

# Voids Activation Pop-up Project

---

Pop-up Occupiers Guide

WESTMINSTER  
**BUSINESS**UNIT



City of Westminster

## Background

Westminster City Council is developing a pop-up project to rapidly address the impact that vacant units have on visitors' perception of a place.

The project seeks to provide differentiated approaches to raise the profile of each area through a targeted network of activations.

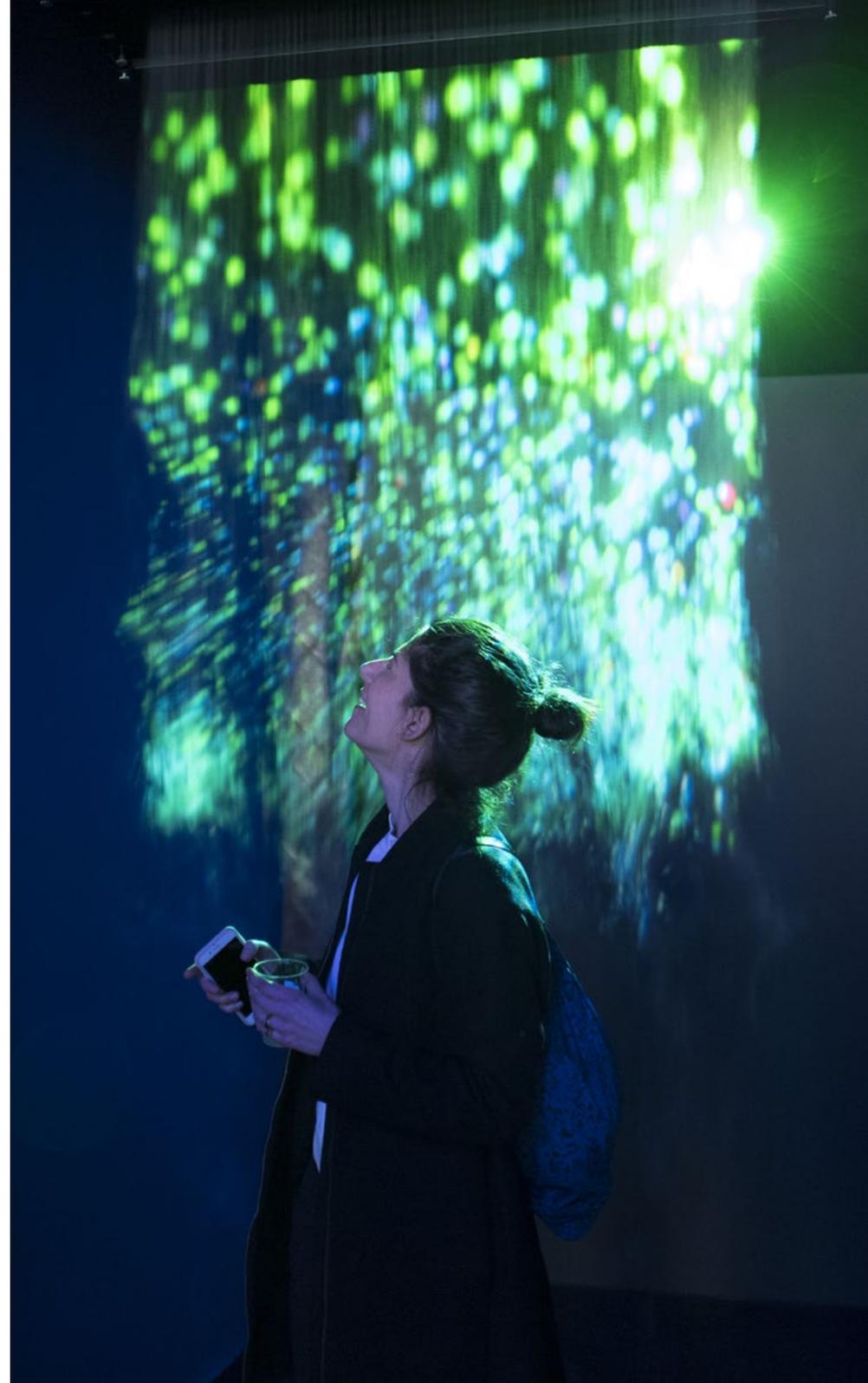
The project aims to test innovative concepts through a programme of events, services and activities that will occupy empty premises with the aim of encouraging people to use spaces in different ways.

