



# Evaluation of the London Regeneration Fund

## Case Studies

# Greater London Authority

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| VERSION | DATE        | VERSION SUMMARY             | APPROVALS                         |
|---------|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| R0      | 24-Sep-2021 | LRF Evaluation Draft Report | Principal authors: GC, DH, RH, DL |
|         |             |                             | Approved by: DL                   |
| R1      | 20-Oct-2021 | Case Studies                | Approved by: DL                   |
| R2      |             |                             | Approved by:                      |
| R3      |             |                             | Approved by:                      |

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## Case Study 1- Meridian Water

The LRF supported project at Meridian Water provides approximately 3,000 sq m of new maker floorspace in the former VOSA testing facility in the Upper Lee Valley. The London Borough of Enfield is the delivery partner and landowner, and Building BloQs is the workspace provider.



The project provides new premises for the nearby existing Building BloQs facility, which has been in operation since 2012. This existing facility provided 'proof of concept' over the past nine years and demonstrates the model that will be deployed on a larger scale when the LRF supported project opens in October 2021. The model combines workspace for

different production businesses with shared access to specialist machinery that would normally be out of reach for many of the businesses that utilise Building BloQs. The provision reflects the industrial heritage of the Lee Valley, serving engineering, CNC manufacturing, woodworking, metal fabrication, 3D printing, and fashion. Unlike much of the current commercial activity in the immediate area, it provides smaller spaces for new enterprises on flexible terms. This reduces the barriers to entry for the occupying businesses and speeds up the development of activities that may otherwise still be located at home or struggling to reach their potential due to equipment or space constraints. Both the existing and the new facility have communal and café spaces, allowing productive interactions between users as well as providing social benefits.



The original intention was that the LRF funded project would take place in a different set of buildings. However, land ownership issues necessitated changing the location and LB Enfield provided the 0.85ha VOSA site in 2017 to accommodate the project. This purchase formed part of a programme of land acquisitions undertaken by the Council to take forward the wider £6.8bn Meridian Water regeneration, which will create a new neighbourhood for London with 10,000 new dwellings as well as new jobs, station, community facilities and public realm. As well as the direct provision of workspace, the Building BloQs project is part of the set of facilities including the OMA film studio, the Vibration Group's Field Day music venue, the Troubadour Meridian Water Studios and the drive-in cinema that all help to redefine the new neighbourhood and facilitate the promotion of development parcels and the saleability of new dwellings. It also helps to develop a reputation for more interesting and creative workspace in Enfield.

The LRF support for Meridian Water was £1.35m, originally with £1.35m match funding from LB Enfield. As a result of the changes to the project, LB Enfield has now invested substantially more, although this does provide the Council with an income earning asset into the future as well as investment in the wider regeneration project. LB Enfield has led the capital works, with input from Building BloQs.



The new facility is expected to safeguard 84 FTE jobs and create another 209 FTE jobs. The project will also provide training as well as supporting 34 artist occupiers. Although the workspace that is now provided is less than originally anticipated, the overall project is still substantial and is considered by both the Council and Building BloQs to be a better site.



## Case Study 2 - South Kilburn Trust Enterprise Hub – The Granville Centre

The LRF funded project in South Kilburn provides 1,200 sq m of workspace and community space in the Granville Centre, a former school in South Kilburn. The London Borough of Brent is the delivery partner and landowner, and the South Kilburn Trust is the workspace provider operating the Centre. The South Kilburn Trust took over the management of the building in 2017, with the LRF funded capital project constructed by the Council and opened in May 2018. The Centre is a designated Asset of Community Value and the building has a number of architectural features which the conversion into an enterprise hub incorporates, including good daylight and some over height rooms.



The workspace provision is 40 desk spaces and 20 self-contained offices. There are no formal gateway policy requirements for occupiers, although there is a preference for local businesses and tenants include a set of creative businesses (many of which migrated from the previous workspace operated by the Trust) as well as a recording studio and radio station. The Trust is making links with other workspace providers in order to facilitate grow on space for occupiers needing to expand.





The workspace is let on an affordable flexible basis, with a series of open studios encouraging interaction and collaboration between occupiers. Benchmarking undertaken by the Trust suggests that there is a discount of approximately 40% on market rents. As well as the workspace, the

project also includes a community café and venue hire of three meeting/event spaces. The venue hire caters for a variety of arts and community events.

The project plays an important role in the South Kilburn Trust's business operation. The Trust originally ran the South Kilburn Studios which were based in a poor-quality Nissen hut, unsuitable for both the Trust and the occupiers.

The project allowed the Trust to expand its activities significantly. The Granville Centre is let to the Trust on a five-year lease, with the LRF match funding being used to provide revenue support, including the business support activities being undertaken as part of the LRF funded project.

Within the suite of LRF projects reviewed within this evaluation, the use of match funding for revenue support is relatively uncommon. The Trust is the Council's lead tenant with overall operational responsibility and the Council's commitment to the success of the project is clear.



