

## Creative Hub

1. The Council commissioned a piece of work to consider opportunities for a Creative Hub in King's Lynn.

"A Creative Hub is a place, either physical or virtual, which brings creative people together. It is a convenor, providing space and support for networking, business development and community engagement within the creative, cultural and tech sectors".

Creative Industries is the fastest growing sector of UK economy.

### 2. Baseline Findings

- No existing creative network or community- this needs facilitation, building up, leadership and support
- Also need to build up arts, culture and creative capacity within the local authority
- Numbers of individuals and groups exist but are not connected or supported – they are however **keen to develop a hub**
- Existing creative companies have good accommodation but want more **networking, talks and affordable meeting space**
- Artists and makers are lacking **accommodation and workspaces**
- There is **desire and ambition** for a large creative hub but only capacity at this point for a small-scale hub
- Look at a **four phase development** of network and buildings  
**Phase 1: Network/Virtual Hub**  
**Phase 2: Meanwhile Use**  
**Phase 3: Creative Workspaces and**  
**Phase 4: Full-scale Creative Hub**

### 3. Conclusion

- King's Lynn is lacking a **communication/connection/promotion** network and platform
- Not enough **free or low cost meeting spaces** suitable for creative use
- Insular attitude in some places, **people feel isolated, neglected**
- **Lots of creative people** in surrounding towns and villages
- A lot of activity in **cultural education and community building** in West Norfolk
- West Norfolk recognised as **above average area for skills** in set design, scenery, fashion, film-making, photography (NESTA)
- **Collusion** and **GroundWork** are making a difference
- There is a lot of enthusiasm and goodwill but **not joined up and working together – not yet a creative community**
- Several factions and conflicting groups, needs objective and sensitive expert brokering and development
- Needs **visionary support/investment** by Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, ACE, LEPS, Norfolk County Council to build capacity
- Needs **facilitation** and on-the-ground **coordination** in shorter term

## 4. Options

	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Drawbacks</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Option 1</b> No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No risk</li> <li>• No investment needed</li> <li>• No increase of capacity necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste of opportunity</li> <li>• No added value for Future High Streets Bid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No creative hub</li> <li>• Dissatisfied community</li> <li>• Creative continue to leave King's Lynn and area</li> <li>• Empty buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 – stage 1</b> Virtual hub/network of creatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low set-up and running costs</li> <li>• Easy to start and expand</li> <li>• No need for physical building</li> <li>• Easy to spread over wide area</li> <li>• Accessible to many</li> <li>• Uses new tech platforms</li> <li>• Increased connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small investment &amp; risk</li> <li>• Doesn't create workspaces or meeting spaces</li> <li>• Not accessible to everyone</li> <li>• Needs strong digital infrastructure</li> <li>• Changes &amp; updates – hard to maintain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A coordinator to devise and commission a suitable platform and structure for a network to function that fit the purpose</li> <li>• Funding to set it up, grow, update, active and maintain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A way to connect creatives across a larger area</li> <li>• National connections</li> <li>• Info sharing mechanism</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> stage creative hub</li> <li>• Limited contribution to the creative economy</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 – stage 2</b> Meanwhile use e.g. 10 Norfolk Street shop empty retail space/Freebridge warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lost cost/low risk/easy to start</li> <li>• Benefits and enlivens high street</li> <li>• Accessible</li> <li>• Helps to build capacity</li> <li>• Appealing to young people</li> <li>• Makes use of any empty building</li> <li>• Adds value to Future High Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of income to Council</li> <li>• Relatively small impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates-free and rent-free agreement from Council</li> <li>• Community-based group or collective to run the space</li> <li>• Start-up and business development support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A boost to the creative community</li> <li>• First step to build capacity</li> <li>• Place to run creative activities with young people &amp; workshops</li> <li>• Increase capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 – stage 3</b> Studios/Makerspace e.g. White Barn, Freebridge Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievable within 1-2 years</li> <li>• Medium investment</li> <li>• Provides workspaces</li> <li>• Builds capacity</li> <li>• Offers collective space for artists</li> <li>• Mixed offer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs funding investment to start</li> <li>• Needs capacity and management</li> <li>• Some revenue costs to maintain</li> <li>• May not offer public access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable building secured</li> <li>• Design development</li> <li>• Detailed business plan</li> <li>• Fundraising for conversion</li> <li>• Investment from partners</li> <li>• Manager/coordinator</li> <li>• Suitable tenants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good use of building</li> <li>• Contribution to creative ecosystem</li> <li>• More income generation opportunities</li> <li>• Strengthen reputation of town</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 – stage 4</b> Full functioning multiuse hub e.g. Kwikfit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High investment for major gain</li> <li>• Offers landmark destination</li> <li>• Inclusive and accessible</li> <li>• Provides social, meeting and workspace</li> <li>• Major contribution to the infrastructure of the Borough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher risk</li> <li>• Expensive to maintain</li> <li>• Long-term project</li> <li>• Needs strong leadership and management</li> <li>• Depends on strong &amp; connected creative sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships and buy-in</li> <li>• Anchor tenant to manage the building or; venue manager</li> <li>• Significant funding</li> <li>• Robust business plan</li> <li>• Long-term commitment to capital project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major asset for the town</li> <li>• Raised profile as a cultural and creative centre</li> <li>• Building the tech and digital creative community</li> <li>• Increased capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Campus approach</b> e.g. combination of spaces across the town-mixture of options above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Makes best use of resources</li> <li>• Benefits high street</li> <li>• Can build over a period of time</li> <li>• Offers range of opportunities and access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs coordination, input and leadership</li> <li>• Takes time to achieve</li> <li>• Could dissipate demand and capacity in the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision and leadership</li> <li>• Range of buildings</li> <li>• Business support</li> <li>• Strong partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A diverse and accessible creative hub</li> <li>• A range of opportunities for creatives and the community</li> <li>• Profile as a creative town</li> </ul>

## 5. Proposal

The Council has several shop units around King's Lynn. Generally shops are left empty pending re-letting or alternatively can be let to charitable entities, this gives business rates relief and can generate a small income.

It is proposed that the Council consider the use of empty retail space as small creative workspaces. Unit xx on Broad Street could be considered as a pilot scheme and would be eligible for small business rates relief.