

Press release for immediate use 13 November 2018



Does King's Lynn need a Creative Hub? And how could one work? Tell us what you think

These are questions that the Norwich Consortium were asked to find out the answers to this autumn. They are working for Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk on a feasibility study for a Creative Hub in King's Lynn. And now they want to know your views

The main aim of this study is to work out whether there could be demand and support for facilities in King's Lynn which provides space to:

- nurture creative businesses
- provide networking and meeting spaces
- offer places for artists and creative people, technologists and programmers to mix together and make new work to enliven the town
- build skills and develop startup enterprises
- offer business advice and mentoring
- attract established creative businesses to the town
- give the town a reputation for a place where creative and exciting things are happening.

Many towns and cities have creative hubs in many different forms. The Consortium's task is to find out what kind of creative hub would work in King's Lynn and how it would benefit the town and its people. King's Lynn is in a really key geographical position in a growing region and the town has many great assets and opportunities. So the Consortium needs to work out would work best here.

Depending on what people need, there could be artists' studios, a maker/hackspace, incubator units, studios to rent, hot-desking and creative studio space for activities and workshops, practice spaces for bands and places for creative people to network, meet each other and share skills and business practice, a café, retail space and more.

The team will also be looking at potentially suitable buildings and sites across town and testing models for ways that a creative hub could be run and supported to be independent and sustainable in the long term.

Why would King's Lynn want a creative hub?

Many people will have seen the film projections on buildings around the town centre in the last few years. These are a good example of the kind of work that can come out of arts and technology collaborations and there are lots of skills needed to make content for the town's projectors – great opportunities for people to inspire each other and learn new skills, especially for young people who may follow a career in the arts and creative digital sector.

The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk already has a strong track of working collaboratively with artists, designers and tech companies on projects such as the Amiens Gardens and the Amiens light projection.

A recent project with Cambridge-based Collusion and local company TinFish resulted in visitors playing giant Pacman on the side of the Custom House in the town. Another projection made by Team Ouse called Voyager was based on an artificial intelligence that landed in King's Lynn and mined an archive connecting love stories across time.

This autumn, projects to mark the 100th anniversary of the RAF and the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, have brought together creatives and technicians with school children, artists and civic dignitaries to create astonishing and thought-provoking displays and interactive games. These give a flavour of the sorts of things that can be possible with the right mix of people and skills.

Projections are just one example. As well as supporting individual creative ventures to thrive, a creative industries space could also foster much more collaborative activity that enriches the town economically, socially and culturally through music, film, games design and more.

The creative industries are growing quickly and there have been many studies and reports about their contribution to our national economy. Young people, startups and developing businesses are in need of more facilities and opportunities in West Norfolk and a hub could provide all that, especially if people get involved.

The team has been conducting a survey amongst creative businesses to find out who is in the area and keen to grow and do more.

We need your input

Now the survey is going live across the whole Borough. The idea is to reach the less visible local creative economy. Maybe you're just beginning to think about making a living from your skills, or you are tucked away working in your bedroom, a garage or shed or even a home studio but feel as though you would like to be more central and better connected– if you are one of those people, or a student, or an established business – please fill in the survey here <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KLCreativeHub> - **and please share it with anyone you know that will be interested.**

Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Health, said: *“Making sure there is demand for this type of workspace, and that we can find suitable premises are the key to this proposal. There is a lot to be done, but if people want it to happen and we can develop feasible and sustainable proposals, it could become an exciting reality. It is crucial that the people who could benefit from this kind of collaborative-workspace approach get involved with the survey so that their views and ideas are captured.”*

On **Thursday 22 November, 6-8pm at King's Lynn Town Hall**, the Consortium will run a **Creative Café** public consultation event to enable respondents to the survey to expand on their views and offer ideas by taking part in a workshop. The event is free but essential to reserve a place. Booking is via an [Eventbrite link](#)

Meanwhile, please feel free to contact the team via the Consultation website here <http://www.theshiftnorwich.org.uk/kings-lynn-creative-hub.html>.

The survey is open until **30 November 2018**. Those who take part are also welcome to the consultation event. Details will also be posted on the Consultation website. <http://www.theshiftnorwich.org.uk/kings-lynn-creative-hub.html>.

Press interviews available from all members of the Consortium on request.
Please contact Marion Catlin culture@theshift.org.uk telephone 07946261651

Notes

The Norwich Consortium consists of three lead people, backed up by their organisations:

- Marion Catlin, Culture Shift, creative and cultural
- Hannah Wooller, Hudson Architects, architectural and buildings
- Erika Watson, Greenwell Consulting, business development

The Consortium has formed specifically for this contract although they have worked together in different combinations in the past. This study builds on work in the region by John Knell (Cultural Prospectus), Wayne Hemingway (Hunstanton) and Collusion (Cambridge).

The work was commissioned by the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk through an open tender process.

The Norwich Consortium



Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk



