lack of professional and social networks for Visual arts
 - i. Lack of professional development support and provision for artists
 - j. Lack of access to Secondary/FE/HE/ Community-based art training
 - k. Brighton is seen as too expensive for some people to visit
 - l. Other
22. What, in your opinion, would most benefit the Visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove?
 - a. Affordable space to rent as a studio / workspace
 - b. Finding space for exhibiting art
 - c. Finding affordable space/opps to sell art and build clientele
 - d. Access to business support and mentors
 - e. More access to funding streams and investment platforms
 - f. Better networking and communications in the sector
 - g. More emphasis on Visual arts in local festivals
 - h. More training on developing commercial and business skills
 - i. Other
23. Thinking about studio space, what are the key aspects of a visual art space that would support creative endeavours in your opinion?
 - a. Affordability
 - b. Flexibility of size
 - c. Flexibility of type of use
 - d. Flexibility of lease (short or long term)
 - e. Access to natural light
 - f. Being close to other artists
 - g. Opportunity for live / work options
 - h. Good digital connectivity
 - i. Access to training e.g. developing sales or business skills
 - j. Other
24. What support do you feel is needed to improve opportunities for visual artists in Brighton & Hove?
 - a. Networking and connectivity
 - b. Access to funding streams
 - c. Connecting up commercial partnership opportunities
 - d. More joined up approach
 - e. Access to affordable space for making and presenting work
 - f. Strong advocacy for the Visual arts
 - g. Other
25. How aware are you of public art initiatives in Brighton & Hove?
26. What role do you think public art should play for the Visual arts in Brighton & Hove?
 - a. Provide opportunities for Brighton & Hove artists to present their work
 - b. Opportunity to showcase national and international artists
 - c. Offer opportunities for community engagement with public art
 - d. Help to animate spaces in the public realm
 - e. Help foster a sense of local identity
 - f. Provide opportunities for joint funded programmes
 - g. Help attract cultural tourism
 - h. Demonstrate the importance of the Visual arts to the city
 - i. Be part of festivals or key cultural moments in the city
 - j. Other
27. Do you think that Brighton & Hove is seen as a centre for Visual arts in the UK?
28. Please explain why not
29. What kind of partnerships would most benefit the Visual arts community in Brighton & Hove (e.g. partnerships with property developers, local businesses, healthcare, universities, commercial galleries)
30. What ideas do you have for how the Visual arts sector could be best supported moving forward that could be tested and discussed at future workshops that could contribute to the city's ambition to be a 'cultural destination'. Please add your response below
31. If you are happy to be contacted about participating in future research, please enter your email address below
32. What is your age?
33. What best describes your gender?
34. What is your ethnic group?
35. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?
36. Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?
37. What is your religion?

Interview conversation guide:

Introduction & Background

1. Could you start by telling us about your connection to Brighton & Hove, and how you've engaged with its Visual arts scene over the years?
2. From your viewpoint, what do you see as the defining characteristics or identity of Brighton & Hove's Visual arts sector?

Current State of the Visual Arts Sector

3. How would you describe the current health of Brighton & Hove's Visual arts ecosystem? What's going particularly well, and what are the main challenges?
4. From a national or international standpoint, how does Brighton & Hove compare with other art hubs?
5. Are there any gaps in infrastructure—such as affordable studio space, exhibition venues, or professional development resources—that you feel should be addressed?
6. What strategies have you seen (either locally or elsewhere) for successfully growing and diversifying audiences for Visual arts?

Opportunities for Growth & Collaboration

7. Where do you see the biggest opportunities for collaboration—within the city's Visual arts sector, and between the sector and other creative industries?
8. Do you have any examples of successful initiatives (local or international) that you believe Brighton & Hove could learn from or replicate?
9. As someone who navigates both national and international art networks, how might Brighton & Hove better promote its local artists and institutions on a larger stage?
10. Do you have any specific projects in mind which could be developed further out of this research/conversation?

Looking Ahead

11. Looking forward 5–10 years, what is your vision for a vibrant and sustainable Visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove, and what key steps need to be taken now to realise that vision?
12. Is there any additional insight or advice you'd like to share on how policy-makers, funders, and cultural leaders can strengthen the sector for both artists and audiences?

Appendix 6 – Survey response summary

Appendix 6 contains a summary of the responses to our survey. 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. In total, there were 227 respondents.

Quantitative responses:

Are you a visual artist?



How long have you worked as a visual artist?



Did you study visual art at School, College or University?



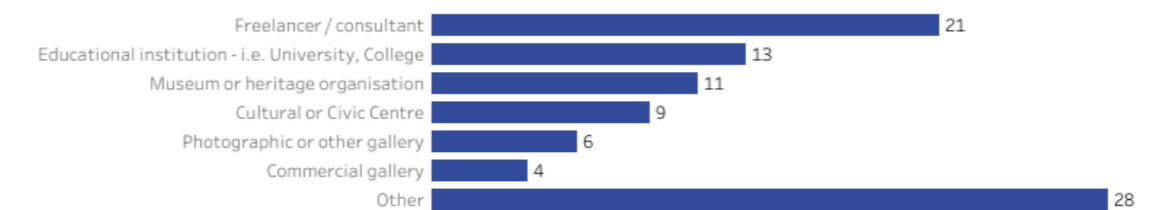
Do you have another job in any other capacity?



