

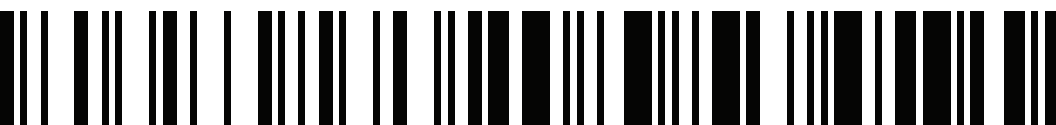


# LEIGH WORKS

Impact Report



# 20 26



# FOREWORD



When we opened the first co-working space in Wigan Borough in 2019, plenty of people asked the same question: why Leigh?

The answer is simple. Because Leigh deserves it.

This report covers our biggest three years yet: the years in which we took a tired town-centre building and turned it into something the town can be proud of. A makerspace, a studio, a place to start a business, learn a trade, or simply find your feet.

The numbers tell part of the story. We have welcomed 35 young people on placement, giving them 1,872 hours using professional equipment. We have supported 43 local businesses, grown our trading by 85%, and invested more than a quarter of a million pounds into the project.

But the numbers do not show the part that matters most: the student who found their confidence, the maker who gained their first proper workshop, or the entrepreneur who secured their first major contract.

We are a social enterprise, driven by impact rather than profit. Every pound raised so far has been reinvested in the space and the surrounding community.

None of this happened alone. My thanks go to our members, Leigh's businesses, our funders at GMCA and GMCVO, and the team that has put everything into this place.

The foundations are laid. Our newest space, a community podcast and video studio, is already opening its doors to local voices. Now the job is to make the whole place work harder, open the doors wider, and keep doing what we set out to do:

To create, inspire and grow Leigh.



**Steven Tomlinson**  
Co-Founder, Leigh Works



# INTRO



Leigh Works is a co-working space, makerspace and studio in the heart of Leigh. We are also a social enterprise. We provide high-quality, paid-for space and services, helping us to operate sustainably, but profit is not our purpose. Most of what we earn is reinvested in the space and the surrounding community.

This report covers our first three years in our town-centre home, from 2024 to 2026. It is the story of what can happen when a tired building, a bold idea and a fair bit of graft come together.

We measure our impact in three ways.

**Create:** providing the space, tools, resources and connections that digital creatives, makers and small businesses need to do their best work.

**Inspire:** raising aspirations and giving the next generation opportunities to explore creative, technical and entrepreneurial careers.

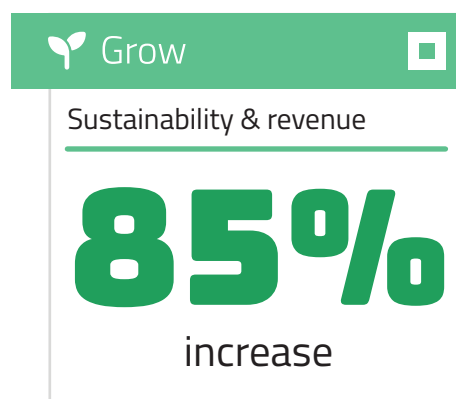
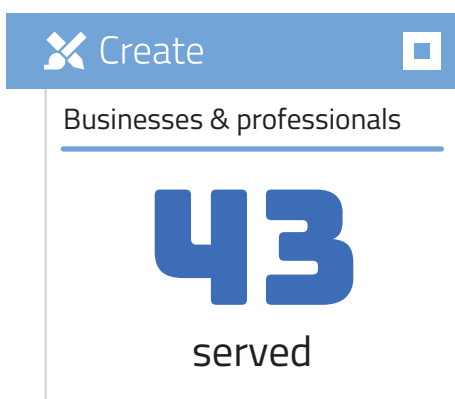
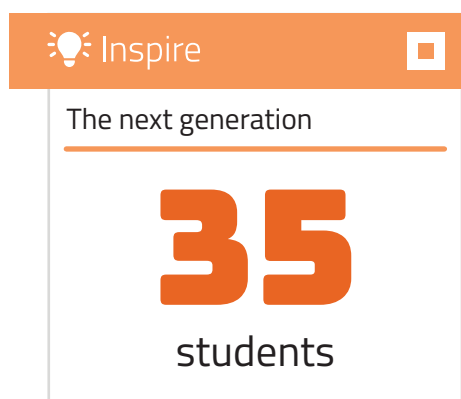
**Grow:** creating more opportunities for training, skills and high-quality local employment.

What follows sets out the impact and investment behind that work: the young people we have welcomed, the businesses we have backed, the jobs we have created, and the money raised, spent and reinvested to bring it all to life.

The numbers matter, and so do the people behind them.

# WHAT WE PUT IN WHAT LEIGH GOT BACK

Leigh Works is a professional co-working space, makerspace and studio run as a social enterprise. We provide high-quality, paid-for space and services to professionals and businesses, helping us to operate sustainably and remain independent. But profit is not our purpose. The majority of what we earn is reinvested in Leigh Works itself and in community projects that create opportunities locally. This report looks back on our first three years of putting that approach into practice.



The next generation of designers, engineers and makers, through real placements on real equipment.



A community of makers, professionals and entrepreneurs, with the studios, labs and workshop tools to get started.



Local jobs, skills and opportunity, while building a social enterprise that can stand on its own two feet.

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## OUR FIRST THREE YEARS



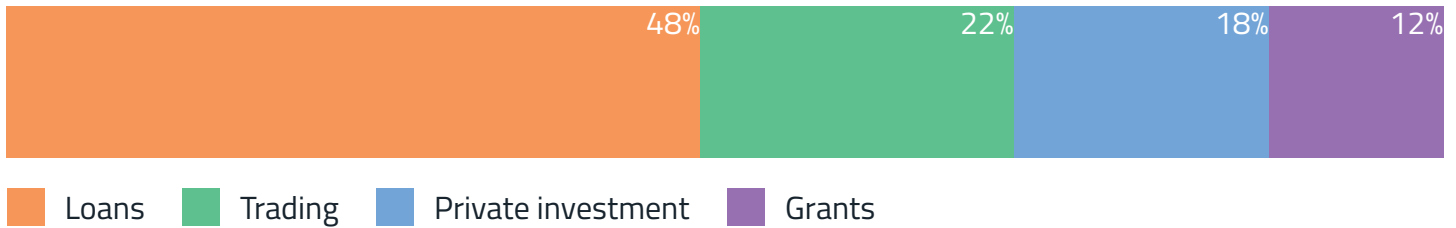
# £495K

invested in bringing  
a tired town-centre  
building back to life.

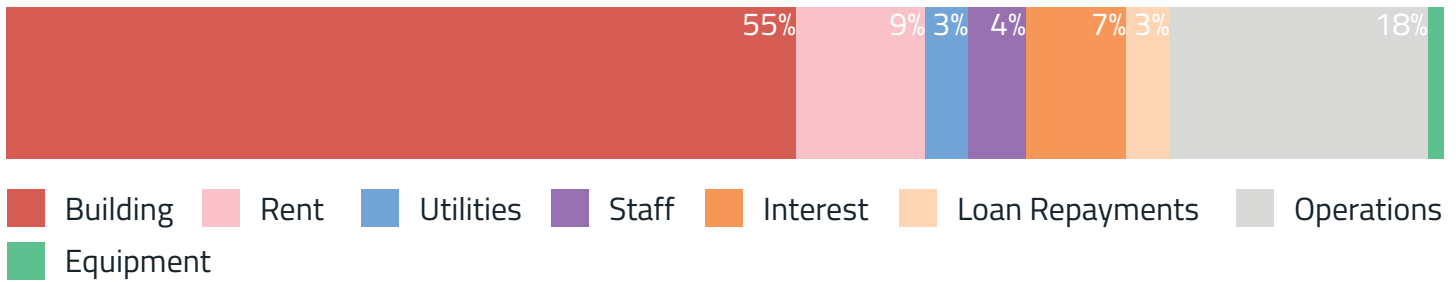
# £489K RAISED

2024 - 2026

Where the money came from - **£489,000** (received 2024-26)



Where it went - **£495,000** (spent 2024-26)



## Delivering exceptional value

We have achieved so much by making every pound work hard. Our smart, flicker-free, and adjustable lighting system is a testament to this approach.

The system was manufactured in-house using our workshop, CNC machines and 3D printers, through a collaboration between one of our members, Nemiah, and lighting manufacturer Ansell. This collaborative effort allowed us to implement advanced building automation throughout Leigh Works at a significantly reduced cost.



# £0.00

paid to directors, allowing all income to be reinvested in the space, its equipment and the community projects it supports.



# THE FOUNDATIONS ARE LAID

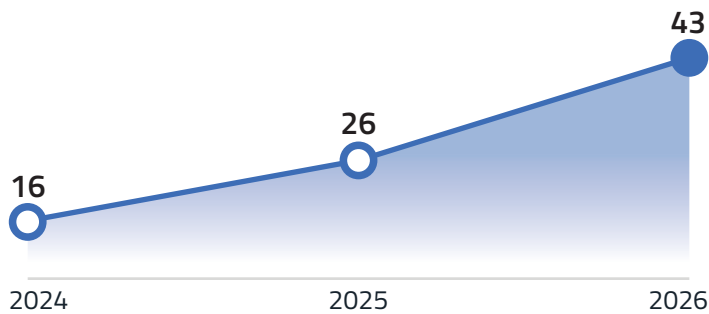


Create

Community Lunch - The social heart of the building

Local businesses are the reason the space exists. Year on year, more of them have made Leigh Works their base or used our studios, labs and workshop. The number we support has nearly tripled in two years as word has spread through the town.

Businesses supported per year



**X2.7** growth in businesses supported in two years. **Proof the model works,** and that demand for affordable, well-equipped space in Leigh is real and rising.



Fantastic environment to work in great people lots going on

Leigh Works Member - Member Experience Survey 2026

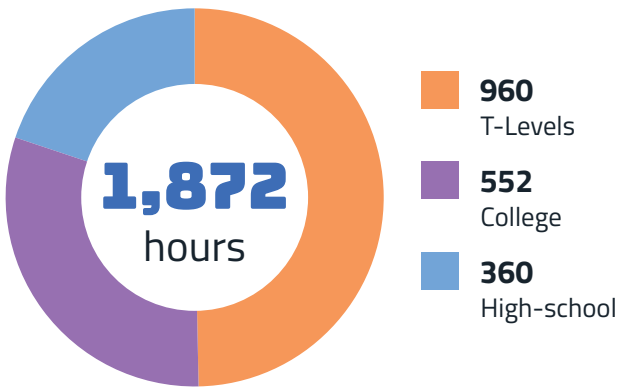


# 1,872 HOURS

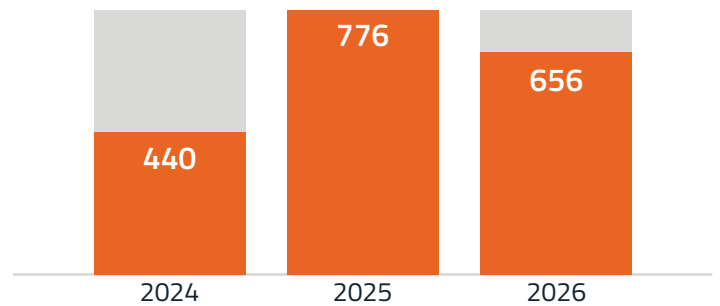
## Work Placements

Over three years, we have hosted 35 students on placement, from T-Level and college programmes to high-school work experience. Together, they have spent 234 days gaining hands-on experience alongside professionals and observing how the industry operates in a real-world environment.

