

# The Studio Hive: Propagating a Creative Technology Ecosystem



August 2024



# Propagating a Creative Technology Ecosystem

## Executive Summary

The Studio in Bath stands at a critical crossroads. Over the past five years, it has carved out a significant role within Bath's creative ecosystem, extending its influence far beyond its physical footprint. A wholly owned university enterprise, The Studio provides desk and meeting space, supporting a vibrant community of approximately 100 small businesses and enterprises, delivering a strong civic presence for the University in the city. However, its future location will likely shift as Bath Spa University develops a major new campus at Locksbrook on the city's outskirts. The pressing question is: how should The Studio position itself in this next development phase, balancing the needs of the University and the City while staying relevant in a rapidly evolving social, economic, and environmental landscape? The University's Vice Chancellor has challenged The Studio team to think big about its future. This research aims to help The Studio rise to this pivotal challenge.

This research employed Bill Sharpe's Three Horizons methodology to engage staff and stakeholders in reflecting on The Studio's current business-as-usual model, envisioning its future state, and identifying the pathways needed to achieve these possibilities. The Methodology section of this report details the approach, which was further enriched through a series of verification interviews with strategic stakeholders.

The Findings section of this report highlights key insights from the Three Horizons workshop and interviews. These insights illuminate ambitious goals for The Studio:

- Building a resilient city regional economy by strengthening connections between creative micro-enterprises.
- Offering a safe space for start-ups, micro-businesses and freelancers to experiment, fail, learn, and try again.
- Shifting the narrative to influence the city region towards a regenerative, sustainable economy that looks beyond GDP growth.
- Countering the extractive impacts of globalised technologies by fostering peer-to-peer connections between local and international networks of small-scale creative enterprises.

Four visions for The Studio's future emerged from an analysis of participants' views:

- The Studio as a **Propagator**: Nurturing early-stage ideas and businesses through broad, ongoing support such as mentorship, community, and resources, fostering organic growth. This contrasts the accelerator model, which offers intensive, short-term programmes focused on rapidly scaling businesses.
- The Studio as a **Mothership**: A welcoming creative space that provides enriching conditions for professional and personal growth, with an emphasis on fostering **right livelihood**, a concept taken from regenerative economics that promotes balance, meaningful, and ethical work that contributes positively to society and the environment.

- The Studio as a **Story-Shifter**: Helping to reframe the narrative of Bath by promoting the past, present and future innovation within the city. Contributing to the development of a long-term strategy for both the University and the City Region.
- The Studio as an **International Bridge-Builder**: Facilitating connections and solidarity between local and global creative networks, fostering cross-cultural collaboration and exchange.

In the Actions section of the report, we outline strategic steps that The Studio can take over the next five years to enact a transformation:

- **Re-invigorating The Studio's Core Values & Behaviours**: A crucial step in revitalising The Studio involves reaffirming its core values and the behaviours that support them. We propose adding 'Healthy Ecology' to the existing core values of Inclusivity, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship to strengthen the connection with the environment and nature. Additionally, to the existing key behaviours— Interdisciplinary Work, Practice-based Learning, and Collaboration—we suggest adding 'Right Livelihood' to emphasise the importance of social purpose alongside commercial development.
- **Diversifying Income Streams**: The Studio must diversify funding to ensure stability. Recommendations include an independent research agenda, strategic partnerships for funding, and exploring joint ventures or CICs. We suggest introducing a modest Resident membership fee of £30/month with one free 'Open Studio' day weekly to maintain accessibility, along with free access for University students, staff and those on low incomes.
- **Planning for Physical Relocation**: The Studio's physical space and location play a pivotal role in its identity and impact. Balancing between its city centre convenience and potential at the University's planned Locksbrook campus, recommendations include a hybrid operational model; robust community engagement; flexible memberships; incentives for early adopters, and strategic placemaking initiatives.
- **Embracing Equity in Tech for Social Change**: In the Three Horizons workshop, there was a call for The Studio to diversify its operations and demographic to better reflect Bath's wider diversity. This is crucial for shaping a future that is inclusive and equitable. The Studio should leverage its community's drive for social change by deepening its analysis of operational relationships and its global economic position. By adopting a 'hive-like' structure and embracing sustainable practices, The Studio can enhance its role in fostering social change and bridging local-global divides.
- **Operating as 'The Studio Hive'**: The Studio Hive strategically redefines creativity and impact through community-driven reciprocity, empowering 'creativibeers' and micro-enterprises alike. Guided by inclusivity and sustainability, it envisions Bath as a creative powerhouse, addressing societal challenges while fostering resilience and community cohesion.

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# 1. Introduction

*“It seems as though most of us have less and less space to think creatively or imaginatively, if at all. Even among people who work within the ‘creative industries’, their imagination seems increasingly harnessed to create demand for things nobody really needs, whose production is increasingly pushing our human and ecological systems to the brink of collapse – almost as if imagination has been coopted in the service of our own extinction.”*

- Rob Hopkins, *“From What is to What If?”*

Established in 2019, The Studio is Bath Spa University’s vibrant city-centre hub for innovation and enterprise. As Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition Towns movement, poignantly noted, in today’s world, creativity often serves consumerist ends that strain our human and ecological systems. In contrast, The Studio fosters collaborations at the nexus of art and technology within the creative industries, aiming to create an inclusive ecosystem that supports students, academics, graduates, micro-businesses, SMEs, and freelancers. It provides a collaborative environment conducive to creativity, entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary learning.

The Studio offers free coworking spaces and a limited number of paid-for desks, supporting approximately 100 Residents. The Studio plays a crucial role in cultivating meaningful relationships within Bath’s creative sector. A key finding from The Studio’s annual Residents survey (Pottinger, 2023) highlighted The Studio’s importance in fostering personal and professional connections. According to the survey, 77% of respondents reported an ‘increased sense of community’ since joining The Studio, while 62% noted an ‘increased sense of place’ and professional development. One Resident aptly summarised this sentiment:

*“The Studio has wonderful connections and works hard to facilitate and network, opening up as much as possible in terms of courses, workshops, and funding support. I’ve never experienced that before. It’s brilliant.”*

Moreover, Professor Kate Pullinger, founder and academic lead at The Studio and Co-Director of Bath Spa University’s Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCCI), was honoured as the ‘Inspirational Person of the Year’ at the Creative Bath Awards (Bath Spa University, 2023). These survey results and accolades underscore The Studio’s current position of strength. The Studio’s value is clearly recognised by senior managers within the University one of whom commented that *“The Studio has proved invaluable for the University – it’s worth its weight in gold”*.

Despite the high esteem the Studio is held in, it faces an uncertain future due to significant changes within Bath Spa University and broader social, economic, and environmental uncertainties. At the time of commissioning this research, it was unclear whether The Studio would relocate to Bath Spa University’s new Locksbrook campus, currently scheduled to open in 2029, or remain in its current city centre location, with the lease on Palace Yard Mews building set to expire early in 2027, adding to the uncertainty.

In this context, this research was commissioned to help The Studio start to devise a five-year plan to increase its impact and renew its narrative to more accurately reflect its internal operations and broader value and influence.

## 2. Research Objectives

The research objectives that The Studio team set out for this study are:

- To think through the role of The Studio both in terms of its current building (including the current models of space usage and income generation) and a proposed move to Locksbrook 2.
- To revisit our stated values, which were last articulated in 2020
- To rethink our Advisory Group – what kind of group should we be engaging to steer The Studio over the next five years? Whose voices are missing?
- To identify other models we can learn from, including funding models for spaces like ours
- To identify future themes for The Studio’s orientation, i.e. Fashion technologies, immersive visitor experiences, etc.
- To revisit the profile of our Resident population - current focus is micro business / sole traders working in creative tech – does this need further thought? Many of our Residents are focused on social impact and social change – can we address/support this more directly linking with, for example, the Bath Social Impact Network (BSIN)?
- To help us find more effective ways to tell the story of The Studio across the region as well as nationally and internationally
- To consider and more clearly define the relationships between CCCI and the University.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Overview

The research methodology followed a qualitative approach to generating insights and understanding. It comprised the following elements:

- I. Inception Workshop: Conducted with The Studio team to fully understand their motivations and aspirations.
- II. Document Review: Analysis of relevant strategies, surveys, and reports.
- III. Three Horizons Workshop: Engaged staff and stakeholders in exploring the business-as-usual model, long-term visions and actionable strategies.
- IV. Reflection and Prioritisation Workshop: Facilitated with The Studio team to reflect on the workshop findings and prioritise actions.
- V. Stakeholder Interviews: One-to-one interviews with strategic stakeholders to validate emerging findings and gather additional insights.

## 3.2 The Three Horizons

*“Three Horizons” ... connects the present with desired (or espoused) futures, and helps to identify the divergent futures which may emerge as a result of conflict between the embedded present and these imagined futures”*

*- Andrew Curry and Anthony Hodgson*

Developed by Bill Sharpe of the International Futures Forum under the UK Foresight Programme’s Intelligent Infrastructures Project (Sharpe and Hodgson, 2006), the Three Horizons framework was originally conceived to depict overlapping waves of technological innovation more realistically than traditional road-mapping methods. While initially designed for technological innovation, Three Horizons has proven immensely useful as a conceptual model across diverse landscapes. It aids in challenging current assumptions, understanding emerging changes, and envisioning possible and desired futures. A Three Horizons workshop with Studio staff and stakeholders formed a central pillar of our research methodology.

