

Brighton & Hove Circular Economy Routemap

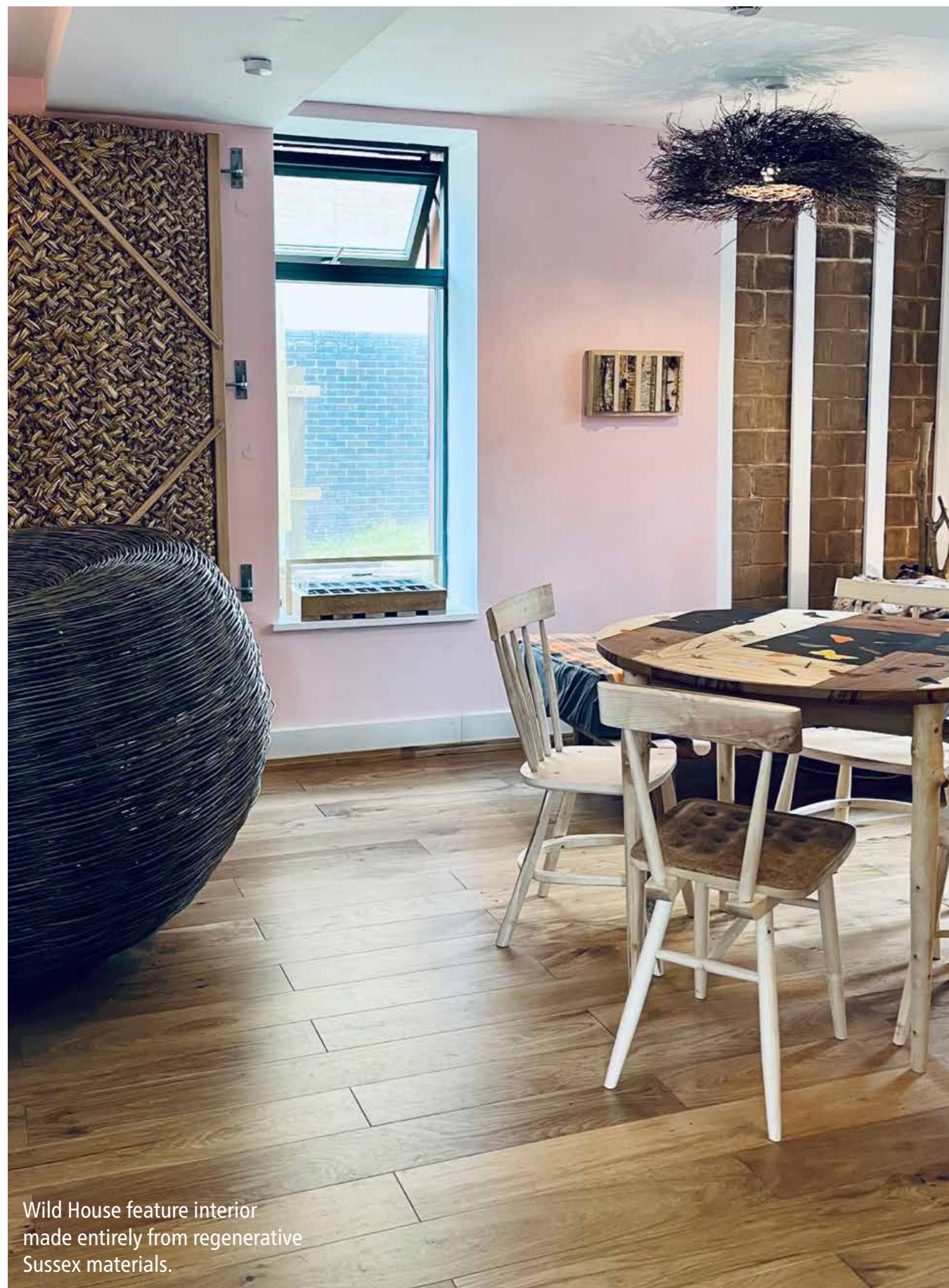
Growing a sustainable economy for the city



Wild House,
University of Brighton

Working towards net zero

2026 - 2035



Wild House feature interior
made entirely from regenerative
Sussex materials.

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Foreword

When you think about it, it seems completely crazy that the world has been operating in a largely “linear” economy for so long – an economy where raw materials are extracted, processed and used to make a product that is then disposed of at the end of its life. Depleting finite resources, spewing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and feeding the global economic machine, this paradigm is clearly not sustainable.

Put simply, a circular economy sources its materials and resources from what is no longer in use. To some extent, these can come from things at the far end of the existing linear model, but true circularity requires systemic shift; designing waste out and reusability, repair, remanufacturing and recycling in from the word go.

Our city has already established itself as a trailblazer in this area and was part of the government’s Circular Economy Taskforce. Brighton & Hove City Council also contributed to the development of England’s first national Circular Economy Strategy – The Circular Economy Growth Plan as a Pathfinder authority.

We are pleased to now be publishing our own Circular Economy Route Map and Action Plan to grow the circular economy here in our city.

Brighton & Hove is internationally known for its creativity and vibrancy. Our unique independent businesses are a defining feature and this entrepreneurial spirit is at the heart of our new Route Map and Action Plan.

From designing out waste in products and keeping them in use for longer, to strengthening local supply chains and finding ways to regenerate natural resources, our circular economy plan recognises the city’s massive potential.

We’ve set out a vision that will provide economic opportunities, promote business

innovation and develop new skills and jobs, all while building wealth within our communities. This plan will enable us to step up our engagement with the fast-growing digital and tech sectors and strengthen the key partnerships that will help us innovate. Connecting local and national priorities not only reinforces our commitment to a sustainable future but also sets out a blueprint for other councils to follow.

Our Circular Economy Action Plan complements our Council Plan’s commitment for building a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable city for all our residents, to grow a diverse and sustainable economy and work towards net zero.

The necessity for sustainable development and economic resilience has never been more pressing. We have completed the groundwork that will help us take advantage of emerging opportunities to develop a strong, resilient economy with tangible benefits for residents.

I am immensely proud of the collaborative efforts that have gone into shaping this plan. It reflects the dedication and innovation of our communities, universities, businesses, residents and public sector partners. Together, we are making strides towards a circular economy that can work for everyone.



Councillor Tim Rowkins, Deputy Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council and Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services.

Vision

Our vision is a city where businesses, communities, and residents embrace circularity as a core part of daily life, recognising the positive impact a circular model creates. By making this fundamental to the way we do business, we will tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis, strengthen our economy, and improve social well-being.

