



AN INNOVATION HUB FOR CREATIVES IN HOLYWOOD

MARKET
TESTING

Creative Innovation Hub

Creative Innovation Hub in Holywood, County Down will be designed to be a centre of excellence for the creative and technology sectors in Northern Ireland specialising in film, TV and screen industries.

The Hub in Holywood has been identified as a key project eligible for funding from Belfast Region City Deal.

This new build innovation hub will cover approximately 30,000 sqft (2,788 sqm) gross, over a number of floors and be perfectly positioned to take advantage of the future growth of the creative sector over the coming years.

The overall design is at an embryonic stage, so it can be influenced by the right operator who recognises this as a long-term partnership for future growth and innovation.



What is the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD)?

BRCD is a bespoke package of funding and decision-making powers agreed between UK central government and local regions; aimed at helping to harness additional investment, create new jobs and accelerate inclusive economic growth.

The BRCD is a catalyst for a step change in the digital and innovation capabilities of our region. It will drive investment in research and development and help embed a culture of innovation to act as a driver for increased productivity. The Creative Innovation Hub is aligned to the BRCD Innovation and Digital Pillar and this market testing exercise is to help inform the Outline Business Case for funding.

Ards and North Down Borough Council has pledged a significant level of investment aligned to Belfast Region City Deal.





Key Data Points



Ards and North Down (AND) has the highest percentage of premises connected with full fibre in NI and the 4th highest in the UK, and NI has the highest density of fibre cables meaning it's super connected.



Hollywood is home to major players in the Northern Ireland Screen Industry, acting as an already established cluster serving regular clients such as the BBC, HBO, Universal, RTÉ and Netflix.

89%

89% of businesses in the region sit within the micro sector (under 9 staff), reflecting the thriving growth segment of small-scale independent businesses.

Ideal Location



Titanic Studios is less than a 10-minute drive and is one of Europe's largest film studios. Hollywood sits on the creative corridor for film/TV, post-production/sound and flourishing businesses within the gaming and animation sector, alongside AR/VR.



George Best Belfast City Airport and Belfast Docks within 3.2 km of the Borough.



150 parking spaces located on surrounding lands.

4,790

There are over 4,790 registered PAYE businesses within the AND region, accounting for 6% of all the businesses of Northern Ireland.



Council has already established partnership links with South Eastern Regional College (SERC), Studio Ulster, NI Screen and the local community.



A strong talent base driving the growth of the (NI) economy in key sectors like technology, creative digital and advanced manufacturing. NI has the best education results in the UK. In AND more people achieve higher qualifications than the NI average.



A recent report into office space and the available facilities highlighted that within Hollywood, there was a significant demand for a quality workspace to meet the requirements of high-growth firms. However, the available capacity of quality space within the town is insufficient to meet this demand.



Strong public transport links. Train station within 5 minute walk of the town centre, regular buses to Belfast, Bangor, and key commuter towns.



Innovation Hub site sits off the A2, the busiest commuter road (non motorway) in Northern Ireland.