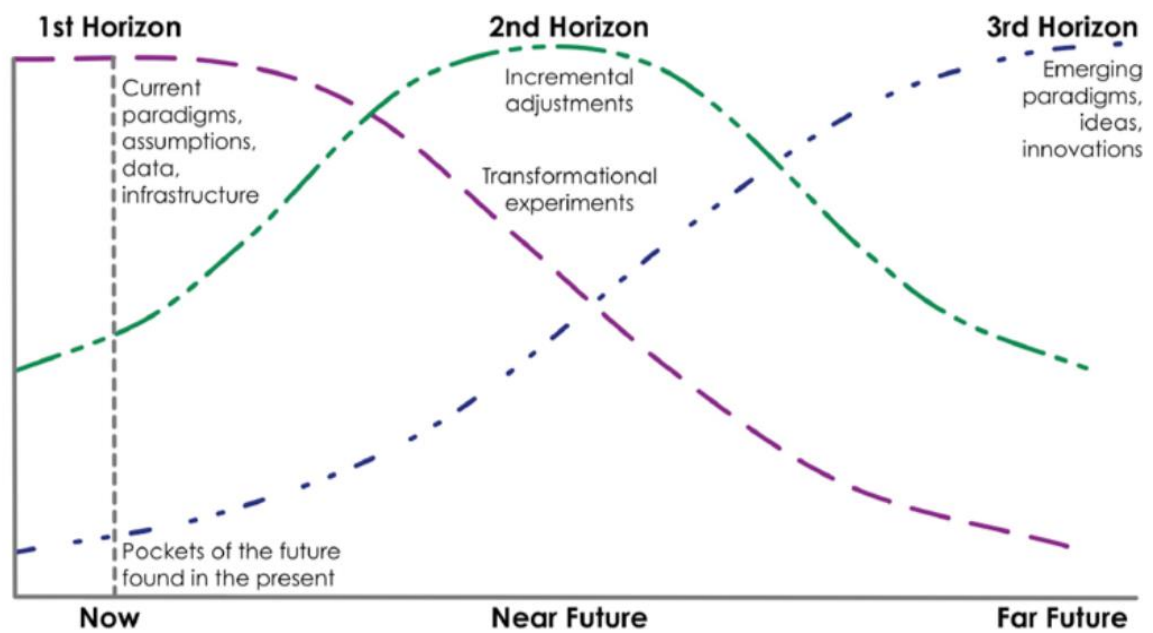
At its core, Three Horizons offers a framework to deepen understanding of short-, medium-, and long-term futures. It recognises that businesses, technologies, policies, and entire civilisations follow life cycles of initiation, growth, peak performance, decline, and renewal. These cycles manifest as waves of change, where dominant forms eventually give way to emerging alternatives. These displacements can be gradual or sudden, especially during periods of rapid change.

For instance, technologies like generative AI can swiftly disrupt technological ecosystems once they reach a tipping point. However, a nuanced perspective reveals multiple waves operating simultaneously across different scales, with their prominence shifting over time. The convergence of Cloud Computing, fast 5G networks, and sophisticated, freely available language models have notably facilitated AI’s maturation. Appreciating the complex and interconnected nature of these patterns requires recognising qualitative differences between the waves. Understanding is further enhanced by simultaneously considering three distinct mindsets or horizons (H\*):

- H1: Managerial mindset, focusing on optimising current operations.
- H2: Entrepreneurial mindset, exploring new opportunities and innovations.
- H3: Visionary mindset, envisioning and shaping future possibilities.

By leveraging the Three Horizons approach, our research not only explored The Studio’s current landscape but also navigated potential pathways to future success, ensuring strategic planning is aligned with dynamic external forces and internal aspirations.





### 3.3 H1: Business-as-usual

Horizon 1 (H1) is the dominant system at present, representing business-as-usual. We rely on these systems for their stability and reliability. However, as the world evolves, elements of business-as-usual can start to feel outdated or inadequate. Eventually, new methods and systems will replace the current ones.

At The Studio, knowledge about H1 is integrated into daily operations, data collection, and partnerships. H1 represents the ways in which The Studio currently manages its relationships, with staff, Residents, the University and partners. While evidence suggests that The Studio currently operates from a position of strength, it is important to acknowledge that even the most robust business-as-usual models contain the seeds of their own demise. Without renewal, these models risk becoming outdated or unsuitable as the world evolves. An example of this is the closure of The Fusebox in Brighton. Similar to The Studio, The Fusebox offered co-working space for entrepreneurs and startups to transform ideas into successful innovations by providing co-working facilities and entrepreneurial expertise. Despite a decade of successful operation, Fusebox declared bankruptcy and closed in November 2023 (The Argus, 2023).

As part of the Three Horizons workshop, The Studio team presented an overview of their work to provide context for broader discussion. This introduction was particularly valuable for participants unfamiliar with the full scope of The Studio's activities. The concept of Horizon 1 was explained, and participants were invited to engage in discussions of The Studio's current state, guided by four questions: What's Hopeful? What's Worrying? What's Working? What's Missing? Participants documented their thoughts on these questions to help frame the context for discussion of future strategies and innovation.

## Horizon One (H1)



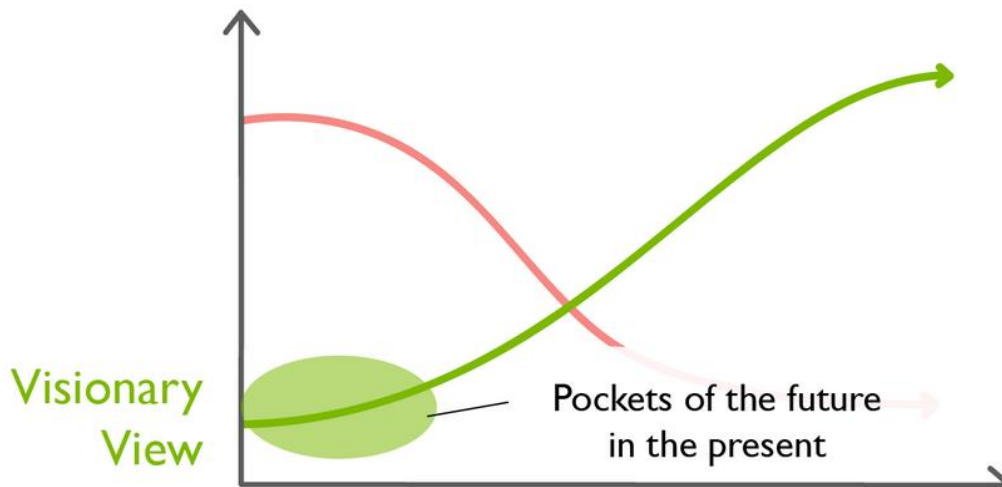
### 3.4 H3: Future Visions

Horizon 3 (H3) represents the long-term successor to business-as-usual, emerging from current fringe activities that introduce entirely new ways of operating. These new methods often prove to be better suited to the evolving world than the dominant H1 systems. We can refer to these initial developments as “pockets of the future in the present”.

During the workshop, participants were first invited to individually reflect on the future of Bath. Under the facilitator's guidance, they considered how interconnected challenges such as economic uncertainty, climate change and widening social divides might impact the city and region over the next decade. Additionally, participants were encouraged to recognise the hopefulness that's already present in the communities and businesses that are finding innovative ways to navigate challenges. Notable examples highlighted included Bath Spa University's commitment to opening the new National Centre for Fashion and Sustainability, the development of the new Locksbrook 2 campus and its potential wider impact at the heart of a new Creative Industries Quarter for Bath.

Following individual reflection, participants shared their insights with the group. They were then tasked with synthesising their separate visions for The Studio on a single A4 sheet and presenting their collective feedback to the whole group. This exercise aimed to harness diverse perspectives and foster a shared vision for The Studio's future, ensuring alignment with emerging trends and community aspirations.

## Horizon Three (H3)

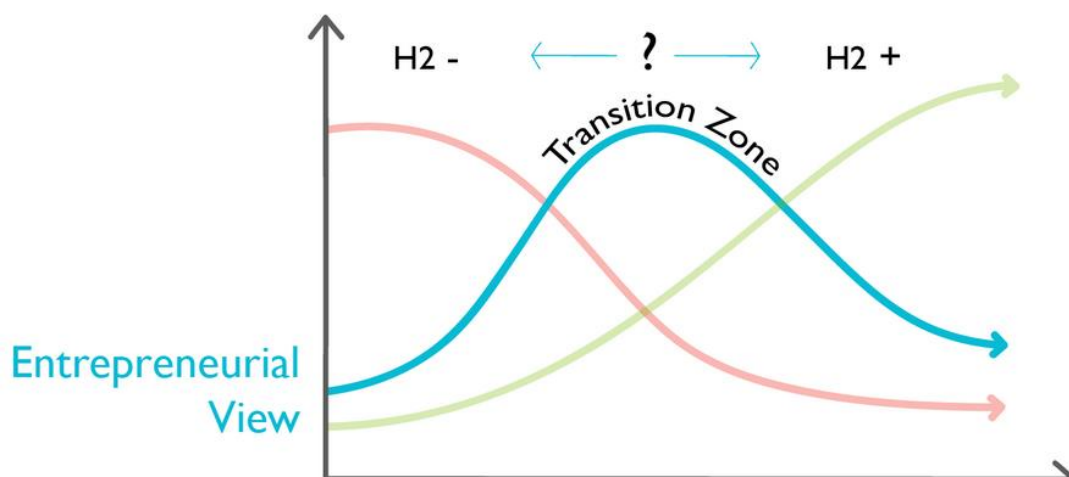


### 3.5 H2: Entrepreneurial Innovation

Horizon 2 (H2) is a pattern of transition activities and innovations, people trying things out in response to the ways in which the landscape is changing. Some of these innovations will be taken up by H1 systems to prolong their life while others will pave the way for the emergence of the radically different H3 systems.

Following the visioning exercise, participants were invited to name the things they thought would either enable or hold back their vision. This exercise was completed in groups, where members captured their ideas on post-it notes and placed them on a timeline. After feeding back, participants were asked to transpose their post-it notes to a large, wall-sized Three Horizons board in priority order - the notes higher on the board were deemed of more importance.

## Horizon Two (H2)



## 4. Rationale and Constraints

Slowmentum (an offshoot of City Global Futures) was engaged as an independent consultant to collaborate with The Studio team and identify opportunities for transformation. We recommended utilising the Three Horizons due to its robust framework, which addresses both immediate operational concerns and long-term strategic visioning.

In practice, the Three Horizons framework provided a clear and intuitive method to explore future scenarios through collective ideation and constructive conversations. It facilitated the inclusion of external perspectives to understand The Studio's current position, necessary changes, and the alignment between future narrative and existing operations. By helping participants uncover their tacit knowledge and basic operating assumptions, the framework enabled the exploration of short-, medium-, and long-term changes and devised appropriate responses to these impacts.

While the Three Horizons method is valuable, it has inherent limitations due to both its structure and the time constraints under which it operates. The framework excels at uncovering new considerations but carries implicit assumptions that can shape conversations and potentially overlook interconnected issues initially deemed irrelevant. For instance, our workshop focused on sustaining The Studio's operations rather than questioning its necessity. To address this, we validated workshop findings with non-participating stakeholders, integrating additional perspectives.

Additionally, the framework can inadvertently entrench participants in strategic thinking, where innovations identified (H2) may be viewed as the sole pathway to achieving future visions (H3). Its simplicity risks oversimplifying the interconnected nature of the Three Horizons.

Time constraints further limit the framework's effectiveness. Designed as a fixed workshop, it precludes ongoing, deep engagement with the wider community to co-design operations. Despite efforts to accommodate busy schedules and diverse perspectives, some aspects were inevitably under-explored.

Nevertheless, the Three Horizons workshop was well-attended and generated lively discussions. Stakeholders unable to attend contributed through interviews, enriching the process. Overall, while acknowledging the limitations, we believe the Three Horizons approach has provided a solid foundation for The Studio's future development.

## 5. Addressing Challenges in Futures Work

*“We must remake the world, and we can remake it better.... Imagination is a superpower. There is a sad failure of imagination at the root of this crisis. An inability to perceive both the terrible and the wonderful. An inability to imagine how all these things are connected.”*

*Rebecca Solnit, 2023, The Guardian*

A significant limitation in any futures work is the challenge of approaching the future with a positive mindset. The pervasive sense of crisis from catastrophic climate change, global conflicts, and widening social divides can make the future feel overwhelming. Recognising this, we started the workshop with an exercise designed to ease participants into a positive and creative mindset. Although not a part of the formal Three Horizons framework, this exercise was helpful in setting the tone for productive discussion.

We adopted a playful approach, sharing a narrative about time travel to the future version of The Studio and returning to the present with a collection of hastily acquired objects, each holding significance in The Studio’s journey. The challenge for the participants was to determine the significance of each object as their labels had been lost in transit. This collaborative task encouraged creative thinking and team cohesion.

While not scientific, the labels created by participants during this exercise are shared in the Findings section of this report. They provide insights into the qualities and values that participants envision The Studio will need to embody in the future. This imaginative exercise helped to frame the workshop in a hopeful light, fostering a sense of possibility and innovation as we moved into more structured discussions about The Studio’s future.

## 6. Findings

*“We agreed what’s important in the future is to enhance positive aspects through greater visibility, trying to make the offer of The Studio more accessible but also more visible so people know it’s there. An expanded offer, so growth in a sense but as we said, sustainable. Thinking of ways to sustain it both for the creative community and the micro businesses but also trying to increase porosity with students, academics, social entrepreneurs, other community groups.”*

*- 3H Participant.*



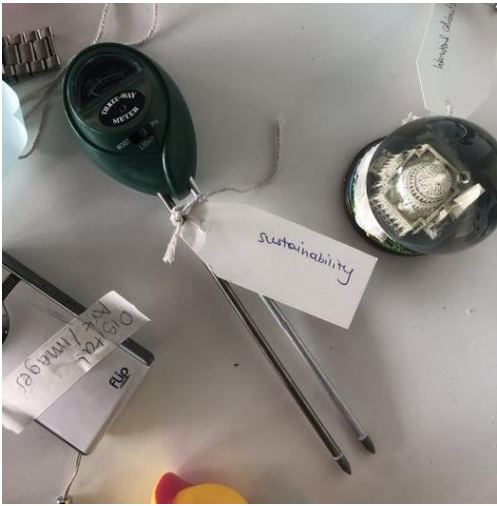
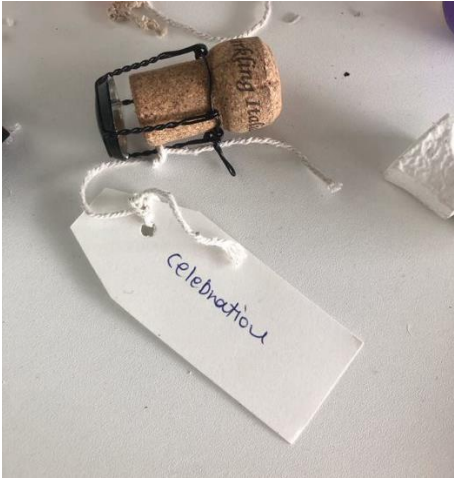
### 6.1 Objects and Values

In response to the task of labelling objects from the future, which symbolised key elements for The Studio's transformation, participants provided playful, insightful and creative answers. For instance, a padlock was labelled '*a reminder to ensure that our practices and offers are open, inclusive, and accessible to all*'. A tin heart was simply labelled '*social purpose, value, humanity*' while a broken Apple smartwatch was marked as '*a reminder of how NOT to do things*'.

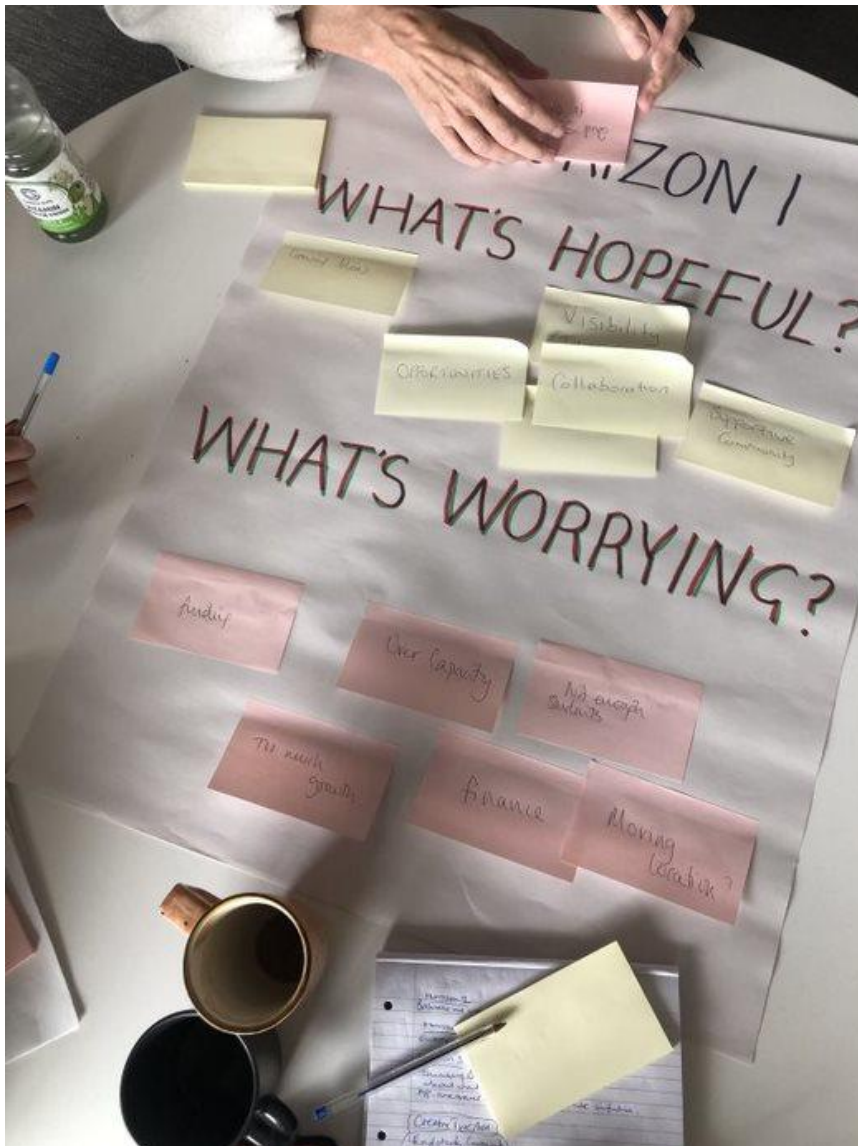
Although not directly tied to real-world planning, a packet of seeds sparked thoughts about The Studio's future location, suggesting '*a location change to somewhere with gardens*'.

This collaborative exercise served as a playful icebreaker and allowed participants to discuss the attributes they believed The Studio should embody. They included celebration, social purpose, humanity, playfulness, sustainability, clear vision, international collaboration, and shared wisdom.





## 6.2 Reflecting on H1 “Business as Usual”



Feedback from the questions posed in H1 discussion: What's Hopeful?  
And What's Working?

- Strong demand from people wanting to join The Studio
- Good feedback from The Studio Residents
- Potential for future projects and a mix of things going on
- There is a desire within The Studio team for it to be long-lasting and impactful
- There is abundant creativity; connecting creativity with technology
- So many Residents; there are lots of spaces to be surrounded by supportive creatives and innovators
- Supportive Environment - ok to fail and learn and encouragement to develop
- Residents have space both to think and to do the work
- There's meeting space and opportunities to network and collaborate
- Ideation; opportunities to think in new ways, inspired by the other Residents and people that you're meeting there.



## Feedback from the questions: What's Worrying? And What's Missing?

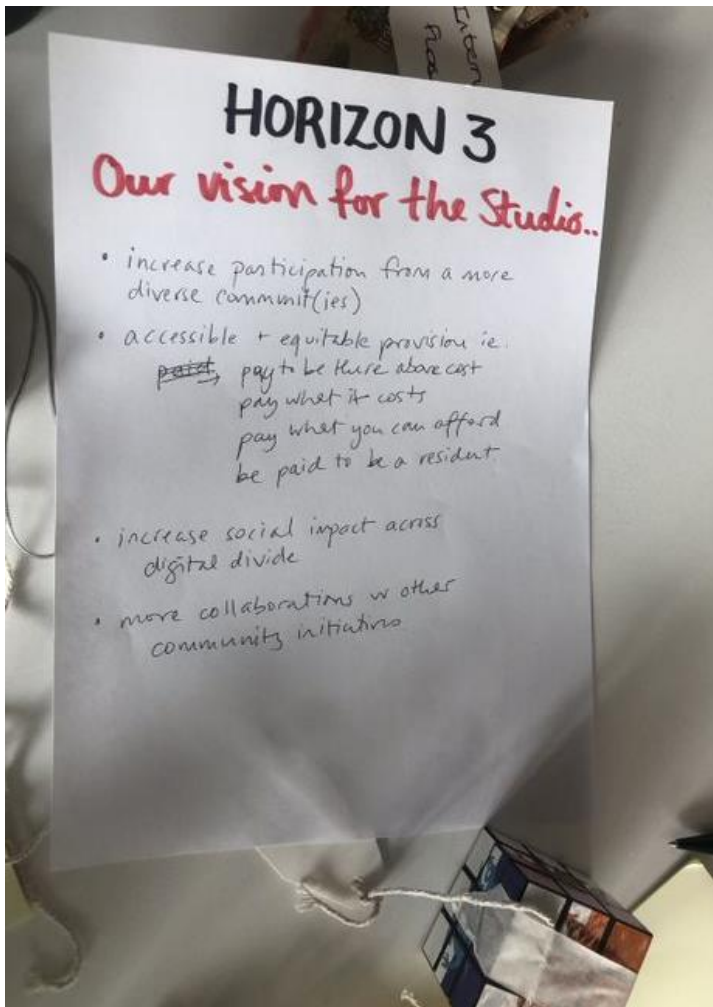
- Although there's a desire for longevity, uncertainties stem from short-term contracts for staff, time-limited external grants and short-term leases etc
- Demand outstripping supply
- Lack of diversity
- How to define and measure the impact of The Studio beyond growth metrics
- A lack of wider awareness of The Studio's presence and offer
- Age range
- Inclusivity
- The building is not very accessible
- Finances are an issue - limited capacity to change or grow
- The capacity is a particular problem ("it's hard to see room to grow")
- Tech is always going out of date so obsolescence is built-in.

<p><b>What's Working?</b></p> <p><i>"There's a specialism in micro business which doesn't insist on accelerate, accelerate, accelerate. It does enable people to become successful in their own terms and also to learn from failure."</i></p>	<p><b>What's Hopeful?</b></p> <p><i>"The uniqueness that came out of every aspect of the discussions about The Studio is the sense of community, the collaboration, the networking, and people loving the space there. You can't make that too big because you're going to lose some of the essence, so you want to bottle it. How do we bottle that?"</i></p>
<p><b>What's Worrying?</b></p> <p><i>"The lack of accessibility... thinking of the physical building but also in terms of diversity and inclusivity - currently, it reflects the demographics of the central part of the city of Bath. It could do better"</i></p>	<p><b>What's Missing?</b></p> <p><i>"If The Studio were to move, could it collaborate more with other groups?"</i></p>

In summary, the assessment of The Studio's business-as-usual (H1) operations revealed a shared sense of positivity and community, reaffirming that The Studio is operating from a position of strength. However, the most significant challenges were identified by workshop participants outside The Studio's core group of university staff and current Residents. A recurring theme was the need to address the challenges of diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity. These were highlighted as crucial opportunities to extend The Studio's reach and relevance beyond its central Bath location. Additionally, the integration of business and social purpose was recognised as a key component of The Studio's community-building approach. One participant specifically noted that this approach could be further enhanced by incorporating a focus on food and nourishment, which could strengthen community ties and foster greater inclusivity.

## 6.3 Envisioning the Future State

The H3 visioning feedback encompassed diverse perspectives that reflected different scales and viewpoints. The varied proximity of participants to The Studio sparked insightful conversations. Participants more distant from The Studio's operations tended to focus on their vision for Bath and how The Studio could integrate into that broader context. In contrast, those within The Studio's inner group provided a more detailed vision of its future operations. Thus, the future visions can be categorised into two distinct areas: key considerations within the wider ecosystem and the specific future vision for The Studio itself. This dual perspective ensures a comprehensive understanding of both the broader community's aspirations and the specific strategic direction for The Studio.



### Wider Ecosystem Considerations

- The role of the arts in re-imagining futures, as well as fostering a deep connection between individuals and communities
- Preserving and passing down tacit and local knowledge
- Climate Protection (including retrofitting Heritage buildings)
- A more diverse and fair society and economy
- Understanding global interdependencies, privileges and power imbalances

- Questioning the role and flow of money, and the meaning of 'wealth'
- As a world heritage city, Bath's future feels 'set in stone'
- Declining of Bath's high street, potential space for future hubs?
- The areas of disadvantage The Studio sits within (digital divide)

## Workshop participants' future vision of The Studio

- Understanding business's changing relationship with investment and profit
- Building international collaborations; bringing different thinking (tech hubs in Africa), connecting with diverse communities that engage with Bath
- Creating ongoing engagement with the city and its people (including tourists)
- Providing platforms for people to get started and stay (eg. retaining graduates, internships or residencies)
- Specialism in micro-businesses
- A supportive place to experiment, fail, learn and try again (building resilience)
- Socially-driven, not just profit-driven
- Financially sustainable
- Working in partnership with others to address wicked problems
- Porous, focused on integration
- A hub for propagation, rather than acceleration
- Networked Hub - long-term and sustainable growth through better linking lots of small things
- Sense of community, possibility and potential (giving greater visibility to enhance these attributes)
- Sustainability for the creative community and micro businesses
- Addressing the wastefulness of technology obsolescence
- Increased porosity between students, academics, social entrepreneurs, and other community groups
- A 'mothership' that can support people's creativity and increase financial resilience (weathering the peaks and troughs)
- A hub that provides continuity and can retain the sense of community
- A space that is open, accessible and equitable
- Centred around food and nourishment
- Subsidise disadvantaged people to come into The Studio
- Centred around social justice and social impact
- Not driven primarily by the monetisation of technology but uses tech to solve social issues
- Instrumental in a different sort of economy that isn't driving climate collapse and social ills
- Using technology and creativity as a method for reconsidering the problems that the world is facing; a method for thinking, exploring, and experimenting
- Disrupting the status quo; using tech to be socially, economically and environmentally disruptive.

## 6.4 Four Emerging Visions of the Studio's Ecosystem Roles

In the H3 discussions, a consensus emerged on the critical roles The Studio plays in nurturing micro-businesses and individual creatives. These roles include:

- Building strength by connecting micro-enterprises.
- Providing a safe space for start-ups and micro-businesses to experiment, fail, learn, and try again.
- Changing the economic narrative to influence city and regional policy beyond GDP growth.
- Countering negative impacts of globalisation by building peer-to-peer connections between networks of small-scale enterprises.

