

Meanwhile On: Oxford Street

Applicants Guide

WESTMINSTER
BUSINESSUNIT



City of Westminster



Background

Westminster City Council (WCC) is launching the next phase of the Meanwhile On programme (formerly Voids Activation and Pop-up Project), which initially addressed the impact of vacant retail units on visitors' perception of the West End. This new phase will look at replacing some of the vacant and low-quality offerings along Oxford Street and other high-profile locations across the West End to help influence and define the future of our high streets.

The programme has delivered on helping to bring vibrancy and footfall back to the West End, supporting over 45 emerging brands and artists across 12 separate activations to date.

The Opportunity

This is an opportunity for innovative, cutting-edge and up-and-coming brands to launch a store on Oxford Street rent-free.

- This is a three-year programme – Spaces will become available at different times throughout this period and we expect them to be available for roughly six months each.
- Space sizes will vary – Smaller units will likely be given to a single brand, and larger units will be split into multi-brand concept stores, with complimentary brands curated around a theme that tells a consistent story.
- Spaces will either be in a white-boxed condition (for single-brand stores) or fully designed (for multi-brand stores).
- Spaces will be rent-free, but brands will need to contribute to project costs (see [page 5](#)).

What we're looking for

WCC are calling on innovative, cutting-edge and up-and-coming brands who:

- Are looking to launch their first physical space (or first in London).
- Can offer something unique to Oxford Street's audience in terms of product, events, experience or concept.
- Have the potential to launch a long-term store after developing their brand through the programme.
- Have sufficient capital to cover the project costs (see [page 5](#)) and to sustain the rest of their business whilst running a store for six months.
- Have sufficient resources to run a store for six months on one of the world's busiest streets. This includes; staff; stock; promotion and general execution.
- Want to play a part in shaping Oxford Street's future for the better.



Benefits for brands

- ✓ Basic white-box service funded by WCC, ensuring that each space is ready so that applicants can undertake final decorative works.
- ✓ Basic fitout service for eligible multi-brand spaces. A design agency will create a unique and attractive design, conceptualised to each location.
- ✓ Rent-free tenancies within prime retail spaces throughout activation period.
- ✓ 70% discount on business rates through the application of Expanded Retail and NNDR Localism Reliefs.
- ✓ Free promotion through consumer-focused campaigns to drive footfall and spend.
- ✓ Support from experienced space operators, Someday Studios, to guide brands every step of the way, funded by WCC.



[Someday Studios](#) are creators and curators of great places, transforming underused spaces into vibrant destinations, helping shape the future of our streets.

They have direct, relevant experience for the programme with 30+ years' experience in retail project management and have successfully activated over 500 stores, working alongside over 2,500 entrepreneurs.

Key responsibilities from Someday Studios include:

- Logistical planning and strategy
- Management of design & build
- Lease agreements
- Introduction of brands to space and ongoing support
- Management of legals and payments (including service charges, holding deposits, BID levies and business rates).

What brands need to provide

All spaces will be rent-free, but brands will be expected to cover the following project costs:

- 1** Business rates contribution: ranging from £500 to £2,800 + VAT per month per brand, depending on space size, with the first three months payable up-front and later months payable one month up-front.
- 2** Damage deposit: £1000 to £2,500 per brand payable up-front and fully refunded at end of tenancy provided there are no issues.
- 3** Service charge (including utilities): where applicable and may vary per space – amounts will be shared with applicants occupying a space prior to any contract signing.
- 4** Business Improvement District (BID) levy is payable by ratepayers if they operate within a property that falls within a BID area. New West End Company (NVEC) will be discounting occupier BID levies by 70% for those participating in the programme and this is to be shared among applicants occupying a space. As an estimate, we expect BID levy contributions to cost between £20-£50 per brand per month. Specific amounts will be shared with applicants occupying a space prior to any contract signing.
- 5** Stock: initial stock and the ability to replenish stock, if needed.
- 6** Staffing: stores are expected to operate 7 days a week, in line with Oxford Street guidelines.
- 7** Security: if/where required.
- 8** Wi-Fi, cleaning and point of sale (POS) potentially shared for multi-brand stores.

