

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Overview and Scrutiny – 7 July 2025**

### **Minster Exchange**

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 This briefing note is designed to provide Committee Members with an update on the operation of the MX development since its opening in 2024.

#### **2. Summary of the Issue & Background**

- 2.1 In 2019, the Council entered into a partnership with the Workshop Group (WSG) – operators of the successful Hub8 Brewery Quarter and Gloucestershire College cyber workspaces, to deliver the Minster Innovation Exchange (MX) to create a cyber start-up incubator and collaboration space as well as a performance venue.
- 2.2 For CBC the project formed one element of a programme of town centre investments spanning the Minster Gardens, Wilson Gallery, Clarence Fountain at Boots Corner and the purchase of 232 -242 High Street (also referenced as 'Poundland').
- 2.3 The objective of these investments was to significantly enhance the high street and connections between the Brewery and Minster Quarters of the town centre.
- 2.4 The MX also forms part of the Council's commercial strategy as following the Council's investment in the Golden Valley development the investment in MX was aimed at further developing and encouraging the concentration of cyber and wider ecosystem businesses.
- 2.5 During the construction of the MX there were number of issues which included development delays, insufficient skills in the developing contractor's team, defects to the structure and an under-estimation of elements of build costs which were compounded by supply chain issues and construction inflation.
- 2.6 As a result of these issues CBC took a number of remedial measures to stabilise and rectify the issues discovered.
- 2.7 On 20 November 2023 prior to its opening the O&S committee undertook a tour of the site before reflecting on learning from the project with the Chief Executive, finance officers and representatives from the MX project team.
- 2.8 The MX officially opened in July 2024 and the site comprises of a Growth Hub, shared office space, private offices, meeting rooms, members space, phone booths,

an event space and more recently a café.

**2.9** After a full year of operation the O&S Committee undertook a visit to the MX on 25 June 2025 to see the building in operation.

**2.10** There continues to be lessons learnt from the first year of operation which are being acted upon and these are covered in the attached report and include changes to the layout to improve member experiences and revenue.

### **3. Summary of evidence/information**

**3.1** Report attached from Bruce Gregory, Managing Director, Hub 8.

### **4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider e.g. potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.**

**4.1** None identified at the present time.

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#### **Accountability**

Rowena Hay, Leader