Brighton & Hove city will continue to maintain a national leadership role in the development of a circular economy as a core component of inclusive and sustainable economic growth. By designing systems that retain material in use, reduce waste and regenerate natural resources, this approach supports long-term competitiveness, drives innovation, attracts investment and delivers high-quality local jobs.

A circular economy will strengthen our city’s economic resilience by reducing dependence on volatile global supply chains and will foster innovation across industries. It will keep wealth circulating in the local economy by reducing dependency on overseas manufacturing as we shift to local remanufacturing, repair, upcycling and designing out waste.

By designing waste out of our systems, rethinking product lifecycles, and prioritising

resource efficiency, we will unlock new markets and revenue streams for businesses.

Innovation will be central to this transition - not only as a means of adopting new technologies and practices, but as the driver of entirely new solutions, business models, and ways of living. By embedding innovation into the heart of our circular economy approach, Brighton & Hove can deliver measurable environmental and social impact while also generating sustainable economic growth, high-value jobs, and investment opportunities. In doing so, the city will position itself as a national leader in translating circular ambitions into real-world outcomes.

Becoming a more circular city will also make a significant contribution towards the local delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Brighton & Hove is uniquely positioned to lead this change. Through bold action, collaboration, and investment, we will build a circular city that is prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive, setting a national benchmark for what’s possible. Our city’s future is one where economic success and environmental responsibility go hand in hand—creating a model that others will follow.



The city's economic challenges

The Brighton & Hove Economic Plan 2024-2027 outlines the economic challenges facing the city, and whilst it is a 3-year plan, it commences a 10-year strategic journey to become a more competitive, productive, fairer and greener city. Some of the main challenges facing the city are:

Economic competitiveness: There is a notable scarcity of businesses scaling up compared to other UK cities.

Commercial space constraints: Recent years have seen a decline in retail, office, and industrial floorspace, with much of the existing stock being of poorer quality and low energy efficiency.

Affordability and cost of living: The rising cost of living, coupled with declining real-term wages, exacerbates financial pressures on residents.

Social inequality: Disproportionately low average earnings means communities often face additional challenges, including limited access to essential services and substandard housing, leading to increased risks of fuel poverty and food insecurity.

Environmental sustainability: There is a pressing need to support businesses in reducing emissions and waste. Additionally, much of the existing commercial infrastructure requires upgrades to meet future sustainability standards.

How the circular economy can address these challenges

Circular economy plays a vital role in underpinning a more sustainable economy and can transform challenges into opportunities, fostering a more resilient and equitable urban environment through:

Enhancing economic competitiveness:

Circular business models such as redesigning, repairing, sharing, remanufacturing, recycling, and recovering not only reduce environmental impact but also unlock significant economic benefits. By adopting these practices, businesses can lower production and energy, reduce reliance on volatile raw material markets, and cut waste disposal fees. In doing so, they drive innovation, enhance their competitiveness and build greater economic resilience — particularly as consumer and investor demand for sustainability increases. Unlike linear models, which leave local economies exposed to external shocks, circular approaches help create a more resilient and robust economic system with 'spin out' social, educational and well-being benefits. The ability to differentiate through circular innovation is becoming a clear market advantage.



Charity. SuperMKT

Optimising commercial spaces: Circular economy approaches encourage the adaptive reuse and repurposing of existing buildings, transforming underutilised properties into vibrant, fit-for-purpose commercial spaces. This helps address the shortage of affordable, quality workspace, particularly for SMEs and start-ups, and reduces the need for resource-intensive new builds. Supporting these efforts can also stimulate local construction and refurbishment industries, creating opportunities for upskilling and green jobs.

Improving affordability: Circular economy can address affordability and cost of living by reducing dependencies on resource intensive, linear consumption patterns and creating local, low-cost alternatives supported by community-based circular initiatives. Tool libraries, repair cafés, and sharing schemes help households lower their day-to-day expenses while promoting a culture of resourcefulness and mutual support.

Circular strategies in construction — such as lean and modular design and reuse of building materials — can significantly reduce both construction and maintenance costs, making homes more affordable over the long term, especially as the cost of materials continues to rise.

Reducing social inequality: Implementing circular economy projects in underserved areas can open up new training, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities. For example, upcycling workshops, localised



Brighton Repair Café learning how to repair their electrical products to reduce WEEE waste

“The circular economy is gaining traction nationally through the Circular Economy Taskforce and the government's growth plans, signalling a clear shift away from linear economic models. Brighton & Hove is well placed to turn this policy direction into practical, scalable circular solutions that deliver economic, environmental and social value”

Dr David Greenfield, Vice President, Circular Economy Institute and Managing Director, Tech-Takeback.

remanufacturing, and repair-based enterprises offer accessible entry points into the green economy. These initiatives not only provide income and skills but also foster stronger, more resilient and cohesive communities by improving access to goods and services through low-cost, circular alternatives.

Advancing environmental sustainability: The circular economy directly contributes to environmental goals by keeping materials in use and circulation, thus reducing the need for virgin resource extraction — the source of half of global greenhouse gas emissions and over 90% of biodiversity loss and water stress (Global Resources Outlook, 2019).

Practices such as urban mining, decentralised recycling, and regenerative local food and materials systems all reduce environmental impact while creating new business opportunities. As commodity prices rise and regulatory pressure increases, circular solutions become not only environmentally necessary but economically advantageous.

Circular economy and net zero

The council is working closely with the city's fast-growing digital and tech sector, strengthening knowledge and innovation partnerships with both universities, and embedding circular economy principles to build a regenerative economy that supports our transition to net zero.

We are also collaborating with education providers and employers to develop a stronger, more inclusive labour market, ensuring that local people are equipped with the skills needed for a green economy.

The urgency of this transition is clear. The economic impacts of climate change are already being felt. Between 2022 and 2024, rising global temperatures contributed to 60% of the increase in UK food bills, costing households an average of £361 over the 2 year period (ECIU, 2024). In addition, rising energy prices—driven by reliance on fossil fuels—added a further £244 to household costs.

These impacts stem from our transport and energy systems, and significantly, from the production, consumption, and disposal of goods and materials. The circular economy provides a powerful framework to address the latter.

A key focus is on Scope 3 emissions—those embedded in products and materials. In London, Scope 3 emissions are estimated to be three times higher than direct emissions. This is likely true for Brighton & Hove, where industrial activity is limited and car ownership relatively low. Tackling these emissions is essential to achieving our climate goals.

“In order to consign the linear economy to the bin - we need the circular economy to scale up, scale out and scale deep - and only cities can do all three - so it is incredibly important that Brighton and Hove and other global cities are at the forefront of this circular movement.”

Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive Officer, ReLondon

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

Carbon emissions are categorised into three scopes based on the source and control of the emissions. These categories are defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol for cities, a widely recognised framework for accounting and reporting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

These are:

Scope 1 GHG emissions from sources located within the city boundary (e.g. CO² emitted during the combustion of gas in boilers or the combustion of petrol or diesel in vehicles)

Scope 2 GHG emissions occurring as a consequence of the use of grid-supplied electricity, heat, steam and/or cooling within the city boundary (e.g. carbon dioxide emitted from electricity power plants or from waste to energy plants that power some cities' district heating networks)

Scope 3 All other greenhouse gases emitted outside the city boundary as a result of activities taking place within the city boundary. e.g. greenhouse gases emitted during the growing, rearing and processing of food and manufacturing and transportation of products and materials consumed within the city.

The role of partners

The transition to a circular economy requires participation from the public sector, businesses, academia, residents and communities.

The public sector can drive the transition to a circular economy by setting clear policy direction, creating supportive regulation, and using its assets, procurement power and infrastructure to enable circular practices. Councils and public bodies can act as convenors, bringing together businesses, academia and communities to collaborate on solutions, while also acting as testbeds for innovation by opening up buildings, land and services for pilot projects. By embedding circular principles into planning, waste management, procurement and service design, the public sector can create the conditions that help residents and businesses reduce waste, extend the life of materials and accelerate the shift to a more regenerative local economy.

The business sector can accelerate the transition to a circular economy by redesigning products and services to minimise waste, extend product life, and keep materials in use for longer through reuse, repair, remanufacturing and sharing models. Companies can adopt circular operating practices — such as using recycled materials, reducing packaging, and offering take-back or leasing schemes — and collaborate with local networks, innovation hubs and other businesses to develop new solutions. By embedding circularity into their strategy, supply chains and customer offerings, businesses can reduce costs, create new revenue streams, and contribute to a more resilient, low-carbon local economy.

Academia can play a vital role in the transition to a circular economy by generating new research, technologies and design approaches that support circular innovation. Universities can act as testbeds for real-world experimentation, working with businesses,



Sew Fabulous, a sustainable sewing and textiles studio based in Brighton Open Market

councils and communities to trial solutions, evaluate impacts and translate ideas into practical applications. By embedding circular economy principles into teaching and skills development, academia helps prepare the future workforce, while innovation hubs and collaborative research programmes connect academic expertise with industry needs — accelerating the adoption and scaling of circular practices across the city.

Residents and communities can support the transition to a circular economy by making everyday choices that reduce waste and keep materials in use for longer — such as repairing items, choosing preloved, sharing tools and appliances, and reducing unnecessary consumption. Community groups, repair cafés, sharing libraries and local food initiatives create spaces where people can learn new skills, access affordable reused goods and connect with others taking practical action. By supporting local circular businesses, participating in recycling and reuse schemes, and encouraging neighbours to get involved, residents and communities help build a culture of circular living that strengthens the local economy and reduces environmental impact.

Together, these partners create the conditions for Brighton & Hove to shift towards a more resilient, lower carbon and circular economy — supported by upstream innovation, midstream collaboration, and downstream community action.

Our circular economy objectives

This Circular Economy Routemap sets out to drive circular innovation, foster economic growth, enhance resource security and support the city's journey to net zero.

Through co-delivery of actions in the refreshed Circular Economy Action Plan (2026-2035) in Appendix 1, the council will:

1. Maximise council influence to drive circular demand
2. Build strategic partnerships for greater impact
3. Create the right conditions for circular business growth
4. Influence regional and national policy to unlock circular economy opportunities

1. Maximising council influence to drive circular demand

We will leverage the council's operations, procurement policies, and regulatory powers to stimulate local demand for circular products and services.

Our approach will involve:

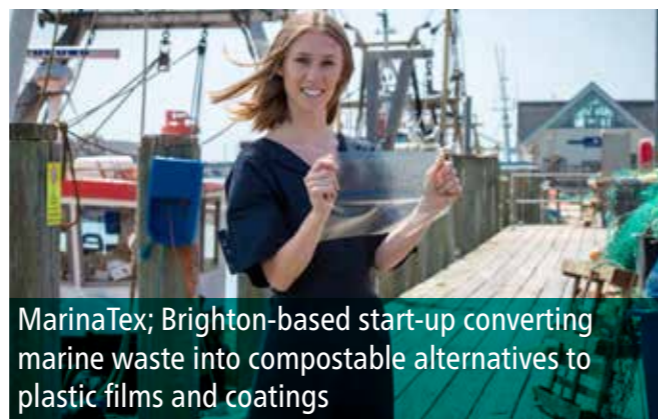
- Embedding circular economy requirements in public sector procurement.
- Commissioning a study to consider planning policy options to support net zero and circular economy to inform the new City Plan 2041 including potential requirements for embodied carbon.
- Embedding circular construction principles and piloting innovations (in planning, design, sustainable materials and methods of construction) in council-led developments and highways projects.
- Delivering food waste prevention actions included in the city-wide Food Strategy (2025–2030).
- Protecting the city's main water source, the chalk aquifer, by supporting the adoption of regenerative farming practices and through the delivery of a sustainable drainage implementation plan.

2. Building strategic partnerships for greater impact

Utilising the council's convening power to forge collaborations across public, private, academia and third sectors will help to unlock external funding and investment, scale circular initiatives, and amplify the work of local businesses, social enterprises and community organisations.

Our approach will involve:

- Increasing anchor institutes' membership of the Good Food Procurement Group to eliminate food waste and improve the provision of healthy, sustainable food across the city.
- Collaborating with the South East England Hub 4 Circularity (SEEH4C), on reducing carbon-intensive waste streams like construction waste, water, and food for industrial symbiosis.
- Collaborating with the University of Brighton Southeast Remanufacturing Catalyst (CaRE) to support businesses in the South East region to accelerate net zero and circular economy ambitions through incorporating remanufacturing and value retention processes.
- Working with communities to develop and promote circular living initiatives such as the Climate for Communities project led by Trust for Developing Communities with funding from the National Lottery Climate Action Fund (2025-2028).