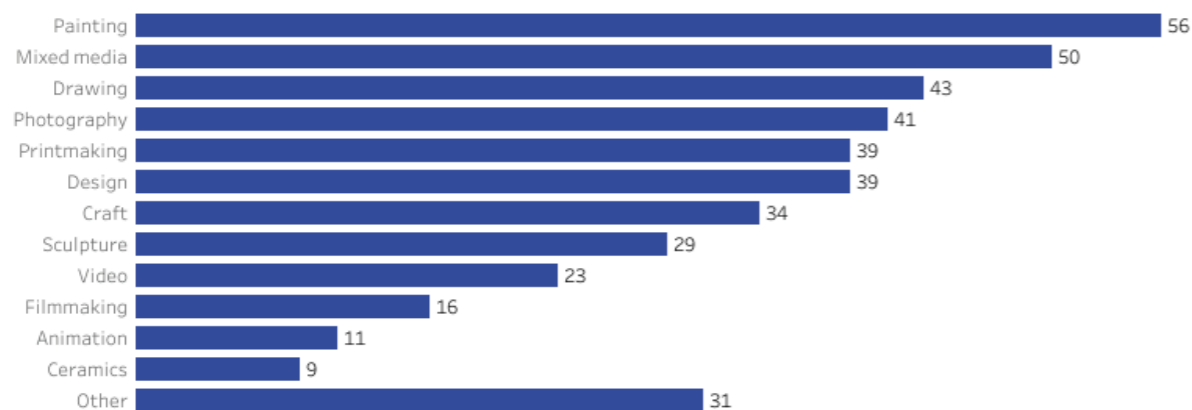
Have you always been based in Brighton & Hove?



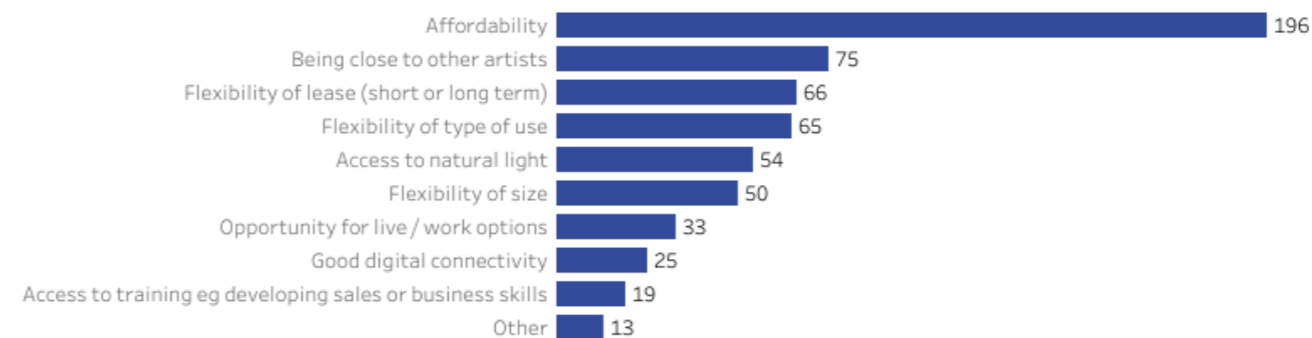
If you are not a visual artist but work in or around the sector, please state what your work in relation to the visual arts is



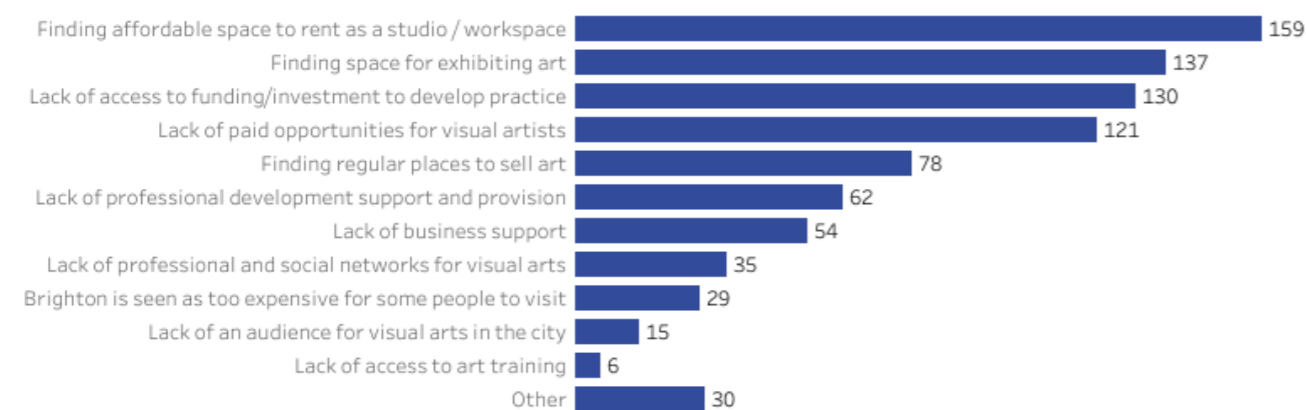
What is your main area of artistic endeavour?



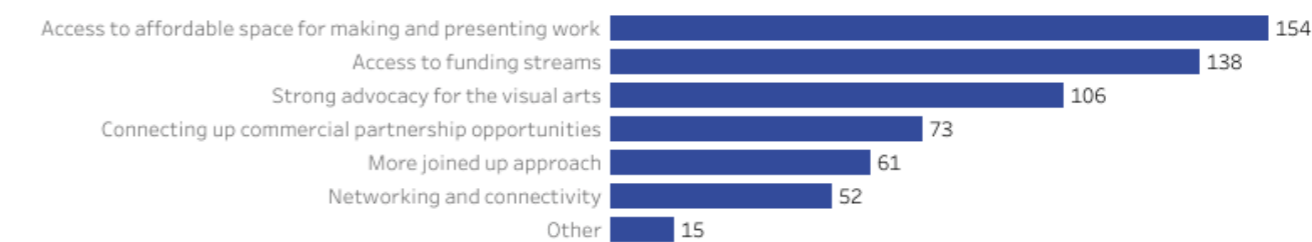
What are the key aspects of a visual art studio space that would support creative endeavours?



