

Creative incubation unit proposal

Proposal for a new low-risk initiative designed to take advantage of available funding opportunities (CLLD budgets earmarked for Market Makers FabLab and office equipment, and partial deployment of unspent Market Makers construction funding).

It is proposed that the Market Makers team continues to work with colleagues at LTC and CLLD to explore the feasibility and progress towards the delivery of the following two options:

- A. The refurbishment and equipment of Unit 2, The Guildhall, Fore Street (LTC-owned property) to create a flexible, multipurpose public workspace, offering access to creative fabrication equipment and business incubation facilities (providing a business address for regular subscribers), also available for LTC surgery and public service pop-up events, based on a commitment for a minimum five-year usage of this facility for these purposes, with costs of administration etc. to be defrayed by prices of hire, as delineated in previous plans for an LTC-run FabLab space, with the possibility, in addition to one-off hires, of extended subscription bookings to 'hotdesk' specific creative and business facilities (note: currently planning permission would allow this space to be used for these purposes);

Refurbishments would include: stripping of old tiling, paintwork and furnishings, redecoration, installation of workstation and shelving units, internet connection, sink refurbishment, reflooring, minor structural repair, and modification of electricity supply suitable for kiln use.

The property currently has level access with door widths meeting required standards for accessibility. The floor plan will be designed with suitable room for movement about the space and other measures such as adjustable height desks/benches included.

Advantages of Plan A

- Property owned and controlled by LTC
- Facilities Manager has quotes for similar refurbishment of Unit 3, which can be achieved in 6 weeks
- Boost the town centre's profile and footfall
- Public front window for LTC, Market Makers and Liskeard crafts
- Strategically valuable position on Fore Street and close to the Tourist Information Centre

Disadvantages of Plan A

- Loss of rental income to LTC if not relet as a shop £3,549

- LTC staff time required at project end to take bookings and control access (Rialtas booking system could be used), or arrangement with a regular user to oversee in return for reduced fees.
 - Small space (approx. 20 square metres).
- B. The refurbishment and equipment of some of the currently vacant space in the Liskerrett Centre art studios (approx. 7m x 11.8m in total) or the former computer suite in the main building (6m x 4.4m plus large storage cupboards) to create a public workshop space, offering access to creative fabrication equipment, based on a commitment for a minimum five-year usage of this facility for these purposes in return for a percentage of income from space hire (with the possibility of an increased percentage to remunerate day-to-day administration of the booking of this space). There would need to be a negotiation with the Liskerrett Centre about how this could work, including agreement from their trustees, but it is likely that the rent would be lower than the rent foregone on Unit 2 at the Guildhall if Plan A were chosen.

The main building has full disabled access, the studio has level access from one end.

Advantages of Plan B

- More space including storage facilities for regular users
- Liskerrett Centre could facilitate day to day running for a share of the income on expiry of the project
- Existing 3 phase electricity supply in the studio
- Existing community of makers onsite
- Liskerrett Centre would be responsible for cleaning shared toilet facilities.
- Super-fast broadband installed and available at no cost

Disadvantages of Plan B

- LTC do not own/have control of the site
- Legal fees and time required to establish a lease or suitable agreement which is ~~likely to be~~ a condition required by CLLD before funding for refurbishment and equipment can be released
- Higher running costs / lower income due to need to pay third party rent or share of income
- No advice/costing yet obtained for refurbishment – an initial visit suggests the room in the main building will require a new window (which will also facilities extraction required), plus redecoration, flooring, washing facilities as a minimum, the studio is likely to require more

extensive refurbishment to make good for a - year period with fire proofing required and the possibility of asbestos in the roof.

- In the main building a need to consider noise generated and impact on other users of the centre.

In either case, individual aspects of refurbishment work would be undertaken by local tradespeople and overseen by the LTC Facilities Manager and Market Makers team.

Following consultation with members of the project's Creative Enterprise Network Forum, it is proposed that for Plan A this facility would be equipped with potter's wheels, industrial sewing machines, kiln, laser cutter and a hotdesk office workstation, including PCs (with Adobe Creative Cloud), printer/scanner and 3D printer. For Plan B there is space for additional equipment if additional funding is made available.

Provisional equipment costs:

- 3D printer: £3,000
- Kiln: £6,000
- Potter's wheel: £4,000 (x2)
- Industrial sewing machine: £1,000 (x2)
- Laser cutter/engraver: £6,000
- Printer/scanner: £120
- PC: £640 (x2)
- Adobe: £600 (x2)

All of the above are easily procured with minimal order lead-in times.

Estates refurbishment costs:

- Redecoration (retiling, paintwork, flooring): £6,000 (based on current quotation from adjacent unit, including contingency)
- Shelving: £1,000
- Lockers: £1,000
- Disability adaptations: £2,000
- Ventilation: £2,000

Overall costs (as funded by ERDF/CLLD) would comprise:

- Fabrication equipment: £28,080
- IT equipment: £1,284.39
- Office fixtures & fittings: £2,801.57
- Utilities & maintenance (three phase supply): £6,000
- Estates refurbishment: £12,000
- Technical support (installation and training): £14,000

Total: £64,165.96

Costs for the fabrication equipment, IT equipment and office fixtures & fittings do not require a new approval process from CLLD. However, funds for the building refurbishments (and any additional equipment) are subject to approval by the LAG at their next meeting on 21 July 2022, from extant ERDF budgets previously allocated to the aborted capital project.

This facility would offer a valuable resource and hub for local artists, craftspeople and creative entrepreneurs, and would be expected to attract into the centre of Liskeard not only townspeople but also creative talents from across the broader region.

Plan A would meet more than 18% of the project's original target for the refurbishment/construction of public/commercial space at less than 2% of the original capital cost, providing a greatly improved value-for--money proposal.

Operating budgets

Main running costs:

Utilities (excluding kiln use*): £3,000 pa

Business rates: £1,771

Projected direct costs: £4,771

* Kiln use should be charged at a rate which directly reflects electricity prices. This would currently be estimated at up to £30 per full-kiln firing, but may increase in line with energy price rises.

Charges:

Hourly user rate (minimum 2 hours): £10

Core user monthly subscription (10 hours use): £40

Core user monthly subscription (20 hours use): £60

Core user monthly subscription (30 hours use): £80

Core user monthly subscription (40 hours use): £100

Core user monthly subscription (40 hours use, plus locker access): £120

Core user monthly subscription (100 hours use, plus locker access): £200

Training in equipment use: £20 per session (per piece of equipment).

All users must be pre-registered before booking. Registration requires proof of identity and address, agreement to terms of service, provision of credit/debit card details (to be used in the case of damage or loss), and proof of ability to use equipment (or participation in training session). LTC's user-training costs for first six months of operation to be covered by ERDF/CLLD budgets. Training costs thereafter to be covered by training charges. Core users who agree to support the maintenance of the facility will receive a 20 per cent discount on charges.

Projected annual income: minimum £5,000-£10,000; maximum: £20,000-£30,000.