MarinaTex; Brighton-based start-up converting marine waste into compostable alternatives to plastic films and coatings

3. Creating the right conditions for circular business growth

Circular businesses face several specific market barriers that hinder growth and scalability including access to finance, regulatory frameworks built around linear models and inconsistent consumer awareness and demand. Business support plays a critical role by de-risking investment through grants or blended finance, providing tailored advice and mentoring and facilitating access to networks. We will work with business incubators, accelerators, and enterprise support organisations to equip local businesses with the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to thrive and build capacity.



Spark & Bell; Brighton-based lighting design studio selling built-to-last, modular light fixtures from locally sourced materials that would otherwise go to waste

Our approach will involve:

- Exploring collaborative R&D funding and investment opportunities to accelerate circular growth.
- Raising the profile of circular economy within the local green skills agenda.
- Facilitating industrial symbiosis initiatives where businesses exchange by-products and waste materials as valuable inputs.
- Working with partners to strengthen the local circular business support offer, drawing on insights from our baseline assessment and best practice to address barriers to circular adoption.

4. Influencing regional and national policy to unlock circular opportunities

Brighton & Hove will play an active role in shaping the regional and national policy landscape to support a circular economy transition and leverage devolution for circular economy growth.

Our approach will involve:

- Working with members of the Sussex & Brighton County Combined Authority to encourage the development of a regional Circular Economy Strategy, informed by leading circular economy advisers. This is aimed at decoupling economic growth and material consumption, aligning with the English Circular Economy Growth Plan and facilitating supply chain networking and collaboration to simulate and optimise circular and regenerative regional supply chains at scale.
- Engaging with national and international circular economy experts to identify policy improvements at local, regional, and national levels, ensuring that the policy landscape maximises the benefits of circular economy transitions for Brighton & Hove.
- Driving policy and investment in circular skills and jobs, advocating for policies and investment that expand workforce training, support job creation and develop skills for emerging circular industries.
- Supporting the expansion of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes to reduce waste at source.

By embedding these circular economy principles into policy, planning, procurement, business support, and community initiatives, Brighton & Hove will build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable local economy. This transition will create green jobs, reduce environmental impact, and keep resources circulating locally, ensuring the city remains at the forefront of the circular economy movement in the UK.

How we will deliver

Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to transitioning towards a circular economy by embedding circular principles across its operations, engaging with businesses and communities, and influencing policy at regional and national levels.

To develop a robust sectoral action plan, we have consulted widely with stakeholders across key sectors—including built environment, food, and textiles—to identify opportunities, challenges, and priority actions.

These priority actions can be found in the refreshed Circular Economy Action Plan in Appendix 1. The action plan will be updated regularly based on progress made and the needs of local businesses.

Our approach is informed by a Theory of Change framework, ensuring that interventions are evidence-based, collaborative, and strategically targeted.

This process will be underpinned by a baseline assessment to be carried out in 2026 that:

- Maps local businesses transitioning to circular models and documents key innovations.
- Assesses sector-specific circular economy practices to understand current waste levels, resource use, and business engagement.
- Captures community-led circular initiatives contributing to local sustainability and economic resilience.
- Identifies gaps in business support, highlighting the greatest inefficiencies and opportunities.
- Provides data-driven recommendations to guide policy development, collaboration, and business support services.

How we will monitor progress

To keep the council and its partners accountable and to encourage continual improvement, we will monitor progress on the four council commitments through the following performance indicators:

- Percentage of actions contained within the refreshed Circular Economy Action Plan (Appendix 1) delivered on time and to plan.
- Number of circular economy projects/ initiatives with local private and community and voluntary sector partners having bid for and successfully attracted external funding, and total value (£) of investment where available.
- Number of circular economy enterprises and community-led initiatives having received investment, funding or support-in-kind from the council, investors or its partners, and total value (£) of investment where available.
- Number of circular innovation initiatives (e.g. startups, spinouts, pilots) supported through city partnerships - including those developing, testing and validating new solutions - and evidence of their progression (such as pilots completed, products launched, investment raised, or jobs created).



BHFP Community composting bins at Albion Hill Corner.

- Number and percentage of circular economy enterprises and community-led initiatives having reported positive benefits from participating in newly established local or regional circular economy forums/ partnerships.
- Number of traditional SMEs having taken up business support offers that promote and facilitate the adoption of circular economy practices.
- Development of a regional Circular Economy Strategy, informed by leading circular economy advisors, aimed at decoupling economic growth and material consumption, aligned with the national Circular Economy Strategy.

Tracking progress on circular economy goals is challenging, as many indicators don't capture real outcomes and data is often lacking. Closing this gap requires coordinated action across councils, government, academia and business—through clear standards, robust reporting, better data systems, and open sharing.

The development of business reporting frameworks, such as the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), supports the shift to a circular economy. Introduced in 2024, these standards create a consistent approach to measuring circular economy performance and ensure transparent, comparable reporting across all businesses.

Brighton & Hove is already working to narrow these gaps. We are partnering with local universities on baseline assessments to track progress, such as business engagement, local circular innovations, and community-led initiatives. Through the UK Circular Cities network, we share best practice on local data collection and continue to seek funding and partnerships to strengthen monitoring, reporting, and innovation in this area.

“Brighton & Hove was one of the first cities to commit to a Circular Economy Route Map back in 2019 and since then it has been an inspiration to other cities and towns, not just across the UK, but Europe as well. This further commitment to turning our ‘take, make, and throw away’ systems into sustainable closed loop & circular economies will enable the citizens of Brighton to begin to co-exist in harmony with the natural world that surrounds us.”

Duncan Baker Brown, ARB, RIBA Architect, Academic, Author & Climate Activist .



Victoria Road sustainable housing scheme won the first Unlock Net Zero awards for development of the year in 2023.

The city's circular achievements to date

In 2018, the city was among the first in the UK to declare a climate and biodiversity emergency, setting the stage for bold climate action. As part of its response to this, the council adopted the first iteration of the **Circular Economy Routemap and Action Plan (2020-2035)**. Since then, emissions have fallen by 23% between 2018 and 2023 (DESNZ local authority GHG statistics).

This Circular Economy Routemap and Action Plan, along with the council's Net Zero Programme targeting energy decarbonisation, will support further city-wide emissions reductions.

The council has played a direct role in advancing circularity through policy and procurement. Between 2020 and 2025 Brighton & Hove has made significant strides in embedding circular economy principles into its policies, economy, and community initiatives.

By embedding circular principles into planning and infrastructure projects, it has encouraged the use of secondary materials in construction.

As the developer of new council housing and other major regeneration projects,



Tech-Takeback in partnership with BHCC, meantime lease operating a reuse electrical shop.

the council is leading the way in specifying circular construction design, materials and methods of construction. For example, all major projects must have a Circular Economy Opportunities Assessment carried out at the start of the project, and from 2026 the council's placemaking service will be monitoring and reporting the share of reused and reusable materials in new major projects.