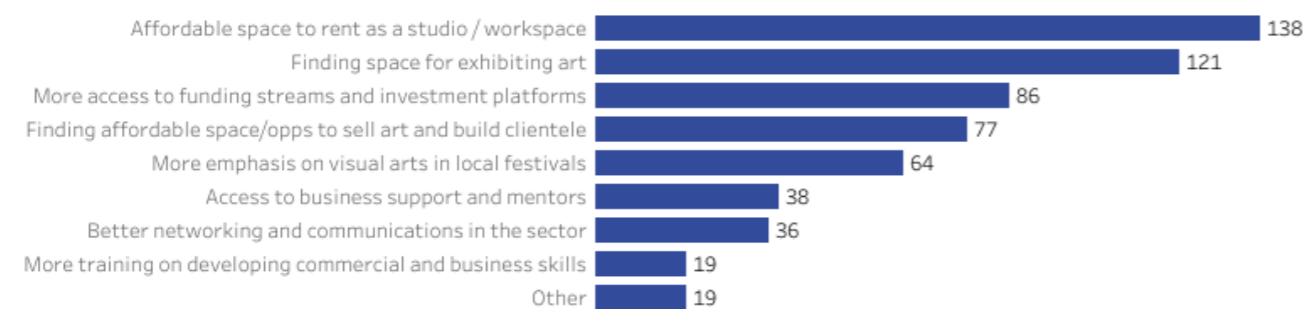
What are the most challenging aspects of being a visual artist in Brighton & Hove?



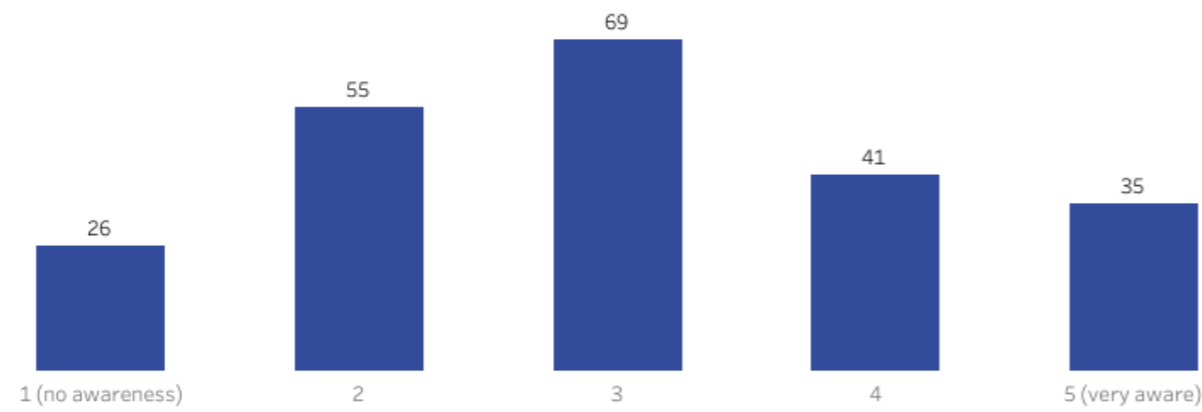
What support do you feel is needed to improve opportunities for visual artists in Brighton & Hove?



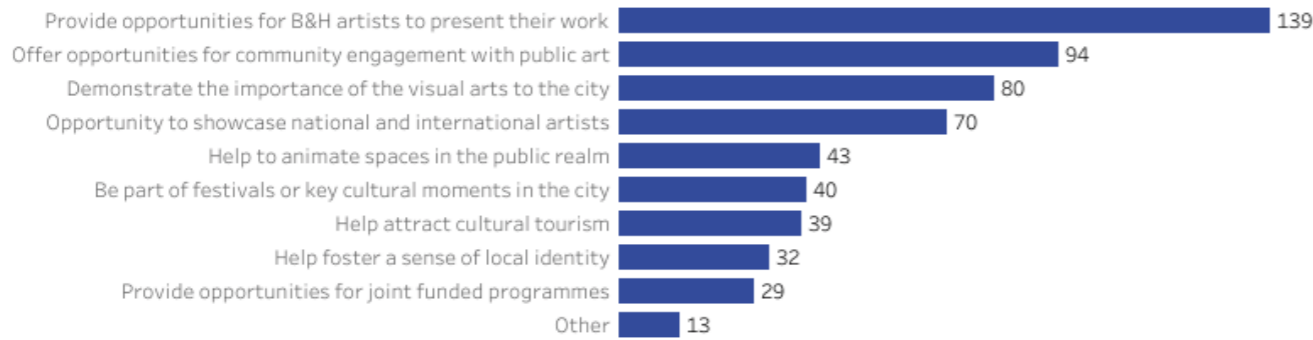
What would most benefit the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove?



How aware are you of public art initiatives in Brighton & Hove?



