

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2011

### **West End science hub to include new 'Innovation Centre'**

A new Centre for Innovation is to be created at Macclesfield House, the former County Council education building on New Road.

Organisers Science Oxford plan to open a £30m state-of-the-art science facility by 2015, but in the short-term, the building is set to be transformed into an innovation centre to house and support up to 30 start-up businesses and entrepreneurs.

Oxford Innovation has been appointed to manage the centre, which could create as many as 120 jobs in its first year. The company already manages 14 centres across the UK and offers business support services, such as access to its business angel investment networks, along with mentoring and planning advice.

Chris Allington, managing director of Oxford Innovation's business and innovation centres division, said: "Our aim is for this prestigious innovation centre to become a focal point for innovation and enterprise in the city and a generator of local employment."

There has already been strong interest in the range of workspaces on offer and several companies are set to move in during March and April, including Mirada Medical, a medical imaging software developer.

Dr Ian Griffin, chief executive of Science Oxford, said: "Innovative, early stage companies are more crucial than ever to our economy and at Oxford Centre for Innovation, they will benefit from a supportive environment with access to the funding and advice they need to help them to grow."

In the longer term, the team at Science Oxford plans to create a world class science centre which will attract more than 100,000 visitors a year. Plans for the building include a domed, immersive theatre, interactive science gallery and a flexible space for exhibitions, presentations, demonstrations and workshops, as well as a café and retail area.

The multi-million pound science centre is to be designed by architects Foster + Partners and will showcase the inspiring discoveries and inventions which have helped establish Oxford's reputation for innovation, and explain how science and technology underpin our lives and culture.

### **ENDS**

For more information contact:

Oxford West End Partnership  
Sarah Leach (01865 252389)  
[sleach@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:sleach@oxford.gov.uk)

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**Oxford City Council**

Media and Communications Office (01865 252096)

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**NOTE TO EDITORS**

**Science Oxford** is the public face of The Oxford Trust, a registered charity set to encourage economic growth through innovation and technology transfer, by developing projects that enthuse young people about science and engineering and by promoting activity that stimulates and facilitates public engagement with science.

**Oxford West End Partnership** was established in 2005 as the driving force behind the West End Renaissance, a long-term regeneration programme to revitalise the central west area of Oxford.