Protect artists and makers studios in the city

We the undersigned petition the council to ensure that:
1. In urban redevelopments, artists and makers workspaces are not sacrificed
2. Urban redevelopments provide adequate allocation of long-term, genuinely affordable, artist's and maker's studio/workshop space
3. During redevelopments, artists and makers are provided with appropriate space to continue working
4. They make explicit to developers their responsibilities to comply with the requirements detailed in the Local Development Framework

"Brighton & Hove is a regional cultural 'city by the sea' famous for its vibrant, cosmopolitan lifestyle with a strong commitment to the arts and thriving creative industries and digital media sector which attracts tourism and new businesses"[1].

Artists and makers play a vital part in our city's personality - they are the driving force behind many visual arts festivals, events and independent exhibitions. Most of these are produced on a shoestring budget, at little or no cost to the public purse, and are free to attend. Creative producers make an invaluable contribution to what makes Brighton a successful city.

As Brighton & Hove grows, redevelopments in the city have resulted in artists and makers losing their workspaces. Creative producers cannot afford rents at levels commercial businesses and large companies can pay and they are therefore priced out of the market. This does not just affect artists and makers, many other small traders and companies suffer also.

Unless substantially changed, another instance of this will be Matsim property developers' plans for the Hove Station Area site. This involves the demolition of the Industrial House building in Conway Street, currently home to several creative businesses including APEC artists' studios. Matsim's proposal: 'Hove Square' announced October 2012 [2] includes no provision of long-term, affordable artists' or makers' workspaces, and Matsim's current proposal, as it stands, will result in the eviction of all of these businesses.

While we, the artists working at APEC, are concerned about the fate of all the businesses in the building, our campaign for recognition of the need for affordable workspace for artists and makers in Brighton & Hove must go further. Many creative producers in the city will face similar problems unless we can prevent further loss of affordable workspaces.

Brighton & Hove City Council states in their local development framework document, the 'Brighton and Hove Draft City Plan Part 1, May 2012' that redevelopment of the (DA6) Hove Station Area should ensure that "workshops, office space, studios, storage and other premises remain affordable, appropriate and available for use"[3]. The Draft City Plan notes the importance of creative practices in several other places, yet Matsim's Hove Square proposal does not address these objectives. All developers must be made aware their plans should not just focus on profit but also on the needs of those they may displace, and the communities they impact on.

Redevelopment can achieve all these aims. ACME Studios in London have, for many years, worked with local authorities and developers to include artists' studios in redevelopments. Through their work ACME have shown that this not only supports artists and makers but also offers real advantages for local economies and developers.

Notes:
(1) Brighton and Hove Draft City Plan Part 1, May 2012. p10
(2) http://hovesquare.com/
(3) Brighton and Hove Draft City Plan Part 1, May 2012. p62

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