Where the hours went

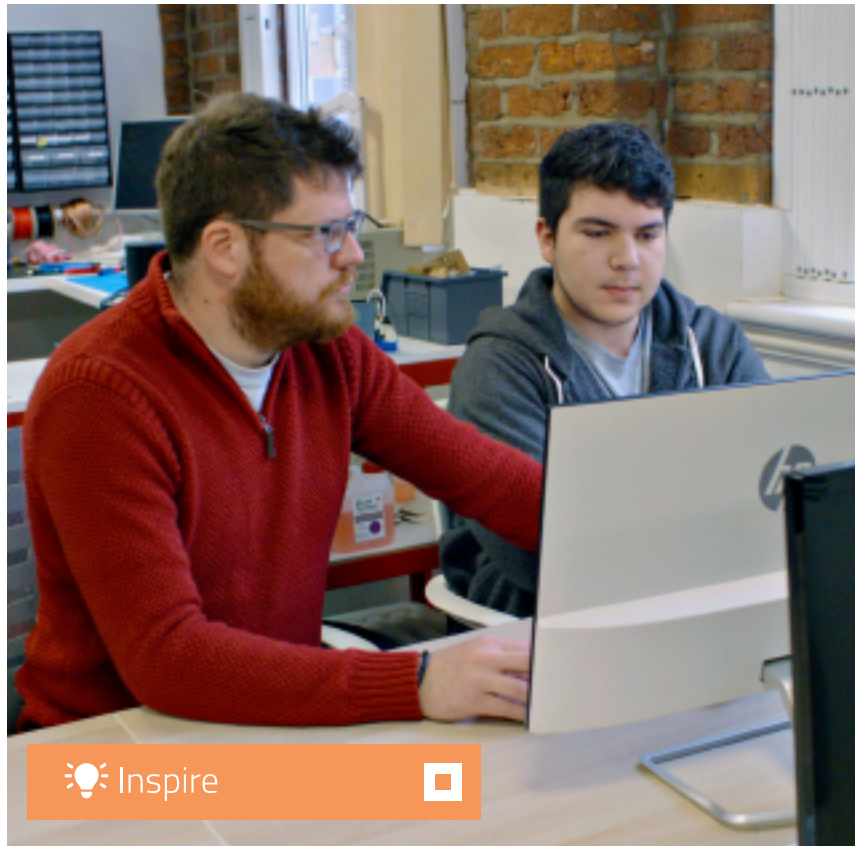


Placement hours by year



**23**  
out of  
**35**

students came through **Wigan & Leigh College**, with placements giving them experience in a professional environment, expanding on what classroom teaching can offer.



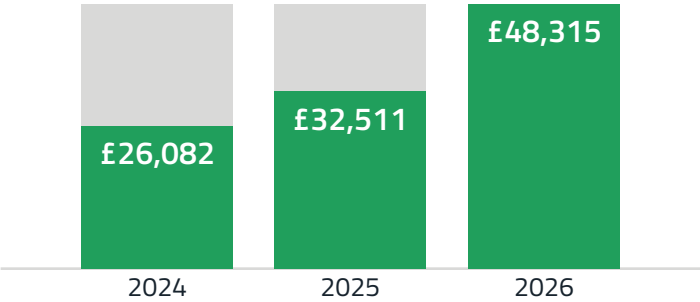
One of the T-Level students at Leigh Works



# SUSTAINABILITY

## Making the place work

Trading income per year

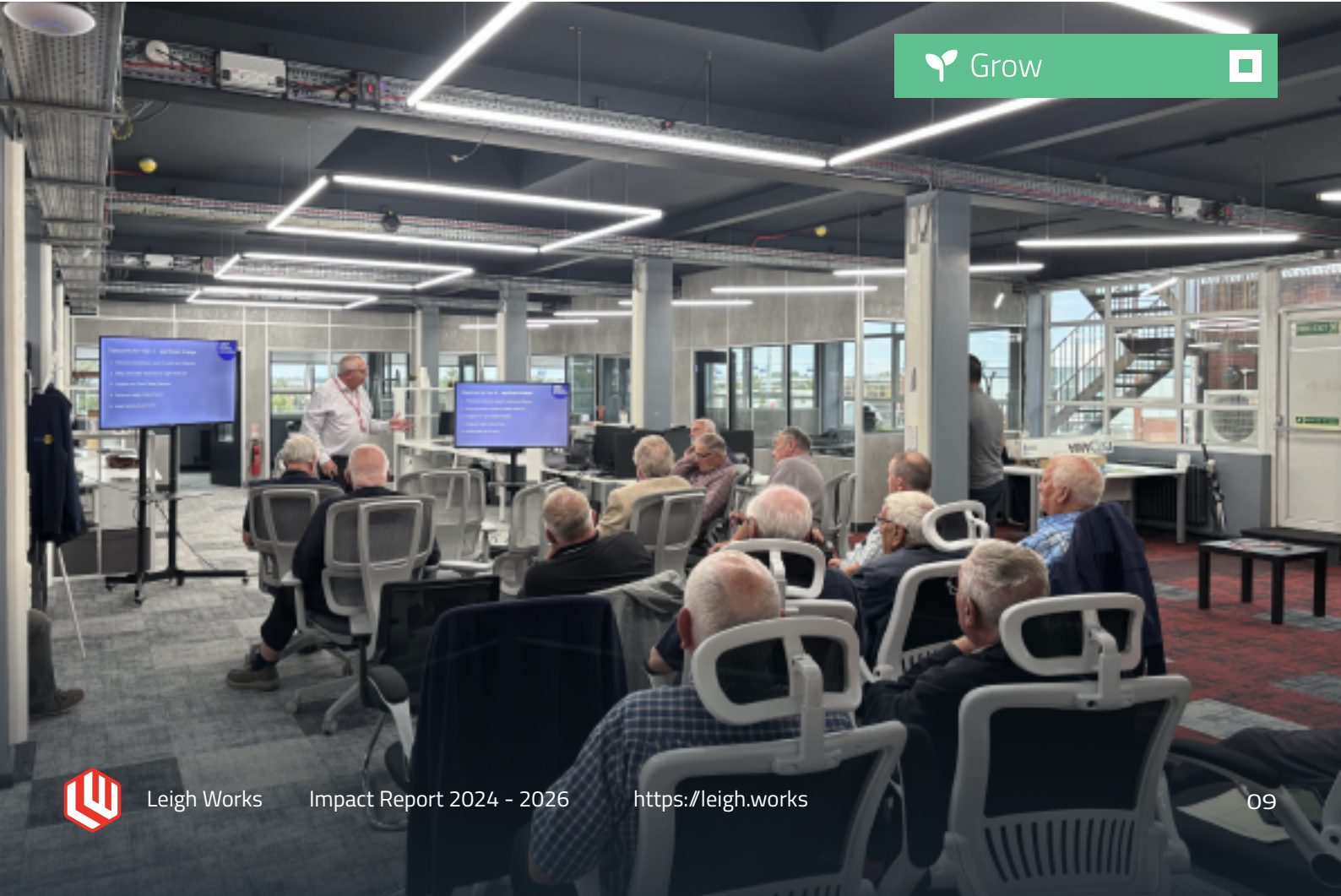


**+85%** £106,908 earned through trading across three years.

This is the engine that will keep Leigh Works open without relying on grants.

A social enterprise only lasts if it can pay its own way. Our trading income, the money we earn from memberships, room hire and services, has grown 85% in two years.

Hosting events at Leigh Works



# PARTNERSHIPS

## Helping to deliver our mission

We work with many public sector organisations, community groups, businesses and not-for-profits, here are some that play a key role in helping us.



Proper Good have provided us with a grant and loan to develop our new £260,000 space.



Business Growth Hub provide regular hands-on support to help businesses grow.



STEM Ambassadors connect our professionals with schools to inspire young people in STEM.



Leigh Means Business help us connect with local businesses and share our goal of regenerating the town centre.



We provide T-level and BTEC work placements for students and arrange apprenticeships through Wigan & Leigh College.



We provide placements and relevant industry projects for University of Salford students.



Wigan Council helps our businesses unlock barriers.



European Creative Hubs Network offers peer exchange, fostering collaboration and innovation within the European creative sector.

# KEY PROJECTS

## Foundational Economy

**GMCA** GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

### Podcast Studio

An £11,000 grant from the Greater Manchester Foundational Economy Innovation Fund helped us create a dedicated podcast and video studio at Leigh Works.

As one of just twenty-five organisations across the region to receive funding, we were recognised for the local impact of our work and the value it brings to the community. The studio gives people in Leigh access to an affordable, professional space to record, create and share their stories.

It is already opening up new opportunities for a wide range of people, including young people, small business owners and those working in sectors such as retail, care and hospitality.