Hollywood

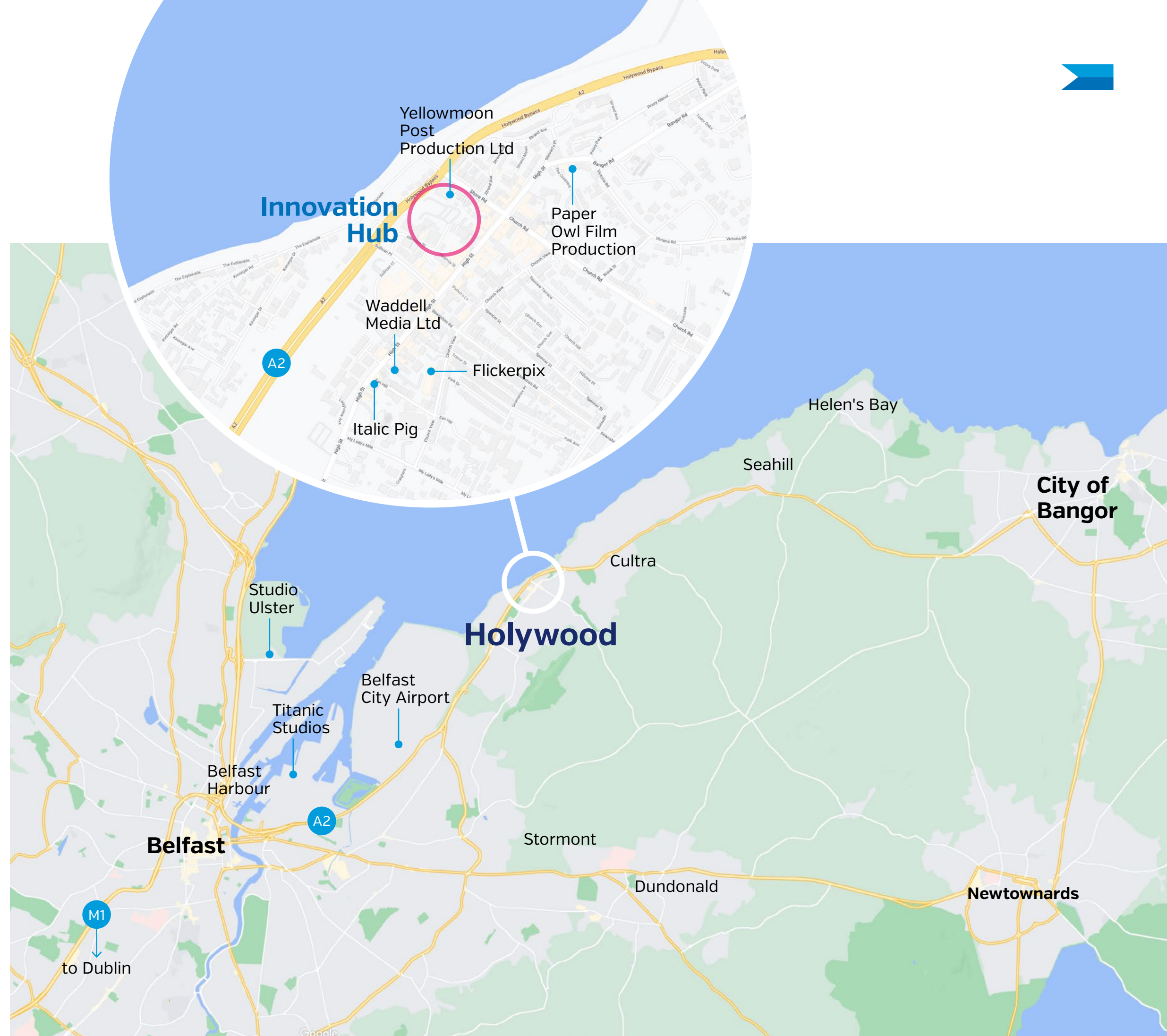
The Sunday Times named Hollywood as the best place to live in Northern Ireland in 2021, primarily due to its transport links, unique shops, café culture and vibrant community. Its proximity to the sea and beach means it's just a stroll away.

Belfast is just 10 minutes by train, Dublin less than two hours' drive, and an international airport is located only 10 minutes away by car.

In recent years Hollywood has become established as a base for a cluster of creative innovators providing essential services to big players in screen industries such as BBC, RTÉ, Universal, HBO and Netflix.

These locally grown businesses work with all the big studios as well as playing their part in the growth of the Northern Irish film and TV sector.

Nearby developments of Belfast Harbour Studios, Titanic Studios, and the new Studio Ulster (Virtual Production Studio) mean that Hollywood is perfectly placed to harness the future growth of business and talent.





Join Creative Industry Leaders

Hollywood is home to leading screen industry innovators specialising in production and post-production for TV and film, animation, design, and games development.

Furthermore, it is situated close to Titanic Studios NI, one of Europe's largest film media campuses, which attracts renowned production companies like Universal, Playtone, Paramount, and HBO.