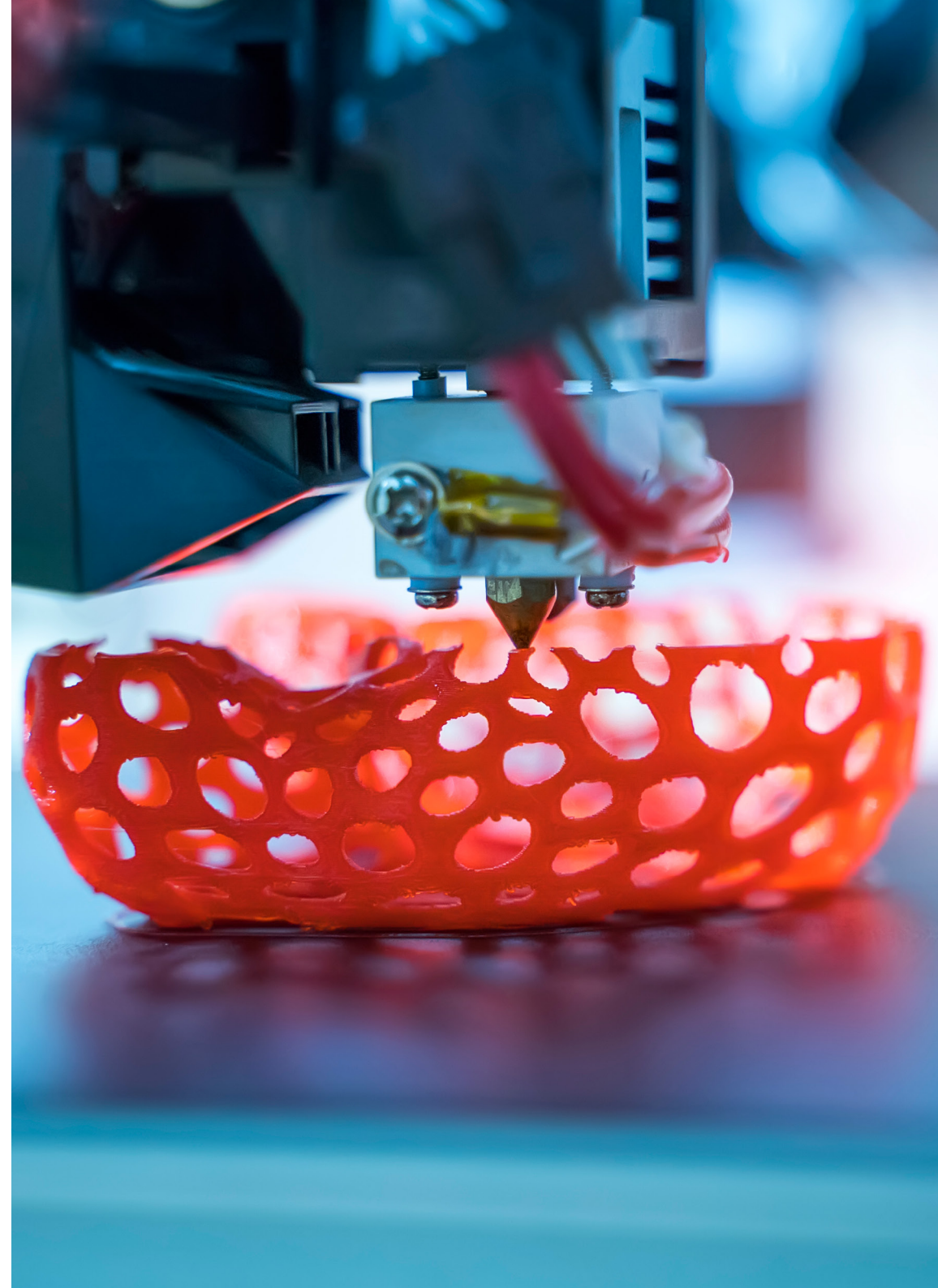


Activation Concepts

Activations are envisaged to fall into but are not strictly limited to the following concepts.

Invention & Production Spaces

- Turning spaces into highly creative, experimental, and futuristic hives of activity. These stores will give visitors an insight into the full production chain enabling them to buy the goods created on-site in front of a live audience.
- Brands will be on the pulse of research, innovation and creation, linking advanced methods of design and fabrication, science, prototyping, sampling through to end products.



