

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Node Phase 2

Service: Economy

Head of Service: Keri Denton

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Assessment carried out by (job title): Senior Economic Development Officer

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Node is a £5m business incubation and acceleration facility located in Roundswell, Barnstaple. Following the initial investment from ERDF, LEP and DCC sources and successful launch, application is being made for up to £640,000 towards the £2m cost of Phase 2 which will see the footprint increased by a further 26% producing 537sqm of commercial floor space and creation of an additional 38 jobs.]

2. Reason for change / review

This project is an extension to the existing Enterprise Centre

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

The investment of £2m to expand the current offer at Node will create more opportunity for entrepreneurs, aspirant entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs to start-up and grow businesses whilst taking advantage of the onsite business support. The location in Barnstaple further supports work to reduce the inequality of access to business support infrastructure across the county.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

Those most affected are business owners in Devon. The support through tenancy is only available to organisations who have met certain gateway criteria based on the submission of their application. The Operator of the Centre is required to comply with Devon County Council's policies on equality and diversity. The operator itself is a certified B Corp which indicates its positive approach to equality, diversity and sustainability.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) is a primary stakeholder as the Managing Authority of the Getting Building Fund. District Councils are stakeholders as are other community groups. Economic Development Teams within district Councils.

6. Additional research used to inform this assessment

Lessons learned from the phase 1 development. Occupancy and pipeline study undertaken by the Operator. A commissioned report from HJA, an expert in the field of infrastructure investment research across the South West.

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) appraisal as they are the Managing Authority for UK Government.

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

The first Phase of the Enterprise Centre was part funded by the European Union ERDF and in result the Operator monitors and reports on the cross-cutting themes of equality, diversity and sustainability on a quarterly basis. This process will now include Phase 2.

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	How will the project / service / policy / activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
All residents (include generic equality provisions)	Node encourages equality of access to business coworking space and office space in Barnstaple, an area ranked number 1 in an economic vulnerability study .	The construction of Node will allow for additional accessibility measures that will make out of hours access of the building fairer for wheelchair users.
Age	The project encourages equality of access to business coworking and space in Barnstaple.	Node is also funded to signpost, broker and provide elements of business support to aspirant entrepreneurs of all ages.
Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people	The project encourages equality of access to business coworking and office spaces in Barnstaple.	Node is also funded to signpost, broker and provide elements of business support to aspirant entrepreneurs of all abilities.
Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief	The project encourages equality of access to business coworking and office spaces in Barnstaple.	Node is also funded to signpost, broker and provide elements of business support to aspirant entrepreneurs of all cultures and ethnicities.

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	How will the project / service / policy / activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)	The project encourages equality of access to business coworking and office spaces in Barnstaple.	Node is also funded to signpost, broker and provide elements of business support to aspirant entrepreneurs of all sexes, genders and gender identities.
Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership	The project encourages equality of access to business coworking and office spaces in Barnstaple	Node is also funded to signpost, broker and provide elements of business support to aspirant entrepreneurs of all orientations and relationship status.

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban</p>	<p>The project encourages equality of access to business coworking and office spaces in Barnstaple</p>	<p>Node is also funded to signpost, broker and provide elements of business support to aspirant entrepreneurs of all parts of the community.</p>

9. Human rights considerations:

As part of the procurement process to award the operator contract, Town Square Spaces Ltd (the Operator) are required to ensure that all operating procedures, including the monitoring of those in the Centre's supply chain consider and support human rights. Town Square Spaces is a Certified B Corp which means that the organisation has undergone assessment of the practical application of their ethos in supporting cross cutting themes, equality of access and rigour of human rights protection.

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered and resourceful?

The Centre offers business support to established and aspirant entrepreneurs from all parts of the community. The support encourages economic growth and higher-value job creation. The support also empowers individuals to consider, test and launch enterprises, supporting the community to self-determine a self-employment career path.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

The Centre has been designed with well-being in mind, to maximise natural light, ventilation and connection with the wider rural setting. The Centre Operator fosters a community of entrepreneurs through facilitated networking which helps reduce isolation. The Operator supports green travel plans through its national "what if everybody walked to work" programme.

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

The Centre Operator works with other local anchor institutions such as Petroc College to support knowledge exchange and knowledge transfer mechanisms such as student placements, T-Levels and the kickstarter scheme. The Centre offers access to meeting and collaboration space to community groups.

11. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	X
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:	This will not be affected	We will ask that all successful bidders submit claims and activity evidence electronically.
Conserve and enhance wildlife:	This will not be affected	As part of the first Phase, ecological and environmental impacts were appraised and where possible mitigation measures such as wildlife-friendly landscaping introduced.
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	This will not be affected	This will not be affected
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	This will not be affected	This will not be affected
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:		The project may reduce the need for commuting to larger conurbations. Emissions will be reduced across Devon's roads.
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):	This will not be affected	Clients will be encouraged to develop a sustainable ethos for their business: this may be by signposting to specific business support provision for Business Resource Efficiency or using Digital technologies.
Contribute to reducing water consumption:	This will not be affected	This will not be affected

<p>Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):</p>	<p>This will not be affected</p>	<p>This will not be affected</p>
<p>Other (please state below):</p>		<p>As Lead Applicant, Devon County Council has an Environmental Policy which outlines the organisation's environmental objectives and demonstrates its commitment to managing the environmental impacts of its operations and improving its environmental performance. The environmental impacts of the County Council's activities are assessed including: staff travel, use of energy and resources in buildings, disposal of waste, new developments, procurement. Environmental best practice is encouraged in all these areas in order to minimise any detrimental effects on the environment. The delivery partners have similar sustainable development principles which underpin the way they do business and this has therefore governed the way in which the project is being developed and how it will be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of teleconferencing - to reduce the need to travel for meetings • electronic document sharing through Devon County Council's 'SharePoint' system - to minimise the use of paper

12. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:	This will not be affected	Knowledge exchange and transfer opportunities between high-growth businesses and FE and HE academic bodies. Higher visibility of skills requirements to meet growing markets. Increased exposure of career development training opportunities for employees.
Impact on employment levels:	This will not be affected	High-value job creation from Centre members. Local supply chain sustainability created through new contracts such as landscaping and catering which are sourced locally
Impact on local business:	This will not be affected	Collaboration and peer learning opportunities amongst community members. Benefit from joining a membership of other national Town Square Spaces facilities such as collaboration and networking.

13. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

The Project Board is responsible for monitoring to ensure that the project is delivered in accordance with the delivery plans agreed with the LEP. They will ensure that all cross-cutting themes of equality and inclusivity are being considered.

No significant conflicts have been identified.

14. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

The economic well being of the northern Devon area will be improved through the visibility of enterprise infrastructure, the aspiration that it creates and the visibility of entrepreneurship as a career-path. The Operator is a Certified B Corp itself and actively supports entrepreneurs from the social purpose sector. Phase 2 will bring together more entrepreneurs, encourage greater economic resilience and further job creation. The Phase 2 building design will meet rigorous environmental standards throughout design, construction and operational phases to promote carbon reduction and maintain the integrity of the local natural habitat.

Procurement of the main contractor will be through the Southern Construction Framework which mandates strong environmental practices amongst all suppliers. The Centre Operator is already in place and as part of their B-Corp status measures the environmental impacts of their supply chain. Each of the member businesses are encouraged to formulate their own environmental plan where one is not already in place.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

Assessment of the building plans to identify the most environmentally advantageous design, materials and construction methods

Recording of travel-to-site origination postcodes and car sharing by the main contractor during building phase and by the Operator following launch.

Quarterly reporting as part of the Operator Contract.