

STATES OF JERSEY



DIGITAL SKILLS (S.R.9/2014): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Presented to the States on 2nd October 2014
by the Minister for Economic Development**

STATES GREFFE

**DIGITAL SKILLS (S.R.9/2014): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Ministerial Response to: S.R.9/2014

Review title: Digital Skills

Scrutiny Panel: Economic Affairs

FINDINGS

	Findings	Comments
1	The Sub-Panel was concerned by the relatively low volume of submissions received directly from the digital industry, but acknowledges that it is itself relatively small in scale at present and is well represented by Digital Jersey.	The relatively low level of direct responses is a testament to the trust that the digital sector in Jersey places in Digital Jersey. They (Digital Jersey) are acting as aggregators of the diverse range of views on many topics exhibited by the digital sector.
2	Stakeholders have predominantly reacted positively to Digital Jersey's 'Developing a Digital Jersey' Strategy although particular concerns were raised regarding highly ambitious job creation targets.	The Minister welcomes the fact that the majority of Stakeholders responded positively to the Panel's approaches. Whilst the targets set might appear high, the Minister welcomes the ambition shown by both the Digital Jersey Board and Executive in setting such high targets in consultation with industry Stakeholders. The Economic Development Department (EDD) will continue to monitor and report on the progress being made.
3	Despite some set-backs, Digital Jersey is an increasingly active organisation, now responsible for a wide-range of initiatives and engagement throughout the digital and social communities. The successful launch and subsequent opportunities provided by the Digital Hub are of particular note.	The Minister both welcomes and shares the Sub-Panels views and recognises that Digital Jersey is now delivering high-profile, high quality initiatives that are driving real value amongst both the sector and social groupings. The Digital Hub represents a significant investment by Digital Jersey in establishing an <i>avant-garde</i> local footprint and focal point for future digital development, appealing to a wide cross section of age and industry groups.
4	The 'Vision for IT in Education' is subject to a short timeframe, 2013-2015, but contains long term objectives.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by Education, Sport and Culture (ESC) to IT education in Jersey. It is the short term investment that will drive much longer term education, skills and training outputs that will help secure the future employment interests of the digital sector.
5	Work on a new IT Strategy for schools began considerably before September 2012, but the	

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	final 'Vision for IT' was not launched until October 2013.	
6	Reaction to the Education, Sport and Culture 'Vision for IT in Education 2013-15' has been broadly supportive, although there has been some criticism that this Vision should have been produced sooner.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey.
7	The significant opportunity presented by fibre connections to initiate change in the way IT is taught and used in all schools is recognised. However, such a change is not so dependent on fibre that an earlier IT strategy could not have been developed and implemented.	
8	Unlike previously implemented Education IT Strategies, the 'Vision for IT in Education 2013-15' is not predominantly about hardware and software, but about changing the nature of teaching, changing the role of teachers and changing the relationship between the teacher, the learner and the learning.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey. The new inter-relationship between teacher, learner and learning is to be welcomed but in the view of the Department should extend further to include both employers and social/third-sector groupings, who are the ultimate 'end-users' of the education process.
9	Development of all individual school business plans was originally due to be completed by January 2014, subsequently extended to March, with implementation beginning from the start of the year. It is concerning that in June 2014, Education, Sport and Culture still had 10 schools requiring minor amendments to plans and 6 schools identified as needing more help.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey. The Minister for ED would take a more pragmatic view to that of the Sub-Panel in that it is perhaps more important to take the time to establish robust, deliverable business plans most likely to deliver the quality and quantity of 'future employees' having the knowledge and skill sets that industry is likely to require.
10	Requiring individual schools to develop their IT Business Plans represents a significant change from previous 'top-down' culture in the Education, Sport and Culture Department. Whilst recognising the advantages this presents to schools to tailor to their needs, this has been a	

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	significant challenge, even more so for some schools than others.	
11	The first phase of funding (£1.5 million) for the implementation of school IT Business Plans will be made available to schools for the start of the school year in September 2014. However, whilst this money is available, funding for the second phase will need to be secured through the next Medium Term Financial Plan.	Funding for future Schools IT business plans is a vital component of the 2016-19 MTFP and the new Minister for ED will probably work closely with the new Minister for ES&C to ensure that appropriate priority and funding is given to this.
12	The Panel has been disappointed during parts of this Review with avoidable delays on the part of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture in ensuring his Department's adequate and timely engagement with the Scrutiny process. This has significantly impacted our ability to complete the Review within the intended timeframe.	
13	With all schools being different, not all are expected by ESC to complete and implement their IT Business Plans at the same speed. ESC is actively targeting more support at the schools that are less confident or equipped to develop such a process.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey.
14	Some schools have worked in clusters to develop their business plans. This involves a secondary school grouping together with feeder primary schools to minimise inconsistencies in the digital skills levels amongst the feeder schools themselves, and between a Secondary school and its feeder Primaries.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by school groupings and ESC to IT education in Jersey – it is important that a continuum of IT learning is put in place throughout the education process that produces the quantity and quality of future local IT employees.
15	Whilst there are notable potential advantages, initial concerns have been identified about ESC's approach of requiring schools to develop	

