



# **SPECIFICATION FOR PROVISION AND OPERATION OF DIGITAL SKILLS, INNOVATION AND LEARNING HUB IN THE ROYAL ARCADE BOSCOMBE**

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## **Economic Development**

**DN632335**

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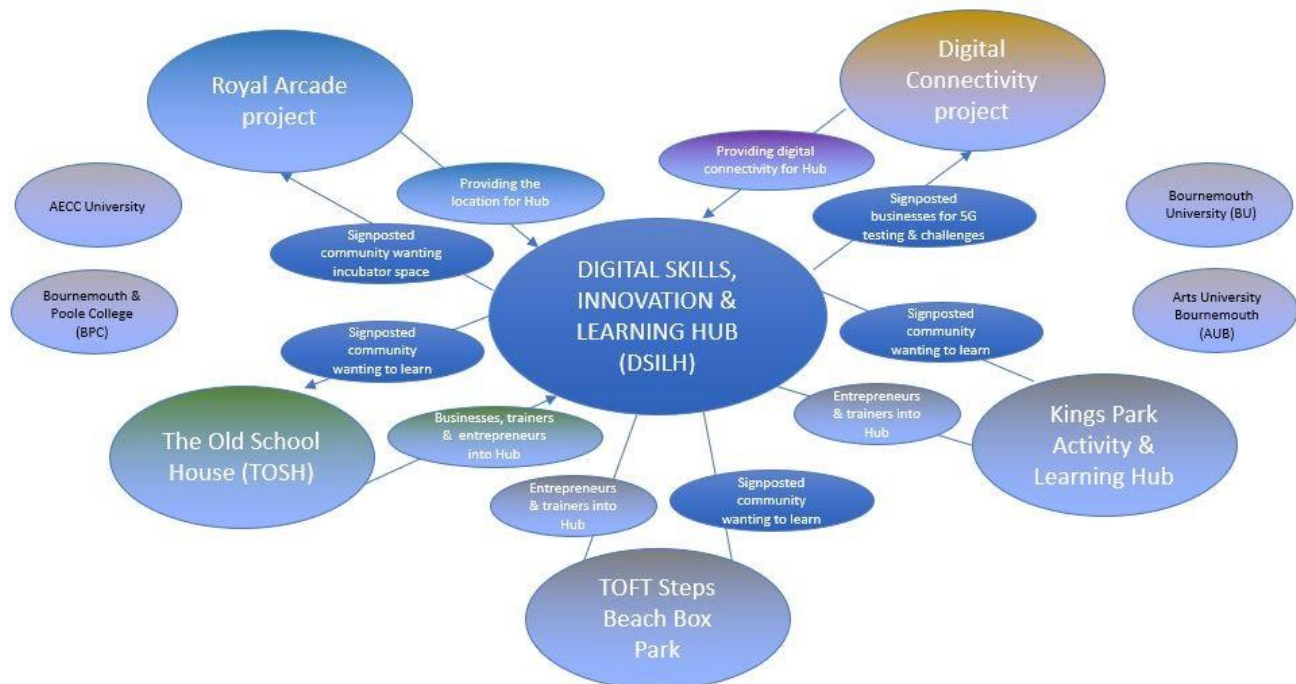
**Date:** November 2022

# Introduction and Background

BCP Council is looking for an Operator to run a Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub (Hub) in space provided by the Council within the Royal Arcade, Boscombe. The Hub will function initially until 2026.

Digital skills, innovation and learning, built on a leading-edge digital connectivity foundation, lies at the heart of Boscombe's success as a regenerated area, creating a digital and creative technology ecosystem to enable a much brighter future for all local residents and businesses. Igniting the aspirations of local residents, young and old, and local businesses, start-ups and established, for digital skills, innovation and learning, will feed the fire for Boscombe's wide regeneration aspirations. The Hub will be free to use for Boscombe residents.

The Hub will be built as a 'Hub and Spoke' model with skills and education providers in the locality, to eradicate duplication. The Hub and Spoke model connects other Boscombe Town Deal funded projects together, as the diagram below illustrates, to create a digital skills and digital tech ecosystem. The Hub will provide a Concierge and Signposting function to the linked projects, as well as promotion of their activities.



