The Newhaven Creative Spaces Survey Report 2022

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Context

The Newhaven Creative Spaces online survey was available to respond to from 8 December 2021 to 10 January 2022.

A majority of the 66 respondents (77.3%) described themselves as individuals as opposed to an organisation, cooperative or partnership (22.7%). Most respondents described their practice as being visual arts (35), craft or maker (24), or graphic design (24), only 12 identified as being in the performing art (respondents were able to choose more than one category).

Demographic information was also collected from respondents. Most respondents were between the ages of 31-67 (83.3%), identified as female (66.7%), and white (90.3%).

The survey was shared widely using the networks of the following organisations and others:

The Creative Newhaven Working Group (31 member individuals and organisations), Hillcrest Centre (including poster), Towner Eastbourne, Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council, Seaford Contemporary Illustrators and Printmakers and the Newhaven Art Club.

This survey follows on from the previously conducted Newhaven Creative Cluster survey (2018) and Rubicon Regeneration's Newhaven Creative Hub feasibility study published in April 2020.

The report highlights some selected findings from the respondent data that was collected. The methodology was that responses have been complied as tables and charts showing the results in number and proportion of totals, from each survey question, for example which artistic categories respondent's practice falls into. Some response totals from different questions were combined, using pivot tables, to show data that addresses more nuanced questions, such as the number of people that can afford to pay a monthly rent on a permanent or annual lease.

The data collection responses and anonymised and aggregated demographic data are available in charts and tables in spreadsheet form on request.

Aims

The aim of the study was to gauge the strength of demand for creative workspace in Newhaven. The main metrics included which creative sectors the demand comes from, how much monthly rent respondents would be able to afford, preferred locations, the kinds of facilities needed, the size of space required and preferred length of tenure. A full list of questions is available on request.

Contributors

Many thanks to Peter Sharp and Sara Taylor at Lewes District Council for their time and help in verifying the data used in the narrative of this report. Many thanks to all the individuals and organisations who shared the link to the report and all those people who responded.

Analysis

Types of creative practitioners

Over 77% of respondents were individual practitioners, 15 (22.7%) were organisations, the majority are involved in the visual arts as opposed to the performing arts. 80% are earning at least part of their living from their creative practice.

Current location

66% of respondents looking for creative workspace in Newhaven currently work from home. A further 18% are currently working from space outside of Newhaven. Only 12% of respondents currently work in a creative workspace in Newhaven.

Location of space required

77.3% of respondents would take workspace in the town centre, 53% (35 respondents) specifically in the high street. 59.1% of respondents indicated they would be happy to work on an industrial estate (respondents could choose multiple options). 25 respondents (37.88%) would take 'dirty' space in the town centre and/or high street but only 12 respondents would **only** be happy with high street and town centre locations. 25 respondents who require (at least some) dirty space, more than 37% of the total, would prefer it to be in the town centre. Over 45% (30 respondents) would take space in the countryside surrounding Newhaven. *Newhaven's creatives have an aspiration to move out of their home/work environment. Overall respondents demonstrated significant flexibility in where the space can be located. Some would prefer centrally located commercial premises, and a sizeable minority of those seeking 'dirty' space would take town centre, but most are flexible and seek space anywhere available.*

Types of space

The types of activities intended for the spaces dictates the type of space required. Respondents were asked to choose if they preferred premises that catered for clean, dirty, quiet or noisy activities and were allowed to choose as many options as they wanted to.

It can be seen from *Table 1* that a wide range of types of space are required. Over half of respondents require so called dirty space, where significant environmental impact will be felt, though over 43% of respondents require quiet space. A significant minority of respondents require multi-functional spaces that enable them to carry out activities that require the opposite conditions, e.g., clean and dirty.

Type	Response No	% Of total
Clean	25	37.88%
Dirty	35	53.03%
Quiet	29	43.94%
Noisy	24	36.36%
Clean & quiet	12	18.18%
Dirty & noisy	12	18.18%
Clean & dirty	11	16.67%
Noisy & quiet	5	7.58%
Clean & noisy	7	10.61%
Dirty & quiet	13	19.70%
Total responses	66	

Table 1

Workspace, on-site, external, and shared facilities

The majority (at least 59.1% up to 95.5%) consider it essential that the workspace to have; electricity; natural light, hot and cold running water; Wi-Fi; a sink for cleaning materials, and fixed heating.

