

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 36

Subject: Alternative Creative Workspace

Date of meeting: 3rd November 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 The cultural and creative industries are a vital part of Brighton & Hove's economy, supporting jobs, education, the visitor economy and the city's identity. However, a lack of creative workspace continues to be a challenge in Brighton & Hove. Recognising the importance of the sector, the UK Government's Industrial Strategy identifies the creative industries as one of eight priority high-growth sectors, underlining the need to ensure suitable workspace is available to support its continued success and growth.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on work being undertaken to identify and provide space for the creative industries in Brighton & Hove including the Expression of Interest process for Phoenix House and Lyndean House. The presentation can be accessed at Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the report and provides any comment on current plans.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Cabinet agreed in July 2026 to "continue to support the provision of creative workspace by unlocking the potential of vacant council commercial assets, partnering with the creative community to curate engaging spaces that promote local talent, culture, and social connection". The agreed strategy focuses on remarketing vacant or underused assets within the council's current commercial portfolio to transform them into vibrant hubs of creativity to enable local arts and creative organisations to thrive.

- 3.2 Phoenix House on West Street and Lyndean House on Queens Road were identified as prospective sites to pilot the scheme as they are largely vacant and unsuitable for immediate disposal.
- 3.3 The repurposing of these buildings for creative use will be delivered through the assessment of bids and proposals from the wider creative sector submitted as part of the Expression of Interest process. The application window was open for 6 weeks, financial assessments were undertaken by the council's managing agent and then passed to officers for assessment. Recommendations to proceed with tenancies will be shared with relevant Cabinet members and officers and decisions taken in accordance with the schemes of delegation under the constitution
- 3.4 The Expression of Interest process closed on 2nd August 2026 and attracted significant interest and multiple applications were received from a range of creative businesses, creative workspace providers, and cultural charities. The Application Assessment Panel is scheduled for 26th October with officer recommendations to be sent to DLT/CLT and the Cabinet Member for consultation. Final approval to enter into the tenancies will be given by the relevant decision maker in accordance with the Council's constitution..

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The applications are being considered as part of the Expression of Interest process and will be assessed on specific criteria. Officer recommendations will be passed to the relevant Cabinet Member and senior officers for approval in accordance with the scheme of delegation under the Council's constitution.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Expression of Interest window was open from 24th June to 2nd August and received significant interest from creative businesses, workspace providers and cultural charities.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report which is for noting. Should expressions of interest be agreed, it is anticipated agreed rental incomes will support the councils financial position in meeting the income targets of its commercial portfolio assets. Any reconfiguration costs will be met from the bids. Should expressions of interest from the creative industries not be considered the council will need to continue identifying tenants to meet its income targets

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 22/10/26

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report, The Council has the power to let property under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. Under Section 123(2), a council must not dispose of land for less than the "best consideration that can reasonably be obtained" unless it is a short tenancy (under 7 years) or secretary of state consent has been obtained. In seeking to let property, compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 is also required.

Name of lawyer consulted: Siobhan Fry Date consulted: 23/10/2026

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 None for this scrutiny report

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 None for this scrutiny report

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 None for this scrutiny report

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 None for this scrutiny report

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is being asked to note the report and provide any comment on current plans.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Presentation on Alternative Creative Workspace