"Averaging an output of 15 series and 6 documentaries a year, Waddell Media have developed a clear reputation for award winning content for UK, Ireland and international broadcasters all from Hollywood Co. Down. Our current location close to both Belfast and the city airport works really well for us; good rail and road links help us access the necessary talent to continue to work with clients such as the BBC, RTÉ, Channel 4, Discovery Channel and National Geographic."

David Cumming, Managing Editor



PAPER OWL FILMS

"We have no intention of opening a New York Office. Our ambition is to continue to produce content for the international market from Hollywood Co. Down. Game of Thrones didn't come to Northern Ireland for the green hills and lovely woods... The reason that the screen industries have been so successful in Northern Ireland is that there have been economic objectives set in parallel with the creative objectives."

Gavin Halpin, Managing Director



"Hollywood has been a fantastic location to set up our office and grow our video game business. It's just close enough to Belfast city centre to be convenient, and just far away not to be stuck in traffic every morning and evening. Hollywood is abuzz with companies in the screen industries - it's rare that I don't bump into an industry colleague at one of the many cafés on the high street. The vibrant coffee culture and seaside scenery paint a friendly picture for anyone who might be flying into City Airport to visit our studio, less than 10 minutes away."

Kevin Beimers, Director



NI Silver

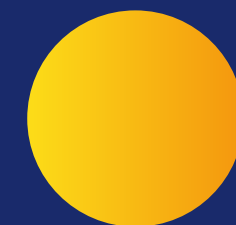
"Our creative business has been keen to incorporate augmented reality into what we offer our customers and we have recently 'put our toes in the AR water'. As a Hollywood-based business, we know that there are other creative businesses making this same journey and it would be great to have a way of sharing our experiences thus quickening each of our journeys."

Steve McEwan-Lyon, Operations Manager



"Flickerpix animation began and remains in Hollywood Co. Down. We have benefited greatly from exposure to the screen industry talent in Hollywood that has helped us grow and develop into the creatively driven award-winning animation studio we are today."

Johnny Schmann, Creative Director



yellowmoon

Yellowmoon are proud to be able to declare that they manage post-production responsibilities for shows such as HBO Game of Thrones™, Blue Lights and Line of Duty, but also that they do it from their base of Hollywood Co. Down. Established in 1994, they are the largest post-production facility in Northern Ireland and continue to grow and develop their footprint in the industry from Hollywood.



Collaboration Opportunities

A key aim of the hub is to have strong links with the growing sector and foster collaboration with key partners including Titanic Studios and Studio Ulster.



The hub site is situated close to Titanic Studios NI, one of Europe's largest film media campuses, which attracts renowned production companies like Universal, Playtone, Paramount, and HBO.



This key Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) project is underway to create Northern Ireland's largest virtual production studio. Developed by Ulster University, in partnership with Belfast Harbour and supported by NI Screen.



With strong links to award-winning South Eastern Regional College (SERC), users of the hub will have access to top class creative industry training, and development of qualifications. There is also the opportunity to tap into a substantial 3,650m² facility including a high specification theatre with backstage facilities, industry standard music recording studios, and a range of state-of-the-art facilities just 13km away in the city of Bangor.



Ready to work with investors to support development in growth industries. With an agile approach and a dedicated business support team delivering a range of leading Digital Innovation, Growth, Skills and Employability Schemes, and links into key partners and Government agencies.



Reasons Holywood is the Ideal Place for the Creative Innovation Hub

Creative corridor

Located in the creative corridor between the concentration of creative and technology businesses in Belfast City and Northern Ireland's newest city, Bangor.

Digital connectivity

Ards and North Down Borough is the council area with the highest percentage of fibre to the premises in NI, with NI being the most connected UK region [OFCOM].

Key growth sector

The creative and digital businesses are recognised as a key growth sector in the UK, but additionally by Ards and North Down Borough Council as a key sector which justifies investment.

