



## NEWS

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Aylesbury venue will live again – albeit briefly

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## Music business leads with “New Deal” to buck downturn

New Deal Of The Mind project aims to create jobs and opportunities in the creative sector

### Jobs

By Eamonn Forde

**THE MUSIC BUSINESS IS AT THE CENTRE** of an ambitious new project to create jobs and opportunities in the creative sector, as the recession continues to bite.

The New Deal Of The Mind (NDOTM) is intended to attract the sharpest and most creative minds to the arts at a time of growing redundancies and cut backs. It has buy-in across all sectors of the creative industries, as well from as the main political parties in Westminster.

Going beyond the internships and apprentice schemes that already exist in the music business, the NDOTM aims to work with Government to reallocate money already being spent on areas like benefits in ways that mutually benefit the workforce, the creative sector and the economy. It also extends to schemes to open up vacant buildings that can be used as arts/creative spaces.

“NDOTM takes its name from President Roosevelt’s New Deal in the Thirties and the notion that the New Deal doesn’t just have to be about



Mike Smith

“The creative industries are the backbone of the British economy. Now, more than ever, we need to nurture them...”

**MIKE SMITH, COLUMBIA**

building new houses or new roads,” says Columbia Records UK managing director Mike Smith, who sits within the NDOTM coalition.



“You can have a way to encourage artists and the creative people around them and find roles for them.”

While NDOTM brings about new thinking and ideas, it also requires commercial expertise to be implemented successfully. This comes via Creative Business Limited (CBL), a venture between Rich Futures and Music Technology Ltd, which is the legal/deal-making agency for NDOTM. CBL is already actively scoping out and signing deals with various music companies and blue-chip brands.

“The deal-making function that CBL brings to the table is that, instead of NDOTM being all about

handouts, we bring in deal partners to monetise and drive commerce from creativity and technological innovation,” says Clive Rich, co-principal of Rich Futures alongside Paul Brown, who last week became UK managing director for Spotify.

Rich explains that, if NDOTM is the philosophical concept behind new business strategies to unlock creative potential, CBL provides the commercial and strategic nous to drive the ideas forward in the market.

“The idea is to create a new, prosperous Britain by creating new, prosperous Britons that emanate from the worlds of creativity and technology,” says Rich.

Music Technology Ltd director Ben Wolff says, “As a songwriter, producer and inventor of software, we need new deal-making in the new deal economy that is quick, fair and creative in the way that we all are. This can allow the creative industries to create industry creatively.”

A cross-party summit meeting at Downing Street took place a fortnight ago between members of the NDOTM coalition, Culture Secretary Andy Burnham, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions James

Purnell and Shadow Culture Minister Ed Vaizey, among others.

Smith says, “It was not about, as has been the case in the past, going cap in hand to the Government for more money. It was about finding ways to bring our ideas and expertise to government to try and create new opportunities for people.”

Representatives from the music business are drafting their proposals to government and will submit these after Easter.

“The creative industries are the backbone of the British economy,” says Smith. “Now, more than ever, we need to nurture them.”

Ironically, news of the NDOTM emerged just two weeks after the Government announced its intention to end the New Deal for Musicians scheme, which allowed unemployed musicians to receive Government benefits as long as they spent a minimum of 30 hours a week honing their musical skills.

It will be replaced from October by a single Flexible New Deal, under which the unemployed will be referred to private or charitable organisations for help with finding work.

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## Editorial Paul Williams



### This new, New Deal could mean a great deal indeed for the industry

**AHEAD OF THE G20 GATHERING IN LONDON LAST WEEK,** Gordon Brown spoke of the world's leaders doing "whatever it takes to create growth and the jobs we need".

The UK Government's delivery of this so far has been largely about the country trying to build its way out of recession, with the Prime Minister in January, for example, announcing the biggest council house building programme for decades; a move that would both help the housing crisis and give a desperately-needed boost to the ailing construction industry.

Brown is adamant the UK can spend itself to safety, despite the concerns of others, not least the Governor of the Bank of England. But, while the debate about the PM's approach rumbles on, what is clear is that so far there has been one vital component missing in any economic stimulus to try to get the UK working again: the part that can be played by its creative industries.

The launch of the New Deal Of The Mind (NDOTM) can correct that huge oversight, however. And given the creative industries make up more than 8% of the UK's GDP and are growing at a faster rate than the rest of the economy, their input could make a serious difference in trying to turn the UK's economic fortunes around.

Music will play a central part in this initiative, which owes its origins to President Roosevelt's New Deal of the 1930s when the programme rolled out was not just about the likes of road-building and constructing bridges and public buildings, but achieved much in education and arts, too.

For this new, new deal, these are very early days. For starters, the music industry has not yet even submitted its proposals to the Government. But what is clear is that the will to make it a success is there from across the creative sector and it has cross-party political support.

Its launch at the end of last month in 11 Downing Street, where politicians mixed with 50 key people from across the creative world may, at first glance, have had eerie echoes of Tony Blair and Noel Gallagher clinking glasses at the height of Cool Britannia. But what is unfolding here could be the beginning of an initiative that could make a real difference to the economy and individuals' lives.

If it works, the NDOTM could more effectively use money that is already there, including tapping into Lottery funds or redirecting cash that would otherwise simply go on benefits. That last point echoes the Enterprise Allowance Scheme of the last recession two decades ago when the likes of Alan McGee were given £40 a week and free business advice, rather than leaving them to languish on the dole.

The NDOTM also has a proper commercial framework behind it through Creative Business Limited, which is already seeking out deals with appropriate music companies and brands to ensure this initiative is not simply some gimmick to make creative executives and politicians feel better about themselves in these tough times but one that can really help the economy.

With the continuing decline of UK manufacturing and even our once-great service industries dramatically on the wane, at least the creative industries remain an outlet of economic strength. It would be criminal therefore if, in these severely tough times, this strength were not properly used to try to help people back to work.

Do you have any views on this column? Feel free to comment by emailing [paul@musicweek.com](mailto:paul@musicweek.com)