Intersectional Spaces

- These cutting-edge spaces will blur the boundaries between reality and the metaverse by combining digital fashion and virtual design with physical production.
- Brands will be able to showcase and sell digital pieces with the opportunity to create physical products on-site.
- Experiential companies will be able to create immersive experiences using technologies such as augmented or virtual reality.



Hyperphysical Spaces

- These spaces aim to elevate the in-store experience via the creation of over expressive settings around a brand's concept. Developed by artists, experiential companies and/or by brands who are looking to solidify their presence; these stores will provide immersive experiences for people to socialise, shop and have fun.
- A destination where technology, art, commerce and creativity converge to engage with visitors.



Practiced Places

- These spaces are designed for like-minded individuals and organisations to work in close proximity and co-design participatory experiences.
- An interactive workshop that enables a wide variety of communal activities such as exhibitions, installations and talks to take place. A space where people from different backgrounds can gather, participate, and purchase items that form part of these ever-changing installations.



Application process

All applications for a space must be submitted through our online platform:

[Application Form](#)

Please note that applications are speculative and successful applicant space designation is subject to unit availability. This process can be fluid and the team will provide as much notice on spaces as soon as possible.

Proposals may be submitted dependant on suitability of chosen medium for their selected area under the following themes:

- Innovation & technology
- Science & invention
- Inclusivity
- Culture & entertainment
- Experiential retail
- Advanced methods of design, fabrication, and prototyping
- Sustainability
- Suggested alternatives

Applications will be ongoing, and we will endeavour to respond to all applicants, although due to the anticipated number of applications received, there may be delays. Please do not submit more than one application.

Please also note that applying does not guarantee a space and all applications are subject to selection.

Selection criteria

The process has been designed to be transparent, clear, timebound and to maximise the opportunity to support up-and-coming brands.

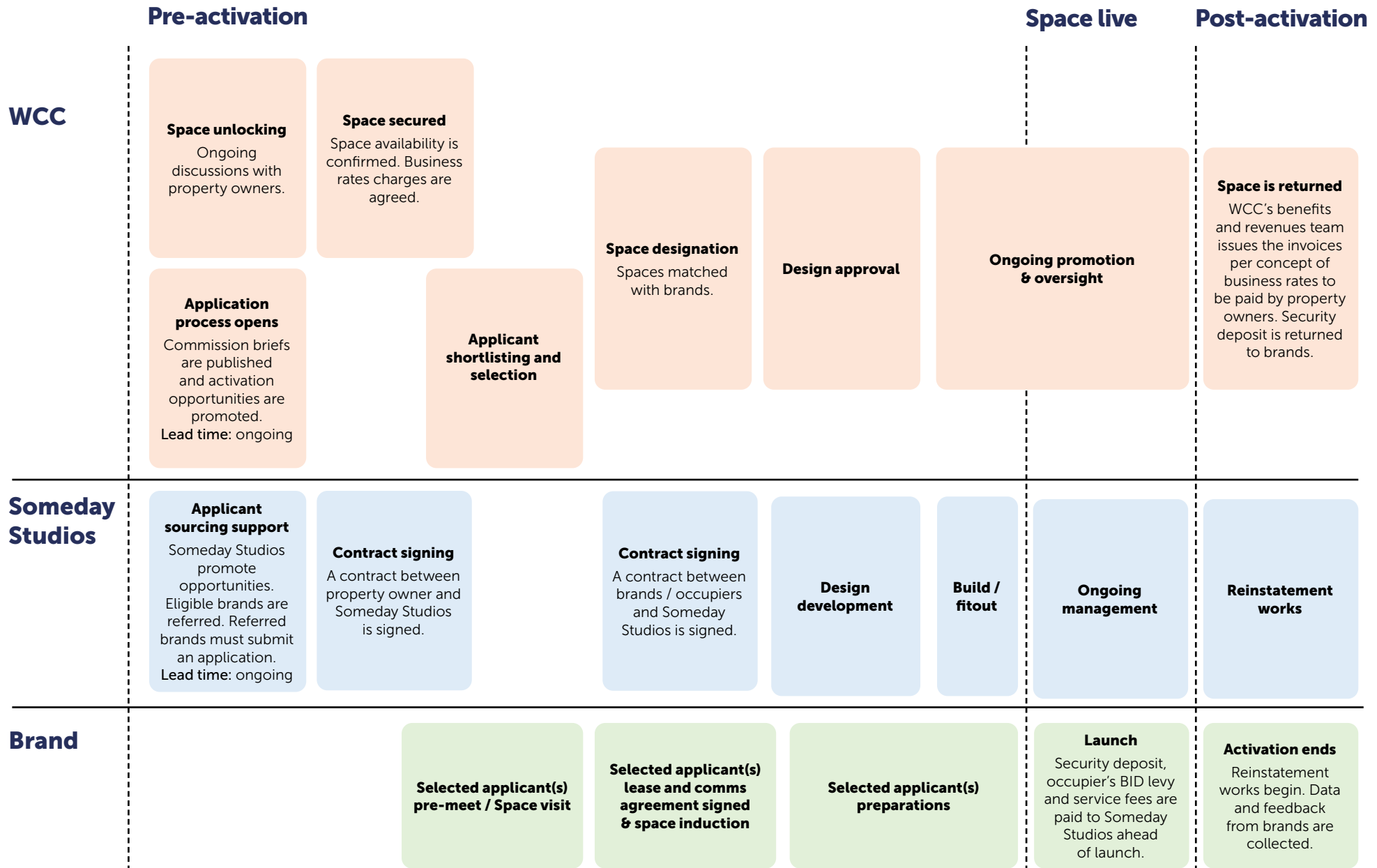
All applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

