



DORSET
Local Enterprise Partnership

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Getting Building Fund (GBF)

End of Project Report

University Centre and Rural Business Hub

OCTOBER 2022

PROJECT SUMMARY

The University Centre and Rural Business Hub received £3.465m of capital funding to create a flagship development at Kingston Maurward College ("KMC") close to Dorchester, in rural Dorset.

Now construction has completed, the project will enhance opportunities for young people in areas of poor social mobility, enable growth in the small rural businesses predominant in the area, and provide a locus for partner universities to come together to utilise the estate as a site of knowledge transfer and research.

There is nothing like this in rural Dorset, and it has the potential to be game-changing for the communities it will serve.

The 875 sqm build sits at the gateway to the Estate, both enhancing the aesthetic appeal of this entrance, but also making a bold statement as to the ambition and drive of the organisation as a whole. It has become the opening vista to a core learning and experiential estate in the heart of rural Dorset.

Evidence demonstrates there is a significant deficiency in HE progression in rural Dorset (36% vs 42% for England, 2019) and this is amplified for those from low-income families (17% vs 26% for England, 2019). Not only are we worse at getting young people qualified here, if they are poor we do even more badly. Intervention is required. A full HE degree (NVQ Level 6 equivalent) is widely recognised to add in excess of £150,000 to an individual's lifetime earnings.

The current proportion of those with just an NVQ 4+ in Dorset Local Authority Area is 36.4% compared to an average of 40.0%. This amounts to a raw gap of 7,236 working age people compared to the rest of England. The average salary gap for Level 3 and 4 NVQ certifications are £1,723 pa, a net average gap for rural Dorset of £12,467,628 pa of lost income, which could have reduced Dorset's productivity gap. There is thus both a social and economic imperative to enhancing Dorset' higher technical and academic firepower.

Engagement with business will allow the rural Unitary Authority ("UA") area to work towards diminishing the current £2.5B productivity gap across the Dorset LEP area.

The combination of a University Centre with a Rural Business Hub will allow Dorset LEP to realise the opportunities described in its own commissioned work, The South-West Rural Productivity Commission. The businesses in the rural areas are predominantly small, and notwithstanding the other challenges of IT infrastructure and connectivity in general, a key barrier to both start-up and scale-up is the presence of business support and guidance. This Centre will provide this.

There is the synergy of bringing together a Higher Education ("HE") hub with a Business one – bringing together HE partners allows development and sharing of research and fruitful Knowledge Exchange, allowing incubation of new ideas and development of Intellectual Property ("IP"). This will support the growth of Dorset's green, land and heritage economies on a site with easy access to key road and mainline rail infrastructure, and a 'living lab' on the doorstep.

Knowledge exchange and partner work with research will raise the profile of both the College and the Dorset UA area, encouraging a development and further investment in higher skills.

Project start date	23 rd October 2020
Project construction start date	16 th August 2021
Project completion date	31 st August 2022

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES:

Outputs:

The output is the development of new 875sqm flagship building on poor quality existing building resource to act as anchor point for University Education within rural Dorset within the Rural Business and Agri-Environment fields. The building layout is split between 650sqm of educational space and 225sqm of commercial space.

The design of the building takes the space and surrounding into context with a single storey development utilising the natural gradient of the slope to create two levels with a mezzanine, the building achieves the maximum footprint without compromising the view.

In addition, the building has appropriate gables and sightlines, using materials to ensure compatibility with landscape.



The development has replaced a range of outdated and poor condition building provision, which were mainly used as workshop and storage space. These buildings were typically clad and roofed in asbestos sheets, as a result they were prohibitively expensive to repair or refurbish and therefore were in a state of 'safe managed decline'.

Please see below a selection of images showing the previous building (photo on the left - building straight ahead) and several photos during the construction process.



Outcomes:

The intended outcomes of the project are as follows:

OUTCOME	Unit	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	TOTAL PROJECTIONS
Third Sector Match Funding (Revenue)	£000s	0	0	227	409	549	1,185
Third Sector Match Funding (In-Kind)	£000s	49	96	132	135	137	549
Third Sector Funding (Total)	£000s	49	96	359	544	686	1,734
Increase in turnover	£m	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.79	1.31	2.36
New jobs - academic - direct	FTEs	0	0	3	2	2	7
New jobs - ancillary - direct	FTEs	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total Jobs	FTEs	0	0	5	2	2	9
Construction jobs	FTEs	0	11	0	0	0	11
Land unlocked	sqm	0	1750	0	0	0	1750
Commercial Floorspace	Sqm	0	225	0	0	0	225
New Learning floorspace	Sqm	0	650	0	0	0	650
External space added	sqm	0	0	875	0	0	875
HE Learning Opportunities	No.	0	0	70	70	70	210
Businesses Supported	No.	0	0	25	25	25	75
Knowledge Exchange Partnerships	No.	0	0	2	1	2	5
IP generation	No.	0	0	0	0	1	1
1.8% variance reduction between rural Dorset HE progression and England's average from 6% to 4.2%	%	0	0	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.8
10% increase to population of rural Dorset with Level 4 qualifications from 25% to 35%	%	0	0	3.3	3.3	3.4	10
1% decrease to GVA gap in rural Dorset	%	0	0	0	0.25	0.75	1

The planned and agreed outcomes of the project are routinely monitored and evaluated.

The remaining outcomes are on-track to be completed by the end of FY24/25, despite the challenges presented thus far by Covid-19.

KMC commits to continue to submit evidence on an annual basis to support the projected outcomes.

BENEFITS REALISED TO DATE

The facility has recently achieved Practical Completion and is in the early stages of being used by KMC.

KMC is gearing up to utilise the new facility – in terms of recruiting new staffing talent, introducing new and existing students and staff to the new facility and progressing discussions with potential partner organisations about developing new Higher Education courses to be based out of the facility.

Future benefits are expected to be significant.

FINANCES

KMC was awarded a £3.465m grant by Dorset LEP. KMC spent over £0.2m in matched revenue

funding since Summer 2020.

LESSONS LEARNT

Project delivery timescales provided the greatest challenge on the project, given the vagaries of securing planning permission for a large-scale development situated within a historic II designated parkland and 750-acre estate, undertaking procurement, value engineering and then completing construction all undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An executive project delivery team was formed at the outset and met at least weekly to ensure close coordination, communication and to ensure timely decision-making.

The major risks were COVID-19, timescales, planning, cost escalation, supply chain challenges, ground conditions during winter construction.

Having experienced partners on the project, especially in the area of project management, ensured that the project could be delivered successfully.

SUCCESS STORY

This has been a successful project. KMC has created a flagship development that will enhance the opportunities for young people in areas of poor social mobility, enable growth in the small rural businesses predominant in the area, and provide a locus for partner universities to come together to utilise the estate and site of knowledge transfer and research. There is nothing like this in rural Dorset, and this has potential to be game-changing for the communities it will serve.

The formal opening of the facility is expected in January 2023, however, a soft launch event took place in October 2022 as part of opening day of Dorset Council's Festival of the Future event which was well attended by businesses and other delegates. This is only the beginning of the use of the facility and we are very excited about the long-term potential of this building.

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