As an owner of agricultural land, the council is working closely with its tenant farmers to produce farm plans and update lease agreements to drive the adoption of circular, regenerative farming practices at the city's edge – with benefits for consumers, nature and the local chalk aquifer – the city's main supply of clean water.

As a large public sector buyer, the council has put in place new measures to increase the specification of circular economy goods, works and services and to engage existing suppliers around opportunities to strengthen their circular economy knowledge and credentials. These measures include an updated Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy; a new Specification-writing Tool for Environmental Procurement (STEP); and delivery of an internal Circular Economy Specification-writing Masterclass with a focus on the built environment.

As the waste collection and disposal authority, the council announced a major expansion of its recycling provision www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2025/major-expansion-recycling-provision with new materials having been added to collections in 2025, including food waste.

There have been a number of initiatives that the council has supported to stimulate circular growth. These include business grants through the Shared Prosperity Fund, meantime lease for circular businesses and access to circular business support and grant information through the BIPC.

Brighton & Hove has fostered strong partnerships to drive circular innovation. Collaboration between the council, universities, and business networks, such as Circular Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce, has helped accelerate circular solutions across multiple sectors.

The city's innovation hubs, including Plus X Innovation and Sussex Innovation Hub, have supported start-ups in developing circular products and business models, while the University of Brighton has connected green enterprises with academic expertise. Plus X Innovation runs a Circular City Exchange, which provides a platform to convene businesses, academia, and communities around circular innovation projects. By

“Second-hand fashion is becoming an increasingly mainstream choice, particularly among younger generations, however fast-fashion consumption continues to outpace even the strong growth of the second-hand sector, so this is not a moment for complacency. What is needed is a greater number of curated, high-quality circular economy retail spaces in prime locations offering the same level of service and choice that consumers expect from leading high-street retailers.”

Wayne Hemingway
Co-founder, HemingwayDesign and Charity Super.Mkt



Our City Our World schools programme.

championing initiatives like this, the council can attract external funding and accelerate the scaling of successful circular innovations.

The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere partners have led high-profile nature restoration projects such as Changing Chalk, and from 2026, the www.sussexnaturerecovery.org.uk will strengthen and focus local biodiversity protection and restoration measures.

Through communications and engagement with households, businesses and communities, the council and its partners have worked in close collaboration to increase local demand for circular economy goods and services.

Between 2021 and 2023 the council, its suppliers and local charities delivered a series of behaviour change initiatives under the EU Interreg-funded BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy project engaging residents in circular workshops provided by over 15 local circular businesses.

In 2023/24 a business-facing communications campaign on LinkedIn and Instagram, Brighton & Hove Loop, reached more than 40,000 accounts in the first 5 months, gained 1,305 followers, and had a consistently high engagement rate, providing a valuable platform to promote circular business practices and highlight the work of local circular economy entrepreneurs.

The flagship Our City Our World environmental education programme delivered in primary and secondary schools

with funding from The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere continues to educate entire school communities on the environmental and financial benefits of circular living, disseminating information about circular businesses and services on our doorstep, and empowering action from the city's youth.

At a grassroots level, Brighton & Hove has a thriving network of community-led circular initiatives, including the South East England Hub 4 Circularity, The Wood Store, Brighton Repair Café, Smarter Uniforms, Brighton Bike Hub, The University of Brighton Wild/Waste House, and The Green Centre. These groups empower residents to embrace reuse, repair, and sharing, fostering a city-wide culture of sustainability.

The city's businesses are also stepping up, with many adopting circular business models and participating in initiatives like Net Zero Champions, a Brighton Chamber programme helping local enterprises integrate circular strategies.

A fuller summary of achievements can be found in the 2025 Circular Economy Action Plan progress report.

Get involved and inspired

A move to the circular economy must involve stakeholders across the city, including academics, innovators, businesses, institutions, communities and residents.

In Brighton & Hove, there are several circular solutions already in action. To find inspiration for a new business idea or a potential circular collaboration, you can view these at projectblueprint.eu/solutions.

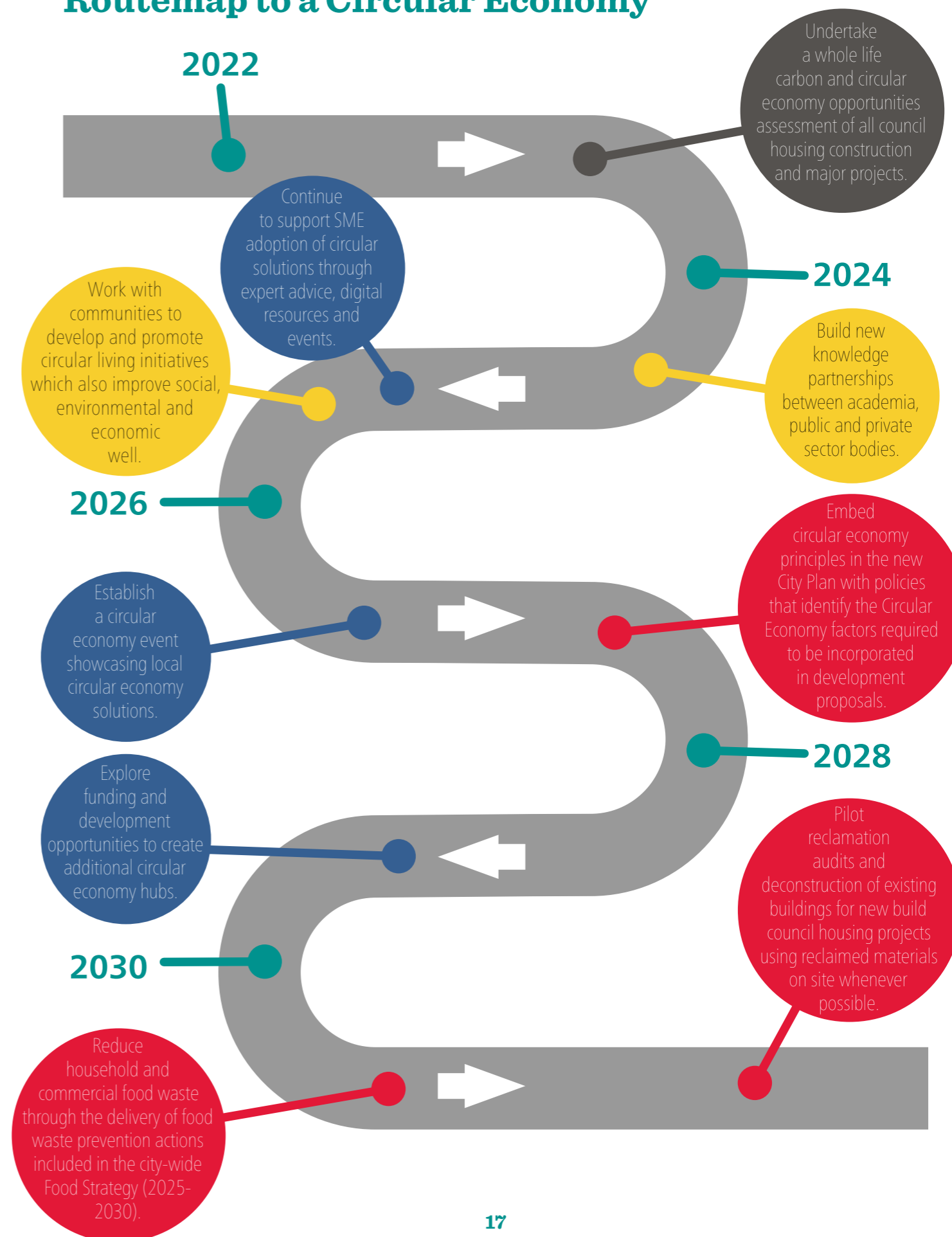
Case studies promoted through www.instagram.com/brightonloop, such as www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2020/get-rid-your-old-electrics-comfort-your-home, www.marinatex.co.uk, beryl.cc, and bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/community-composting help bring opportunities to life and show the exciting work happening in the city.