Collaboration

The Holywood screen industries, Northern Ireland Screen and Ards and North Down Borough Council are exploring collaborative opportunities with Studio Ulster, set to be a global player in virtual production.

Close to Regeneration and Investment

Other significant investment projects in the vicinity include Bangor Waterfront development and Studio Ulster's virtual production facilities.

Join global leaders

Hollywood is home to major players in the Northern Ireland Screen Industry, acting as an already established cluster boasting regular clients such as the BBC, HBO, Universal, RTÉ and Netflix.

Proximity to industry sites

10 minute drive to Titanic Studios (less than 5 miles) comprising of four 16,000 ft² cell studios and home to the HBO Game of Thrones™ production.

Inspirational location

Vibrant coffee culture serving the needs of the creative community. Seaside town on the outskirts of Belfast – inspiration from the water's edge location.

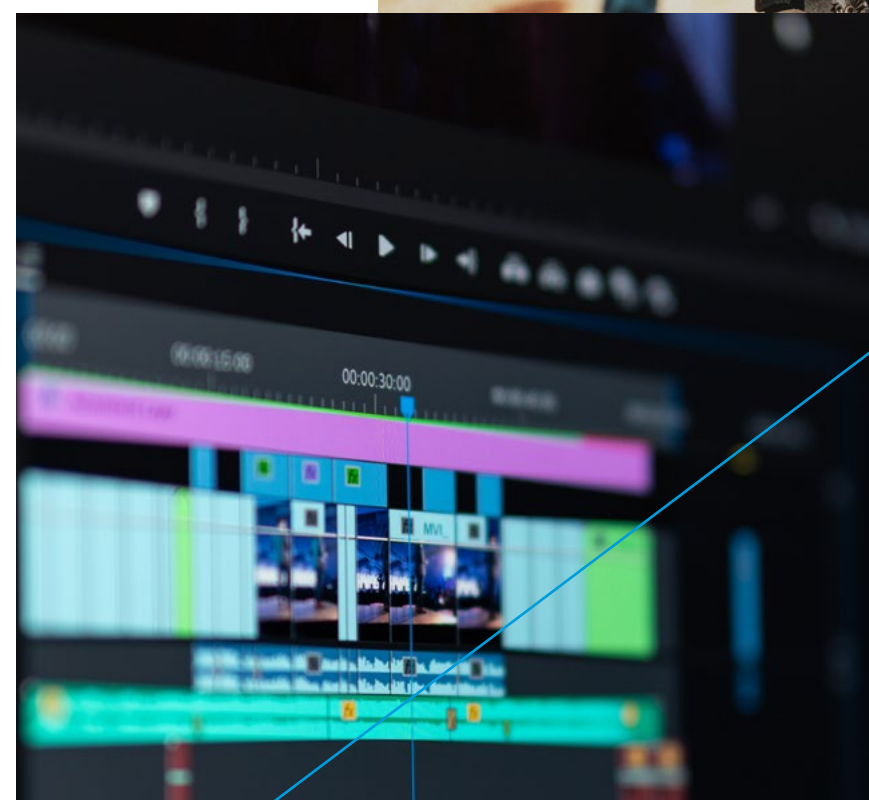
A Vision for the Future

Creative Innovation Hub in Hollywood, County Down will be a centre of excellence for the creative and technology sectors in Northern Ireland specialising in film, TV and screen industries.

A state-of-the-art location which will become home to a network of creative thinkers, innovators, and leaders.

Providing the opportunity to join global leaders, forge strong working partnerships through knowledge sharing and complementary expertise.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is pro-business and is actively looking to bring this development online within the next 3 years. Now is the time to get involved at the early stage for maximum long-term benefit.



The Council has a strong ambition for the long-term growth of Hollywood and has recognised that the area lacks flexible workspace options, despite a high demand for quality spaces.

Since the pandemic, there has been an even greater need for workspaces that are fully connected and community-oriented, as more businesses shift towards flexibility and the creative sector in Northern Ireland continues to expand.

Within the Borough, there is an ever-growing community of digital businesses, including local start-ups and internationally recognised companies with global reach.