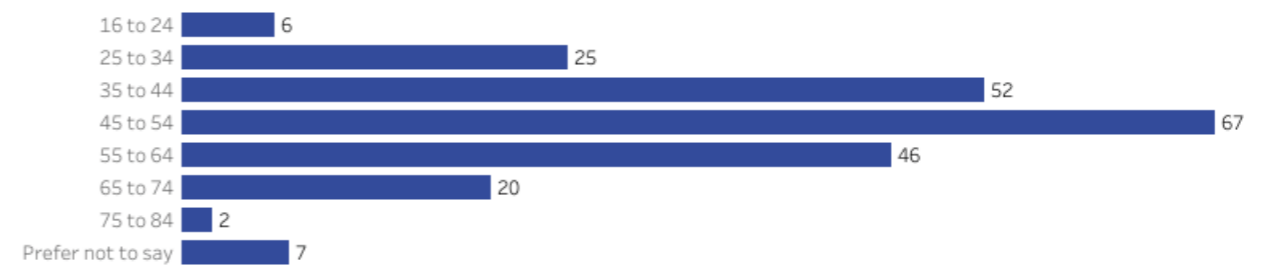
What role do you think public art should play for the visual arts in Brighton & Hove?



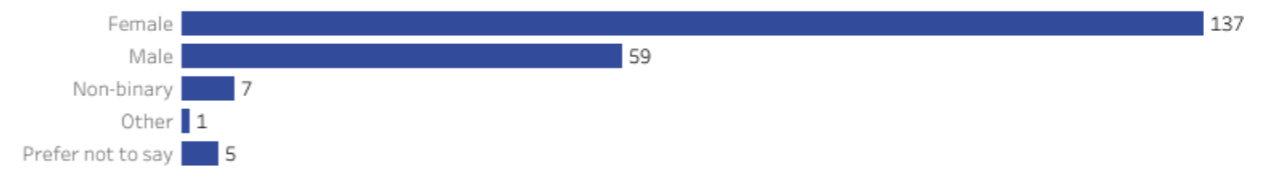
Do you think that Brighton & Hove is seen as a centre for visual arts in the UK?



What is your age?



What best describes your gender?



What is your ethnic group?



Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?



Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?



What is your religion?



Qualitative responses:

What, in your opinion, are the most challenging aspects of being a visual artist in Brighton & Hove?

The most frequently cited challenge is the lack of affordable space, encompassing studios, workspaces, and exhibition venues. This includes the high cost of renting studios, the difficulty in finding spaces to exhibit work, and the general unaffordability of living in Brighton & Hove, making it hard for artists to sustain their practice.

Another significant challenge is the lack of paid opportunities for visual artists. Many feel there is a lack of commissions, investment in developing practice, and an expectation for artists to work for free for exposure.

Many respondents also pointed to a lack of a significant, dedicated public art gallery or contemporary art institution in Brighton & Hove, similar to those in other coastal towns like Eastbourne, Hastings, and Margate. This absence is felt to hinder the city's reputation as a Visual arts centre.

Other challenges include:

- Lack of business support and mentors
- Finding regular places to sell art
- Lack of professional development support and provision for artists
- Lack of an audience for Visual arts
- The perception that Brighton is too expensive for some people to visit, potentially limiting the art market
- A feeling that visual art is not valued as much as performing arts or music in the city
- Lack of connectivity and networking opportunities within the Visual arts community.

What, in your opinion, would most benefit the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove?

The most prominent suggestion is the creation of more affordable studios and workspaces.

Many suggest utilising empty commercial spaces and advocating for lower rents.

The establishment of a dedicated, high-quality visual arts gallery or institution is also a widely supported idea. This is seen as crucial for raising the profile of visual arts in the city and attracting visitors.

Increased funding and investment in the visual arts sector is another key request. This includes grants for artists, funding for exhibitions, and support for arts organisations.

Other beneficial factors mentioned include:

- More emphasis on visual arts in local festivals
- Better networking and communications within the sector
- Stronger advocacy for the visual arts
- More training on developing commercial and business skills for artists
- More opportunities for Brighton & Hove artists to present their work
- Opportunity to showcase national and international artists
- More joined up approach and collaboration within the arts sector and with other sectors.

Thinking about studio space, what are the key aspects of a visual art space that would support creative endeavours in your opinion?

The most frequently mentioned key aspects of studio space are affordability. Flexibility of the space is also considered important, including flexibility of size, and flexibility of type of use. Flexibility of lease (short or long term) is also desired. Access to natural light is frequently mentioned. Being close to other artists is also seen as beneficial for creative exchange and community.

Other desired aspects include:

- Opportunity for live/work options
- Good digital connectivity
- Access to training (e.g., developing sales or

business skills).

What support do you feel is needed to improve opportunities for visual artists in Brighton & Hove?

The most frequently mentioned need is access to affordable space for making and presenting work. Access to funding streams and investment platforms is also a significant need. Stronger advocacy for the visual arts is also deemed necessary.

Other needed support includes:

- More joined up approach and collaboration
- Connecting up commercial partnership opportunities
- Better networking and communications
- More emphasis on visual arts in local festivals
- Access to business support and mentors
- More training on developing commercial and business skills
- Strong advocacy for the visual arts.

What role do you think public art should play for the visual arts in Brighton & Hove?

Many respondents believe public art should provide opportunities for Brighton & Hove artists to present their work to a wider audience. It is also seen as a way to animate spaces in the public realm. Public art is also considered important for community engagement. It is also seen as a way to demonstrate the importance of the visual arts to the city.

Some respondents believe public art should help foster a sense of local identity. It is also seen as a way to help attract cultural tourism. Some highlighted the importance of quality in public art (and that it isn't that great now). Others mentioned its role in offering opportunities for joint funded programmes.

Do you think that Brighton & Hove is seen as a

centre for visual arts in the UK? Please explain why not.

The overwhelming consensus is that Brighton & Hove is NOT widely seen as a centre for visual arts in the UK, although it is often perceived as a creative city.