When it comes to shared facilities only communal meeting spaces was considered essential by more than half of respondents (54.5%). Other options such as: a self-catering kitchen (45.5%); shared storage (42.4%), and an on-site office (30.3%) were also popular.

Over 50% of all respondents considered free car-parking, site Wi-Fi, 24-hour access and exhibiting gallery space essential, the last one reflecting the propensity for the survey to be completed by visual artists.

Size and cost of space

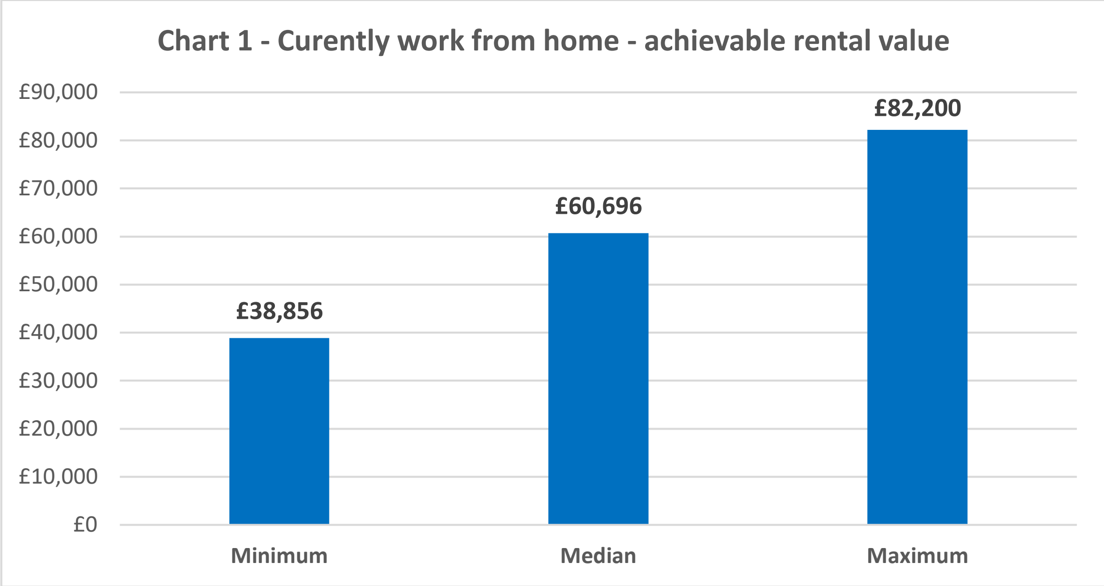
86.4% of respondents require a medium (7m x 3.3m) or large space (7m x 7m or larger) to work in but have a very wide range of budget to pay for it. Both the monthly price ranges of £26 - £100 and £101 - £250 were perceived as affordable by 15 respondents each (22.7% each). 14 respondents (21.2%) could afford a peppercorn rent of under £25 a month, 3 respondents were not able to afford to pay at all. 12 respondents could afford to pay £251 or more, one respondent considered over £1,000 affordable.

39 respondents requiring medium or large workspace can afford to pay at least £26 a month *suggesting strong demand for provision that will deliver income to leaseholders*. 8 respondents looking for small or medium size workspace can afford a peppercorn rent or no rent at all, *suggesting a small amount of heavily subsidised workspace, either as part of a mixed development or as a stand-alone site would be welcome.*

Most respondents (48, 72.8%) expect utility bills to be included or to pay a small amount (up to £25 a month). 5 respondents expected to pay over £51 a month for utility bills.