This Creative Innovation Hub will be specifically designed for individuals involved in film/TV production and digital technologies. It provides a platform for collaboration and networking within the new and emerging technologies sectors. As such, it will have links directly back to Studio Ulster and will look to create and inspire talent through skills development relevant to these growing sectors.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is seeking a long-term partner to create and operate this site.

The Concept

Ards and North Down Borough Council has taken the decision to build from the ground up to 'a white box' with all key facilities and HVAC.

This de-risks any issues for a potential operator in terms of the fabric of the building and will ideally be done prior to the operator taking possession (but in collaboration with the operator in the design stages). The proposal for funding covers these CAPEX works and to enable key facilities of the secondary fitout, meaning that the operator who is awarded will benefit from a building which is fit for purpose.

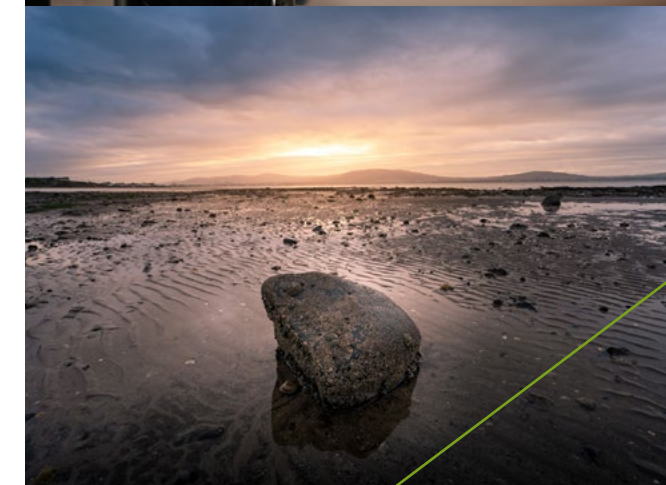
As this is a collaborative approach, the operator will need to have 'skin in the game' in terms of further fit-out investment. It is anticipated that the operating agreement between the Council and the operator will be at an agreed level of rent for the market.



What we are looking for

An operator to invest in and develop the hub in a long-term partnership with the Council to activate skills development and economic growth.

Interested parties should show previous experience in not only bringing a project like this to the market but also actively demonstrate the impact they have had in terms of social value additionality.



Next Steps

Market Testing

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to this opportunity and would like potential operators to provide feedback to inform the initial market scoping that will be used to inform the Outline Business Case. This will enable the project to be further defined, which will allow us to apply to draw down Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) funding, and subsequently progress through the tender process.

Partnership Approach

It is anticipated that a fruitful partnership between the right operator and Council will facilitate an approach that works for all stakeholders. This will be expressed through a competitive process and subsequent commercial agreement moving forward.



The operating agreement is expected to be based on a long-term lease.

This is anticipated to incorporate:

- Lease and break options and competitive terms [to be determined].
- Collaboration opportunities with Government departments and agencies and screen industry bodies within Northern Ireland for future programmes and development.
- Business support programmes to support productivity and growth, which will provide access to a greater network for members and spaces.
- Support from Ards and North Down Borough Council for a successful delivery.