In the current climate, a near term approach to trial and experiment with new ideas and business models is key to support the visitor economy and the area's resilience to ensure it remains relevant to future visitors. The temporary new landscape created by the diverse pop-up ventures will help to feed the evolution of the area's post-Covid features.

The project seeks to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports small scale businesses, homegrown start-ups, and emerging creative talent. We aim for the project to act as a space for the next generation of local talent and as an experimental platform where innovative modes of production, business models and ideas for a better future are tested.

## Pop-up project for Heart of London Business Alliance

The goal is to promote the area's cultural assets in an engaging and stimulating way that encourages interaction within activated spaces and diversifies existing services, creating unique concepts that will provide more options and therefore attract and engage with new audiences. In addition, the project seeks to generate excitement by producing experiences that exist for a limited time period and that are in constant evolution. WCC in partnership with Art of London are calling for enterprise, art and culture related pop-up occupiers to help us celebrate art in every form by activating void premises in the Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square areas from May until the End of August.



## Pop-up concept brief

### Artists in residence

#### Aims

Support emerging talent by giving local artists the opportunity to work, develop new ideas and generate live art from within a prime located space for a defined period of time.

Turn artists' residencies into art incubators by giving participating artists maximum exposure and the necessary tools to promote their work.

#### The concept

Turn vacant retail units into studios in which creative processes develop, generating a unique space where artworks are produced and consumed. Visitors will be able to experience the process of production and buy the artworks created at these temporary studios. The unit becomes a practised place, a glimpse into the artist's world that can be occupied in different ways throughout the day providing educational opportunities and the development of content related workshops.

#### Relevance

The ways in which visitors consume culture and goods has changed its focus from objects to services and experiences, which has highlighted the importance of incorporating new activities that add value to the shopping experience. This business model framework allows for retail, education services and entertainment to coexist and develop within the same space. The concept provides a constantly evolving, unpredictable scene in which the artist, the process and the artwork are at the centre of the experience.



## Fringe theatre shows & live performances

### Aims

Support performing arts, especially the theatre industry by providing actors, music producers and costume designers with a space to perform, rehearse and showcase their work.

Interact with new, diverse audiences including the opportunity for those who can't leave their homes using alternative channels to make the shows accessible.

Showcase local talent to broader audiences.

### The concept

Create a rotative programme of fringe theatre shows that will bring human warmth to empty units, transforming and shaping underutilised spaces into performance stages, creating temporary places through live performances.

Showcase a programme of performances to enable users to experience live functions without the need of physical contact.

### Relevance

The multiple ways in which visitors engage with places has highlighted the importance of making services and commodities more accessible through a wide variety of channels. The concept allows for spaces to be consumed as experiences where the physical and virtual realms perform as interdependent elements.



## Detachable galleries

### Aims

Support small galleries that champion emerging artists by allowing these to spread out their programme and occupy void spaces.

### The concept

Create a rotating programme of installations and exhibitions that allow small galleries to showcase sneak peeks of collections to give emerging artists maximum exposure whilst attracting broader audiences.

### Relevance

Exchanging narratives between the city and cultural organisations will help to build a sense of place as we occupy it. Exhibitions and installations can provide a journey of discovery, transforming the perception of an area just by walking around.



## Delivery framework

### Unit requirements

- Short term standardised lease
- Rent free period
- Utilities costs / service charges included
- Flexibility to make non-structural changes. Upon termination of the tenancy the premise will be reinstated back to the original condition

### Amenities:

- Lighting
- Heating
- Toilets

### Planning permission and advertisement consent

Any uses which do not fall within class E will require planning permission.

- Class E (commercial, businesses and services) includes shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, businesses, light industrial activities, indoor sport, recreation or fitness, medical or health services and day centres.
- Learning and non-residential institutions such as museums fall within class F1 and will therefore require planning permission.
- Local community uses fall within class F2 and will therefore require planning permission.
- Any uses which do not fall within the categories provided are referred to as 'Sui Generis' and will require planning permission. Examples of a sui generis use include theatres, drinking establishments and venues for live music performance.

Advertisement consent will be required for all pop-ups

WCC will submit the planning permission and advertisement consent applications on behalf of end occupiers.

## Business rates

Central Government's retail hospitality and leisure 100% rates holiday scheme has been extended to 30 June. The scheme will come to a tapered end with 66% business rates relief for the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022.