To further conceptualise these different roles, we have given each a name to reflect the core identity it represents for The Studio:

### I. The Propagator

In this vision The Studio is the Propagator of creative micro-businesses:

- *"Thinking about how much Bath has changed in the last ten years, and how much we can really picture it changing in the next ten years? Because it feels very set in stone, literally... So we saw potential in the peripheries like Locksbrook and perhaps for The Studio to grow and create a new centre. The Studio aspires to be more integrative, more porous, and a space for people doing different things. So we were discussing whether The Studio could seed and propagate other possibilities."*

### II. The Mothership

In this vision, The Studio is the Mothership for socially-driven technologists:

- *"We talked about getting radically connected, thinking about outreach - not expecting people to come to us but rather us going to them. That might mean a team of ambassadors at The Studio, bridging that gap and making people feel comfortable in the space."*
- *"Our Residents are moving beyond The Studio, which means our reach is broadening and our legacy is being established as people move out of The Studio."*
- *"What's the financial support that the mothership can offer as people and ideas move beyond? It's not about reproducing what's already there."\**

### III. The Story-Shifter

In this vision The Studio helps to shift Bath's existing narrative:

- *"Reclaiming the narrative of what technology is and can do, and whose hands it belongs in."*

- *“The problem is we don’t have a way of addressing the challenges we actually face that doesn’t involve the same thing we’re already doing. Creativity is a way for people to understand the challenges.”*
- *“Using technology as a method for reconsidering the problems the world is facing. Technology isn’t necessarily the solution; it’s more about creativity as a method for thinking, exploring, and experimenting with different tools.”*
- *“We need to be fine financially, but I think our function in society is different. The way we look at technology and creative technology is about solving social issues and reusing this technology and space.”*
- *“When I asked people what they think creative technology is, very few said VR or immersive sound. They all talked about social issues.”*
- *“Considering ourselves almost as our own client, thinking about how we should tell people about the work we’re already doing to promote social value and the collective power of micro-businesses. We’d like to do something quite different within the ecosystem.”*

#### IV. An International Bridge-Builder

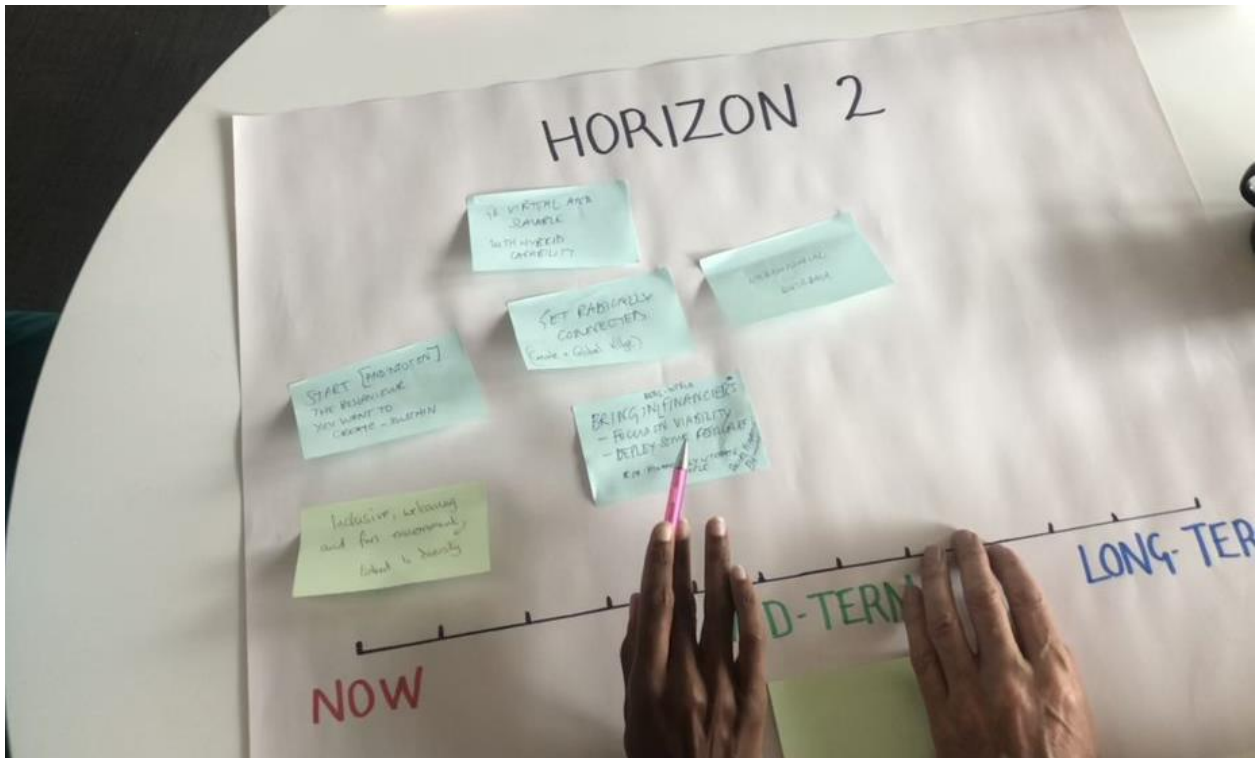
In this vision, The Studio builds supportive links with international networks of creatives:

*“The arts can do two things really well: free play of imagination and fostering a deep connection with individuals and communities.”*

*“There’s a lack of twinning with other countries internationally, so we talked about creating more collaboration by bringing different thinking and international partnerships. There are similar institutions like The Studio around the world, and I specifically talked about Africa because I know a lot of tech hubs there. So, how do you connect with more communities that engage with Bath?”*

These emerging visions for The Studio underscore its potential to shape the future of creative micro-enterprises, foster social innovation, and build meaningful local-to-global connections. While each vision stands independently, they are interconnected, and we believe that to be effective, The Studio must embrace all these roles. This is explored further in the Recommended Actions section of this report.

## 6.5 Pathways to the Future



The Horizon 2 discussion focussed on generating ideas for actions that The Studio can implement, either independently or in partnership, both now and in the future. The goal was to create broad pathways towards future visions, rather than detailed action plans requiring allocation of time and resources for implementation. Additionally, it was important to consider how The Studio might address challenges and deficits inherent in the current business-as-usual model, as set out in H1.

While this stage of the Three Horizons discussion can be used to understand how actions might have a negative impact by anchoring the business in H1, participants mainly focused on enabling H3. This focus on positive actions could have been influenced by the framing of the exercise, or the fact that negative impacts had already been discussed in previous sessions, leading participants to concentrate on finding solutions.

## 6.6 Themes from the H2 Discussion

Horizon 2 provided a platform to bridge the present with the future, sparking discussions that coalesced around several key themes of sustainability, impact, and behaviour, which can be categorised as follows:

- Technological Sustainability

Participants contemplated the challenges of technology obsolescence and the need for future-proofing equipment. As one participant noted, "*We started to think about tech provisioning, about how the tech we have currently will become outdated but it's not*

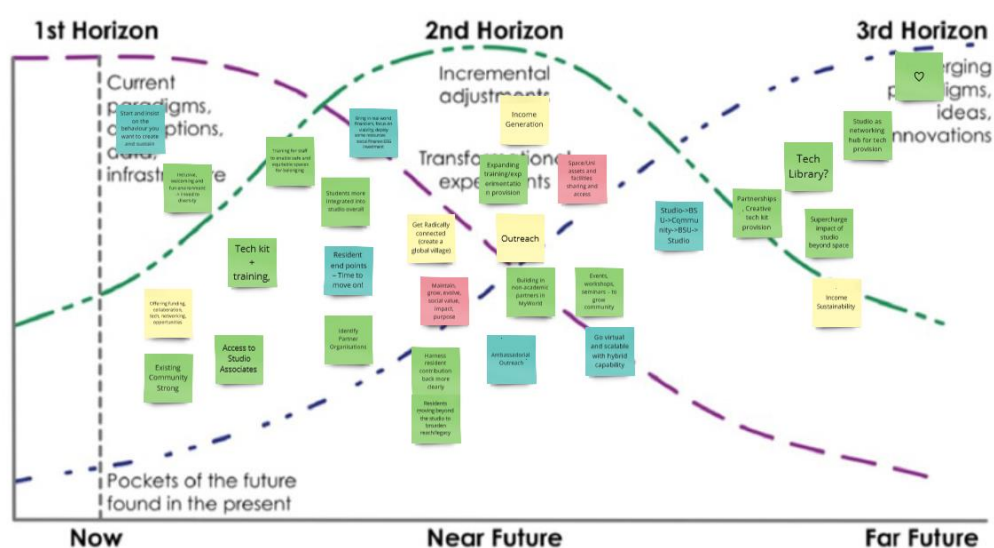
*realistic for us to continuously update our kit.”* Discussions revolved around remaining tech-agnostic while seeking partnerships to keep pace with technological advancements both within and beyond The Studio.

