

## **Project Brief: Commercial & Social Purpose Review of Students' Union Commercial Spaces**

**Commissioning Organisation:** University of Lancashire Students' Union

**Project Type:** External Consultancy Support

### **1. Introduction**

The University of Lancashire Students' Union (the Union) operates food, beverage, and social spaces that are intended to contribute to both our commercial income and our wider social purpose. These include:

- **Lampworks Bar** — casual dining, licensed bar and social space.
- **SU Café** (part of the *'Proud to Serve' Starbucks programme*) — café offer including sandwich meal deals, jacket potatoes, and halal options via an external provider (Chaii Stop).

We want to ensure these spaces are fulfilling their social enterprise mission of creating inclusive and exciting spaces and services for our diverse student membership, whilst also contributing to the long-term financial sustainability of our charity.

To support this effort, we are commissioning an external consultant to undertake a strategic review and provide expert recommendations as to how we can grow this vital area of our charity.

### **2. Purpose of the Project**

This project aims to:

1. Assess the commercial performance and potential of our food, beverage, and venue spaces.
2. Ensure these operations align with, and strengthen, our social purpose and charitable objectives.
3. Understand how our spaces are used by a diverse range of students, with particular consideration given to students in minoritised communities.
4. Produce actionable recommendations on what the Union's options are for the future of social enterprise development.

This is not purely a commercial review. We are seeking an assessment of how our spaces contribute to student belonging, our work to build powerful communities of students, and the Union's overall impact.

### **3. Outcomes We Are Seeking**

We want to emerge from this project with:

- A clear understanding of the commercial viability of each outlet with recommendations for improving trading performance.
- An informed view of where to invest, repurpose, re-design or partner.
- Clarity on how our spaces can continue to support our community building work, with particular focus on our minoritised communities.
- A roadmap that balances income generation with social purpose.

#### **4. Scope of Work**

The consultant will deliver analysis and recommendations across four broad areas:

##### **A. Commercial Review**

- Review financial performance of Lampworks bar / social space and SU Café.
- Analyse customer behaviour, footfall and usage.
- Assess menu, pricing, cost base and efficiency.
- Review the constraints / opportunity with the current 'proud to serve' café model.
- Benchmark against the unique Preston market and the local student demographic.

##### **B. Social Purpose Analysis**

- Evaluate how the spaces currently serve different student communities and student groups, highlighting gaps and opportunities.
- Identify barriers and risks for minoritised groups (cultural, sensory, affordability, alcohol dominant environments, etc.).
- Explore opportunities to increase community value and inclusivity.
- Assess how each outlet contributes to the Union's Theory of Change and long-term strategy.

##### **C. Future Operating Models**

- Options for spaces operating independently & together.
- Opportunities for strategic partnerships or external operators.
- Capital investment options and projected impact.

#### **5. Methodology**

The Union's Trustee Board has requested that this project includes meaningful, in person engagement.

We expect:

##### **In-person engagement-person engagement**

- Some consultant presence on campus in Preston.
- Conversations with student leaders and staff.

- Direct observation of trading activity and space usage to inform analysis.

### **Local understanding**

- Familiarity with the specific Preston context including:
  - student demographics
  - commuter vs local student behaviours
  - local hospitality and café landscape
  - cultural and economic factors impacting student life

### **Partnership considerations**

- An acknowledgement of the close and productive working relationship that we have with the University of Lancashire and how this affects our commercial choices.
- An awareness of franchise and partnership delivery models that might work for us.

### **Analytical work**

- Market analysis and financial review (as supporting evidence).
- Comparative insights from similar institutions or social enterprise models.

We do not want an approach based solely on remote surveys or desktop research.

### **Suggested KPIs**

An idea of how we could best measure our impact and success in this area eg;

- Commercial sustainability (*revenue, gross margin, labour cost percentage, contribution*).
- Student value and social purpose (*affordability, belonging, satisfaction, inclusivity of use*).

## **6. Expected Deliverables**

1. Commercial & Social Purpose Review Report delivered 17<sup>th</sup> April.
2. Presentation or workshop with Trustees and senior staff to explain findings.

## **7. Project Logistics**

- **Project Lead:** Jon Russ, Director of Engagement & Social Enterprise
- **Location:** University of Lancashire Students' Union, Preston
- **Timeline:** Some flexibility but working towards the week commencing April 17<sup>th</sup> as a fixed deadline for an initial report and presentation / workshop to SLT / the Board. There may be scope for follow up work in this area. Work to commence ASAP subject to Board approval.
- **Budget:** Maximum budget of £5000.

- **Reporting:** Regular check-ins with the Director and Board sub-committee lead-ins with the Director and

## 8. How to Apply

To submit a proposal for this project, please provide:

1. A short outline of your proposed approach, including how you will balance commercial analysis with social purpose insight.
2. Details of relevant experience, particularly in hospitality, social enterprise, or student-focused environments.
3. A clear breakdown of costs, including day rates, anticipated time on campus, and any expenses.
4. Your proposed timeline for completing the work within the parameters set out in the brief.
5. Examples of similar work or testimonials from other clients if available.

Please send your proposal by email to:

**Jon Russ, Director of Engagement & Social Enterprise**

Email: [jross@lancashire.ac.uk](mailto:jross@lancashire.ac.uk)

Deadline for expressions of interest: **12pm, 27<sup>th</sup> February.**

Proposals should be submitted as soon as possible, as the work is intended to commence promptly following Board approval.