We are exploring a model which will enable further reduced rates for property owners and free rates for end occupiers of pop-ups planned through the later summer months and through to October 2021.

## Showcasing Enterprise, Arts & Culture Fund

Grants for up to £5,000 will be awarded to eligible applicants.

Applicants can apply for one of the two following grants:

- Up to £2,500 for proposals which benefit is career development (the opportunity to increase recognition, showcase their talent and raise their brand profile).
- Up to £5,000 for more ambitious proposals offering higher impact and public and audience engagement outcomes.

These grants will fund actual costs for fitout and the commission of artists to produce live art from these spaces.

The budget allocated for the commission of artworks should cover the following costs:

- All professional fees, expenses, design development, and workshop costs, insurances and permissions to deliver the project.
- Costs of materials, fabrication, production and installation (and de-installation).

## White box fit out service

The basic 'white box' fit out service will ensure the premise is ready so the temporary occupier can undertake decorative works. WCC will cover the costs of this service with funds from the Stimulating the Economy Capital Fund.

The scope of works will vary depending on the condition of each premise, yet the works that will be expected pre-occupancy are: ensure walls are clean, ensure electrical switches work, ensure restrooms work, ensure lights work, remove old features that could put new tenant and visitors at risk (large-scale elements will not be removed unless they present an imminent danger to people).

Once the temporary lease ends, the contractor will reinstate the premise so it is ready for a new tenant's remodelling works. The works that will be expected post occupancy are: ensure floors and walls are clean, remove tenant's improvements including signage and decorative elements (artworks as well as any large scale furniture will be removed by the tenant once the license period is over).



# Westminster City Council celebrates Art in Every Form in partnership with Art of London

## Application Process

All applications for a pop-up space must be submitted through our online platform which will be operating from late March:

### [Application Form](#)

A commission brief for each activation concept detailed in this document will be published and circulated among WCC's network.

The commission brief will provide details about the online application form, selection process, artistic requirements, grants' eligibility criteria, scoring criteria and proposal requirements.

Any form of art may be submitted dependant on suitability of chosen medium for their selected area under any of the following themes:

- Environment & Sustainability
- Identity & Inclusion
- Learning & Skills
- Health & Wellbeing
- Innovation & Future of Art

## Pop-up selection criteria

The process has been designed to be transparent, clear, timebound and to maximise the opportunity to support UK businesses and creatives.

All applications will be assessed against the following scoring criteria:

- Concept's Originality and Inventiveness
- Context and Connection to Site
- Feasibility and Delivery
- Applicant Information

A panel of experts formed by Arts & Culture Institutions' representatives, WCC officers in Cultural Policy and Economic Development and BIDs' representatives will evaluate the proposals.

The maximum occupation period is three months.



## Marketing & promotion

Participants will benefit from free promotion across the following channels:

### Art of London

Website: [artoflondon.co.uk/](http://artoflondon.co.uk/)

Instagram: [instagram.com/theartofldn/](https://www.instagram.com/theartofldn/)

Facebook: [facebook.com/theartofldn](https://www.facebook.com/theartofldn)

Twitter: [twitter.com/theartofldn](https://twitter.com/theartofldn)

### Discover Leicester Square

Website: [leicestersquare.london/](http://leicestersquare.london/)

Instagram: [instagram.com/discoverlsq/](https://www.instagram.com/discoverlsq/)

Facebook: [facebook.com/discoverlsq](https://www.facebook.com/discoverlsq)

Twitter: [twitter.com/discoverlsq](https://twitter.com/discoverlsq)

### London West End

Instagram: [instagram.com/london.westend/](https://www.instagram.com/london.westend/)

Facebook: [facebook.com/LondonWestEnd/](https://www.facebook.com/LondonWestEnd/)

Twitter: [twitter.com/londonwestend](https://twitter.com/londonwestend)

### HOLBA

Website: [heartoflondonbid.london/](http://heartoflondonbid.london/)

### Westminster City Council

Website: [westminster.gov.uk](http://westminster.gov.uk)

Instagram: [instagram.com/citywestminster/](https://www.instagram.com/citywestminster/)

Facebook: [facebook.com/CityWestminster/](https://www.facebook.com/CityWestminster/)

Twitter: [twitter.com/citywestminster](https://twitter.com/citywestminster)

Contact us to learn more about this exciting opportunity.

@ [businessunit@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:businessunit@westminster.gov.uk)

📞 020 7641 2070



**SUPPORT**



**WESTMINSTER**