LRF provided £750,000 for the project, with an equal amount provided by LB Brent as match funding over the five-year period. The project target outputs include construction jobs as well as 56 new jobs and 26 safeguarded jobs; as well as business support and training and community events. Covid-19 has had an impact on delivering some of the activities but prior to the pandemic the Trust was on course to meet or exceed targets.

Part of the role of the project is to help facilitate nearby large estate regeneration. The Centre provides community facilities in an area with relatively high levels of deprivation at a time when many traditional meeting places such as pubs are closing, as well as facilitating enterprise. As population increases in new housing there will be additional entrepreneurs needing workspace and it is anticipated that there will be a continued role for the Centre.

The involvement with this project has changed the attitude of the Council towards affordable workspace and part of this legacy has been further work towards bringing vacant private buildings back into productive use and developing an affordable workspace strategy.

## Case Study 3 – Dalston Works

### Overview

The project was developed by Hackney Co-operative Development (HCD) in co-operation with the London Borough of Hackney. It involves the refurbishment of HCD's existing affordable workspace building (Bradbury St) to create 23 new office spaces and 10 new retail spaces and new meeting spaces. The refurbishment shown in the image below also included a roof extension and 3rd storey rear extension and mezzanine.

In addition, it includes the fit out of an affordable workspace unit in the Woodberry Down development at Manor House. This provided 564 sq. m of new affordable workspaces.

Both workspaces will be managed by HCD.



### Project rationale and policy context

HCD needed to upgrade the Bradbury Street building and reduce its carbon footprint. The project also gave an opportunity to add new space as well. Woodberry Down is one of the biggest regeneration projects in Europe. Most of the development is residential, so this provides affordable workspace for some of the residents and those looking for affordable workspace in the area. For the Council the project fitted with what they wanted to achieve. The new Dalston Plan includes commitments on providing affordable workspace, providing job opportunities, assisting start-up businesses. This project is an early strand of that work.

### Local Context

In terms of comparison with other local workspaces, HCD operate at 70-80% of market rate, which makes it more affordable. There are other workshop spaces, but availability has been an issue, prior to Covid most spaces in Dalston had waiting lists. There is always a demand for more affordable workspace, particularly very small units. There are a lot of artists and designer makers seeking spaces. Also because of the diversity and good transport links, a lot of SME and third sector organisations choose Dalston – e.g. VCS is located in Dalston. In addition, there is a demand for move on space.

### Project benefits

Tenants that approach HCD are the most disadvantaged - women returners, people with disabilities, they also prioritise community groups and social entrepreneurs.

*We offer one to one sessions with tenants and clients, to find out what support they need. We signpost them to where they can get support or provide direct assistance. We work from incubation stage until they are business ready. If they are business ready, we go through their business plan, we want to make sure they are not putting them up to fail. Anthonia Onigbode, Hackney Co-operative Development*

The improvements to Bradbury Street will improve the tone of Gillet Square. It will be a redeveloped and refurbished space that will have wider benefits including hosting community and music events and continue providing weekly children's play activity. The project provides improved meeting and business space adjacent to the square.

In Woodbury Down, a new community is emerging, it is hoped that the new space will bring the community together. The development is providing business and community space in addition to the jobs provided. The project would not have been delivered without LRF funding.



## Case Study 4 Spare Street Creative Enterprise

### Overview

The project was developed by Hotel Elephant, a not-for-profit company delivering arts, education and cultural activity in the Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area. It created affordable workspace for creative entrepreneurs across five newly refurbished railway arches. This provides a broad range of offers from low cost supported spaces to higher cost spaces, for 80-100 users. It also includes a café.

### Project rationale and policy context

Hotel Elephant had been trying to set up a permanent cultural hub in Elephant and Castle. It was clear that area was changing, and affordable spaces were becoming difficult to get.

Fortuitously they were offered the railway arches when the LRF funding became available. They considered that it was a good time to ring fence affordable creative space. The LRF funding made it possible to provide a better quality outcome in a shorter space of time.

There is close working between Hotel Elephant and Southwark Council's cultural and regeneration teams. They also have strong links with Southbank and LCC London College of Communication and run partnership projects with them.



### Local Context

This is the only co-working space south of Elephant and Castle roundabout. There are other shared spaces, but the project believes that they have set a precedent for the level of service they provide. In their view commercial co-working spaces will be established as the area develops.

### Project benefits

The project has effectively developed 'a new street dedicated to creative enterprise'. This has resulted in regular footfall in Spare Street 24 hours a day, which makes it a safer for all. Most of members are local residents, so the project helps to retain creative talent and small business in the area. In addition to the direct economic benefits of the businesses and the cafe, the members spend money in the High Street. Hotel Elephant run a business help programme in partnership with the Design Trust. Community activities such as film nights, talks and seminars are also offered.

*"Our mission is to establish Spare Street as a destination for Creative Entrepreneurs and Start-Up Creative Businesses"* Reuben Powell & Emily Woodhouse - Hotel Elephant Directors





## CAG CONSULTANTS

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