The main reasons cited for this perception are:

- Lack of a major, dedicated contemporary art gallery comparable to those in other similar-sized cities and coastal towns
- The closure of significant art spaces and a decline in funding for visual arts organisations
- A perception that the city prioritises performing arts and music, particularly through the Brighton Festival, over visual arts
- Brighton being too close to London leading to a talent drain and less focus on developing a strong local visual arts scene
- A feeling that the Visual arts scene is fragmented, bitty, and lacks a central focus or joined-up group
- A perception that the visual arts scene leans towards craft and amateur work rather than serious contemporary art
- A lack of national press and recognition for visual arts in Brighton compared to other towns.

What kind of partnerships would most benefit the visual arts community in Brighton & Hove (e.g. partnerships with property developers, local businesses, healthcare, universities, commercial galleries)?

Respondents suggested a wide range of beneficial partnerships:

- Property developers: To provide affordable studio and exhibition spaces, pop-up galleries in vacant buildings, and funding for public art in new developments
- Local businesses: For sponsorship, exhibition spaces in their premises (cafes, shops, hotels), commissions, and collaborations on branding and events
- Healthcare: For art therapy programmes,

displaying art in healthcare settings, and commissions related to wellbeing

- Universities: For residencies, teaching roles, exhibition spaces, collaborative projects, mentorship, and access to resources
- Commercial galleries: For representation, exhibition opportunities, sales channels, and international exposure
- Local government and cultural institutions: For grants, public art opportunities, city-wide promotion, and use of underutilised spaces
- Tech and digital companies: For funding creative projects and merging technology with visual art.

What ideas do you have for how the visual arts sector could be best supported moving forward that could be tested and discussed at future workshops that could contribute to the city's ambition to be a 'cultural destination'. Please add your response below.

Many ideas revolved around addressing the lack of space and funding:

- Creating affordable studio spaces through subsidised rent, cooperative models, utilising empty buildings, and repurposing existing structures
- Establishing a flagship contemporary arts centre or gallery
- Creating a cultural investment fund with public-private contributions
- Exploring alternative funding models like cooperatives, micro-investment, and patronage schemes
- Increasing funding and commissioning opportunities for visual artists, including public art commissions.

Other ideas included:

- Expanding initiatives like Artists Open Houses and creating year-round pop-up opportunities
- Developing a digital platform showcasing artists, galleries, and public art
- Implementing "Art in Unexpected Places" initiatives

- Establishing artist mentorship programmes and creative business bootcamps
- Developing residency exchange programmes with other cultural cities
- Creating publicly funded community art commissions
- Improving accessibility to art spaces
- Supporting the intersection of digital technology and visual arts
- Exploring NFTs and digital collectibles for local artists
- Organising a separate visual art festival or expanding visual arts programming within existing festivals
- Creating a city-wide public art programme and sculpture trails
- Strengthening the commercial art ecosystem by incentivising gallery startups and launching art fairs
- Improving connections and collaborations between artists, arts organisations, universities, businesses, and the council
- Better integration of visual arts with other sectors like healthcare, tourism, and education
- Creating a more unified and supportive Visual arts network
- Improving marketing and promotion of Visual arts events and artists
- Advocating for policy changes like rent control and business rate reductions for artists and arts organisations
- Establishing artist residency schemes and funded pop-ups
- Creating a cultural calendar and a visual arts magazine
- Recognising and supporting the value of artists and creative thinking in city planning and development
- Focusing on EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion) within the visual arts sector
- Supporting graduate retention and creating pathways into local industries for artists
- Learning from successful models in other cities.

Appendix 7 - Summary of Key Points from 1-2-1 Interviews

Here is a detailed summary of key points from the 1-2-1 interviews, organised under key headings. All data has been kept anonymous.

Challenges Facing the Sector

Interviewees consistently raised concerns regarding fundamental issues impacting the vitality and sustainability of the visual arts in Brighton & Hove.

Space and Infrastructure Deficiencies: A significant challenge identified is the lack of affordable space for artists' studios and for exhibiting work. There is a perceived absence of a serious contemporary art venue in the city, with one interviewee noting that even other nearby towns like Eastbourne have one. The city's focus is sometimes perceived to be more on performing arts than visual arts. Existing organisations have faced funding challenges, with specific examples given of funding being taken away from organisations like Fabrica and the CCA. The lack of infrastructure is seen as hindering the support of the existing appetite for art venues. There is a feeling that spaces are at a "breaking point." Finding regular places to sell art and build clientele is also difficult. Certain existing buildings were criticised as eyesores and not in keeping with the town. Space constraints were highlighted as high-impact gaps.

Financial Sustainability and Artist Income:

Access to funding and investment to develop practice or receive commissions is a significant barrier. There is a notable lack of paid opportunities for visual artists. Concerns were raised about budgets for public sector art being minimal and inadequate, potentially forcing artists to compromise. There is a call for policy to ensure artists are paid for work

commissioned by the council. The high cost of living and housing in the city impacts artists' ability to create work.

Professional Development and Support: There is a lack of professional development support and provision for artists, and a lack of business support.

Connectivity and Communication: Poor networking and communications were mentioned, along with a perceived "silo-ed Visual arts community" and a lack of partnerships across creative industries more widely. It can be difficult to find out what is happening in the sector.

Policy and City Context: Some interviewees felt the arts are not a mandatory priority for the city council. There is a sense of "lots of conversations and very little happens next" within the council. Public sector art briefs were felt to focus too much on community engagement, potentially at the expense of purely artist-led work. Good design is not always a focus in new developments. The procurement process was seen as a blocker for public art. There is a feeling that the council needs to be braver with public art.

