

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

Executive Forward Plan Reference	E2401
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The Guild Co-Working Hub

Date of Meeting	9-May-12
The Issue	<i>The Council is developing a co-working hub in Bath to provide the growing community of freelancers, particularly app designers, coders, copywriters and web developers with shared working space, meeting rooms, training facilities and event space. The Cabinet needs to approve plans for the Guild Co-working Hub to open in late summer 2012</i>
The decision	<p>(1) To APPROVE that up to £500,000 capital provisionally allocated in the 2012/13 budget be used to redevelop an area in the Guildhall to become a Co-Working Hub;</p> <p>(2) To AGREE that the final layout of the Co-Working Hub will be agreed by Council officers in conjunction with the Cabinet members for Sustainable Development and Community Resources;</p> <p>To AGREE that a lease be granted by the council to a Community Interest Company to deliver the Co-Working Hub. The specific details of the governance arrangements will need to be agreed by the Council's Section 151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet member for Sustainable Development and Community Resources.</p>
Rationale for decision	<p>A Creative and Digital Hub Study was commissioned by B&NES to examine the best way to support the Creative sector. It examined the full range of options for supporting this key sector, including financial support, skills development, research and development, general business support, networks, digital connectivity and property.</p> <p>The report concludes that an integrated property solution would provide the best immediate return on public sector investment. In coming to this conclusion the study shows that the availability of suitable and affordable workspace in the City is limited, as evidenced by the high concentrations of professionals working from home in the City of Bath and that existing employers have difficulties finding space for freelancers they employ on a contractual basis. It concludes that the structure of the sector with multiple small businesses, limits the confidence of the property development industry to provide suitable business space. This is an important market failure which can be addressed. An intervention in the provision of workspace can be the vehicle to driving many of the other important interventions.</p> <p>Having established this, the study considered a range of potential sites. This assessed all potential sites in Bath and recommended the Guildhall as the best option to test the concept</p>
Other options considered	<p>Do nothing: As the main report highlights however there is a real need to support this sector and providing a Hub for activities is seen as one of the most valuable means of achieving this. By not intervening there will be fewer</p>

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individuals in Bath able to find accommodation for early stage businesses, fewer opportunities for networking and innovation and less opportunity for mentors and investors to meet with early stage companies

Find an alternative office space:

As set out in the report, all property options were reviewed and the Guildhall was considered the best option to test the concept of a Co-Working Hub.

The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision