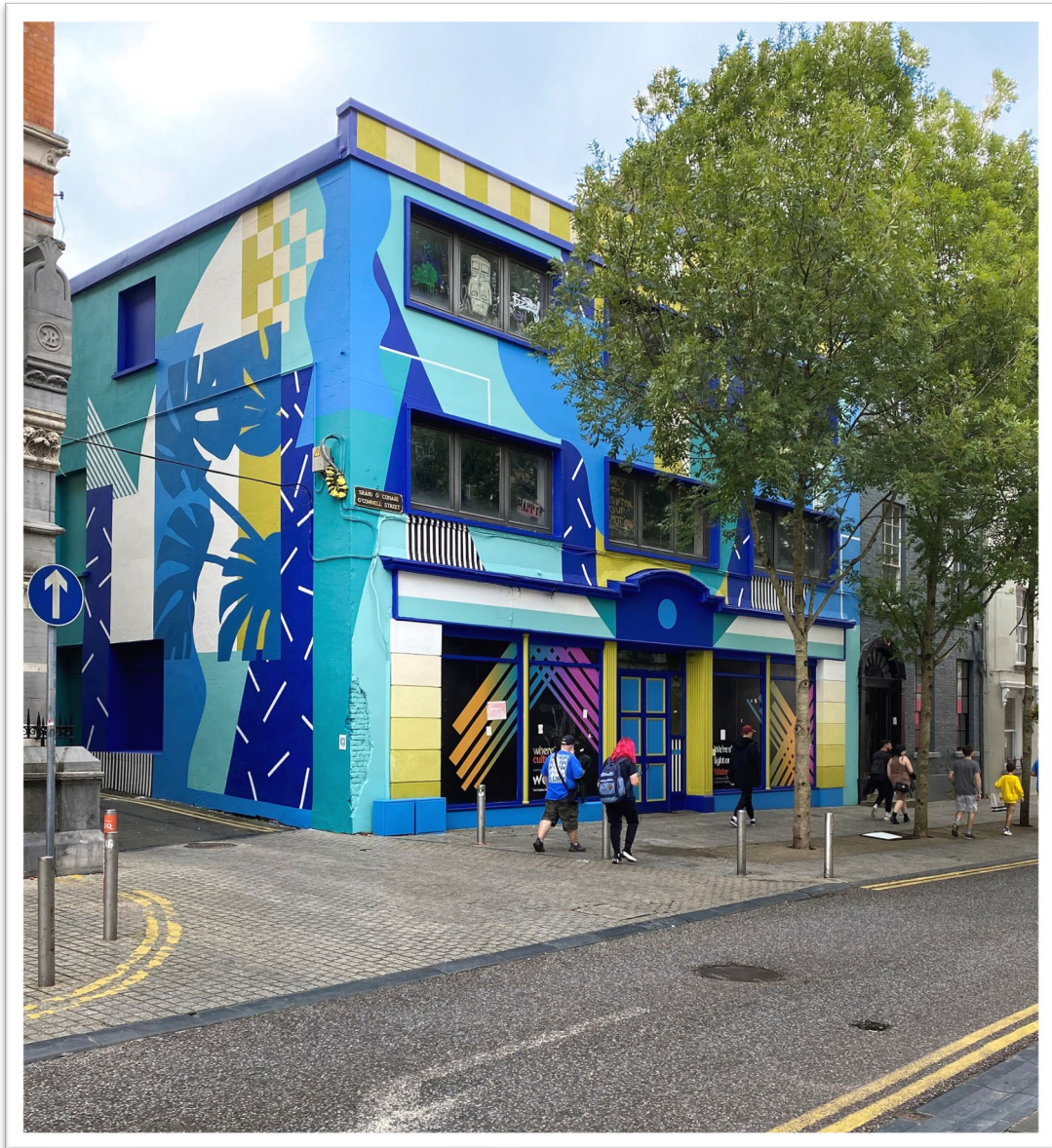


**Expression of Interest  
for  
The Development of an Innovative Creative Space  
at  
25/26 O' Connell Street.**



Waterford City & County Council invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from parties interested in collaborating with the Council to develop a project brief, and, in operating an innovative creative space within a cultural building in Waterford's Cultural Quarter. A cultural building that will combine innovation in creativity, artistic ambition and civic purpose.

It is envisaged that this innovative creative space would act as an anchor tenant for a Creative Arts cluster in Waterford's Cultural Quarter. This could include co-working spaces, collaborative studios and creative industries etc. The building must be dedicated to creative production that is open, visible, and with hands-on making opportunities for visitors. It must support both professional artists (studio, exhibition and performance possibilities and



equipment support), and community creativity through hands on making opportunities. It must also encourage experimentation and the evolution of new practices and creative technologies.

The successful applicant will work closely with Waterford City & County Council to develop a brief that will inform the design, operation and management of the building. They will assist in advising on how the building will operate on a day-to-day basis, drawn from their knowledge and expertise in the arts and cultural management. Having assisted in the development of the design brief it is expected that the successful applicant will then operate the cultural building when built.

### **Background:**

The proposed development forms a central component of Waterford City and County Council's successful *Urban Regeneration and Development Fund* (URDF) award of 2021. The transformative regeneration of our urban centre has seen a strong commitment by WCCC towards revitalizing the city through investment, planning policy, and development management; the challenges are multi-faceted but include the reversion of dereliction and vacancy of our building stock, loss of urban communities through reduced residential use, little public amenity or variety of urban spaces, and a changing city centre retail environment, post-pandemic.

The regeneration of Waterford City is based on a pragmatic approach to building on what has already been achieved, in terms of improvements to the public realm and regeneration of derelict sites.

Waterford Cultural Quarter is an urban revitalisation initiative, managed by Waterford City and County Council. It aims to enhance creativity, culture and community in the O'Connell Street area of the city . [www.waterfordculturalquarter.ie](http://www.waterfordculturalquarter.ie)

The proposed development at 25/26 O'Connell Street located in the Cultural Quarter has the potential to create a focal point for the Cultural Quarter and provide a welcoming civic and cultural space for all. The Innovative Creative Space will add vitality to the area, amplifying the cultural strengths of the city and will create a space for talent to congregate, work and play.

### **Proposed Building description:**

The property is currently vacant and was last used as a furniture shop. Having carried out a feasibility study it was concluded that a new building that aligns with the objectives of the Cultural Quarter would maximise the potential of the site.

The complex will consist of two buildings and a courtyard.

Building 1, This will be a creative space including a workshop/Gallery/Multi-functional spaces over three levels, ground, first and second floors located to the rear of the site at Meeting house lane.

Building 2, This will be a three to four storey building with an activation space located on the ground floor facing O'Connell Street. It is proposed to have office space on the floors above, and these will be operated and managed by others. The potential for the activation space may include mixed-use commercial spaces, a Food/Beverage and Retail offering or other creative commercial uses.

The Courtyard. The Courtyard is open to the east and west. By creating an opening in the existing boundary wall at Garter Lane Theatre a public route is achieved through to Sargent's Lane, and this area will include a courtyard.

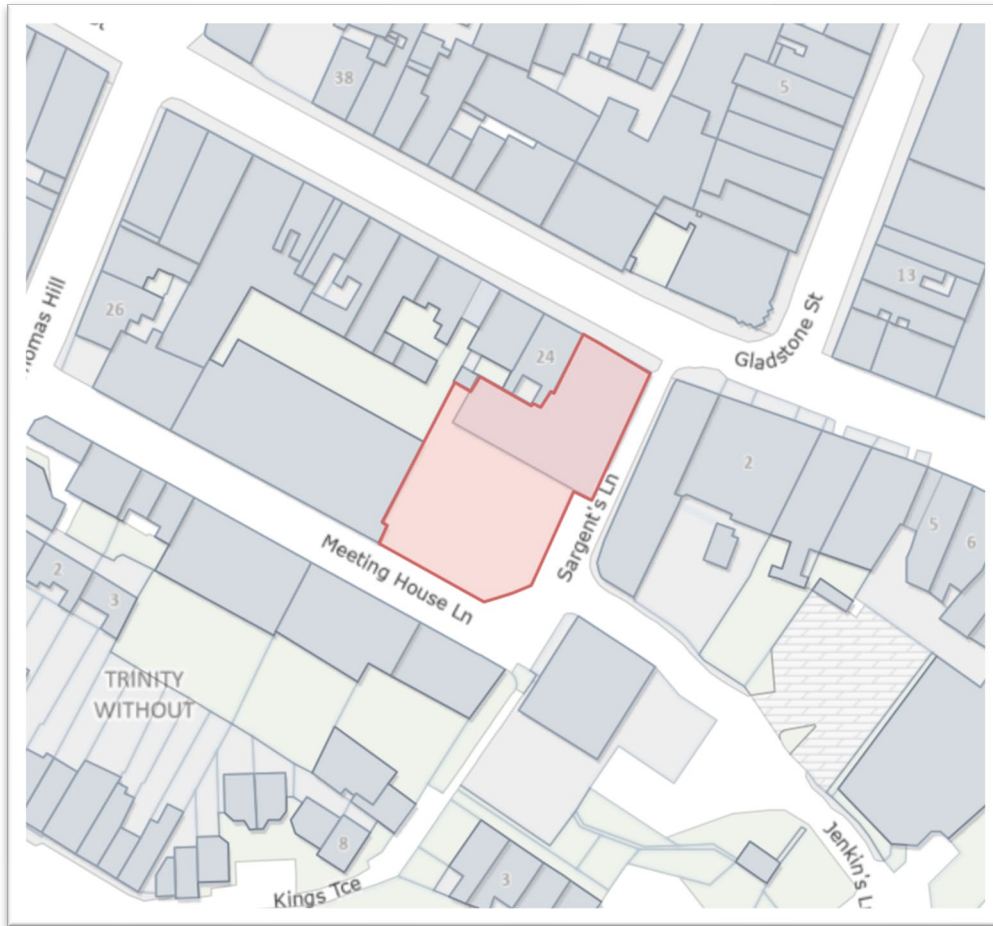


WCCC are now seeking a design partner to develop the Innovative creative space at the rear of the site and the ground floor activation space that fronts onto O'Connell street.

**Site:**

The existing building is end of terrace and the site can be accessed from, O'Connell Street, Sargent's Lane and Meeting House Lane, there is also a possibility of accessing the site by creating an opening in the boundary wall from Garter Lane Theatre. The vacant area to the rear along with the cleared site will total approx. 1050m<sup>2</sup> in area.

The property is located in an Architectural Conservation Area and is adjacent to and facing Protected Structures.



Site location Map



## 1. The objectives of the project are outlined below:

- To deliver a civic building that is dedicated to creativity, innovation, learning and collaboration.
- To identify an operator who can work in collaboration with the Waterford Cultural Quarter team and the City Council design team to deliver a design brief and is committed to managing the creative space and the ground floor activation / commercial space when built.
- To enhance and activate the surrounding area of the Cultural Quarter.
- To provide a sustainable, long-term use for the site which is in keeping with the objectives of the Waterford Cultural Quarters Strategic Plan 2026-2030.
- To provide a community service/asset.
- To generate sustainable employment.

## 2. Funding:

Waterford City & County Council are committed to sourcing funding, and it is anticipated that this will be through grants from National and EU funding streams. The implementation of this project is however subject to securing adequate funding in order for it to proceed. This expression of interest invitation is not a binding obligation to proceed with the project.

## 3. Lease, Rents and Commercial Rates

A lease for 7 to 10 years or long term lease is proposed but final agreement on the length of the lease will be discussed with the successful applicant.

Waterford City & County Council are open to negotiation on the final rental fees subject to a suitable applicant demonstrating they can meet and exceed all the requirements outlined in the assessment criteria below.

The commercial premises may be eligible under **Waterford City & County Council's Economic Incentive Scheme** for a grant for commercial rates. This will be subject to a separate application under this scheme. For more details on this scheme visit

[Waterford City & County Council : Starting A Business \(waterfordcouncil.ie\)](http://waterfordcouncil.ie)

Further details are outlined in Appendix B.

A lease beyond the period of 4 years 9 months will require approval by the Elected Members through a S183 process

## 4. Overview of Proposed Building:

The Innovative creative space should be a beacon for creativity, a welcoming civic space, a visible hub of innovation, making and learning, and a driver of cultural and economic regeneration.

1. **Identity & Vision** - A bold, visible landmark symbolising Waterford's creative ambition.
2. **Community & People** - A shared, inclusive civic space fostering wellbeing and participation.
3. **Creativity & Making** - A hands-on, experimental environment supporting artists, creatives and the public.



4. **Spatial Experience** - Flexible, adaptive design integrating sustainability and discovery.
5. **Learning & Growth** - Lifelong, accessible learning and partnerships with South East Technological University.
6. **Economy & Sustainability** - Financially resilient, environmentally conscious, with long-term commitment.

<b>Indicative timeline</b>	
<b>PHASE 1</b>	
Invitation to EOI	March 2026
Site Visits, by appointment only	Mid April 2026
Closing date for EOI	May 8 <sup>th</sup> , 3:00pm
<b>Phase 2</b>	
Submission of a business plan	TBC

	<b>Assessment of Expressions of Interest Criteria</b>	<b>Min Score (pass)</b>	<b>Max Score</b>
A	Quality of proposal	10	20
B	Experience in working on projects, including projects in collaboration with others, particularly with cultural, creative and community based organizations.	10	20
C	Proposal should align with the vision and mission of the Cultural Quarter Strategic Plan – Appendix D.	15	30
D	Contribution to the City and commercial benefit	5	10
E	Ability to generate employment/revenue and increase footfall in the area.	5	10
F	Operational plan	5	10
	<b>TOTAL POINTS:</b>		<b>100</b>

The qualitative criteria will be scored on the following basis:

- 0% of marks = no response or not addressed in any detail to enable assessment
- 20% of marks = poor response
- 40% of marks = acceptable response
- 60% of marks = very good response
- 80% of marks = excellent response
- 100% of marks = outstanding response



## 5. Explanation of the criteria

- A. *Quality of the proposal:*  
Proposer should submit all relevant material to clearly illustrate and describe the proposal. The proposal should clearly outline the vision for the project, its advantages and the deliverables and criteria for measuring success of the project. Submissions will be assessed on the quality and articulation of the proposal and the information submitted.
- B. *Experience with working in collaboration with others:*  
Proposer should provide information on other projects they have worked on, including those that were delivered in collaboration with others, particularly cultural, creative and community based organisations. They should outline the projects objectives, the processes used, the strengths they brought to the overall project and the outcome of the project.
- C. *Cultural Quarter Strategic Plan:*  
Proposers should familiarise themselves with the attached document and ensure that their proposal aligns with the WCQ strategic plan. The proposer should demonstrate how their approach will compliment and echo the goals of the WCQ strategic plan 2026-2030
- D. *Contribution to the City and commercial benefit:*  
The proposal should seek to provide an asset or service to the city and neighborhood. The proposal should also illustrate how it intends to provide sustainable, long-term use for the creative space and how it will contribute towards the commercial activity of the city centre and wider community.
- E. *Ability to generate employment/revenue:*  
The proposal should clearly show the potential to generate a sustainable revenue stream and/or employment opportunities.
- F. *Operational plan:*  
The proposer should describe what facilities are envisaged? How are they used? And explain how they are operated and managed.

## 6. Interested parties are required to include the following information in their expression of interest:

- Proposal description document that addresses each of the criteria mentioned above.
- "Legal Entity" name that is Expressing their Interest.
- Project Time Line/Programme.

EOI submissions are to be made through the [consult.waterford.ie](https://consult.waterford.ie) webpage: <https://consult.waterfordcouncil.ie/en/browse>, submissions will not be made public.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed by Waterford City & County Council based on the Criteria A to F outlined above. Applicants may be invited for an interview.

## Phase 2 :

It is envisaged that the successful applicant will operate and manage both the creative space and activation space when built. This is dependent on a Phase 2 business plan being submitted by the partner and being assessed for feasibility. It will be permitted to sub contract the operating of the activation space if required.



- Appendix A:** Declaration as to Personal Circumstances
- Appendix B:** Economic Incentive Scheme
- Appendix C:** WCCC Maker Hub Report – this is an ideation document and is not to be considered to be a definitive list of activities for the space.
- Appendix D:** WCQ Strategic Plan - Proposal should align with the vision and mission of the Cultural Quarter Strategic Plan



Appendix A: Declaration as to Personal Circumstances

**RE: Expression of Interest for a Commercial operator to develop a brief and operate  
An Innovative Creative Space at 25/26 O' Connell Street.**

Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, sincerely declare that:

I, or my company, am not bankrupt or being wound up, and my affairs are not being administered by a court, I have not entered into an arrangement with creditors, I have not suspended business activities nor am I in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national laws and regulations.

I, or my company, am not the subject of proceedings for a declaration of bankruptcy, for an order for compulsory winding up or administration by the court or for an arrangement with creditors or of any other similar proceedings under national laws and regulations.

Neither myself, or any of my company's directors or partners, has been convicted of an offence concerning professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata or been guilty of grave professional misconduct (proven by any means which Waterford City & County Council can demonstrate) in the course of business.

I have fulfilled my obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in this or any other State in which the individual or company is located.

I have not been guilty of serious misrepresentation or omission in providing information to a public buying agency, including Waterford City & County Council.

I, or any of my company's directors or partners, have not been convicted of fraud, money laundering, corruption, or of being a member of a criminal organization,

And

I understand and acknowledge that the provision of inaccurate or misleading information in this declaration may lead to myself, my business/firm/company/partnership being excluded from participation in this Expression of Interest or future tenders, and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act, 1938. This declaration is made for the benefit of Waterford City & County Council.

Signature of Declarant

Name of Declarant in print or block

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge  
Waterford City & County Council