Opportunities and Potential Solutions

Interviewees proposed a range of strategies and specific ideas to address these challenges and foster a more vibrant visual arts sector.

Addressing Space Needs: Providing affordable space is crucial. Ideas include utilising empty shops as gallery spaces for a significant period, such as a minimum of six months, ideally with no set-up costs for artists. Developing community hubs and creative centres was suggested. Leveraging council planning power to ensure relevant space in new developments at no extra charge, potentially using existing buildings, was proposed. Models where rent

is tied to business success, aiming for reduced market rates, were mentioned. Creating spaces for short-term hire or self-directed residencies was suggested. The need to build studio and gallery spaces and reinstate galleries, such as the one at the art college, was highlighted. Using existing buildings for mixed use, including visual arts, is seen as a possibility. Exploring affordability, flexibility of use, opportunities for live/work options, access to natural light, and being close to other artists were noted as important aspects of space provision. Specific locations like the Madeira terraces were suggested for potential studio spaces. Forcing derelict buildings, like banks, to be repurposed as community hubs and studio spaces was proposed.

Strengthening Policy, Strategy, and Advocacy:

The sector needs clear targets and a coherent strategy. Policy changes should include ensuring artists are paid by the council and potentially exploring initiatives like a cultural tax (like Finland), or reviewing the percentage for arts in planning. There is a strong call for stronger advocacy for the visual arts. The council should elevate the identity of the visual arts as much as it does for other festivals. Research into the economic dynamics could help build a stronger case for funding. A long-term visionary planning approach is needed, moving away from a stop-start cycle.

Increasing Visibility and Engagement:

Suggestions include making visual art more visible in public spaces where *“ordinary people can see it without having to step into a gallery”*. Ideas included public art trails along the seafront, in parks, or utilising buses and bus stops for display. Demonstrating the importance of the visual arts to the city is vital. More emphasis on visual arts within local festivals was suggested. Hosting cultural events that bring together industry professionals and artists could be beneficial. Utilising empty shops as pop-

up gallery space was mentioned as a starting point. There’s a need to be braver with public art in terms of scale and colour. Bold temporary public art as part of the festival was proposed, and the Corn Exchange was proposed for large-scale installations. Reinstating a major city-wide arts event, like White Night, was suggested, as was exploring models that cluster openings and activities.

Fostering Collaboration and Partnerships:

Collaboration is seen as key, particularly with property developers, local businesses, healthcare, and universities. A more joined-up approach across the sector and with other creative industries is advocated. Connecting up commercial partnership opportunities was highlighted. Working with artists and creative organisations from the initial stages of planning was suggested. Connecting with the wider regional arts landscape, including venues in nearby areas like Charleston and Towner, was also proposed. Joint-funded programmes could be beneficial. Leveraging existing expertise, such as at the Attenborough Centre or Cahoots, was suggested.

Improving Funding and Paid Opportunities:

More access to funding streams and investment platforms is needed. Addressing the lack of paid opportunities is crucial. Direct financial support for visual arts from the council was mentioned. Supporting existing organisations to secure funding again was seen as important. More funding for arts was explicitly requested over other areas like cycling lanes.

Enhancing Professional Development and Business Support:

There is a need for more training, such as developing sales or business skills. Addressing the lack of professional development support and business support was highlighted.

Specific Project Ideas: Creating a public art

trail, perhaps along the seafront, was proposed. Reinstating a visual arts biennial and making visual arts a central part of the festival were mentioned. Focusing on good design in new developments. Developing the area under Madeira terraces for studios was an idea. Supporting graduate retention and creating pathways into local industries were seen as important steps. Initiatives that can integrate into existing frameworks and work with public services were proposed.

Appendix 8 – 1-2-1 Interviews: Interviewees

Name	Organisation
David Blandy	Artist
Peter Heslip	Arts Council England
Maureen Paley	Maureen Paley Gallery
Kerry Lemon	Artist
Lord Steve Bassam	Trustee, Brighton Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust
Simon Vaughan	Creative Giants
Wayne Hemingway	Designer / Artist
Joe Hill	CEO Towner Eastbourne
Richard Upton	Creative Developer

Appendix 9 – Innovation Sprints Workshops

Innovation Sprints – Methodology and Agenda

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.

They aimed to achieve this by:

- Providing a fast-paced, interactive, solutions-based, and (fun) workshop model that focuses on developing feasible solutions for development that can be included in the Visual Arts Analysis as practical ways forward.
- Bringing together participants from different sectors to collaborate and work together, using a tried and tested model. Together participants surfaced and ideated solutions that considered the context of the visual arts ecosystem and looked to develop new ways of working and thinking about the opportunities that exist for the visual arts to flourish and be supported in Brighton & Hove.

CAO chose to use the Sprint framework as it creates and tests ideas for future ways of working using a tried and tested framework developed by Pegram Harrison and Lucy Shaw at Oxford University's Saïd Business School to encourage:

- The development of **innovative ideas**
- **Entrepreneurial** ways of thinking and working
- **Ideating solutions** and **stress testing** them before applying them

- **Inclusive** ways of working across hierarchies - no one is the expert
- **Collaboration** across silos, sectors and areas of expertise - taking an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving
- **Sharing** ideas and experiences
- Surfacing **new talent** and people with leadership potential