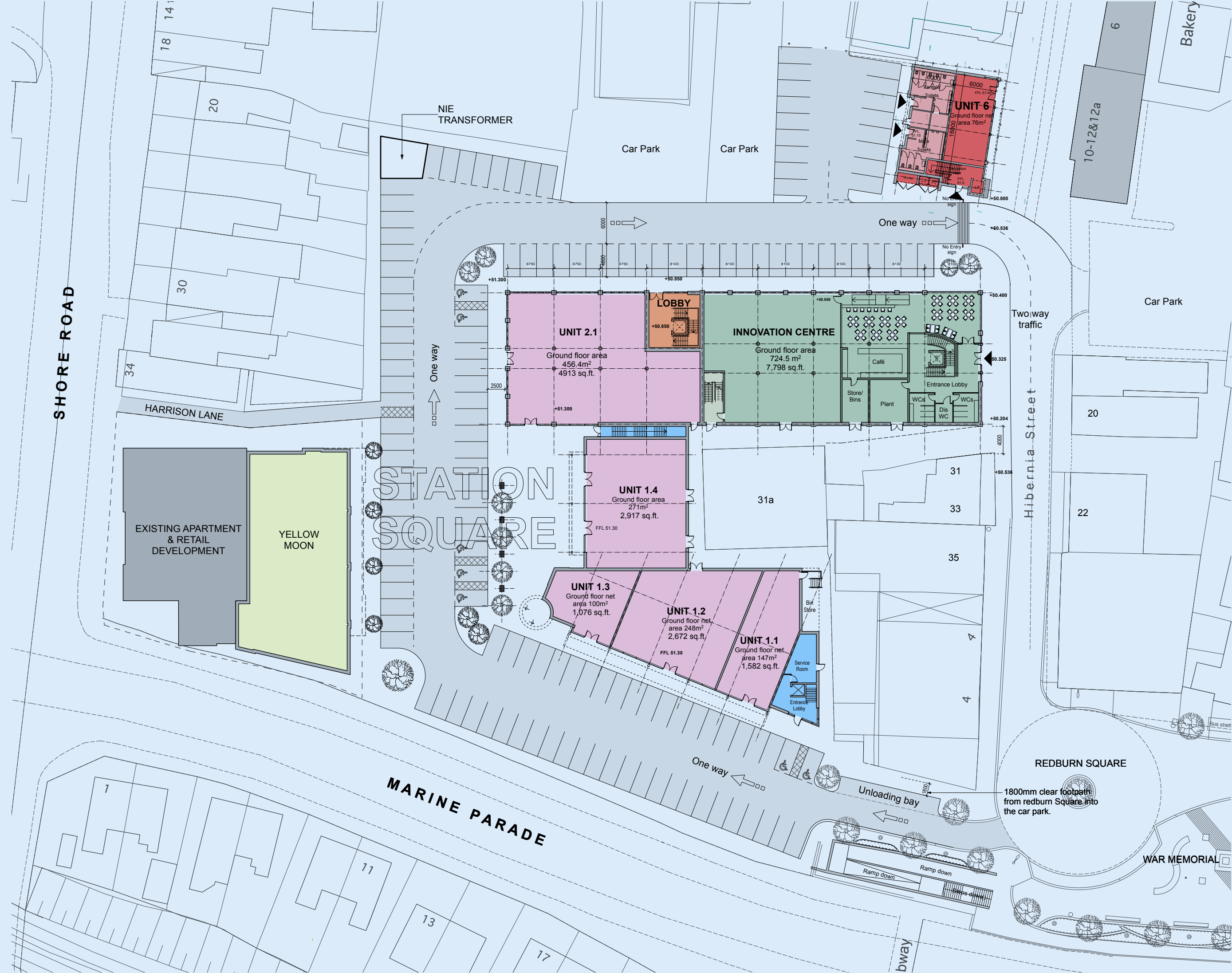
Timeline

Market testing will be conducted in summer 2023 to help inform the Outline Business Case. It is anticipated that this will be submitted as an application to draw down funding in the second half of 2023, and for tenders for operator, design and build to be progressed from 2024 onwards.

