

**Council**

**Agenda Item 40**

**Subject: Deputations from members of the public**

**Date of meeting: 1 October 2026**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the council, nominated by the mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the mayor and voted on without discussion that the spokesperson for the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification that three deputations have been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**1. Protecting Brighton & Hove's LGBTQ+ Nightlife**

Supported by:

Steve Jones  
Andy Dunton  
Erica Hann  
Sean Pettit-Scheepers  
Alistair Mackinnon-Musson  
Paul Gray  
Chris Marshall  
Simon Ebers  
Mike Gallagher  
Craig Harwood

Summary of Deputation:

Brighton & Hove's LGBTQ+ nightlife is shrinking. Long-standing venues have closed, remaining operators are increasingly concerned about the future, and the city risks losing part of the culture and identity that has helped make Brighton distinctive for decades. LGBTQ+ venues are not simply places to drink and socialise: they provide spaces where people can feel safe, find community and be themselves, while also supporting jobs, tourism and the wider night-time economy. LGBTQ+ businesses from across the city have therefore come together around five practical priorities for action.

**1. Recognise and invest in Brighton's LGBTQ+ Quarter**

Develop a clear plan for St James's Street, Marine Parade and the surrounding area, with practical investment in safety, lighting, cleanliness, public realm, transport, vacant premises, LGBTQ+ identity and heritage. The aim should be a safer, more attractive, economically resilient and visibly LGBTQ+ district all year round.

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## **2. Make the area safer**

Improve visible policing and wardens, lighting, CCTV, cleansing and the response to antisocial behaviour, street drinking, drug activity and hate crime. The city should also be willing to consider whether concentrating people with significant vulnerabilities and complex needs within one of Brighton's busiest areas for alcohol, drugs and late-night activity is always in the best interests of those individuals or the wider area.

## **3. Promote Brighton's LGBTQ+ offer 365 days a year**

Brighton's LGBTQ+ identity should be promoted throughout the year, not predominantly around Pride. VisitBrighton and partners should provide stronger year-round promotion of LGBTQ+ venues, nightlife, events and businesses, including dedicated online content and promotion of the LGBTQ+ Quarter as a destination in its own right.

## **4. Create a licensing environment that supports responsible nightlife and investment**

Licensing must continue to protect residents and promote responsible operation, while allowing good operators and new ideas to invest. The Licensing Matrix and wider policy should be reviewed regularly against evidence, economic impact and equality considerations, with better data on the number and type of nightlife venues operating across the city.

## **5. Protect permanent venues and develop a long-term nightlife strategy**

Permanent LGBTQ+ and nightlife venues are difficult to replace once lost and should be recognised as important cultural, social and economic infrastructure. Brighton should develop a long-term strategy for the full 6pm–6am economy, including measures to protect existing venues, attract responsible investment, improve transport and safety, and support midweek and off-season activity.

## **OUR ASK TO THE COUNCIL**

We ask Brighton & Hove City Council to recognise these five priorities and commit to working with LGBTQ+ businesses, Sussex Police, Licensing, VisitBrighton, planning, transport partners and other stakeholders to turn them into a coordinated programme of action. This is not about preserving Brighton in the past. It is about making deliberate choices about its future: protecting the culture and venues that make the city distinctive while creating the conditions for a safer, stronger and more diverse night-time economy to grow.

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Supporting Information

### **Securing the Future of Brighton's LGBTQ+ Quarter: 5 Priorities for Action**

Brighton & Hove has the largest LGBTQ+ population proportionally, yet the city's LGBTQ+ night-time economy is now in crisis. Five LGBTQ+ venues have been lost in recent years and only one has been replaced by another LGBTQ+ operator. Without urgent intervention, there is a genuine risk that Brighton could lose much of the LGBTQ+ nightlife scene that has helped define the city for generations.

LGBTQ+ venues are part of Brighton's cultural identity, visitor economy and community infrastructure. If Brighton wants to remain the UK's leading LGBTQ+ destination, it must be a city where LGBTQ+ venues can open, invest, grow and survive 365 days a year. These five priorities set out practical actions for 2026 alongside longer-term changes needed to rebuild the LGBTQ+ Quarter and strengthen the wider night-time economy.

#### **1. Formally recognise and invest in Brighton's LGBTQ+ Quarter**

Recognise St James's Street, Marine Parade and adjoining roads as a permanent cultural, community, visitor-economy and night-time-economy asset.

- Recognise the Brighton LGBTQ+ Business Group as the representative operator body and include it in relevant council, tourism, licensing, safety, public-realm and night-time-economy work.
- Make the Quarter visibly LGBTQ+ through entrance signage, banners, permanent flags, public art, murals, rainbow crossings, night-time lighting and clear wayfinding from the station, seafront and city centre.
- Create a funded LGBTQ+ Quarter Action Plan covering cleaning, vacant units, shopfronts, outdoor hospitality, business mix, safety, culture and visitor experience.
- Create accountable nightlife leadership through a named Night-Time Economy Lead and permanent Night-Time Economy Board, with published actions, owners and deadlines.
- Longer term: secure recognition through the New City Plan and related economic, cultural and tourism strategies; attract and retain LGBTQ+, cultural and hospitality businesses; and ensure LGBTQ+ businesses have a meaningful role in shaping the Pride Street Party.

