

Alternative Creative Workspace

November 2026

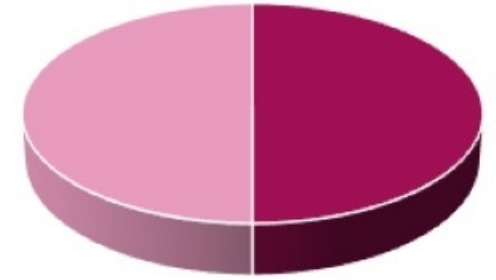
- Creative, cultural and digital industries comprise 10% of jobs and 21% of jobs in Brighton & Hove. This sector also contributes to the wider Visitor Economy, compliments education provision and is a major part of our civic identity.
- The Creative Industries are one of the 8 high-growth areas prioritised by the UK Government's Industrial Strategy (2025). Brighton & Hove is well placed to take advantage of this strategic focus, as a major centre of creative innovation.
- **Creative Workspace** is one of the biggest challenges facing the cultural and creative industries in Brighton & Hove. This has been highlighted in multiple policy documents and reports, including:
 - **B&H Economic Plan** (2024)
 - **GBEB Creative Industries Vision** (2025)
 - **Re:Frame Visual Arts Analysis** (2026)- commissioned in partnership with Arts Council England
 - **B&H Employment Land Study** (2024)
 - **Space to Grow Report** (2023) - commissioned in partnership with B&H Culture Alliance
 - **Creative Land Trust Feasibility** (2024) - commissioned in partnership with B&H Culture Alliance



"creative industries do not necessarily need to be focused around specific commercial hubs [...] location and accessibility are key to where companies may locate, and hence some flexibility in the way spaces are used may be useful to the sector in the future."

Brighton & Hove Space for Culture
We Made That Urban Research Unit,
2023

- 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 BHCC's current commercial portfolio to transform them into vibrant hubs of creativity to enable local arts/creative organisations to thrive.
- This aligns to our Learning Framework, prioritising working innovatively across council services and in collaboration with the sector and leveraging existing resources and negative assets. At each stage of the process, data and learning will be gathered to support future initiatives and refine processes and mechanisms of support.
- This test and learn approach will also inform other council workstreams, most notably the City Plan, which will provide a strategic framework for the disposition of employment and residential land across the city.
- Repurposing of vacant assets could, for example, offer a model to address the volume of lower-grade office stock in Brighton & Hove (45% constructed or renovated before 1950), or to promote High Street recovery.



In the UK, 50% of adults would like to see more creative experiences on their high streets.

Creative High Streets
South East Local Enterprise
Partnership & Arts Council
England, 2021



- The first two properties identified as a pilot for this scheme are **Phoenix House** (West St) and **Lyndean House** (Queens Rd), both largely vacant BHCC properties unsuitable for immediate disposal. By promoting these as new creative workspaces, we will be reducing current void liabilities.
- The repurposing of these buildings for creative use will be delivered through assessment of bids and proposals from the wider creative sector submitted within the expression of interest (EOI) window. The properties were marketed via managing agents SHW and directly to the sector and will be assessed against both financial and non-financial weightings in a 50:50 ratio.
- Marketing and sector conversations have indicated BHCC's preference for established partners who have an appetite to take on whole floor(s) areas and who may also be able to act as a head tenant for smaller organisations, freelancers and individual artists.

Creative Tenants have been sought via EOI application window (6 weeks), with financial assessment then conducted by SHW (BHCC managing agents) and passed to officers for assessment. Recommendations to proceed with tenancies will then be shared with relevant cabinet members and DLT/CLT meetings.

Weighting for Assessment

Criteria	Evaluation Type	Weighting
Financial	Income - Rent per sq ft Rental Models – variety will be considered, depending on level of investment each organisation is looking to make or social/economic benefits being brought.	50%
Q.1 How do you intend to grow and develop the activities of your organisation, and, or collaborate with other local organisations to support the wider sector you are operating in. (quantified employment and financial if poss.)	Local Economic Benefits & Creative/Social Value	20%
Q.2 How do you intend to support the development of other small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and creative enterprises locally?	Local Economic Benefits	15%
Q.3 How do you intend to promote physical and mental health of people working within your operation, and of the local community?	Health & Wellbeing	7.5%
Q.4 How do you intend to deliver training initiatives, eliminate any gender pay gap, and support disabled staff?	Health & Wellbeing	7.5%
TOTAL		100%

EOI Process:

The EOI window was opened on 24/06 and closed 02/08. It attracted significant interest and resulted in multiple full applications from a range of creative businesses, creative workspace providers and cultural charities. Officers from Estates, Culture & Creative Industries and Local Growth are now assessing these applications.

Next Steps:

- **Application assessment panel scheduled for 26/08, with officer recommendations to follow**
- **Approval through DLT/CLT & Cabinet (member decision)**
- **Tenancy negotiation and confirmation.**
- **Tenants move into properties.**



Additional complementary work on Creative Workspace:

Space to Grow Working Group (with B&H Culture Alliance) / Private sector workspace projects / SBSA engagement (Prosperity Strategy, Cultural Competency, Culture Sussex).