For other case studies and sources of inspiration, visit the www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/resources/business/examples, relondon.gov.uk/business/our-impact/success-stories success stories, and the ceinstitute.org.

Delivering the Circular Economy Routemap objectives

- **Objective 1:** Maximise council influence to drive circular demand
- **Outcome 2:** Build strategic partnerships for greater impact
- **Objective 3:** Create the right conditions for circular business growth
- **Outcome 4:** Influence regional and national policy to unlock circular economy opportunities

Routemap to a Circular Economy



Appendix 1: Refreshed circular economy action plan

Objective 1: Maximise council influence to drive circular demand

Sector	Action	Delivery timeframe	Outcome	Economic challenges met	Delivery partners
Food	1 Create opportunities for local, regenerative food producers or those who want to be farming in ways that are better for the environment and build the supply chain infrastructure that they can tap into.	Short, medium and long-term	Increased adoption of regenerative farming practices, leading to improved soil and water health, increased biodiversity (linking to City Downland Estate Plan), and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Greater public awareness and support for regenerative farming methods.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	South Downs National Park, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), BHCC's tenant farmers
Food	2 Reduce household and commercial food waste through the delivery of food waste prevention actions included in the city-wide Food Strategy (2025 – 2030) including the introduction of weekly food waste collections for all households across the city by April 2026.	Short and medium-term	Outcome 1: Diversion of organic waste from incineration to recycling, improved soil quality, and increased opportunities for local food growing. Outcome 2: Cost savings for households and redistribution of surplus food to emergency food services Outcome 3: Cost savings for food businesses through more efficient use of food resources and reduced disposal costs	Improving affordability Reducing social inequality Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Environmental Services), Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, Sussex FareShare, food banks and food hubs, community kitchens
Built environment	3 Ensure developments are built to high sustainability and environmental standards and are designed and constructed in line with circular economy principles in construction.	Short, medium and long-term	Outcome 1: As part of preparing the City Plan 2041, options for circular economy and whole life carbon requirements of development proposals are explored Outcome 2: On all new build council housing and major projects, circular economy opportunity assessments are carried out at the feasibility and throughout early design stages with the aim of circulating elements at their highest value. The reused and recycled content in new build council housing is measured and reported, aiming for 20% of all materials by weight. Materials recoverable at the end of the building's life are measured and reported, aiming for 50% of all materials by 2025 and 60% by 2030. Sustainability outcomes are set based on industry best practice and whole life carbon assessments are undertaken on all council new build housing and major projects to support designers to choose materials, systems, designs, and methods to meet outcomes.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (local planning authority); developers including BHCC; BHCC contractors

Built environment	4 Pilot reclamation audits and deconstruction of existing buildings for new build council housing projects, using reclaimed materials on site wherever possible.	Short-term	Pilot projects demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of reclaiming materials from deconstructed buildings at their highest value and support skills development in methods of deconstruction.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Regen); BHCC contractors; SEEH4C
Built environment	5 Continue to invest in preventative maintenance programmes to extend the life of highway assets. Monitor and review new carbon reduction innovations through the network of national and regional bodies that have been set up to share best practice such as the Local Government Technical Advisers Group and Local Council Roads Innovation Group (LCRIG).	Short, medium and long-term	Preventative maintenance and innovate pilot projects that result in longer lasting infrastructure, lower lifecycle costs and reduced environmental impact.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Highways); BHCC contractors; Local Government Technical Advisers Group and Local Council Roads Innovation Group (LCRIG)
Built environment	6 Continue to explore opportunities to embed the principles of the circular economy and other low carbon approaches to highway design and implementation as part of the procurement of new and existing call off contracts.	Short, medium and long-term	The Civil Engineering Design & Transport Planning Services Framework is renewed to ensure capital and operational carbon reduction is considered at the design stages of construction projects through lean design, designing for longevity and flexibility/adaptability and improved material selection. Contractors are required to reduce, monitor and report embodied carbon in transport projects and maintenance programmes.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Highways); BHCC contractors; SEEH4C
Water	7 Develop and begin delivery of a sustainable drainage implementation plan using nature-based solutions to replenish and protect groundwater resources.	Short and medium-term	A sustainable drainage implementation plan is developed and executed, protecting highways and properties from surface water flooding and extreme weather events. This plan also safeguards the chalk aquifer and creates natural habitats for local species, enhancing environmental resilience and biodiversity.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Highways); BHCC contractors; Environment Agency; Southern Water; SEEH4C; OCOW; University of Sussex