#### **2. Make the LGBTQ+ Quarter safer**

Improve safety through visible intervention, targeted enforcement and stronger partnership between venues, Sussex Police and the council, without making responsible venues carry the consequences of crime and disorder around them.

- Restore visible late-night safety capacity, including stronger Night Safety Marshal coverage based on live evidence and operator input.
- Carry out an urgent CCTV and lighting audit, publish priority improvements, and address persistent street drinking, open drug use/dealing, repeat offenders and hotspot locations.
- Hold monthly accountability meetings between the LGBTQ+ Business Group, Police, Licensing and Community Safety, with clear hate-crime reporting, escalation and feedback.
- Ensure crime data distinguish between harm caused by a premises and incidents merely reported by its staff or customers, so responsible reporting does not become a licensing disadvantage.
- Review access, movement, parking, taxis, deliveries, disabled access and pedestrian safety across the Quarter, including proportionate options for traffic management or time-limited pedestrianisation following consultation.

# Brighton & Hove City Council

- Review the concentration of hostel/supported accommodation in the Quarter and, where evidence shows recurring street-level impacts, consider suitable relocation opportunities outside the central nightlife area while protecting support and overall accommodation capacity.

- Longer term: create one measurable LGBTQ+ Quarter Safety Plan covering policing, marshals, CCTV, lighting, cleansing, transport, dispersal, hate-crime response and ASB enforcement.

### **3. Promote LGBTQ+ Brighton and its nightlife 365 days a year**

Brighton should actively market its year-round LGBTQ+ offer rather than rely on historic reputation or focus LGBTQ+ promotion mainly around Pride. The objective should be measurable additional visits, overnight stays, footfall and spend in permanent businesses.

- Give VisitBrighton a dedicated year-round LGBTQ+ and after-dark marketing budget and named lead, developed with the LGBTQ+ Business Group.

- Create a dedicated LGBTQ+ visitor website with a venue/business directory, live events listings, maps and direct links to businesses' own websites and ticketing.

- Launch a winter campaign positioning Brighton as an LGBTQ+ city-break and nightlife destination when permanent businesses most need demand.

- Promote complete trips, not isolated venues, through itineraries, hotel/transport partnerships, visitor maps, station/seafront promotion, concierge materials, LGBTQ+ travel media and search activity.

- Treat businesses as content partners and measure commercial outcomes such as referrals, bookings, overnight conversion, after-dark footfall and winter/shoulder-season performance.

### **4. Make licensing work for responsible nightlife and new investment**

Brighton should remain rigorous on safety while ensuring responsible operators can adapt, grow and invest, and credible new operators have a realistic route to opening.

- Publish a clear exceptional-circumstances route showing what evidence and safeguards can support a new venue, later hours or a variation where the Licensing Matrix is restrictive.

- Extend the Good Operator principle so established operators can open additional venues or make sensible variations without being treated like unknown or poor-performing operators.

- Create a route for experienced new entrants with strong operating records elsewhere and give practical weight to the cultural value of LGBTQ+ and TNBI venues alongside the licensing objectives.

- Stop responsible reporting becoming a licensing disadvantage by reviewing how nearby public-area crime is attributed and used.

- Longer term: reform the Matrix and Statement of Licensing Policy toward a more proportionate, evidence-led approach; benchmark Brighton against comparable cities; and publish licensing performance data.

### **5. Protect permanent venues now and build a city-wide 6pm–6am growth strategy**

Immediate relief for existing venues should sit alongside a long-term plan to grow the whole night-time economy, increase overnight stays and off-season demand, and maintain a viable pipeline of permanent venues.

- Publish a 12-month Nightlife Recovery Action Plan with named owners, budgets, deadlines and quarterly progress reporting.

- Use business-rates powers and discretionary relief where national schemes leave strategically important venues unsupported.

# Brighton & Hove City Council

- Review late-night food, toilets, taxi/private-hire provision and other amenities, and assess whether temporary events displace spend from permanent venues as well as generating visitors.
- Create a genuine city-wide 6pm–6am Night-Time Economy Strategy with measurable objectives for venue numbers, footfall, spend, employment, safety and investment.
- Develop a Cultural & Nightlife Venue Resilience Fund for soundproofing, accessibility, safety/welfare, energy efficiency, capital improvements, programming, digital investment and emergency support.
- Work with hotels and transport providers to improve one-night stays, affordability, later Friday/Saturday services and longer-term night connectivity.
- Make winter a strategic priority and strengthen planning protection, Agent of Change, succession/replacement of culturally important venues, reuse of vacant nightlife spaces and active attraction of responsible independent operators.

## **Proposed by the Brighton LGBTQ+ Business Group**

This document has been developed collaboratively by LGBTQ+ venue and business operators from across Brighton's LGBTQ+ Quarter.