- Financial Sustainability

A critical topic was diversifying revenue streams beyond grant dependency. Participants highlighted the necessity of sustainable income models that are resilient to fluctuations in grant funding. One participant emphasised, *“Obviously you can’t do any of this if there’s no money coming in. So in the future is there a way of having a sustainable income for the studio that’s not reliant on grants or bids that come in but that there’s some form of sustainability.”* They proposed partnerships with local businesses and a shift towards more entrepreneurial approaches, noting, *“We as academics are trained in the world of grant capture... If we’re going to change the system we actually need to start thinking in a much more enterprising way, ironically much like the people we’re supporting.”*

- Behaviour and Equity

The dialogue emphasised community engagement and inclusivity. Strategies discussed included proactive outreach initiatives to bridge gaps and enhance inclusivity. According to one participant, *“We talked about getting radically connected, so thinking about outreach not expecting people to come to us but rather for us go to them, so that might be a team of ambassadors... [learning] how to bridge that gap and getting some people to The Studio and feeling comfortable in the space.”* Another participant highlighted the importance of creating a welcoming, playful environment that promotes diversity and inclusion, stating, *“That reallocation promotes diversity and inclusion and is a welcoming fun environment. Also thinking about getting radically connected in terms of thinking big, really doing some work around our international partnerships.”*



The digitised copy of The Studio’s Three Horizon board can be found [here](#).

## 7. Validation Interviews

To test and refine the emerging findings from the Three Horizons workshop, a number of one-to-one interviews were carried out with strategic stakeholders who had been unavailable to attend. These interviews revealed a consensus among participants: The Studio plays a crucial role as a hub for creative ventures, providing a unique space that fosters innovation and community. The following analysis synthesises stakeholders' insights, offering an overview of The Studio's pivotal position, challenges, and opportunities within Bath and the West of England's ecosystems.

- **The Studio's Distinct Role**

The Studio serves a unique function in Bath, supporting creative ventures beyond traditional business models. One stakeholder emphasised, "*The Studio provides a function that we [Bath] don't have elsewhere,*" underscoring its role in nurturing a community that might not otherwise thrive. This aligns with Bath's reputation for embracing contemporary digital and creative innovations, as evident in initiatives like the Bath Digital Festival.

- **Infrastructure and Community Support**

A recurring theme is the necessity of physical space in building a supportive infrastructure. As one participant noted, "*Having a physical space as a base to build a supportive infrastructure is vital; you can't achieve this through ad hoc meet-ups alone.*" The Studio's inclusive and welcoming environment is crucial for nurturing a creative community. However, concerns exist that relocating The Studio out of the city centre could lead to a loss of community to neighbouring cities like Bristol, which boast similar spaces such as Spike Island and Watershed.

- **Financial Sustainability**

The financial model of The Studio remains a significant concern. One stakeholder argued against free access, suggesting that a nominal fee could instil value and support reinvestment into student enterprises: "*If you have 100 Residents each paying £10 per month, that's £1000 you could invest in student enterprise.*" This approach aims to prevent a "handout culture" and promote sustainable ventures. Another participant stressed the need for The Studio to refine its approach to finances, viewing commerciality not as a taboo but as essential for achieving lasting viability and sustainability. Another interviewee, who holds a senior position at BSU, highlighted the potential for The Studio to advocate for increased core funding from the University. They suggested that The Studio could enhance its value proposition to the institution by aligning its contributions more with student recruitment efforts rather than solely focusing on student retention. This shift in emphasis could demonstrate The Studio's broader impact on the University, potentially attracting more support and resources.



- Inklusivity and Impact

Bath Spa University's recognition as the Socially Inclusive University of the Year (The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024) underscores its commitment to diversity and empowerment. The Studio plays a pivotal role in this mission, including for neurodivergent individuals who may find traditional employment challenging. One participant highlighted that neurodivergent people are often overrepresented in creative sectors, as they may find it easier to create their own roles rather than fit into conventional systems. It is crucial for The Studio to maintain its independence while integrating effectively within the University's ecosystem to preserve its unique community impact. One stakeholder cautioned, "*There is a risk that as its success grows, it will be drawn back into the University, losing some of its autonomy and failing to reach its full potential.*"

- Balancing Personal Well-being and Professional Growth

The Studio's approach to supporting ventures emphasises personal well-being alongside professional growth. One participant reflected, "*You want your project to reach more people, you want to pay your bills, to be happy, to help people – but it is still a business. However, business is not a word that everyone likes, so that's why I use venture or enterprise. Still, it's got to be sustainable*". The focus is on commercial sustainability and well-being rather than rapid growth. This philosophy aligns with the concept of *right livelihood*, emphasising the balance between personal satisfaction and professional success. Another stakeholder advocated for creating an environment where individuals can pursue what makes them happy without the pressure of aggressive growth targets: "*Some may prefer working part-time and spending more time with family, voluntary work or hobbies – and that's perfectly valid. I'm tired of seeing hockey stick growth projections; let's prioritise what sustains us and our communities.*"

- Collaborative and Sustainable Growth

Stakeholders converge on the importance of sustainable growth over rapid scaling or aggressive commercial success. One participant underscored, "*While job creation is often prioritised, many prefer avoiding the complexities of employing others.*" Encouraging consortia and collaborations aligns with The Studio's community-driven ethos.

- Bridging Financial Gaps for Micro-Businesses

Micro-businesses and freelancers face considerable financial instability, characterised by income peaks and troughs. One approach to mitigate these challenges is through micro-lending initiatives. Successful examples include Sardex, a mutual credit system in Sardinia, and the cooperative model in Italy's Emilia-Romagna region, supporting small enterprises through innovative financial systems. Introducing a micro-lending programme at The Studio could help bridge financial gaps for its Residents, providing stability and resilience against economic fluctuations. This enables creative professionals to sustain ventures during lean periods, ensuring continuous productivity.

- **Diversification and Regional Integration**

Ensuring long-term sustainability involves diversifying income streams. Suggestions include hosting private events, leveraging Resident skills for local businesses, and optimising space efficiencies. Additionally, The Studio should expand collaborations with organisations like Fairfield House and the Black SW Network. One participant proposed, *"While relocating to Locksbrook2 is an option, maintaining a city centre presence, if viable, remains crucial."*

- **Strategic Partnerships and Bid Participation**

The Studio's participation in regional projects, such as Bristol+Bath Creative R&D, underscores its growing role. However, there's a risk it may be perceived as merely a creative addition to projects rather than an equal partner. Recognising and resourcing The Studio's contributions are essential. One stakeholder emphasised, *"in the current financial climate, Universities may increasingly prioritise retaining grant funding in-house, heightening The Studio's role in fund distribution."*

- **Regional Perception Risks**

From a regional perspective, The Studio's distinct value may be obscured. The West of England could view it as akin to Bristol's Pervasive Media Studio, questioning the necessity of two similar facilities in fairly close proximity. *"This perception,"* one stakeholder noted, *"poses a risk for regional strategy makers who may ask, 'Why two?'"*

## **Conclusion from External Interviews**

External stakeholders recognise The Studio stands at a pivotal juncture. Balancing its community support role with financial sustainability and regional integration is paramount. Addressing these challenges and leveraging strategic partnerships will ensure The Studio continues as a cornerstone of Bath's creative ecosystem, fostering sustainable growth and innovation. Future strategies should maintain its independent spirit while enhancing financial viability and community impact, prioritising personal well-being alongside professional growth. This approach ensures The Studio remains a supportive environment for creative ventures, embodying principles of right livelihood, balance and sustainable success.

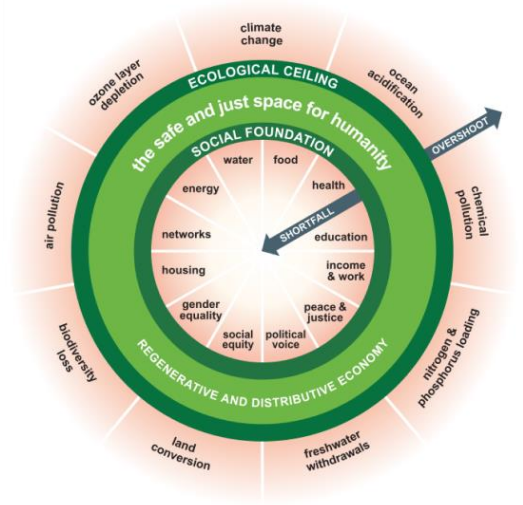
## **8. Recommended Actions**

The following recommended actions are designed to guide The Studio team in pursuing the transformation pathways identified in this report, aiming to realise the future visions outlined. Although we do not provide a detailed action plan, our recommendations focus on initiatives that should be actionable within the next 5 years. Many of these actions build upon work The Studio is already engaged in, making them relatively easy to integrate into existing organisational plans.

## 8.1 Renewing the Studio's Values & Behaviours

Currently, The Studio's core values include a mix of values and the behaviours that are needed to support them. We propose adding 'Healthy Ecology' to the existing core values of Inclusivity, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship to strengthen the connection with the environment and nature. Additionally, to the existing key behaviours—Interdisciplinary Work, Practice-based Learning, and Collaboration—we suggest adding 'Right Livelihood' to emphasise the importance of social purpose alongside commercial development. It is crucial that these values are not only embraced but also integrated into the fabric of The Studio's culture.

- **Healthy Ecology:** The Studio has an opportunity to emphasise that natural systems are foundational to its operations. Increased overconsumption of these systems can lead to ecological collapse. By valuing ecological health, The Studio can gain a better understanding of its material footprint, as well as that of its Residents and community. This understanding can guide efforts to reduce collective impact and, where possible, regenerate the ecological systems that support them. One helpful framework is Kate Raworth's [Doughnut Economics](#). Adopting a version of this model, "The Studio's Doughnut," could illustrate the tensions and interdependencies within these relationships.



