

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 9

Subject: Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group Scoping Report

Date of meeting: 22nd July 2026

Report of: Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Natalie Sacks-Hammond

Email: Natalie.sacks-hammond@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report is to establish a Task & Finish Group to focus on aspects of the city visitor economy. The report provides information on the current offer to visitors in Brighton & Hove, with a particular focus on the nighttime and winter economies. The Task & Finish Group will explore what changes could be made to increase numbers staying overnight and all year round.
- 1.2 This report includes a scoping report for the Task & Finish Group (Appendix 1) and draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 2).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees to establish a Task & Finish Group to scrutinise the visitor economy of Brighton & Hove.
- 2.2 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees the Terms of Reference, membership and duration of the Task & Finish Group as set out in Appendix 2.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Two Notices of Motion were referred by Full Council to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December 2025 and January 2026, relating to the Visitor Economy and to Co-operative Housing. At its meeting on 24th March 2026, the committee considered both topics when determining the subject of its next Task & Finish Group. Following the meeting, members voted via email, with the Visitor Economy receiving the most support. Co-operative Housing will remain on the work programme.

- 3.2 The purpose of the Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group is to review Brighton & Hove's current visitor offer, with a particular focus on the nighttime and winter economies. It will examine the barriers that may deter visitors from coming to, or staying in, the city and identify opportunities for improvement. The group will develop and explore initiatives aimed at converting high levels of day visitors into overnight stays, while also strengthening the city's appeal as a year-round destination.

3.3 Nighttime economy

Brighton & Hove attracts high day visitor numbers, but it would benefit from converting these into more overnight stays to encourage spending in the hospitality sector. Areas to investigate include the current offer for those using the nighttime economy, safety at night, transport provision, licensing, changing habits of young people and the decline in alcohol-centred venues.

Areas of focus include:

- Investigate reasons why visitors don't stay overnight and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on nighttime?
- What is the current offer for visitors at nighttime? How do you make nighttime activities more attractive to visitors so they choose to stay overnight? What lessons have been learned from previous activities?
- To look into more non-alcohol led venues and activities, how might this look?
- To look at the availability and affordability of public transport late at night
- To look at licensing for nighttime venues; understand the changes that were made, how effective has this been for businesses, has it made a difference to the nighttime economy?
- To investigate the issues of anti-social behaviour, street drinking and safety. What can be introduced to make this better?
- To look at what other cities have done to increase spending in their nighttime economy, was it successful?

3.4 Winter economy

Brighton & Hove has a lot to offer during the summer months but it is less attractive as a tourist destination in the winter time. The Council's *Brighton & Hove Economic Plan* states that the council will "develop an ambitious major events calendar to include a diverse range of festivals and events throughout the year," with the aim of increasing visitor numbers during the winter months. Areas to investigate include the current offer for those wanting to visit Brighton & Hove in the winter, activities and events planned over the Christmas period, conference tourism, and what support the hospitality industry may need over the winter months.

The most consistent outdoor offering for the winter is the ice rink at the Royal Pavilion which will need to move location in 2026 due to the restoration of the Pavilion Gardens. This could have a negative impact on the city's winter economy.

Areas of focus include:

- Investigate reasons why visitors don't visit in the winter and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers
- Why have recent winter events faced issues in the past and what can be learned from this?
- What kind of indoor activities are popular and can be built upon?
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on winter time?
- How can the council support hospitality venues during off season months
- What is the offer for winter events? What's the plan moving forward?
- Can those activities that attract a lot of visitors be turned into an all year-round offer. What are they?
- What is the Christmas offer?
- Businesses in the Brilliant Brighton BID work hard to provide Christmas lights for the city centre, but could this be built on or changed? Could it be extended into Hove?
- What have other cities done to improve visitor numbers in the winter? Were they successful?

3.5 Task & Finish Group Scoping Report and Terms of Reference

More information on the Visitor Economy is included in the Task & Finish Group scoping report (Appendix 1), including suggested areas of enquiry and witnesses. The draft Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) include suggested membership and duration of the Group.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Members are free to amend the details of the Terms of Reference if they wish to pursue alternative options

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 This has not been considered at this stage but the Task & Finish Group will ensure that appropriate consultation and engagement with the local community will take place as part of future work in this area.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no expected financial implications associated with the establishment and operation of the member task and finish group as it is anticipated that any costs associated with their operation will be managed within the existing revenue budgets of each respective service area involved.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 07/07/2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 No direct legal implications have been identified as arising from this report.

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 The subject of the visitor economy is broad, and the proposed timeline is relatively short, creating a risk of difficulty in meeting agreed deadlines if there is scope creep. However, the Chair has stated that she would be happy to extend the timeline if needed.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

13. Crime & disorder implications:

- 13.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is being asked to establish a Task & Finish Group to scrutinise the Visitor Economy in Brighton & Hove and to agree to Terms of Reference and membership of the group taking on this work.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group Scoping Report
2. Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference

