HavenLife: Integrated Youth Co-Living Ecosystem

Deep Innovation Report

Executive Summary

HavenLife combines affordable micro-housing with purpose-driven co-working spaces, outdoor green areas, and social leisure amenities tailored for young professionals in BCP.

By addressing the dual challenges of local housing affordability and graduate retention, HavenLife creates an integrated environment where early-career talent can live, create, and build local networks.

A pop-up test focusing on shared working and social space in a town centre location offers a low-risk starting point to validate community demand before committing to larger capital development.

The Better Everyday

What if young adults in BCP could step directly from an affordable micro-home into shared working hubs and green courtyards without leaving their neighbourhood?

HavenLife integrates modular affordable living units with ground-floor co-working spaces, outdoor green areas, and shared leisure facilities under one community umbrella. The concept ensures that early-career creatives and young professionals have immediate access to both productive work environments and relaxing social spaces.

Imagine a Tuesday morning in Lansdowne where a young digital designer walks downstairs from a compact apartment into a light-filled studio space to collaborate on a local enterprise project. By mid-afternoon, they are working from a garden bench in the central green courtyard before joining neighbours for a communal evening event. They no longer spend most of their earnings on isolated private rentals or spend hours commuting across town to find vibrant workspace.

This approach meets an enduring human need for financial stability, belonging, and professional growth during the transition into full-time work. Today, many young residents rely on expensive flatshares or work from cramped bedrooms, which leads to feelings of isolation and strain on mental wellbeing.

A successful ecosystem could create a new expectation that residential planning should routinely incorporate collaborative work and green leisure space. That principle could spread to housing associations, commercial property redevelopments, and broader town centre regeneration across BCP.

Who It Could Matter To

From recent graduates establishing their careers to local employers seeking stable talent, integrated co-living creates lasting local roots.

Early-Career Creative Practitioner

A 23-year-old Arts University Bournemouth graduate working as a freelance animator who wants to stay in the region.

They encounter HavenLife while searching for accommodation that combines reasonable rent with space to meet clients and collaborate with peers.

They gain an affordable living space and an instant professional network, provided the workspace remains well-managed and quiet during core working hours.

Tech Start-up Founder

A founder operating a digital agency in Lansdowne who struggles to retain junior staff against larger metropolitan competitors.

They discover the hub when searching for flexible workspace that offers strong lifestyle benefits for early employees.

They gain access to motivated talent and flexible hot-desking, provided project confidentiality and workspace standards are respected.

Community Project Lead

A local coordinator in Boscombe focused on youth wellbeing and neighbourhood social cohesion.

They connect with HavenLife when looking for accessible venues to host peer-mentoring sessions and community workshops.

They gain a vibrant physical hub to connect young adults with wider neighbourhood initiatives, provided the space remains open and welcoming to non-residents.

What This Could Change for BCP

Connecting housing and enterprise within walkable hubs strengthens talent retention across BCP's creative and digital sectors.

By drawing on the strength of Bournemouth University and Arts University Bournemouth, HavenLife directly addresses the post-graduation departure of skilled young adults. Providing integrated living and working solutions creates a compelling reason for talent to put down roots locally.

The direct effect is a more stable early-career workforce for the established digital, tech, and creative sectors across BCP. Young professionals gain financial breathing room while local firms access a steady pipeline of collaborators.

As a ripple effect, evening footfall around these hubs would support neighbouring independent cafes, shops, and cultural venues, driving year-round economic vitality in areas like Lansdowne or Boscombe.

The primary trade-off involves balancing high-density living with existing neighbourhood expectations regarding parking, noise, and design scale. Planning must involve early community dialogue to establish respectful boundaries.

Who Must Connect

Realizing an integrated co-living hub requires aligning housing operators, commercial workspace managers, and civic enablers.

Delivery depends on a non-profit housing provider partnering with a local co-working operator to manage the residential units and shared ground-floor space effectively.

Participation relies on a resident-led steering group of young professionals and local students who establish community guidelines, organize events, and shape shared spaces.

Enabling comes from BCP Council planning teams working with site owners to support mixed-use redevelopments in town centre locations.

Sustaining is achieved through a mixed-revenue structure combining affordable residential rent, workspace memberships, and event space hires to ensure long-term maintenance.

The missing link is a formal bridge between local tech employers and housing developers to subsidize workspace memberships in exchange for talent incubation, which a network like Silicon South could help facilitate.

Why This Fails

Understanding potential points of failure helps protect the initiative against financial imbalances and community friction.

Unaffordable living costs: If construction or operating costs push residential rents above local graduate affordability, the core audience is priced out and units sit empty. An early warning sign is low application rates among local graduates and high turnover within six months.

Operational friction: If management prioritizes residential quiet hours over creative collaboration, or vice versa, internal friction damages the community atmosphere. An early warning sign is frequent resident complaints regarding noise, guest policies, or shared kitchen cleanliness.

Neighbourhood pushback: If social events create late-night noise or parking congestion on adjacent streets, local residents may oppose future expansion. An early warning sign is formal noise complaints submitted to council teams during early community gatherings.

One Experiment to Start

Testing shared workspace and social activities in an existing venue validates community interest before constructing physical housing.

The most critical uncertainty is whether young professionals will actively participate in a shared collaborative community when housing is not yet bundled. Resolving this demonstrates whether the demand for shared social and professional infrastructure exists.

A four-week pop-up residency could be hosted in a vacant town centre building in Boscombe or Lansdowne, offering hot-desking, shared outdoor social events, and peer networking sessions for forty local young creatives.

Keep going if participants attend regularly, organize spontaneous events, and start collaborative projects; stop or rethink if attendees treat the venue purely as an isolated hot-desk space without interacting. This reveals whether the social integration model generates genuine value.

Next step: A local creative network lead convenes a working group with BCP Council property leads within 90 days to identify a vacant town centre property suitable for a pop-up trial.