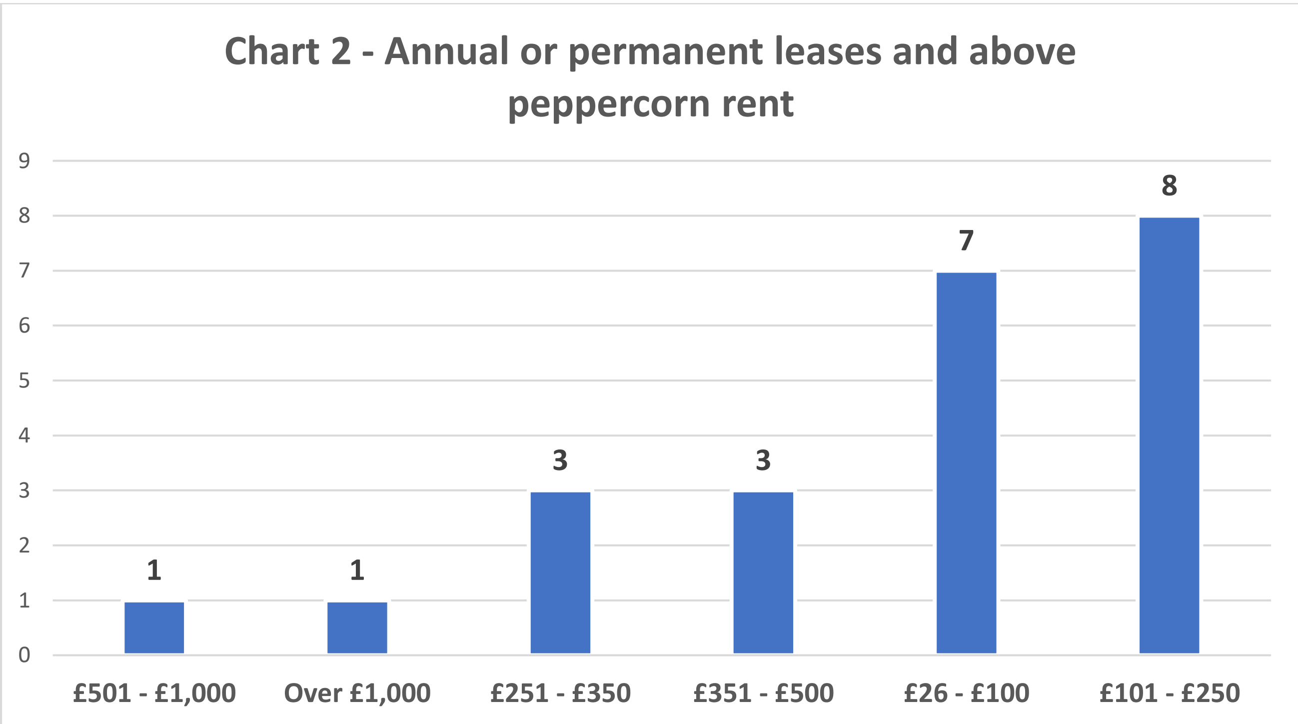
Moving from home working to commercial workspace

As most respondents earned at least a part of their income from their creative activity (53, 80.3%), conduct their work from home (44, 66.7%), and implicit in them responding to the survey are seeking other workspace, it follows that we can estimate a value to the economy of the rental they can afford, should they take leases on commercial workspace. Chart 1 shows the annual rent achievable from these respondents should they all move into accommodation, based on their responses to the question about affordable rent. These figures only include those respondents who currently work at home, can pay at least a peppercorn rent, and require space in Newhaven.



