



DORSET
Local Enterprise Partnership

IT Infrastructure Upgrade

End of Project Report

February 2021

PROJECT SUMMARY

Kingston Maurward College (KMC) is a land-based specialist college which delivers skills and training to students from the age of 16 upwards. KMC has a country estate of some 750 acres which generates commercial revenue through tourism and events management.

An audit of KMC's ICT infrastructure identified an urgent need for core systems and components to be upgraded across the campus; the aim of the project was to fully upgrade the IT infrastructure across the college campus in order to improve the student user experience; to prepare the estate for the introduction of 5G and Superfast capacity as part of Superfast Dorset rollout; to upgrade and reconfigure network across the campus to create a more robust IT infrastructure; and to enable business resilience and a platform for growth.

The majority of project objectives were achieved, with upgrades completed as planned. However, due to the Covid pandemic, some aspects of the upgrade had to be reprioritised.

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|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Project start date | 5 June 2020 |
| Project completion date | 5 February 2021 |

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES:

Dorset LEP funding of £124,733 has enabled KMC to fundamentally improve its network architecture and resilience. This has been incredibly helpful during the pandemic, and provides a springboard for future growth.

Investments included 2 new servers, significant additional memory and storage, 60 new desktop computers for student use, and new switches to enable much faster communications across the estate and college campus. This is also enabled new WIFI access points and improvements to servers and backup systems.

As a result of the investment, student experience and learning outcomes will be enhanced, as will the visitor experience for conferencing and weddings. This additional commercial opportunity means that there will be possibilities to expand this component of the business, as well as ensuring the highest quality opportunity for young people in the county of Dorset. Local business and start-ups will be supported in turn.

Due to the pandemic and a change in priorities, some of the planned upgrades have been reprioritised, but will be planned into future capital programmes.

Over 300 staff at the College have been upskilled due to the requirement to introduce on-line learning at a rapid pace due to Covid 19. The purchasing of new hardware for staff, 60 laptops, upgrading the network and switches and increased speed of network enabled the provision of on-line learning for students which would not have been possible without this new equipment. Upgraded and improved infrastructure has enabled high quality teaching and learning on-line, enhancing student experience and increasing in-year retention by 5% and attracting 58 additional full time 16-18 year olds students to apply.

The commercial areas will re-open from 12 April and a large increase in visitor numbers is anticipated. A new Estate Shop has just opened, further enhancing the customer and visitor experience to the estate.

Wedding bookings are high and new enquiries for conferences and social events are increasing. Due to the expected increase in commercial activity KMC have appointed a new wedding co-ordinator, we will appoint a shop supervisor and two new catering assistants to work in the Barn café.

The intended outcomes of the project are as follows:

| INDICATORS | | FY 2020/21 | FY 2021/22 | FY 2022/23 | FY 2023/24 | FY 2024/25 | Total PROJECTIONS |
|---|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| New jobs | FTEs | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Retained jobs | FTEs | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Up-skilled jobs | FTEs | 20 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 220 |
| Productivity value increase | % | 5% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5% |
| No. of businesses relocated to LEP region | No | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| No. of new business start ups | No | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| No. of new trainees/ apprentices/ work placements | No | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| No. of visitors/tourists | No | 2500 | 2500 | 2500 | 2500 | 2500 | 10500 |

The project has created four new jobs in commercial areas, and three new IT technicians have been appointed. Eight staff were retained in the commercial and IT departments.

SUCCESS STORY

Dorset LEP funding has resulted in a partnership with a specialist local IT company, and enabled the college to look at much wider aims and strategic objectives resulting in a greater impact to both infrastructure and staff and student experience than the original outcomes that were identified.

The project has enabled KMC's Senior Management Team and Governing Body to evaluate the infrastructure and direction of travel in terms of information and communications technology (ICT) and resulting in a significant three-year investment into the organisation in the partnership.

Laptop Refresh (60 laptops)

- *Allowed for more E Learning to Students*
- *Facilitate more flexible working for staff*

- *Loan of equipment to students*
- *More efficient and fit for purpose devices for day-to-day work.*

Switching/Network upgrades

- *Improved speed and access to network*
- *Improve proactive monitoring of network traffic and managing uptime.*
- *Advanced visibility of network and support tools to address problems.*
- *Future proof core network for new buildings, rooms, and growth*

Replacement UPS

- *Ensure safe shut down of Servers and equipment.*
- *Increase uptime of the campus removing failing kit*
- *Ensure proficient surge protection from electricity spikes.*

New Backup Server

- *Increased space for further backup retentions and restore points.*
- *Reduced backup failures as disc were running out of space.*
- *Increased resilience in backup restores points in the event of a failure.*

LESSONS LEARNT

The pandemic placed significant strain on IT systems, as a rapid movement to online delivery of learning and meetings required both more bandwidth and system capacity. The LEP funding in this instance was exactly the right thing at the right time, and demonstrates the need for robust systems architecture in IT.

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