| Criteria | Points available |
|---|------------------|
| Concept's originality and inventiveness | 100 |
| Feasibility and delivery | 100 |
| Association and connection to the borough | 70 |
| Preparedness and scalability | 70 |
| Applicant and brand track record | 70 |

A panel formed by experts in each concept category field, WCC officers, BID representatives, Someday Studios and property owners will evaluate all proposals. Applicants will be assessed on the quality of their proposal and how well this reflects the programme's vision and expectations.

If you have any questions regarding the application process or selection criteria, please email businessunit@westminster.gov.uk with the subject heading "Meanwhile On: Oxford St Application Enquiry".

Activation Journey



Case studies from previous phases

The Regent Street Edit

(88 Regent Street)
Sept 2021 – Dec 2021

A curated brand mix bucking the “fast-fashion” trend.

The Regent St. Edit saw a total of 8 complementary fashion and wellness brands focussed around themes of sustainability all housed in a sustainably designed store.

They not only offered limited edition, made-to-order goods but gave a live window into their processes as well as giving consumers the opportunity to meet the founders.



The Collect

(500 Oxford Street)

Nov 2021 – Jan 2022

The Collect incorporated 11 outspoken brands who use design as a tool to address social, political and environmental issues.

The community, composed of artists, fashion designers and activists showcased gender-neutral and empowering pieces and used the opportunity to run workshops and open the debate around fashion, sustainability and equality.



12|12

(12 Piccadilly Arcade)

Jan 2022 – Dec 2022

12|12 represented a living laboratory, a working studio and a hive of activity for new and exciting brands.





The unit acted as a revolving and evolving space showcasing 12 separate and unique start-ups, one per month, who are masters of their respective craft and are re-inventing the wheel – merging innovation, science, technology, culture, fashion and people.






Marketing and Promotion

In addition to each selected applicant's own marketing activity, we will support with consumer-focused campaigns to increase awareness amongst relevant audiences to drive footfall and spend. Participants will also benefit from free promotion across our following channels:

Westminster City Council

-  facebook.com/citywestminster
-  instagram.com/citywestminster
-  linkedin.com/company/westminster-city-council
-  twitter.com/citywestminster



NWEC

-  newwestend.com
-  linkedin.com/company/new-west-end-company
-  twitter.com/newwestend

Oxford Street

-  facebook.com/oxfordstw1
-  instagram.com/oxfordstreetw1

Someday Studios

-  instagram.com/somedaystudiosldn
-  linkedin.com/company/somedaystudios



[Apply here](#) or for any enquiries, please contact us at the details below, quoting "Meanwhile On Programme":

 businessunit@westminster.gov.uk

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