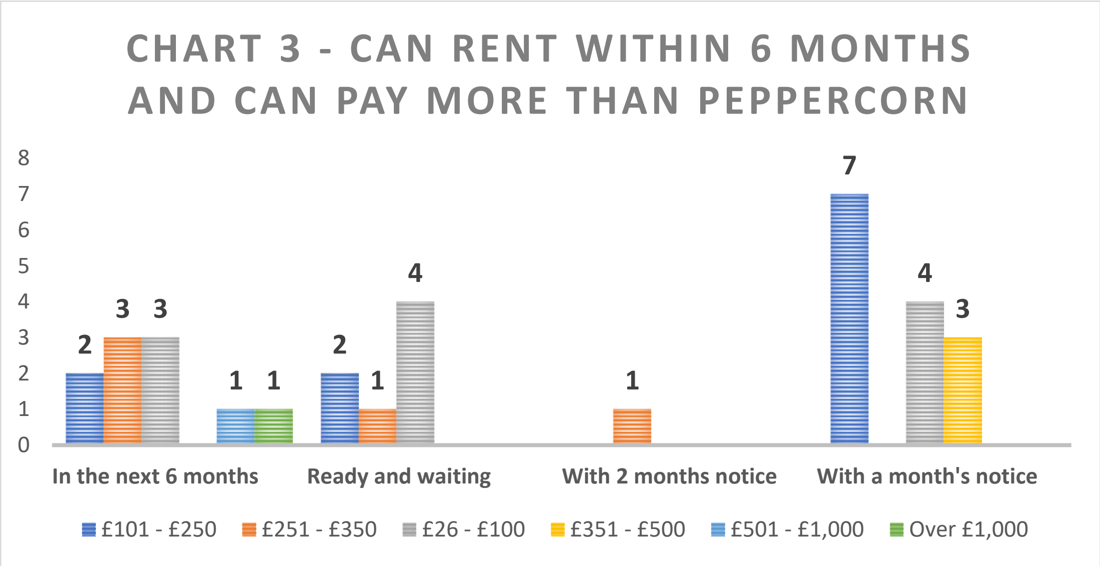
Length of tenure

Survey respondents were asked to state their ideal length of tenure. The most popular response was flexible (27 responses, 40.9%). 42.4% of responses (28) were split evenly between annual and permanent, *suggesting strong demand for secure long-term workspace.* Most of these respondents (23) were able to afford a rent above peppercorn, see Chart 2.