The studio is now a lively space for recording, learning and community participation, with plenty more voices still to be heard.

 Inspire



# LOCAL HEROES

Local businesses that supported us

The following businesses share our passion for the local community and have helped make Leigh Works possible by donating their time or products.



Ask Platt Office Supplies have helped us with office furniture.



Palatine Paints have provided the paint for our new building.



Nemiah have developed bespoke software and smart devices for us.



Ansell have provided the lighting for our new building.



QHI Northwest went above and beyond as our main development contractor.



No Metric have provided super-fast fibre broadband and equipment.



Welch Mill have provided carpet and flooring.



CatonLloyd have provided AV equipment and installation.



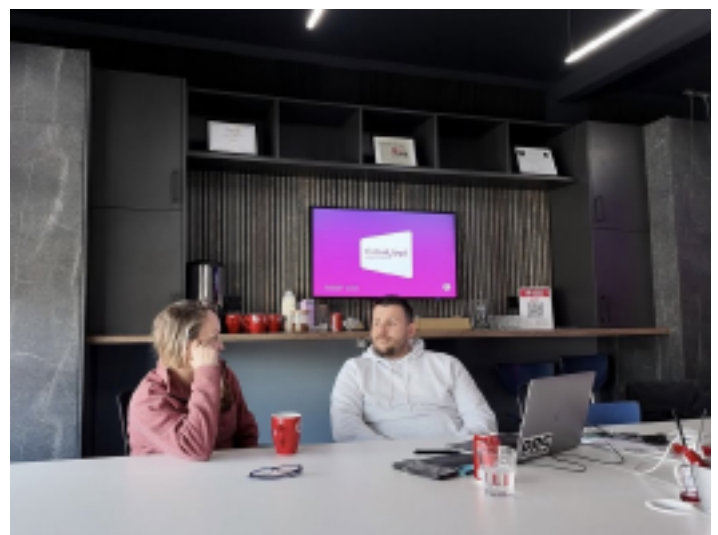
Leigh Plumbing Merchants have provided bathroom fittings and tiles.



# £20K SPONSORED

## CatonLloyd Audio Visual Suite

A £20,000 sponsorship from CatonLloyd enabled the full transformation of our meeting room, converting an underutilised area into a professional, self-contained suite. Featuring high-spec video conferencing and integrated streaming technology, the room is a prime example of how local business investment directly creates high-quality resources for the entire community to use.



 Grow



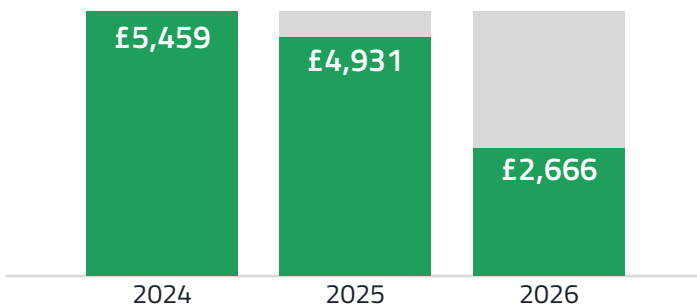
# ENERGY

## Energy Reduction through intelligent building automation

Leigh Works was selected as the pilot site for Nemiah's Live Carbon energy management module, which is part of the cosmOS Smart Building Operating System and is supported by the Energy Innovation Agency. With AI-driven optimisation and automation, the module enables real-time control and carbon tracking. This has allowed us to reduce energy consumption, year on year, despite an expanding number of customers occupying more of the building, more often.



Energy Costs



Since deployment, Leigh Works has saved 84,000 kWh of energy, far exceeding initial projections. The system developed here has since been rolled out to Spinners Mill and Civic in Wigan, with plans in motion to reach up to 100 buildings nationwide by the end of the year. cosmOS demonstrates the practical benefits of intelligent energy management, while strengthening our commitment to environmental responsibility.





Andy Burnham visiting Leigh Works, December 2025.



 Inspire

 Create

 Grow

A social-enterprise makerspace in the heart of Leigh.  
Drop in, take a look around, and see what the town is building.

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