All sectors	8 Require the use of the council's Specification-writing Tool for Environmental Procurement on all procurements over £1m and monitor the tool's use and impact on tenders.	Short, medium and long-term	An increasing share of council contracts contains circular economy requirements. This will minimise waste and reduce the material and carbon footprint of council services, as well as promote sustainable procurement practices among local suppliers.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Procurement; All Service Areas)
All sectors	9 Improve the recycling offer of the council's commercial waste management service and increase the number of materials being recycled.	Short-term	Local businesses better supported in their efforts to divert waste from landfill and incineration.	Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Environment Services)
Climate action	10 Explore opportunities to create circular use of green waste produced within the city.	Short and medium-term	Green waste diverted from high-emission scenario processing, to create a carbon negative product.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Net Zero and City Parks)
Climate action	11 Deliver the council's Climate & Nature Action Plan and associated deliverables on reducing waste and consumption emissions	Short, medium and long-term	Reduced city-wide greenhouse gas emissions, support the city to transition to climate resilience and restored local nature.	Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC (Net Zero and City Parks; Placemaking, Housing, Schools, Transport, Waste) and Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere

Objective 2: Build strategic partnerships for greater impact

Sector	Action	Delivery	Outcome	Economic challenges	Delivery
Textiles	12 Establish a city-wide Circular Textiles Forum	Short-term	Circular textiles actions are identified and progressed in collaboration to support the development of this growth sector.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Improving affordability Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC; Sew Fabulous; Smarter Uniforms; SEEH4C; University of Brighton
Food	13 Update the council's Good Food Buying Standards and increase anchor institute membership of the Good Food Procurement Group.	Short-term	Enhanced Good Food Buying Standards lead to healthier, more sustainable food procurement across the city. Increased membership in the Good Food Procurement Group results in co-ordinated efforts to eliminate food waste, benefiting public health and the environment through reduced waste and better nutrition.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	Brighton & Hove Food Partnership; large food procurers incl. BHCC, Sussex NHS Trust, universities; further education institutes; and other large food procurers such as care homes and events venues
All sectors	14 Build new knowledge partnerships between academia, public and private sector bodies	Short-term	Stronger collaborations between academia, public, and private sector bodies will foster innovation and knowledge exchange, enabling the development and application of emerging technologies, including AI, to advance circular practices. These partnerships will unlock new business opportunities, support data-driven decision-making, and accelerate scalable solutions for a more sustainable and resilient local economy.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	BHCC; local universities and FE institutes; Brighton Chamber of Commerce; Plus X Innovation; Sussex Innovation; Clean Growth Innovation Hub; Circular Brighton & Hove; SEEH4C; Brighton AI

	15 Formalise a Circular Innovation Consortium to design and deliver innovation challenges linked to city priorities (e.g. construction reuse, local manufacturing, food systems).	Short-term	Creates a structured workstream for piloting and scaling circular solutions, strengthens city capacity to attract external funding, and builds cross-sector innovation capability.	Enhancing economic competitiveness; Optimising commercial spaces; Advancing environmental sustainability	BHC; Plus X Innovation; University of Brighton; University of Sussex; Brighton Chamber of Commerce; Circular Brighton & Hove
All sectors	16 University of Brighton Southeast Remanufacturing Catalyst (CaRE) to support businesses in the South-East region to accelerate net zero and circular economy ambitions through incorporating remanufacturing and value retention processes.	Short-term	Outcome 1: Improved understanding of VRP status in the Brighton and Hove region to facilitate policy making in the region. Outcome 2: Increased demand for remanufactured products/goods through awareness raising, training, social media promotion and information presenting (cost, emission, risk for informed decision making).	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	The University of Brighton and all CaRE partners
All sectors	17 Work with communities to develop and promote circular living initiatives which also improve social, environmental, and economic well-being.	Short and medium-term	Outcome 1: Increased demand for circular products and services, participation in community-led circular economy initiatives, and community cohesion. Outcome 2: Cost of living support through the promotion of third sector initiatives such as repair cafes, free/low-cost borrowing schemes, food redistribution and community cafes.	Improving affordability Reducing social inequality Advancing environmental sustainability	Trust for Developing Communities; SEEH4C; Circular Brighton & Hove; Brighton & Hove Food Partnership; The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere; OCOW; University of Sussex

Objective 3: Create the right conditions for circular business growth

Sector	Action	Delivery timeframe	Outcome	Economic challenges met	Delivery partners
All sectors	18 Continue to support SME adoption of circular solutions and work with partners to strengthen the local circular business support offer, drawing on insights from the baseline assessment and best practice to address barriers to circular adoption.	Short and medium-term	This support facilitates the adoption of circular economy practices leading to reduced waste, increased resource efficiency, and enhanced business sustainability.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	Brighton Chamber of Commerce; Business & IP Centre; Growth Hub; SEEH4C; Plus X Innovation; Sussex Innovation; University of Sussex; Clean Growth Innovation Hub (University of Brighton) Brighton B Local
All sectors	19 Explore funding and development opportunities to create additional circular economy hubs.	Short and medium-term	The development of circular economy hubs provides dedicated spaces for start-ups, secondary material commerce, research, education and events. These hubs become innovation centres, fostering collaboration and supporting the growth of circular economy initiatives within the city.	Optimising commercial spaces Improving affordability Advancing environmental sustainability	BHC; SEEH4C; University of Brighton; University of Sussex
All sectors	20 Raise the profile of circular economy within the local green skills agenda.	Short-term	Education and training providers are encouraged to explore an expanded definition of 'green skills' to include those needed to extend the life and reduce the environmental impact of materials and goods designed, consumed and/or disposed of in Brighton & Hove. Opportunities to expand the local circular economy training offer are explored through new and existing fora.	Reducing social inequality Advancing environmental sustainability	BHC; education and training providers; Sussex Chambers LSIP; Brighton B Local
All Sectors	21 Facilitate industrial symbiosis initiatives such as the South East Circular Hub funded by Horizon Europe 2024.	Short, medium and long-term	Businesses exchange rather than dispose of valuable by-products and waste materials that can be used as inputs into other industrial processes, lowering material costs and creating new revenue streams.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	SEEH4C (Tech-Takeback; Kent County Council; Claire Potter Design; Ecowise)

All sectors	22 Establish a circular economy event showcasing local circular economy solutions, bringing together business innovations, green skills access and community initiatives.	Short-term	The event creates a platform for local businesses, communities and educational institutions to showcase their circular economy initiatives, facilitating peer learning and knowledge exchange. This exposure enables adoption of best practices, drives innovation, and strengthens the local circular economy network.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Advancing environmental sustainability	Brighton MET; Brighton & Hove Food Partnership; Circular Brighton & Hove; Brighton Chamber of Commerce; Plus X Innovation; University of Sussex; Clean Growth Innovation Hub (University of Brighton); BHCC; SEEH4C; Trust for Developing Communities
All sectors	23 Implement circular economy learning and action in schools through the Our City, Our World (OCOW) environmental education programme.	Short-term	Outcome 1: Enhanced awareness and engagement of students in circular economy practices, fostering a generation of environmentally conscious individuals and increased demand for circular products and services. Outcome 2: Waste minimisation in schools and school participation in sustainable food systems. Outcome 3: Skills.	Reducing social inequality Advancing environmental sustainability	OCOW; BHCC; Brighton Schools; School meal providers; Brighton & Hove Food Partnership; The Real Junk Food Project; Farm School

