

Coast to Capital



HM Government

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Plumpton College

Project Summary

Plumpton College is a specialist training and education centre for land-based industries including countryside management, metal work as well as sport, food-based courses and Maths and English. Specialist courses taught at the college support businesses located across the South East that work in the land-based industries by aiming to fill gaps in skilled workforce.

The college required new farming equipment and associated updated technology to meet the requirements of emerging and innovative farming and land management methods. In addition, some areas of the college had become tired looking and was not being used to full potential. The project intended to provide students with the required skillset for land-based industries, refurbished classrooms and shared learning areas and reconfigured space to facilitate learning.

£2,298,500 Local Growth Funds

Project Achievements

Local Growth Fund of £2,298,500 was awarded by Coast to Capital to support the project and £3,704,629.96 of match was contributed which created a benefit cost ratio of £1:£1.61. The priority given to the project was insightful in the context of the government's current Adult Skills agenda and the step-change in support for the improvement of further education estates and resources.



The project has achieved many outputs that benefit new and existing students, staff and businesses. Farm equipment and new technologies were purchased for the use by students to learn the skills needed to progress into land-based job roles or further education. This included new software used in the industry that will give students an all-encompassing experience whilst learning.

On the College campus 0.5 km of new road was built to provide access through to additional parking facilities and flood defence works resulted in 75 ha of land with reduced likelihood of flooding. Management of this land and the wider farm estate has since been awarded 'Linking Environment and Farming' accreditation which applies to less than 5% of farmed land across the UK and was made possible by infrastructure improvements funded by the project.



The College was able to reclaim 24,000 sqm of site with the development of the 'Walled Garden' horticultural training facility at Stanmer Park. This facility is unique within the UK and has enabled Plumpton College to meet the significant growth in demand for Horticulture and Woodland Management training. It was a key enabler in the college being awarded a national contract with the Royal Horticultural Society for apprenticeship delivery. In addition, 225 sqm of commercial space was created within the Walled Garden through the development of a farm shop within a redundant glasshouse and an associated external plant sales area. This facility now allows our students exposure to the full business cycle of commercial horticulture.



26,240 sqm of refurbished, rationalised & reconfigured learning & commercial floorspace

After



The college itself underwent improvements and reconfiguration work that resulted in 585 sqm of rationalised floor space where classrooms and shared learning areas were repurposed to make the best use of the space. 1,430 sqm of learning space was refurbished including a Maths and English hub which results in a working space that students thrive in.

This work enabled 376 service improvements, created 63 new jobs, safeguarded 42 jobs and resulted in 483 new learners and 249 new apprentices. Lastly, as the college works closely with businesses in the land-based industry, this project has directly supported 250 enterprises because students attending Plumpton will form the skilled workforce needed in the industry for the future.

105 Jobs
483 Learners
249 Apprenticeships

Project Benefits

The ultimate measure of success for this project is the positive destination data for the 2019/20 student cohort which shows that 75% of students continue into employment or further education.

Since the project began in 2016 Plumpton College has been able to use the improvements funded by this project to significantly enhance its strategic position as the leading provider of land-based education in the South East.

The LGF investment in developing the quality and industry standard of the farm, together with the improvement in the generic facilities has allowed the college to take a more strategic regional and national perspective with its business engagement and employer support. For example, the college now works closely with the Agricultural and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the national levy funded organisations for the two sectors and is a lead in the development of the industry professional competency framework. This work has led to the college being represented on the Government's newly formed Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH) which is leading on industry competency skills and training supply.

Additionally, the improvements to the farm specifically have improved the reputation of the College with stakeholders, including NFU, Farming and Rural Issues Group South East and has facilitated the college to secure 4 national training contracts including butchery for a supermarket. Operating more efficiently has had a greater positive impact on the environment and teaching potential has kept pace with changes.

Improvements to the water quality leaving the site is a result of advancements made to the farmyard area. An analysis is carried out on a weekly basis which shows the improvements but more importantly, some of the surveys carried out by the fisheries department with their students and the species found in the watercourses, help demonstrate this further.



Having a range of modern equipment on the farm such as the tractor, drill and sprayer enables showcasing of the latest technologies within agriculture to students. It enables the farming business to be more sustainable as new 'vari-rate' methods are used. Put simply by being able to utilise GPS and yield map fields there is capacity to spray only areas of weed burden and fertilise areas in need. This reduces the impact we have on the environment whilst at the same time enabling cost efficiency. The college could not have secured LEAF accreditation without these improvements and are now looking to work closely with Sussex Wildlife Trust as the next step of our estate management.



The increased profile that this project has given the college has led to greater business engagement and support. This has been demonstrated not only in an increased AGM attendance and in the successful securing of national apprenticeship contracts but also in the 270% increase in applications for related courses.

A key aspect of the project has been working with employers and this has been boosted by both resources and the reputational impact of this project. The College now work with employers in a variety of ways to support their business growth, whether developing their future talent pipeline via our industry placement and work experience service, upskilling existing staff and developing new recruits via our land based focused apprenticeship programmes, ensuring their staff are operationally competent and compliant via a suite of Lantra and NPTC training and assessment courses or supporting their recruitment needs by delivering bespoke pre employment programmes (sector based work academies) linked to their immediate job opportunities.

An example of the range of support interventions that are now provided - Vine-works, a leading UK vineyard management company benefit from the range of business services offered by the college. Requiring assistance with recruiting seasonal staff they turned to the college for support. After spending time with the business to understand their need, a sector-based work academy was developed providing them with a pool of job seekers to interview who had all attended a weeklong intensive employability and skills training course. The college also works with the employer as their apprenticeship provider of choice, supporting them from point of recruitment via the college's free apprenticeship recruitment service to delivering the country's only viticulture apprenticeship to employees. By supporting the college's career events and giving industry talks to full time students the company has begun to develop a pipeline of potential future employees, raising awareness of available work opportunities whether seasonal or part time suitable for existing students or full time for those who finish their college studies.

The Walled Garden at Stanmer



During



Complete