

MX INNOVATION CENTRE OPENS WITH MISSION TO FUEL BUSINESS GROWTH, NURTURE THE TECH ECOSYSTEM AND CONNECT COMMUNITY

25/07/24

Cheltenham, UK – 25th July 2024: Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) and Hub8 by Plexal, the workspace dedicated to growth of the local tech community, have officially opened the doors to the 20,000 square foot MX Innovation Centre – the heart of their shared urban Minster Exchange (MX) rejuvenation scheme.

Cheltenham is a thriving cyber cluster set to be supercharged with the HBD-led development of Golden Valley, which is supported in partnership by CBC and Plexal, the innovation company solving society's challenges through collaboration. A collaborative environment in proximity of GCHQ's Doughnut, Golden Valley is designed as a smart district where tech companies can innovate and talent can live – complete with green countryside backdrop.

The MX complements the Golden Valley vision, with the CBC and Hub8 by Plexal delivering a shared workspace for startups and The Growth Hub to support business development. This presents a safe, trusted environment where Cheltenham residents can connect professionally and socially, while the lessons from the MX activity can directly help inform and shape Golden Valley's proposition.

Through the MX launch, the aims of CBC and Hub8 by Plexal are to:

- **Fuel business growth:** This will be achieved through initiatives including Grown in Cheltenham, an opportunity for local founders to fast-track their companies with six months of free, tailored support.
- **Nurture the tech ecosystem:** The MX will be home to many fast-growth tech companies and their work is essential to secure the town's future progress.
- **Connect community:** Internal facilities include a cafe alongside a 200-person capacity auditorium for events and education, while the external Minster Gardens area features new greenery, seating and pathways.



For press enquiries, please contact:
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Cll Rowena Hay

Cheltenham Borough Council

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Ideally situated with the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum and Cheltenham Public Library on one side and the high street on the other, the MX is poised to create a more connected experience for local people where technology, creativity and community collides – blending tradition with progress.

Cllr Rowena Hay, Leader at Cheltenham Borough Council, says: “After a much-anticipated wait, I am delighted that the MX is now officially open. This innovative new space will be a place for startups, academia, industry and government, particularly through its links into Golden Valley, and it will also be a hub for the community, with a café and events space.

“The MX will reinvigorate this area of town connecting the Minster, Wilson Gallery, library, and the lower High Street. It is also the latest step in the council’s enabling role in the regeneration of this important part of the town.”

Bruce Gregory, Managing Director at Hub8 by Plexal, details: “We’re over the moon to have officially cut the ribbon on the MX Innovation Centre. It’s been a long time coming but seeing people familiarising themselves with the site is hugely rewarding.

“We’ve already welcomed 60 businesses, with a total capacity for 400 members. These companies are working on everything from cyber security and marketing through to recruitment and foodtech, demonstrating a diverse pipeline of talent.

“As the summer holidays are beginning, we look forward to welcoming plenty of families – many of which may well have the next bright leaders to join our innovation community in the future.”

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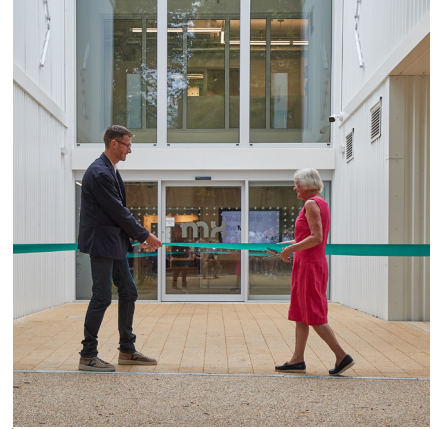
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Andrew Roughan, CEO at Plexal, the Delancey-founded innovation company that has a majority shareholding in Hub8, adds: “We’ve worked with Hub8 for five years – 18 months of which we’ve held a majority shareholding in the business. Over this period, organisations across the southwest region have demonstrated their commitment to cross-sector collaboration.

“The MX opening is the next step for this and fits in seamlessly with HBD’s mission to bring companies and communities together through the Golden Valley development.

“Across the UK, aligning our universities, large tech companies, local authorities and startups to a clear mission for growth, we’ll create the conditions for innovation clusters to thrive. This in turn will contribute significantly to the country’s economic progress and prosperity.”

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, leader of Gloucestershire County Council, concludes: “I’m thrilled the MX has now opened. It will help to support business development in a range of sectors including cyber tech and digital, as well as help to regenerate the whole area. It shows the benefit of strong partnership working, which will support economic growth in the county and attract further investment and skills.”

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