



**DORSET**

Local Enterprise Partnership

**Kingston Maurward  
College**

**End of Project Report**

**November 2016**

## **Project Summary**

Dorset has a very long and proud tradition of farming, which has helped to shape Dorset's beautiful landscape and it plays a key part in the economic activity of rural Dorset. Dorset also boasts a varied selection of locally produced food and drink, including meat, fish, dairy and wine.

Dorset is home to Kingston Maurward College, which provides nationally recognised education and training in agriculture and farming to students across the UK. £900k of Growth Deal funding was allocated to Kingston Maurward College to support investment in infrastructure and equipment resources to develop an agri-tech centre to support the development of skills needed to sustain this key sector. A further £300k was put into the project by the college.

## **Review of Business Case**

This project was included within the "Transforming Dorset" Strategic Economic Plan, which was used for the bid to Government for the first round of Growth Deal Funding. Kingston Maurward College was not successful in gaining funding through Growth Deal 1.

When Growth Deal 2 was subsequently announced, Dorset LEP put forward a number of projects for consideration, 6 projects were approved by Government and £12.6m was allocated to deliver them. £900k was allocated to Kingston Maurward College for the agri-tech project for the 2016/17 financial year.

Following discussions with Kingston Maurward College and sign off from Dorset LEP Board in November 2015, the agri-tech project was brought forward with the aim of completing as much work as possible within the 2015/16 funded year, in order to utilise available funds.

## **Planned Outputs**

1. Construction of a new dedicated workshop to enable the creation of a base for agri-tech science resources/equipment to support innovation e.g. soil analysis, climate change analysis.  
The original submission was for the refurbishment of an existing workshop, however subsequent project analysis highlighted that a new building could be constructed on the site of the existing workshop for the same level of capital expenditure, thus providing greater long term value for the same level of investment.
2. Purchase of latest integrated precision farming system for monitoring of soil nutrients and crop establishment: all-terrain vehicle with GPS technology for sampling/analysis and production of soil maps and 150-160hp tractor fully equipped with instrumentation to read map specifications with CVT transmission and auto-steering sensors to guide travel paths and calibration for variable rates for seed sowing/fertiliser distribution;
3. Purchase of resources/equipment to monitor livestock health plans including blood tests, artificial insemination, feed utilisation, foot care to improve efficiency, welfare, meat/milk yields and reduce carbon emissions.

## Achievement of Outputs

The contemporary agri-tech centre was completed in June 2016, approximately 5 months ahead of the original schedule and took five months to build. It positions Kingston Maurward College at the forefront of agricultural training facilities in the region, fundamental to advancing career prospects of workers and students in the county.

The agri-tech centre, covering 325m<sup>2</sup>, includes agricultural classrooms, an IT suite, a high spec workshop and machinery facilities.

Prestigious John Deere equipment from Dorchester's Smart Agricultural Services was also purchased including nine tractors, GPS tractor, plough, sprayer and variable rate drill – bringing Kingston Maurward College to the forefront of agricultural learning facilities in the country. Students will really benefit from using this modern machinery and gain invaluable hands-on experience as they look to develop careers in the rapidly modernising agriculture sector.

## Outcome

- Number of students enrolled 2016/17: 100
- Number of apprentices enrolled 2016/17: 10

Final figures will be available at the end of the academic year and will feed into continued outcome reporting.

## Benefits Realised to date

A Dorset [agri-tech proposition](#) was published in September 2016 by the LEP Inward Investment sub group, to highlight Dorset as a key destination for investment, with the agri-tech centre as a key selling point.

The South West was offered a "market stall" at the Game Changing Technologies in Agriculture for the bioeconomy event held in London on 6th October. Dorset's Inward Investment team represented Dorset LEP to around 250 specially invited guests from:

- Multi-nationals
- SMEs
- Universities & Research institutions
- Innovative organisations and catapults
- Start ups

## Review of Project Objectives

RAG Review of Objectives	Status	Comments
<b>Time</b>		The project was brought forward to utilise funds, it concluded five months earlier than originally profiled, in June 2016.
<b>Cost</b>		The project came in on budget, utilising the £900k Growth Deal investment in full.
<b>Quality</b>		The project delivered all outputs exactly as described in the business case.
<b>Scope</b>		The project was adjusted as project analysis highlighted that a new building could be constructed on the site of the existing workshop for the same level of capital expenditure thus providing greater long term value for the same level of investment.

<b>Benefits</b>		The benefits realised to date have exceeded expectations at this stage. Ongoing monitoring of student numbers will capture further benefits over time.
<b>Risk</b>		No significant risks reported.

## Conclusion

Growth Deal Funding has enabled Kingston Maurward College to establish an agri-tech centre which brings them to the forefront of agricultural learning facilities in the country. Students will really benefit from using this modern machinery and gain invaluable hands-on experience as they look to develop careers in agriculture.

The agri-tech centre, just months after completion, has started to attract inward investment opportunities. This will benefit the industry-led curriculum at Kingston Maurward College, the agri-tech sector in this area and for the UK, and will have additional benefits to the economy across Dorset.

Luke Rake, Principal of Kingston Maurward College said:

"The Agri-tech building has provided a focal point for development of wider understanding of precision agriculture and related technologies in the South West. Kingston Maurward College is working with a consortium of LEPs in the region to utilise the building and increase knowledge exchange and value added to farm enterprises. For full-time students, the improved facility has positively impacted learning and improved skills, enabling students to move on directly into employment following completion of their course."

Gordon Page, Chairman of the Dorset LEP said:

"This impressive facility will give students invaluable hands-on experience as they look to develop careers in agriculture. Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership is committed to supporting the county's rural strengths and high quality specialist education. This was a priority project for us and we managed to accelerate the project start and delivery date. We're delighted to have secured £900,000 to co-fund Kingston Maurward College's agri-tech centre that will benefit hundreds of students now and in the years to come."

Clare Davison, former Principal of Kingston Maurward College said:

"The College is extremely grateful and fortunate to have had the support of Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership in order to be able to complete this project. Their support in co-financing this project has enabled the College to invest not only in a wonderful new facility, but also in state of the art equipment totalling some £1.2 million. Every year employer and student expectations rise. The College must continue to apply and adopt new science and technological developments in order to carry on thriving and remain relevant to the industries it serves and the students that enrol here. Access to these contemporary facilities and equipment will enable the take up of breakthroughs across nutrition, informatics, remote sensing and low impact agriculture. All of this can be exploited across the rural Dorset economy to help increase productivity."