PROGRAMME

Date:	Thursday 3rd & Friday 4th April 2025
Time:	10:00 - 15:00 – a light lunch and refreshments will be served <i>Please arrive at 9.45 for tea and coffee</i>
Location:	Royal Pavilion, King William IV Room, Pavilion Buildings Brighton, BN1 1EE
Facilitators:	Lucy Shaw , Miki Lentin
Workshop aims:	<p>The visual arts analysis of Brighton & Hove aims to analyse and identify actionable opportunities for the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove, which is a high priority for artists, audiences, cultural organisations, Brighton & Hove Council and Arts Council England.</p> <p>The Innovation Sprint you have been invited to be part of will aim to identify and discuss workable solutions that will support the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove.</p> <p>The workshops will bring together participants from different sectors to collaborate and work together to surface and ideate solutions that will consider the context in which the visual arts is in, and develop new ways of working and thinking about the opportunities that exist for the visual arts to flourish and be supported in Brighton & Hove.</p> <p>The workshops will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create an inclusive environment: Ensure that everyone is heard by encouraging active listening and open discussion.2. Engage stakeholders: Foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including artists, institutions, and community members, to ensure that all perspectives are considered in developing innovative solutions for the visual arts sector.3. Identify opportunities and challenges: Utilise the demand-side, supply-side, and resources checklists to identify key opportunities and challenges within the visual arts ecosystem in Brighton & Hove.4. Develop innovative project ideas: Encourage participants to generate 1-2 project ideas per table that address identified gaps and opportunities, leveraging the unique cultural and creative strengths of the city.5. Promote inclusivity and accessibility: Ensure that the projects developed prioritise inclusivity, accessibility, and community engagement, aligning with the city's cultural diversity and economic goals.6. Pitch and refine ideas: Facilitate an environment where participants can

effectively pitch their project ideas, receive feedback, and refine them based on peer insights and available resources.

7. Foster collaboration and partnerships: Encourage the formation of partnerships and collaborations among participants to support the implementation and sustainability of the proposed projects.

8. Align with B&H objectives: Ensure that the project ideas align with Brighton & Hove’s economic plan and cultural ambitions, contributing to the city’s future growth and creative vitality.

9. Capture and document insights: Record the pitches and document key insights from the Innovation Sprint to inform future strategic planning and decision-making processes related to the visual arts sector in Brighton & Hove.

0945-1000	Arrivals and registration
1000-1030	Welcome and introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAO - Lucy Shaw, Director • Brighton & Hove Council - Chenine Bhatena, Director Culture & Environment • Arts Council England - Peter Heslip, Director Visual Arts
1030-1100	What’s the Ambition for Visual Arts in Brighton & Hove? How can we get here? <i>Discussion in groups</i>
1100 - 1115	Agreeing the ideas to work up <i>Discussion in groups</i>
1115-1130	Coffee break
1130 - 1215	Break Out Session 1: “Testing the demand” <i>Discussion to test the demand of a proposed idea</i>
1215 - 1300	Break Out Session 2: “Testing the supply” <i>Discussion to test the supply of a proposed idea</i>
1300 - 1330	Lunch
1330 -1415	Break Out Session 3: “Testing the resources” <i>Discussion to test the resources of a proposed idea</i>
1415 - 1455	Pitching - sharing ideas <i>Presentations from groups</i>
1500	Closing reflections and next stages

The methodology involved participants working in small teams during three breakout sessions to:

1. Test the demand – exploring ideas by looking at:
 - a. Trends to assess future growth and potential
 - b. What benefits will be delivered?
 - c. What proof is there that people are keen to uptake it?
2. Test the supply – looking at the feasibility of the ideas by asking?
 - a. Who are your competitors?
 - b. What changes are expected in the near / long term future?
 - c. What advantage does this idea have? How viable is it? What will make it a success?
3. Test the resource – further exploring its feasibility and building a case:
 - a. What is the entrepreneurial mindset of your team and stakeholders?
 - b. What is the capacity of your people?
 - c. What skills do you need to make this happen
 - d. What networks do you need access to?

Innovation Sprints – Project Ideas Presented

At the end of each day, groups presented their worked up ideas. Below, we list the 11 project ideas which emerged from the Sprints, and which participants saw as offering a roadmap for developing and growing Brighton & Hove’s visual arts ecosystem—focusing on visibility, sustainability, inclusivity, and cross-sector collaboration.

1. Artist-Led Community Network Hub

Idea: Create an artist-led, community-focused

network hub (“Hub”)—both physical and digital—to foster generosity, social justice, and countercultural values in the arts. The hub would provide advocacy, resource sharing, mentoring, a digital directory, and regular events.

Aims:

- Reinvigorate Brighton’s creative spirit and hope
- Open opportunities for artists and communities, especially in underused council-owned schools
- Embed artists in education and local communities
- Champion inclusivity, alternative voices, and social justice through the arts.

2. Citywide Artist Assembly and Decentralised Hubs

Idea: Establish a recurring citywide “artist assembly” to bring together diverse artists and communities, supported by a network of neighbourhood and interest-based hubs (in venues like Fabrica, Phoenix, or community centres).

Aims:

- Build a sense of belonging and agency for all artists, including underrepresented groups
- Facilitate intergenerational and cross-community connections
- Ensure inclusivity and diversity are embedded from the outset
- Combat isolation and fragmentation in the sector.

3. Creative Land Trust and Brokering Model

Idea: Develop a “Creative Land Trust” that secures and manages creative spaces (studios, galleries, community venues) for artists in perpetuity, protected from political and market volatility. A brokering entity would coordinate

public resources, private investment, and creative needs.

Aims:

- Provide long-term security for artist spaces
- Retain and attract creative talent in Brighton
- Embed artists in diverse communities across the city
- Ensure stability and sustainability for the sector.

4. Green Creative Land Trust and Repurposing Spaces

Idea: Advance an environmentally driven Creative Land Trust that repurposes existing buildings for creative use, lowering carbon footprints and supporting the city's climate goals. Focus on refurbishing rather than new builds and leveraging private investment.