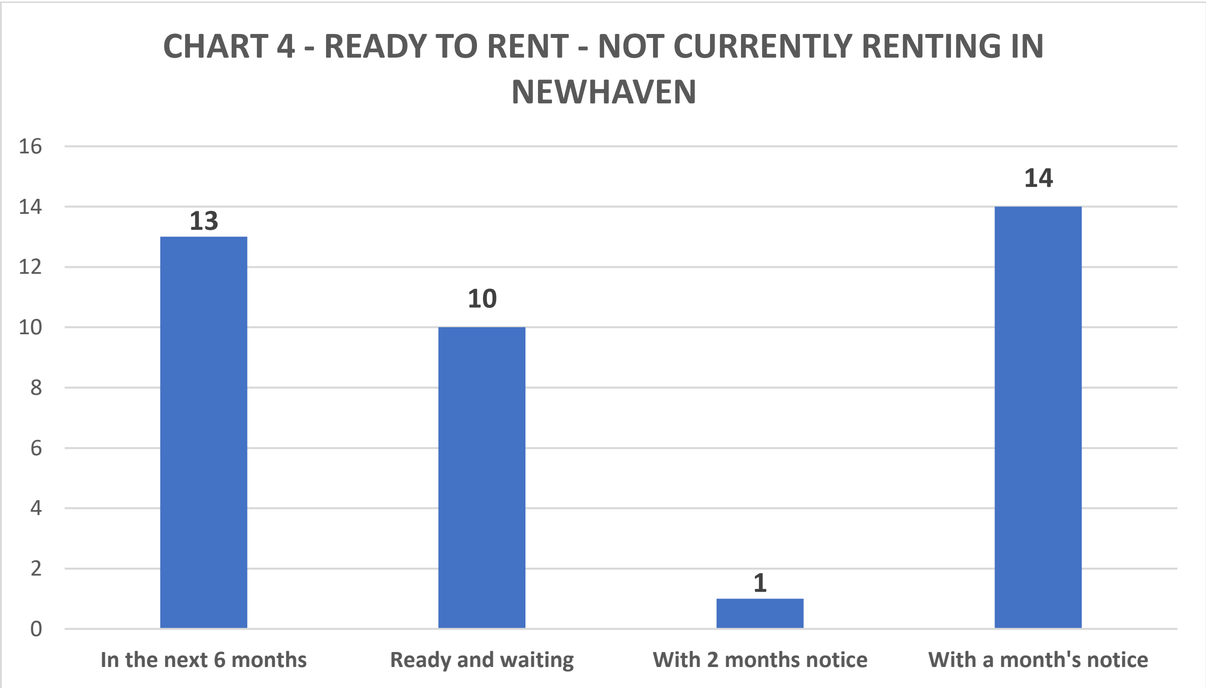


Readiness to move into new creative workspace

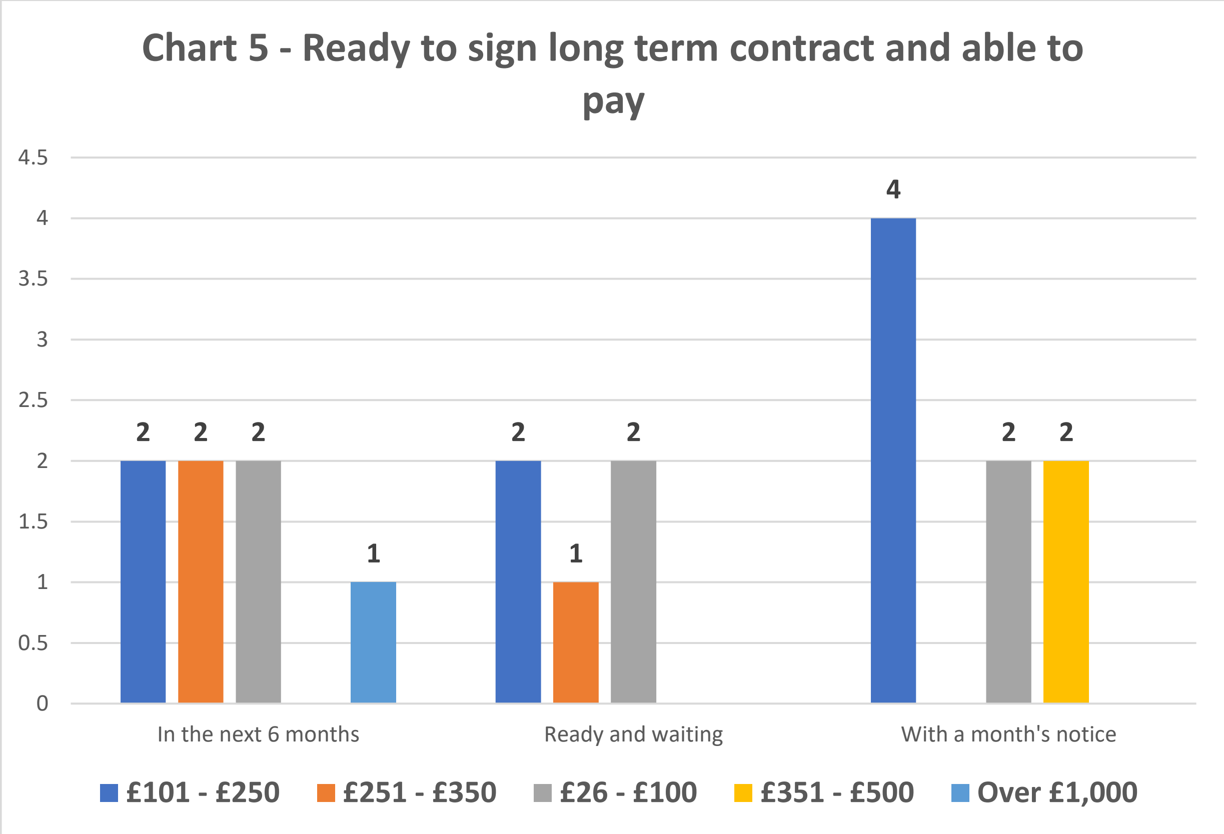
45 respondents (68.18%) indicated a preparedness to sign a lease imminently by choosing one of 'With a month's notice', 'Ready and waiting' and 'In the next 6 months' to the question, 'How ready are you to move in?". 32 of these respondents were able to pay more than a peppercorn rent