The vision for the Hub is:

**“To create an inclusive digital and creative-tech knowledge centre, providing residents with high aspirational learning opportunities and businesses with opportunities to constantly improve productivity through technology adoption.”**

- The focus of the Hub is to create a world-leading, high-end digital skills ecosystem around Boscombe that not only equips residents with skills for a better occupational future, but also acts as a major attractor of businesses which will underpin economic wellbeing and growth across the Boscombe-Bournemouth Town Deal area, the BCP area and Dorset.
- The proposed model is to provide a physical and virtual Hub in the Royal Arcade, to signpost people to existing and enhanced services appropriate to individual needs. This will enhance existing programmes, making them more accessible to people in and around Boscombe Town Centre. The Hub will be where tech touches the people.
- The Hub model will harness all existing local digital tech opportunities, from learning and training to employment and finance. It will create an ecosystem able to show local residents the world of digital, develop the local community and local businesses by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to become more productive, more successful and more entrepreneurial. It will retain talented locals and start-ups by providing the environment for them to grow.
- The Hub will provide a centre to host events in support of the project objectives, further cementing the focus for digital and creative tech careers and skills.

The Hub will initially launch with:

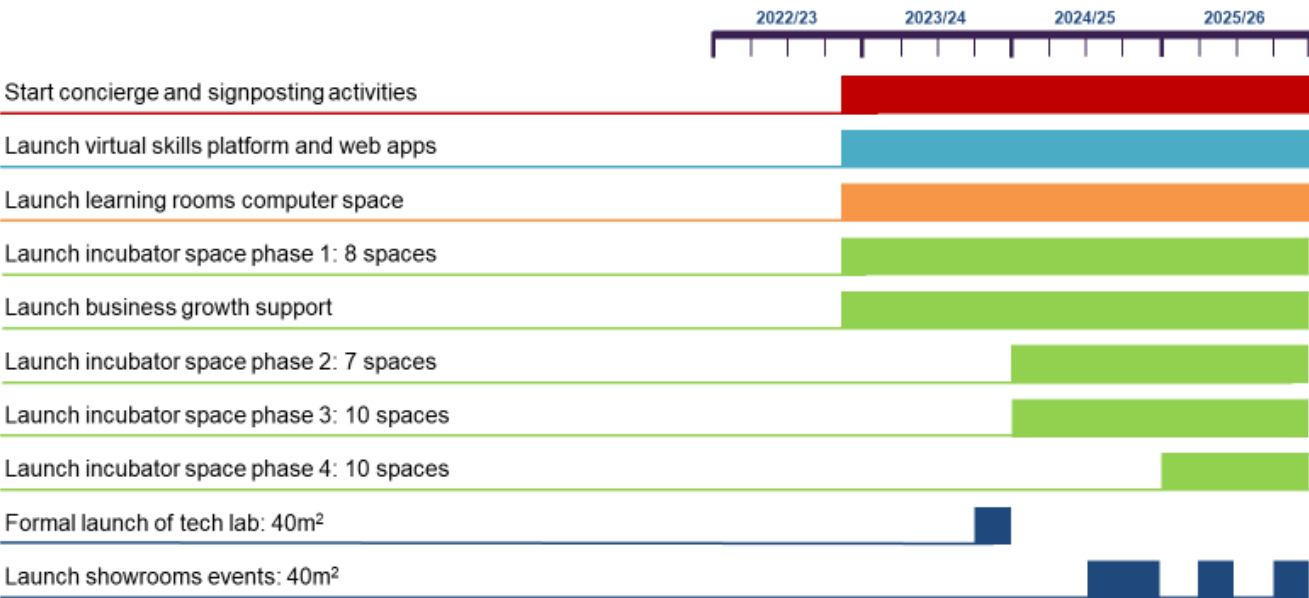
1. Hub Concierge and Signposting Service – a physical ‘one-stop shop’ service for the local community and businesses, providing digital support advice, information and education signposting to digital skills, innovation and learning activities in the community, to expose them to and excite them about the digital and creative tech sector and opportunities.
2. Digital Learning Rooms – to provide Technical and Future Skills training and knowledge not currently offered in the community, digital transformation programmes for businesses, in demand digital workshops, computer space and elementary IT skills support for those without access and a safe digital technology learning space open for all.
3. Virtual Skills Platform **(being developed separately)** – a virtual service to improve residents’ access to local digital learning and skills information, by making it easy to search for skills and training opportunities in their local area, offering training and career paths to individuals based on their job aspirations, their abilities and their desire to upskill/reskill themselves to access a higher-level job market using digital skills and knowledge.
4. Digital Tech Incubator/Accelerator - hosting up to 35 (starting with 8 and increasing over the course of the contract term) digital and creative tech entrepreneurs and/or start-ups at any one time, providing structured business growth support, collaborative tech and R&D project

support, moving them on to ‘investment-ready’ status and onwards to their own Royal Arcade digital tech scale up space.