- **Right Livelihood:** The concept of [cultivating Right Livelihood](#), rooted in Buddhist philosophy, is gaining momentum within the creative and digital industries. Pioneers like [Della Duncan](#), a Right Livelihood Coach, are helping individuals and organisations align their work with ethical values and sustainable practices. This ethical approach to work, which not only avoids harm but also contributes positively to the well-being of others and the environment, aligns seamlessly with the values upheld by The Studio community. Embracing Right Livelihood presents an opportunity for The Studio to reinforce its commitment to balance, appropriate scale, and a measured, nuanced approach to growth, thereby fostering a more sustainable and ethical creative environment.

Our focus below is on recommending actionable steps, many incremental, to ensure that The Studio's values are prominently reflected in its behaviours and activities.

## The Studio's Values

### Inclusivity

Elaboration:

- **Embrace Diversity.** Ensure that The Studio provides an inclusive environment where people from all backgrounds, including underrepresented and marginalised communities, feel welcomed and valued.
- **Access to Resources.** Develop funding programs and grants specifically for underrepresented groups to participate in creative micro-enterprise projects, ensuring equitable access to resources.
- **Inclusive Events.** Organise inclusive events and workshops that are accessible to all community members, fostering a diverse and flourishing creative ecosystem.
- **Outreach Programmes.** Implement outreach programmes to engage with and support creative talent from various communities, ensuring that inclusivity is woven into the fabric of The Studio's operations.
- **Seek out training to understand embedded privileges and positions of power.**
- **Championing Regenerative Economy.** Promote inclusivity as a key aspect of a regenerative economy by ensuring that all voices are heard and valued in the creative process, contributing to a more equitable and sustainable economic landscape.

### Creativity

Elaboration.

- **Creative Freedom.** Provide an environment where creativity is nurtured and creative expression is encouraged, allowing individuals to experiment and explore new ideas without fear of failure.
- **Innovation Labs.** Set up innovation labs and creative incubators where new ideas can be developed, tested, and refined, fostering a culture of continuous innovation.
- **Showcase Platforms.** Create platforms to showcase creative work, such as exhibitions, performances, and digital galleries, celebrating the creativity of The Studio's community.
- **Creative Challenges.** Organise creative challenges and competitions that inspire innovation and push the boundaries of what's possible in the creative industries.
- **Championing Regenerative Economy.** Encourage creative projects that focus on sustainability and regeneration, using art and innovation to highlight and address environmental and social issues.

### Entrepreneurship

Elaboration

- **Entrepreneurial Training.** Offer training sessions and workshops on entrepreneurial skills, including business planning, marketing, financial management, and scaling.
- **Business Support.** Provide access to business support services, including mentorship, consultancy, and funding/loan opportunities, to help micro-enterprises survive and succeed.

- Incubation Programmes. Establish incubation programmes that support early-stage creative enterprises, providing them with the resources and guidance they need to develop and thrive.
- Market Opportunities: Help micro-enterprises identify and capitalise on market opportunities, facilitating their entry into new markets and expanding their reach.
- Champion Regenerative Economy: Support entrepreneurial ventures that prioritise long-term environmental and social benefits, fostering a new generation of businesses that contribute to a regenerative economy.

## Healthy Ecology

### Additional Value

- Sustainable Practices: Integrate sustainability into all aspects of The Studio's operations to minimise environmental impact and promote responsible and circular resource use.
- Green Initiatives: Initiate and support green initiatives promoting renewable energy, waste reduction, and eco-friendly practices within the creative community.
- Sustainable Education: Educate Residents and visitors on sustainable practices through workshops, seminars, and practical demonstrations.
- Sustainable Partnerships: Collaborate with like-minded organisations to develop and implement sustainability projects, reinforcing The Studio's commitment to a regenerative economy.
- Championing a Regenerative Economy: Position sustainability at the core of The Studio's mission, aligning all activities with regenerative economic principles to foster lasting positive impacts on the environment and society.

## The Studio's Behaviours

### Interdisciplinary Work

#### Elaboration:

- Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: Facilitate regular interdisciplinary forums and workshops that encourage idea exchange and collaborative project development between artists, technologists, scientists, and entrepreneurs.
- Shared Projects. Promote and support projects that require interdisciplinary skills, ensuring diverse expertise and perspectives are combined to address complex challenges in the creative industries.
- Resource Sharing. Create a collaborative platform for sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise across different disciplines, fostering and harnessing innovation and synergy within the community.
- Devolve Power. Find ways to devolve responsibility for The Studio and its programmes to stakeholders and the wider community.
- Championing Regenerative Economy. Leverage interdisciplinary work to develop innovative solutions that support the principles of a regenerative economy, focusing on sustainable practices and holistic approaches to problem-solving.

## Practice-based Learning

#### Elaboration

- Hands-On Workshops. Develop and offer workshops that provide hands-on experiences, allowing participants to learn by doing and gain practical skills in real-world creative projects.
- Mentorship Programmes: Establish mentorship programs where experienced professionals guide emerging creatives through practical projects, providing real-time feedback and support.
- Project-Based Internships. Partner with local businesses and organisations to offer internships focused on practice-based learning, giving participants valuable industry experience.
- Continuous Learning. Encourage a culture of continuous learning by providing access to resources, training, and development opportunities that support ongoing professional growth.
- Championing Regenerative Economy. Integrate sustainability and regenerative practices into all learning activities, ensuring that participants understand and can implement these principles in their work.

## Collaboration

### Elaboration

- Collaborative Culture. Foster a culture of collaboration where teamwork and collective effort are highly valued and encouraged.
- Shared Spaces. Design spaces within The Studio that promote collaboration, including co-working areas, meeting rooms, and communal spaces where creatives can interact, work and socialise together.
- Joint Ventures. Support joint ventures and collaborative projects that involve multiple micro-enterprises, enhancing their capacity to tackle larger and more ambitious projects.
- Networking Events. Host networking events and social gatherings that facilitate connections between creatives, encouraging partnerships and collaborative initiatives.
- Championing Regenerative Economy. Promote collaborative efforts that support the regenerative economy, where shared resources and mutual support lead to sustainable growth and resilience within the creative community.

## Right Livelihood

### Additional Value

- Ethical Practices: Embed ethical principles into all aspects of The Studio's operations, ensuring that business practices are fair, transparent, and socially responsible.
- Work-Life Balance: Encourage a healthy work-life balance for all members of The Studio community, promoting well-being and preventing burnout.
- Fair Compensation: Ensure fair wages and compensation for all employees and collaborators, reflecting the value of their contributions.
- Social Responsibility: Foster a culture of social responsibility by engaging in projects that benefit local communities and address social inequalities.
- Community Well-Being: Support initiatives that enhance the well-being of the broader community, including health, education, and social support.

- **Championing a Regenerative Economy:** Align all economic activities with the principles of a regenerative economy, ensuring that they contribute positively to both society and the environment.
- **Holistic Development:** Promote the holistic development of individuals, encouraging personal growth, professional development, and a sense of purpose in their work.
- **Ethical Supply Chains:** Ensure that all materials and services used by The Studio are sourced ethically, prioritising suppliers who adhere to fair employment practices and environmental sustainability.

By expanding on these values and integrating a focus on ecological health and right livelihood, The Studio can effectively fulfil its roles as a Propagation Hub for micro-enterprises, and a Mothership for creative technologists, working in the creative industries and beyond. This approach not only champions a regenerative economy but also cultivates a supportive ecosystem where creativity and innovation can thrive.

## 8.2 Diversifying Funding Streams

As noted in the Validation Interviews section of this report, there is scope for The Studio to make a strong case for additional core funding from the University by cementing its role in student recruitment, as well as student retention. However, an additional challenge is the need for The Studio to diversify its funding streams to enhance capacity and ensure long-term stability. This challenge is not unique to The Studio but is prevalent across the wider creative industries. Many of The Studio's Residents face similar hurdles. However, The Studio's situation is distinct in one crucial aspect: it operates as a wholly owned university enterprise. This dual identity offers both opportunities and limitations. To navigate these complexities, we present a strategic framework with three key recommendations:

Firstly, in the short term, The Studio should articulate its unique research proposition and the role it plays in collaborative research initiatives. Currently, the Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCCI) guides much of this effort, leveraging successful bids such as The Creative Clusters programme (Bristol+Bath Creative R+D) and MyWorld. While this relationship has yielded significant successes, The Studio has reached a level of maturity that warrants an independent research agenda, developed in close collaboration with its Resident community. By co-creating a research prospectus, engaging Residents to identify key research questions and opportunities, and focusing on critical themes such as socio-technical futures, ethics and 'tech for good', and innovative models of co-ownership and locally-driven benefits, The Studio can promote new collaborative research opportunities. This proactive stance can generate resources for The Studio and its Residents while still showcasing the University's impact on the city and community.

Secondly, The Studio should leverage its position within the University to forge new partnerships and strengthen existing ones. The new Civic Agreement between B&NES Council, Royal United Hospital, and the city's two universities provides a timely strategic opportunity for The Studio to enter into formal research collaboration agreements with these entities and strengthen ties with partners. By fostering wider strategic alliances with industry leaders, government bodies, and international creative hubs, The Studio can open doors to diverse funding opportunities and resource-sharing arrangements. Additionally, engaging



with the University's alumni network can help identify potential supporters and investors interested in fostering innovation within the creative industries.