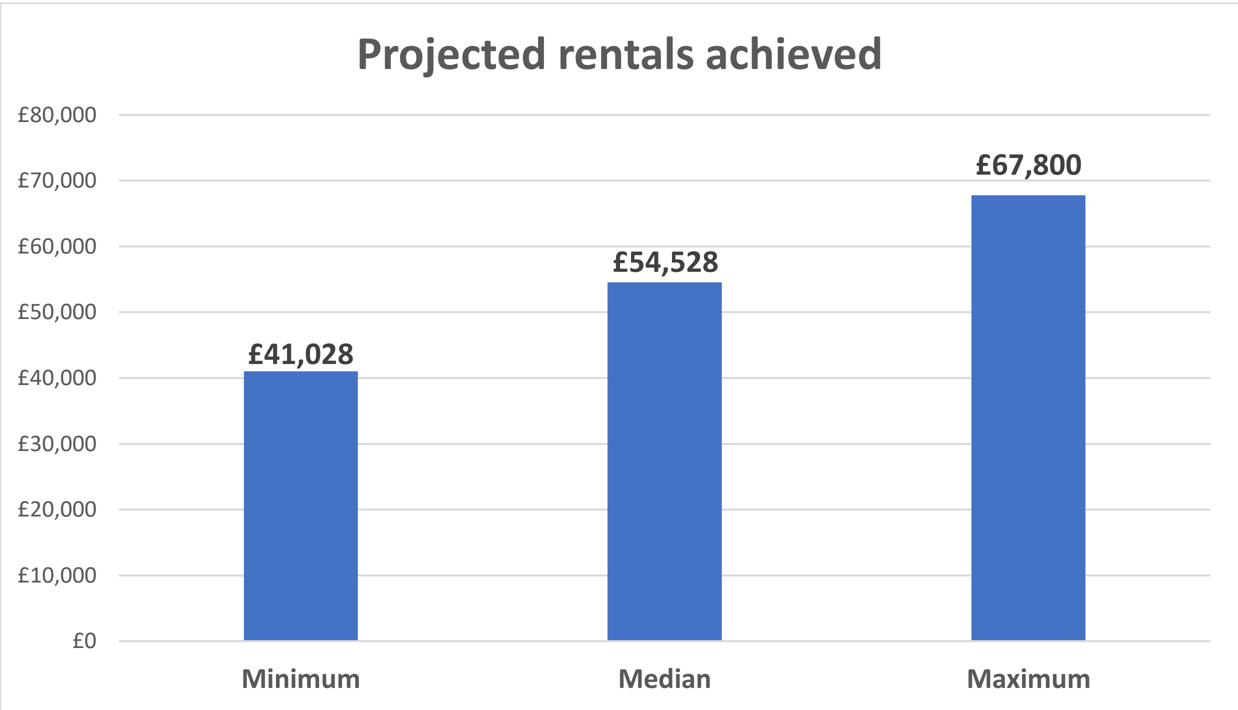
38 of the respondents who were ready to move into property imminently are not currently renting in Newhaven (see Chart 3). This is significant as there is an evidence cohort of respondents that could potentially take up leases soon in Newhaven should they be available.



When this list is filtered on ability to pay more than a peppercorn rent and able to sign a long-term contract there remains 20 respondents.



This would translate to a maximum annual potential rental of £67,800 based on respondent replies to the affordable rent question.



Conclusion

Survey respondents answered the survey questions as a direct investigation into their subjective preferences and requirements for creative workspace in Newhaven, not a hypothetical exercise. This is demonstrated by the amount of detail respondents went into in some of their answers to the open-ended questions and where open responses were possible as a supplement to an 'Other' option.

Therefore, the results can be interpretated as a representative snapshot of latent demand for creative workspace in Newhaven, but also significantly, data provided by a distinct cohort of people who are looking for new space and in all but one case, have given us permission to contact them about this issue in the future. Nearly a third of respondents are prepared to move in quickly, on long-term paid-for leases. If that demand can be harnessed, it could produce a new community of creatives very quickly.

The survey results clearly evidence potential to move creatives from working at home, to workspace property, which in the most part they are prepared to pay at least some rent for. This new capacity, if cited adjacent to existing retail and food and beverage business could result in significant secondary spend.

The results indicate that the size of property preferred leans towards larger spaces and that a mix of types of activity need catering for, though broadly in the visual arts sphere. There is a clear preference for being in the town centre and some significant infrastructure including power, water, Wi-Fi, and parking are considered essential.

When the numbers of respondents indicating a willingness to readily move into new town centre workspaces is compared to existing provision, providing spaces for these creatives could have a significant impact on the ecology and infrastructure of creative Newhaven. It is not known if by choosing the town centre respondents would include the Hillcrest Centre, for example, as this community facility already provides for several artist studios and could potentially be expanded to accommodate more.