

**Report to:** Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee

**Date:** 8 March 2022

**Subject:** **One Public Estate Programme- Meanwhile Use Report**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To obtain final approval for the Meanwhile Use Report prepared as part of the One Public Estate Programme and to invite Committee members to discuss and provide a view on the consultants recommendations which will inform how the report is taken forward.

## 2. Information

- 2.1 Vacant land and property can lead to a spiral of decline, acting as a magnet for antisocial behaviour and impacting on the costs to councils managing such space. As part of a wider approach to repurposing town centres and high streets, there is a case for creating space for temporary, transitional or meanwhile purposes for use by the cultural and creative sectors as well as business start-ups and local communities and voluntary groups.
- 2.2 In March 2019 the West Yorkshire One Public Estate (OPE) Partnership was awarded funding to explore and consider the role of public sector and use of public and private sector vacant space on a temporary basis, repurposing vacant land and buildings whilst awaiting longer term development for permanent use. Leeds based placemaking and regeneration consultancy

Creative Space Management (CSM) working in collaboration with East Street Arts (an arts charity also based in Leeds) was awarded the tender at the end of November 2019. Desk-based research was carried out to produce evidence of successful temporary use and to build a rationale for authorities to look for opportunities to expand local opportunities.

2.3 The initial report raised three key questions:

- What the enabling role of public sector is and what needs considering before temporary uses can be offered?
- How can public sector partners develop temporary use projects which can be delivered?
- How can we aggregate resources to maximise benefit and impact?

2.4 As temporary use became significantly more relevant following COVID-19 and the impact that was having on vacant public and private sector property in our towns and cities, a **second stage project** was commissioned to address the questions from the perspective of economic, social and cultural recovery post-COVID and as part of revitalising town centres via the Towns Deal. The project recognised that a more pro-active innovative approach was needed to revitalise failing locations and utilise the 'blank canvasses' that have appeared on our high streets. The project was endorsed by Place Panel and Directors of Development at project inception. In January 2021, following competitive tender, CSM was further commissioned to carry out the stage 2 study.

2.5 The final Meanwhile Use Report is attached (Appendix 1). The report highlights the approaches needed to effectively repurpose both public and private vacant spaces to reinvigorate urban centres and high streets. It focuses on bring to a regional level the emerging stories of our resilient and radical creative communities currently working with partners on meanwhile use projects.

2.6 The key findings address the challenge that change in towns, accelerated by Covid 19 impact, increasing both public and private sector vacant properties requires long-term strategic initiatives at a regional level which go beyond the temporary fix of meanwhile use. The project work was supported by the district colleagues who are concerned that capacity and resources are not simply targeted at temporary interventions which fail to address the same underlying problems. As a next step the Meanwhile Space report (Appendix 1) and resource pack (Appendix 2) proposes a sequence of potential actions for creating more sustainable and resilient places:

- Develop a regionwide initiative for Creative Action Zones
- Explore Creative Land Trusts as a regional delivery vehicle
- Develop a region wide cultural streets programme
- Coordinate and promote cultural urban destinations
- Deliver regionwide creative industries acceleration

2.7 As part of the project Creative Space has developed and is to host a public facing Meanwhile Use website (<https://www.meanwhilewy.co.uk/>) on the Combined Authority's behalf until June 2022. The web base includes shared information and platform for aggregating best practice and information/ brokerage resources available as a resource for local authorities and other stakeholder organisations. The aim will be to take the web- based resource in house depending on capacity needed to maintain content and update on a periodic basis.

2.8 The project has come to a close but further work and analysis could be developed to identify which recommendations to be taken forward in the report. Given helpful discussions with partners, the project is a good launch point to develop and support the Cultural Framework and the Mayor's pledge to support culture, creative industries and the arts. The report is a piece of work which supports economic repair, rebuilding high streets and supporting a sector that has been particularly impacted by the pandemic. The Committee are asked for their thoughts to feed into any future stages of the work.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

3.1 Repurposing existing buildings, rather than demolition and rebuild, is an opportunity to reduce the region's carbon impact and create more sustainable places to work and live. Expanding options to live and work in towns will contribute to the reduction in carbon emissions by reducing travel to work.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

4.1 By working together and sharing know-how, this project can coordinate and drive forward a region-wide response to post COVID recovery providing inclusive opportunities for developing and unlocking new skills. Increased low cost options provided by meanwhile use could enable young people and a broader range of communities to become engaged in their towns and for high streets to become less reliant on national retailers and more focused diverse range of independent home-grown creative and cultural sectors, start-ups and community groups.

### **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

5.1 Repurposing vacant properties in West Yorkshire towns and cities could be a conduit to supporting people of all socio-economic backgrounds, education levels and geographical locations to engage in the cultural and creative sectors and set-up start-up businesses. The web site content to be hosted initially by Creative Space until June 22 will offer accessibility and functionality to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). If the web base is taken in house as part of a Combined Authority resource, accessibility will be improved to a higher standard to match enhanced accessibility offered through Combined Authority web- based material.

### **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **8. Staffing Implications**

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report but additional resource maybe required if the Creative Space hosted web based content is taken in house into the Combined Authority web site in June 22.

## **9. External Consultees**

9.1 The draft report has been reviewed by District partners and referenced as part of the Supporting Creative Business Models report presented to Culture, Arts and Creative Industries Committee on 18 January 22.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 To invite Committee to discuss and provide a view on the consultants recommendations which will inform how the report is taken forward.

10.2 That the Committee notes and approves the final report.

## **11. Background Documents**

11.1 [Leeds City Region Cultural Framework](#)

## **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1: CSM Meanwhile Report

Appendix 2: WYCA Resource Pack