Aims:

- Align creative infrastructure growth with environmental sustainability
- Secure creative spaces while reducing the city's carbon footprint
- Attract private funding and reduce reliance on shrinking public funds.

5. Sussex-Wide Non-Place-Based Commissioning Vehicle (National Landscape Gallery for Sussex)

Idea: Launch a Sussex-wide, non-place-based visual arts commissioning programme (akin to National Theatre Wales or Folkestone Triennial), focused on storytelling, tourism, and community engagement. Example: a major public art trail along the seafront.

Aims:

- Build a cohesive Sussex visual arts narrative
- Elevate local talent and attract national attention
- Engage diverse communities and connect with tourism, green, and economic networks

- Position Sussex as a leader in contemporary public art.

6. Public Artist Directory and Celebrating Local Talent

Idea: Create a public directory/database of Brighton's established and emerging artists, showcasing their work and expertise. Use public spaces and streets as accessible "galleries" for all.

Aims:

- Celebrate and make visible the city's artistic talent
- Provide a resource for students, educators, and the public
- Foster community pride and engagement through accessible public art.

7. Policy Advocacy for Creative Use of Vacant Spaces

Idea: Advocate for changes in national and local business rates legislation to make it easier to repurpose empty commercial spaces for creative use. Explore council-led applications for business rates relief.

Aims:

- Unlock more affordable, temporary spaces for artists and events
- Influence policy to better support the creative sector
- Develop a networked approach with other cities to lobby for legislative change.

8. Creative Use Exemptions in Business Rates

Idea: Pursue exemptions in business rates for properties used for non-commercial or community arts purposes, allowing more vacant spaces to be used by artists and organisations without financial penalty.

Aims:

- Lower barriers for accessing empty properties
- Enable more pop-up and community arts projects
- Build a case for national policy reform through local pilots.

9. Artist-Led Public Programme and Incubator

Idea: Pilot a public-facing programme and incubator for young and emerging artists, led by a collective including artists, planners, advocates, and higher education. The city itself becomes the "venue," with a focus on visibility, reputation, and critical discourse.

Aims:

- Support early-career artists with development, mentoring, and public exposure
- Centralise and showcase existing talent
- Build evidence of impact for future funding and advocacy
- Foster collaboration across networks and generations.

10. Enhanced Sector Connectivity and Resource Sharing

Idea: Resource and expand existing networks (e.g., Brighton Visual Arts Coalition) to increase sector connectivity, share knowledge, and amplify opportunities. Use platforms and summits to bring together artists, organisations, and funders.

Aims:

- Raise visibility and connectivity within the sector
- Enable collaborative bids and joint projects
- Improve communication of existing strategies and achievements
- Advocate for the sector's social, economic, and cultural value.

11. Inclusive Digital Platform & Sector Umbrella

Idea: Develop a comprehensive digital (and eventually print) platform—an "umbrella"

for the sector—where artists, communities, tourism, institutions, and events are all represented. The platform is moderated for inclusivity and relevance, and feeds into real-world events and collaborations.

Aims:

- Increase visibility and communication across the sector
 - Facilitate collaboration, funding, and resource sharing
 - Ensure smaller groups and independent artists have a voice
- Strengthen the Culture Alliance and connect all parts of the ecosystem.

Innovation Sprints: Participants

Due to room capacity and available bursaries, there were unavoidably stakeholders not able to attend these Innovation Sprints. These sessions were not designed to be an entirely comprehensive representation of the sector, but complementary to the wider, open-to-all survey, and efforts were made to ensure a balance of artists, curators and organisations with representatives from funders and other political stakeholders across both days.

Thursday 3rd April 2025

Attendee	Organisation
Peter Heslip	Arts Council England
Hedley Swain	RPMT
Karin Janzon	Hove Civic Society
Kelly Martin	BHCC Events
Liz Whitehead	Fabrica
El Ward	B&H Culture Alliance
Chenine Bhatena	BHCC Culture & Environment Director
Cllr Birgit Miller	BHCC Cabinet Lead
Trisha Stone	Red Herring
Andy Ash	Red Herring
Helen Dewhurst	Red Herring
Nina Emmett	Fotodocument
Claire Wearn	Photo Fringe
Layla Hignell-Tully	Rocket Artists CIC
Hazel Reeves	Artist
Zoe Toolan	Artist and Educator
Joseph Young	Artist
Lewis Church	BHCC
Marie Tulley-Rose	BHCC
Sherry Neyhus	ACE

Friday 4th April 2025

Attendee	Organisation
Lucy Day	Phoenix
Stuart Hedley	Univ of Brighton
Charlotte Gould	Univ of Brighton
Nathaniel Bellio	DCMS
Robert Batson	Same Sky
Peter Sharp	BHCC Econ Dev
Danit Ariel	Photoworks
Neil Pavey	Artist
Paulina Anzorge	Curator
Pascal Downer	Curator
Chenine Bhatena	BHCC Culture & Environment Director
Cllr Birgit Miller	BHCC Cabinet Lead for Culture
Sam Williams	Artist and Curator
Amy Beckwith	Street Artist
Jamie Wyld	Curator Videoclub
Katy Beinart	Social Circles
Gary Carpenter	Fanny Fielding
Eve Shepherd	Sculptor (Artist)
Gil Mualem-Doron	SEAS
Lewis Church	BHCC
Marie Tulley-Rose	BHCC
Peter Heslip	ACE
John McPherson	ACE



Report designed by Anna Marris for
Cultural Associates Oxford

Right Porthole, screen print,
by Anna Marris, 2024