Subsequently, as further space becomes available:

- 5. Digital Tech Lab and Showroom – building off the back of the Boscombe Town Deal digital connectivity infrastructure project this Tech Lab will be used by local companies to test, develop and demonstrate their products using the most advanced features of the respective technologies, co-creating new innovative solutions for industry.

## Timeline of Activity



## Project Outcomes

The successful bidder will demonstrate they are able to deliver:

- A Hub space designed to make users feel welcome, providing both learning space and consultation space.

- A real-life digital learning experience designed to show a measurable increase in digital skills and abilities for the service users.
- A comprehensive digital skills ecosystem working in conjunction with project partners.
- Non-financial support to entrepreneurs in the digital sector.

The outcomes over the life of the project (2022 – 2026) are expected to be as follows:

	<b>Objective</b>  <b>The investment will enable the Council to:</b>	<b>Outcomes/outputs</b>
<b>1</b>	Create a Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub of local / regional / national significance, with the ability to attract additional investment into the Boscombe area	No. of customers / businesses using the Hub – 10,250
<b>2</b>	Increase the visibility and accessibility of digital skills and learning opportunities across all pathways to the Boscombe regeneration community	No. of referrals to existing courses & facilities – 8,884
<b>3</b>	Create a co-ordinated digital skills, innovation and learning ecosystem for the Boscombe regeneration community to eliminate duplication and align digital objectives	No. of new learners enrolled on existing courses & facilities – 1,500
<b>4</b>	Increase the capacity for support of fledgling digital and creative tech businesses through incubation, with a view to preparing them for the commercial environment	No. of entrepreneurs receiving non-financial support - 393
<b>5</b>	Increase benefits for the public education over the long-term, increasing the numbers of learners learning digital skills, gaining qualifications and being 'job ready' (as assessed by employers)	No. of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise-ready - 114
<b>6</b>	Create new digital tech jobs, volunteering and work experience opportunities and pathways into careers within the relative digital tech sector	No. of qualified new learners in new courses - 640
<b>7</b>	Increase the collaboration of the Boscombe regeneration community in digital innovation, R&D and development challenges for the benefit of the community	No. of closer collaborations with employers - 165

The profile for the delivery of these outcomes has been agreed with DLUHC and will be shared with the successful Operator.

## Location Considerations

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A suitable premises is being sourced for the location of the Hub but initially the hub will share use of the Towns Fund offices in the Royal Arcade. This offers space for the concierge and signposting service, learning rooms activities and up to 8 business incubator desks. Other local venues are being investigated and it is anticipated the hub could move some or all of its activities out of the Towns Fund offices by year 3, giving increased scope for the business incubator space to be expanded as per the timeline above. This location will be within Boscombe and BCP Council will obtain any necessary planning permissions for use as a hub and business incubator. It should be anticipated some element of cosmetic refurbishment and furnishing will be required to fit the space out.

## Operations

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The Operator must:

- Publicise the service to ensure that potential service users have access to services in a timely manner.
- Provide the welcome and management of the concierge/signposting service. This also covers the learning room activities and supporting events, including refreshments.
- Provide the entrepreneurs and start ups non-financial support sufficient to enable them to become investment ready.
- Develop a business digital transformation programme for individual companies
- Liaise with the Smart Place team to ensure training provision is represented on the Virtual Skills Platform and be able to instruct users in how to use the platform if required.
- Take ownership of the Virtual Skills Platform in order to amalgamate contributions to outcome targets from the app into data gained from the physical use of the Hub. (The Virtual Skills Platform will be developed and maintained over the four year period by a separate contractor)

The suggested core operational hours for the concierge/signposting service will be Monday to Friday 10.00 to 17:00, Saturday 10.00 to 14.00. This is subject to discussion with the successful bidder.

Core hub activities and operator responsibilities are described in more detail below:

Hub Activities		
DSILH Concierge and Signposting	<b>Management of the DSILH Space</b>	Front-door reception service for the Hub. First line support for the community enquiring about digital skills, innovation and learning, providing signposting to digital skills learning in the community (Hub and Spoke information). Management of internal Hub Space - Booking in and directing visitors to Tech Lab, Learning Rooms and high-end digital tech training, Incubator/Accelerator Space, Community Engagement Event Space.
	<b>Initial digital support advice service</b>	One-stop 'no wrong door' personalised service offered by the Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub to community members enquiring about digital skills, innovation and learning, advising individuals according to their needs and to indicate the best Hub service or redirect them to Service Providers in the community ('spokes' - The Old School House, Kings Park Activity and Learning Hub, Bournemouth and Poole College, the universities and incubators providing training, advice, expertise, learning opportunities in digital skills, digitisation and advanced technologies.)
	<b>Initial SME digital support advice service</b>	One-stop service offered by the Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub to advise companies according to their needs and be able to indicate the best Hub service or redirect them to training, experts in digitisation or advanced technologies.
	<b>Events aimed at local SMEs and the community</b>	Awareness-raising events aimed at informing and engaging the community, companies and larger entities to use the services offered within the Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub. During the events innovative solutions, impact and benefits, case studies and success stories will be presented. Service providers will show digital skills pathways, impact and benefits, introduce local businesses with employment opportunities, and present appealing case stories.
	<b>DSILH Marketing and promotion materials</b>	Website page creation promoting the Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub, events, Hub and Spoke information. Downloadable brochure for the community, businesses and inward investment about the Hub offerings. Social media marketing.

	<b>Collaboration events</b>	Events to promote and optimise links between the business community, wider creative/digital tech sector across BCP, Dorset and the South, and provide support to organisations such as the Smart Place R&D Consortium, Boscombe Creative Alliance, Silicon South, Tech Nation, UK5G etc.
Virtual Skills Platform	<b>Virtual Skills Educational pathway support</b>	Back End - Physical service provider pathway support for local residents and businesses requiring support to access and benefit from the Virtual Skills Platform. All Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub Service providers will provide wider educational provision support and guidance. Links to the 'spokes' of The Old School House, Kings Park Activity and Learning Hub and incubators in the Royal Arcade
	<b>Digital technology initial assessment (online)</b>	A link to a digital platform to assess the level of adoption of digital technologies in companies, stakeholders and local entities will be created on the web. A support guide will be developed to carry out a free-of-charge analysis. Support will also be provided at the partner service provider point
DSILH Learning rooms – Training & Knowledge	<b>Technical and future skills programme</b>	Provide an on-site range of focused digital technical and future skills programmes (skills training sessions, workshops, bootcamps etc.) aimed at skilling up the local population in high-end technology areas identified as training gaps. Examples include Smart Place, VR, AI, AR, Robotics, Cyber Security and 5G. DSILH-created L2 and L3 training as well as expert training and workshops provided by the Service provider group.
	<b>Accredited training coordination</b>	Work with the Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub Steering Group (to be re-named Boscombe-Bournemouth Skills Alliance) to consolidate the local digital technologies offer (courses, degrees, masters, T-levels etc.) required to train professionals in the sector and identify gaps in professional training.
	<b>Business transformation programme for individual companies</b>	The business transformation plan can include a digital tech maturity level analysis, identification of digital transformation opportunities, a transformation plan, followed by detailed and bespoke service provision
Digital Tech Incubator / Accelerator	<b>Creation of Incubator / Accelerator Space</b>	Create incubator/accelerator space for digital tech start-ups, graduates and budding techpreneurs wanting to stay in the area and develop businesses.



	<b>Business growth support</b>	Support for the development of Incubator space member businesses, including hands-on workshops, funding and investment advice, 1:1 mentoring, expert insight, IP protection, pitch practice etc. Any business support model will need to align with UK Shared Prosperity Fund initiatives introduced by the Council, who will liaise with the contractor regarding this.
	<b>Support for the submission of collaborative tech and research projects</b>	Identification and promotion of UK digital and innovation bids and funding calls. Sessions to help capture R&D challenges. Support for the creation of collaborative research projects, collaboration with companies and R&D consortium members to apply to different national and regional calls.
	<b>Technology showcase and matchmaking events</b>	Networking events will be held between supply and demand with the goal to connect technology with demand. Events around a technology or challenge for solution providers to showcase their technology and value proposition to potential investors and buyer, the benefits that they would get from implementing or investing in it, and successful use cases.
	<b>Cluster support activities</b>	Access to local cluster events organised by Digital Tech and Creative Tech clusters to encourage Incubator member participation in the Tech ecosystem around the Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub.
<b>DSILH Tech Lab &amp; Showroom</b>	<b>Digital Tech Lab</b>	Creation of a Tech Lab and showroom for local tech businesses, schools and community members to learn, innovate, prototype and showcase. Provision of VR, XR, 3D printing and other assets. Support the Smart Place Team in directing businesses (both providers and potential investors/purchasers) to the Tech lab and showroom offering. Raising awareness of the offering and organising hosted visits to the showroom.
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Development</b>	<b>Digital Skills, Innovation and Learning Hub Management Group</b>	Participate in a DSILH Project Management Group to oversee Hub day-to-day management, business growth service support, membership fee policies, partnership development, sponsorship, funding opportunities, sustainability plan development, operations and delivery of project outcomes.
	<b>Boscombe-Bournemouth Skills Alliance</b>	Participate in a Boscombe-Bournemouth Skills Alliance to bring service providers and stakeholders together (e.g., universities, colleges, company representatives) to provide direction and support to the DSILH digital tech environment, consolidate the local digital technologies offer to meet local business and community demand and