Register for more information

Steve@thinkheartsandminds.com

Appendix 1 Masterplan Concept – Site Location



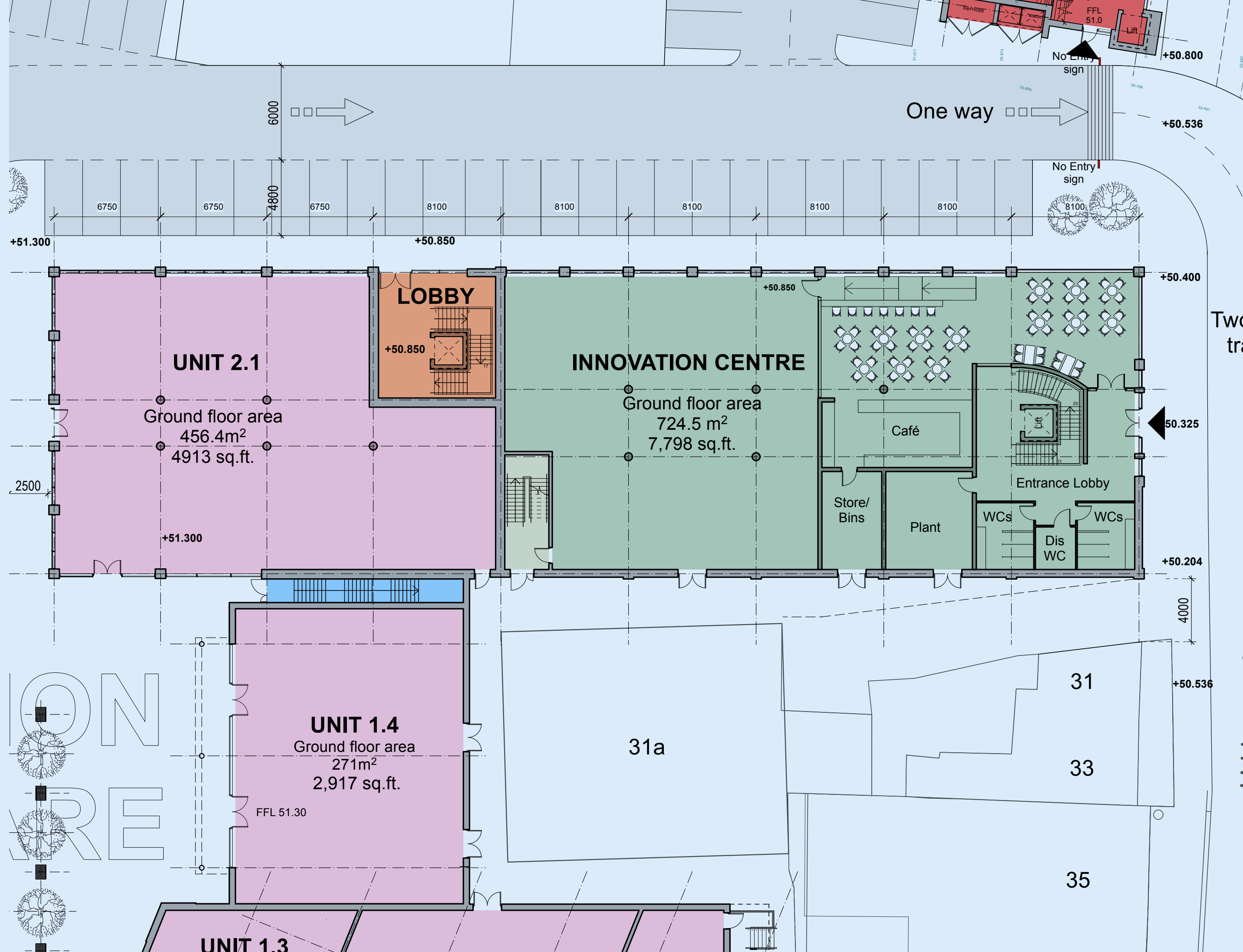
Appendix 2 Masterplan Concept – Proposed Floor Layouts

Ground floor level
725 sqm 7,798 sqft

First floor level
697 sqm, 7,501 sqft

Second floor level
697 sqm, 7,501 sqft

Third floor level
566 sqm, 6,095 sqft





Ards and North Down Borough Council

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Every effort has been made to ensure that information included was correct at time of publication. While care has been taken to ensure accuracy, we cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions, or changes that may occur after this time. Timelines suggested are indicative and dependent on the funding application and approval process. Belfast Region City Deal BRCD funding is subject to Central Government approval process. All images and plans included in this digital brochure are conceptual only. Final designs and development of a Creative Innovation Hub may vary and will be subject to the planning approval process.