Thirdly, The Studio should rethink its governance structure to explore establishing a joint commercial venture, a Co-op or a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC). This approach can provide the community with greater ownership and open up alternative, non-academic funding streams. Establishing a joint commercial venture can enable The Studio to partner directly with private enterprises, facilitating investment and innovation. Alternatively, forming a CIC would not only align with the social and creative mission of The Studio but also attract funding from grants, donations, and social investment aimed at not-for-profit entities. This shift in governance would empower the community, enhance stakeholder engagement, and diversify funding sources, ensuring a more resilient and inclusive model for growth.

By implementing these strategic recommendations, The Studio can not only diversify its funding streams but also build a resilient framework that supports long-term sustainable growth and stability. This will enable The Studio to continue its pioneering work in the creative industries while significantly contributing to the socio-economic development of its community. However, we recognise that resourcing these initiatives is challenging for The Studio's relatively small team. Therefore, we recommend considering the introduction of a modest membership fee for Residents, approximately £30 per month. This fee would generate essential resources to support these strategic efforts. To ensure inclusivity and mitigate any negative impact on Residents who might find this fee burdensome, The Studio could adopt a model similar to Bristol's Pervasive Media Studio by offering an 'Open Studio' day each week, where access is free for everyone. This approach balances the need for additional resources with a commitment to maintaining accessibility and community support.

### 8.3 Physical Space and Location

The physical space and location of The Studio were initially secondary considerations in this research, which primarily focused on analysing its community relationships and operational impact. However, the significance of these factors emerged prominently throughout our study, underscoring their integral role in defining The Studio's value.

For many stakeholders, the city centre location is indispensable. It serves as a convenient hub for visitors needing workspace and for city-based professionals seeking proximity to Palace Yard Mews and other hubs. Conversely, relocating to the new Locksbrook2 campus offers enhanced visibility within the University landscape and the potential for deeper engagement with marginalised communities.

This dilemma highlights a strategic choice: The Studio currently operates somewhat independently from the University, effectively bridging academic initiatives with city-based agendas and communities. Fully integrating into the University could strengthen ties with different parts of the city but risks alienating some users who prefer the current accessibility and vibe of the city centre. To balance these competing demands, we recommend the following actions:



- **Hybrid Model of Operation:**

To benefit from the advantages of both city centre and university settings, The Studio should adopt a hybrid approach. This involves maintaining a flexible presence in the city centre while establishing Locksbrook as its primary base. The city centre space would remain a dynamic hub for events and collaborations, ensuring ongoing accessibility. If maintaining two locations proves impractical, partnerships with other co-working spaces could provide 'pop-up' options, maintaining connections in central Bath.

- **Community Engagement Strategy:**

Prior to any relocation, The Studio should develop a comprehensive community engagement strategy. This includes regular update events at Palace Yard Mews, transport support to Locksbrook, and ongoing dialogue to address user concerns and maintain community cohesion.

- **Flexible Membership Options:**

Introduce flexible membership to enable access to both the city centre hub and Locksbrook campus. Options could include part-time memberships, which could work well for Residents who use The Studio less regularly and could cater to diverse user needs effectively.

- **Incentives for Early Adopters:**

Offer incentives for early adopters of the Locksbrook location. Discounts, exclusive access to new facilities, and additional support services can ease the transition and encourage community support.

- **Placemaking and Marketing:**

Collaborate with the University on a targeted placemaking and marketing campaign for Locksbrook. Highlight enhanced facilities, opportunities for creative collaboration, and the potential for meaningful engagement with university resources and diverse communities. Position Locksbrook as a pivotal node in Bath's urban fabric, echoing Charles Landry's concept of "acupuncture points" that catalyse broader systemic changes within the city.

In addition to these recommendations, our research highlights the importance of food in promoting diverse cultural identity and well-being. An innovative idea is to consider how The Studio leverages diverse community relationships with food to connect communities, utilising Bath's rich cuisine to serve as a cultural bridge. Akin to Bristol's [91 Ways project](#) that is named after the 91 languages that are spoken in the City's schools, this initiative can promote connections across Bath's diverse communities.

## 8.4 Embracing Equity and Tech for Social Change

Within the workshop, there was a strong recognition that The Studio should diversify its operations and demographic to better reflect the city as a whole. The current make-up of The Studio, including staff and its Residents, runs the risk of appearing to be quite homogenous. This remains an issue, not because of social cohesion but because of how this homogeneity of ideas and experiences drives the future ecosystem of Bath and beyond.

While the workshop consisted of people from varying backgrounds, it was still limited in time and scope and needs to be used as a springboard to a much wider and deeper discussion with groups influenced by The Studio's operations. While feedback is beneficial, if ultimate decision-making power is shaped by similar hands then invariably groups get left behind.

The Studio adopting a more 'hive-like' structure can increase its potential to create a more equitable future. By diversifying perspectives and experiences, the impetus for social change becomes diversified. For example, middle-class people may focus on climate protection, working-class people on equitable housing, BPOC communities on creative and equitable work, and international members on reversing the global extraction of minerals in technological development. Each issue is interwoven and essential drivers toward a regenerative economy.

The drive for social change is a clear goal of The Studio community and should be leveraged in its updated narrative. However, to embody its true meaning, The Studio should commit to looking more deeply into the relationships underpinning its operations and analyse its position in the global economy. The doughnut framework as described in section 8.1 could be useful for The Studio to adopt. Another resource that could help The Studio to understand its position and impact is the [Just Transition](#) framework. Through these frameworks, The Studio can deepen its understanding of its material use, positions of privilege, and the interconnectivity between them. In the aim to understand the holistic impacts of The Studio's operations and seek to transform them.

This, we recognise, is difficult to achieve in two key ways. Firstly, because The Studio is a tech hub it operates in a high-waste, unequal and highly fragmented industry. And secondly, because The Studio is wholly owned by the University, there are procurement and bureaucratic barriers to overcome. Despite these challenges, this work could be seen as a core extension of the social impact work The Studio already engages in. Adopting these frameworks can light up the pathway toward a more regenerative practice and enable The Studio to implement more impactful practical and behavioural changes toward an equitable local and global economy.

**Recommendation:** To advance its commitment to equity and social change, The Studio should establish ongoing forums and advisory groups comprising diverse stakeholders. These forums would ensure sustained engagement and input from underrepresented communities in shaping The Studio's strategic direction, fostering a truly inclusive and impactful ecosystem.

## 8.5 Reframing The Studio’s Narrative

“When was ever honey made with one bee in a hive?”

Thomas Hood, *Poetical Works* (1857)

We conclude this report with our vision for The Studio:

Welcome to The Studio Hive, a vibrant community hub redefining creativity and impact. At its core, The Studio Hive fosters reciprocity and relational thinking, empowering its members – ‘creativibeeps’ to thrive collectively. By nurturing healthy relationships and providing essential guidance, technical expertise, and support to micro-enterprises, The Studio Hive amplifies their societal impact.

Guided by a commitment to inclusivity, creativity, and sustainable practices, The Studio Hive envisions Bath as a creative powerhouse. Through innovative technologies and a focus on small-scale enterprises, it addresses climate and social challenges, embodying reciprocity as the foundation of its collaborative ecosystem. Success is measured not just by individual achievements but by the resilience and unity of the community.

As The Studio Hive evolves, it offers a deliberate counterbalance to rapid expansion, prioritising community, sustainability, and ecological renewal. Positioned uniquely within Bath, it drives local creativity, innovation, and community cohesion. Embracing this hive-like strategy, The Studio Hive’s influence extends far beyond its physical boundaries, shaping a future where creativity thrives sustainably and inclusively in Bath and beyond.

## 9. Acknowledgements

We extend our appreciation to The Studio Team and all the research participants for their invaluable contributions to this project. Their openness and transparency throughout the process have been instrumental in shaping our understanding and vision. The abundant warmth and commitment to positive change have profoundly impacted our efforts to renew and strengthen The Studio’s core values and purpose. This dedication to fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and innovative environment will continue to inspire positive transformations through the power of creativity and regenerative practices, driving meaningful change in Bath and beyond.

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## Appendix: List of Participants

Name	Organisation
Kate Pullinger	The Studio
Caroline Anstey	The Studio
Louise Chapman	The Studio
Stacey Pottinger	The Studio
Natasha Kidd	CCCI
Andy Salmon	BSU
Hannah Whiting	BSU – Bath Social Impact Network
Anna Garner	B&NES Council
William Heath	Fairfield House Bath CIC
Sandy Merrell	Cool Ventures/Studio Resident

Gamu Matarira	GenA Consultancy.com
Eleanor Rowley	BSU – PG Impact Fellow
Elizeta Pyloti	BSU Graduate
Ruth Farrar	CCCI
Sara Telahoun	3Adapt
Rakesh Menon	Bath Community Kitchen
Renee Jacobs	B in Bath
Nick Sturge	BSU Board
John Strachan	BSU
Duncan Kerr	WECA
Lucy Paine	Tech Spark
Tarek Virani	UWE