		influence the development of wider digital tech training and education.
	<b>DSILH Annual Report and meeting</b>	Produce one showcase report a year on how digital tech and digitisation is impacting and benefitting the local SME sector and community, as well as solutions that have been implemented, case studies and the benefits for the wider BCP community.

## Agreement Period

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### Service Provision

**Duration:** 3 years 2 months

**Option to Extend:** No. Grant funding for the project is for four years after which time the additional funding must be sought if the project is to continue. Should this occur the contract would be re-tendered.

## Estimated Value

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The estimated value of the contract is £736,024 over the agreement period.

Bidders note that:

- BCP Council has grant funding for four years and the outcomes should be achieved over the agreement period with six monthly reporting intervals to monitor progress

## Revenue and Funding

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### Revenue

The aim of the project is not to generate large revenues but rather to fund developments or to allow elements to become cost neutral. Revenue remains within the project and contributes to future development of the scheme. The majority of the operations will be free to access for local residents, but a fee could be charged to those outside the Boscombe wards. The business incubator would attract a small monthly cost (to be aligned with The Old School House) per incubator and larger organisations could be charged to attend events and cluster support activities which will give them access to business opportunities. Business transformation programmes would attract a contribution fee and corporate sponsorship could be sought in years 3 and 4.

Anticipated revenue is as follows:

Description	Revenue			
	yr1	yr2	yr3	yr4
Attendance at workshops & courses and business transformation programmes	£ 7,200	£13,200	£14,700	£17,200
Corporate sponsorship opportunities	-	-	£20,000	£40,000
Business incubator	£9,600	£9,600	£30,000	£42,000
Attendance at events	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£ 4,000

## Funding

BCP Council will lease the premises and cover the business rates applicable to providing the service. The main cost areas within the contract can be broadly broken out as follows:

Description	yr1	yr2	yr3	yr4
Staffing costs inc taxes	£65,370.00	£125,275.00	£135,350.00	£139,350.00
Space fitout costs inc equipment/IT	£48,450.00	£47,890.00	£40,910.70	£26,220.00
Space maintenance	£6,410.40	£12,998.40	£19,174.40	£23,350.40
Website, social media, marketing/promotion	£3,950.00	£1,850.00	£1,550.00	£1,550.00
Event provision (AV, catering etc)	£7,708.80	£9,013.20	£9,722.00	£9,930.80

- The contractor should consult with BCP Council procurement before purchases are made against budget for equipment/fitout and website etc in order to ensure best value is achieved and consistency of look & feel with the Towns Fund project. Equipment will remain in the ownership of BCP Council. Branding guidelines will be provided.

## **Insurance**

The contractor should provide evidence of:

- Public Liability Insurance – £10 million (each and every incident)
- Employer's Liability Insurance – £5 million (each and every incident)
- Professional Indemnity Insurance – £5 million (in aggregate for the year with run off cover for not less than 6 years)

## **Performance/Contract Management**

The successful Operator will become a part of the Boscombe Town Deal Board.

The Board will monitor progress towards annual performance targets for the Hub against the required outcomes. Regular meetings will be held with the contractor to be timed ahead of the formal reporting deadlines to ensure evidence and figures are available and on target.

The Operator must use all reasonable endeavours to ensure any professional or training advice given to service users, both private individuals and businesses, is relevant and valuable. The responsibility for the quality of the advice given to service users is that of the Operator.

If the Operator does not meet the requirements their performance will be subject to a corrective action plan and will be monitored as appropriate to identify improvement. If performance does not improve within agreed timeframes, then the Operator will be given notice of the withdrawal of Council funding.

Progress against outcomes will be formally reported every 6 months and mechanisms should be developed to capture this data accurately and evidence of this recorded. Quarterly review meetings with the Project Manager will also be required to monitor progress against outcomes. Contributions to outcomes gained via the Virtual Skills Platform will be captured separately through the app and added to those created through the physical use of the Hub.