Objective 4: Influence regional and national policy to unlock circular economy opportunities

Sector	Action	Delivery timeframe	Outcome	Economic challenges met	Delivery partners
Government	24 Explore with neighbouring authorities the development of a regional Circular Economy Routemap	Medium Term	A regional Circular Economy Routemap developed with input from national and international experts, aligned with the national Circular Economy Growth Plan.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Improving affordability Reducing social inequality Advancing environmental sustainability	Neighbouring authorities and DEFRA Circular Economy Taskforce and Pathfinders

All sectors	25 Baseline circular business activity and identify circular economy infrastructure needs and growth sectors for the region.	Short-term	Unlock opportunities for regional economic growth, decoupled from material consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, waste and pollution.	Enhancing economic competitiveness	BHCC; University of Brighton; University of Sussex; SOENECS
All sectors	26 Support the expansion of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes to reduce waste at source.	Short and medium-term	Engage and respond to central government consultation, clearly demonstrating support for policy improvements that reduce consumption and waste at source.	Enhancing economic competitiveness	BHCC, EMF, WRAP
Government	27 Engage with national and international circular economy experts to identify policy improvements at local, regional, and national levels, ensuring that the policy landscape maximises the benefits of circular economy transitions for Brighton & Hove.	Short, medium and long-term	Growth opportunities for local academic, design and tech sectors secured through a strengthened policy focus on waste prevention and targeted intervention at the design and use stages of product lifecycles.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Optimising commercial spaces Improving affordability Reducing social inequality Advancing environmental sustainability	National government departments; Circular Brighton & Hove; ReLondon; Ellen MacArthur Foundation; Clean Growth Innovation Hub (University of Brighton); University of Sussex
All sectors	28 Drive policy and investment in circular skills and jobs, advocating for policies and investment that expand workforce training, support job creation and develop skills for emerging circular industries.	Short and medium-term	Coordinated policy and investment build circular skills, training pathways and quality jobs, ensuring Brighton & Hove has the workforce capacity to scale circular activity and deliver long-term economic benefits.	Enhancing economic competitiveness Reducing social inequality Advancing environmental sustainability	LSIP; SEEH4C

Appendix 2: List of city partners

Public sector bodies

- The UK Government has a legislative leadership role, introducing policies that promote reducing, reusing, repairing, and recycling. Examples of recent policy innovations include a Deposit Return Scheme for beverage containers and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging.
- Brighton & Hove City Council – Leads and develops policies that support the circular economy, participates in national and international networks such as ReLondon's Circular Cities Network and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Circular Cities Stand-up, to learn from and share best practice, deliver circular projects, and maximise public resources to support local businesses and residents in adopting circular practices. The council as an asset owner can support innovation by identifying opportunities to act as a testbed using its assets.
- University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust – Participates in the Circular Economy Healthcare Alliance to reduce consumption, waste and carbon emissions.
- The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere – Supports circular, regenerative initiatives across the urban, rural, and marine environment.

Circular business models and initiatives

- Bus services, Brighton & Hove's Bikeshare Scheme and Electric Brighton – Encourages shared mobility and reduces the need for private vehicle ownership.
- Recorra and Compost Club – Closed loop recycling services that supply customers with products created from their own waste (e.g. office supplies and compost).
- Harriet's of Hove, Hunglish, Infinity Foods and Kindly – Reducing packaging waste through dry food refill stations.
- Tech-Takeback – offering collection, data erasing and repurposing of end of life household and SME tech for social good.

Business networks and innovation hubs

- Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce – Supports circular business models through initiatives including Net Zero Champions.
- Plus X Innovation Hub – Supports and hosts start-ups like MarinaTex, Natural Negative, Batch.Works, and Samudra Oceans, which develop circular solutions.
- Sussex Innovation Hub – Connects university research with businesses to commercialise circular economy solutions.
- Clean Growth Innovation Hub at the University of Brighton - accelerates the translation of leading academic research into beneficial real-world outcomes.
- B Corp business network – Business network of certified B Corp businesses in Sussex, sharing best practice and creating collaborative opportunities to enable the adoption of circular and other sustainable business practices.
- EU Horizon 2024 funded South East England Hub 4 Circularity – A collaborative project led by Tech-Takeback, facilitating the exchange of end-of-life materials across the region.
- The wide range of co working spaces in the city that support start ups, including those focused on circular business models.

Universities and research institutions

- University of Brighton – Leads research and innovation in sustainable design, including the Brighton Wild/Waste House. Embeds sustainability into the curriculum and delivers circular economy initiatives on campus. Supports stakeholders via its Clean Growth Innovation Hub which delivers collaborative research, innovation and skills training to drive circular economy adoption across the city.
- University of Sussex – Leads research and innovation on materials science. Embeds sustainability into the curriculum and delivers circular economy initiatives on campus.

Community and third sector organisations

- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, The Real Junk Food Project, Sussex Surplus and other members of the city's Surplus Food Network – Address food waste and food insecurity by redistributing and utilising surplus food.
- Fork and Dig it– A regenerative farming project supporting nature restoration and food production.
- Brighton Repair Café, Sew Fabulous, and Brighton Bike Hub – Upskilling residents so they can save money and extend the lifetime of products through repair.
- Charity shops, RevaluElectricals, Freegle, Smarter Uniforms, and Brighton Wood Store – Promote reuse and redistribution of products.
- The Green Centre and Shabitat (Magpie Recycling Co-Operative) – Share information on local recycling and provide supplementary recycling services.
- Brighton Borrowers and Brighton Community Workshop – Support asset sharing to avoid costly purchases of less frequently used items.
- Circular Brighton & Hove – part of the global network of the Circular Economy institute.

Households and residents

- Residents play a key role in supporting the circular economy by adopting sustainable consumption habits, participating in sharing and repair initiatives, increasing demand for circular products and services, and ensuring proper waste management.

By working together, these partners are helping Brighton & Hove transition towards a more sustainable and circular economy through up, mid and downstream solutions.

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