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	their own IT business plan, including how this might affect consistency and the need for appropriate support to be provided by ESC to schools.	
16	To encourage consistency, all school IT business plans must be approved by Education, Sport and Culture to secure funding, with assessment criteria and guidelines having been shared with all schools from the beginning of the business plan process.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey.
17	It is too early to judge either way whether Education, Sport and Culture's approach of requiring schools to develop their own IT Business Plans, rather than top-down, has been successful.	
18	Stakeholders are unanimous that a digital divide amongst schools and pupils must not be allowed to grow. If consistency is not managed as effectively as planned by Education, Sport and Culture, then the current Vision for IT in Education might inadvertently exacerbate this problem.	The Minister for ED shares the view of Stakeholders and will work closely with Ministerial colleagues to avoid any future growth in 'digital divide'.
19	There is currently no social premium within Education, Sport and Culture's IT funding model to try to assist those schools and pupils facing the biggest challenges regarding IT.	
20	Education, Sport and Culture's approach to e-safety has changed. Previously top-down, schools now have the option to develop an individually tailored policy if they so choose, within Education, Sport and Culture guidelines.	
21	Despite changes to the model of establishing e-safety policies in schools, pupil safety must always remain the absolute priority.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach and shares the views of the Sub-Panel.

	Findings	Comments
22	Education, Sport and Culture has in post an e-Learning and e-Safety co-ordinator to provide schools with relevant information and training, to establish appropriate individual policies and to oversee consistency.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey.
23	The challenge of changing the teaching culture, methods and environment within schools to achieve the aims and objectives of the 'Vision for IT' is widely acknowledged and not underestimated.	
24	Teacher training features prominently in the thinking and plans of Education, Sport and Culture and identification of each school's need is a core requirement of the IT Business Plans.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey.
25	It is not yet apparent that there has been significant delivery of teacher training despite the upcoming implementation of the 'Vision for IT' from September 2015.	
26	All pupils have an entitlement to appropriate standards of teaching. This will be monitored by Education, Sport and Culture with regard to teachers' use of technology.	
27	Education, Sport and Culture will in part use the Professional Partnering Programme to help monitor implementation of the Vision for IT and maintain appropriate standards in the use by teachers of technology to effectively enhance learning.	
28	There were previous differences of opinion between Education, Sport and Culture and Digital Jersey about the appropriate level of focus on developing suitably skilled school leavers to help meet industry requirements.	The Minister for ED is glad that any previous concerns regarding level of focus have been eliminated and that a broad-reaching and combined approach to the future IT development of school leavers has now been agreed and is in the process of being delivered.

	Findings	Comments
29	Education, Sport and Culture and Digital Jersey are now in agreement that students exiting school at 16 should have a range of skills. This should be a combination of specific curriculum based knowledge and more generalised skills including teamwork, problem solving and communication.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC and Digital Jersey to future education priorities in Jersey.
30	Digital Jersey has commented positively on the direction of travel established in the development of digital skills for school pupils by the Vision for IT in Education.	The Minister for ED welcomes the fact that a coordinated and combined 'direction of travel' has now been agreed.
31	IT skills in schools will be developed in 2 distinguishable ways via the 'Vision for IT'. Firstly, general digital skills of all pupils should be improved through the change in teaching culture and methodology, and secondly, and more directly, by the introduction of a new IT curriculum from September 2014.	The Minister for ED welcomes this new approach by ESC to IT education in Jersey.
32	Despite some courses at Highlands College, the formal provision of professional digital skills education post 16 is limited. It appears that the digital industry has recognised a need to bridge this gap through its own initiatives.	Working in conjunction with the Skills Executive, it is paramount Highlands College signs up to and delivers a future programme of digitally-focused learning programmes that meet the needs of both employers and students. Digital Jersey is committed to working with Highlands and the Skills Executive to deliver programmes that are aligned to short and medium term demand from industry.
33	It is widely accepted that some specialised inward migration will be required to stimulate and support the growth of a thriving digital sector in Jersey.	The Minister for ED strongly welcomes this Sub-Panel Finding and looks forward to working with new Ministerial colleagues to broker a solution that allocates an appropriate number of delegated licences under both the current Interim Population Policy and any future Migration Policy that can be reserved solely for the needs of the digital sector. The Economic Growth and Diversification Strategy and Enterprise Action Plan are predicated on allowing appropriate levels of inward migration to support the growth and diversification of the digital sector and, by doing so, create further job opportunities for local people.

	Findings	Comments
34	States policy requires a 1:4 ratio of inward migration v's local appointments in the sector.	The Minister for ED recognises that future inward migration may well follow such a historical trend and that such a trend is prevalent within the digital sector. See answer to 33 above.
35	Local employment opportunities in the emerging digital sector are more than just skilled IT positions, and include more general business support roles.	The future growth of the digital sector is likely to provide opportunities for a wide cross section of employees, however it is vital that Government continues to make its investment at the strategic level and thereby encourage industry and individuals to make their own investment in order to capitalise on economic growth opportunities.
36	There are concerns that the timelines of the Digital Jersey strategy and Education, Sport and Culture Vision do not appear to converge as would be necessary to meet Digital Jersey's short and medium term goals regarding local jobs.	In addition to the ESC initiatives in terms of education, it is important that the Sub-Panel recognises that some of the differential would be eliminated through limited inward migration.
37	The new IT curriculum begins from September 2014. It will be a number of years before the first pupils will leave school with the benefit of its full cycle.	
38	Steps have been taken to try to bridge the short-medium term gaps in skills development between Digital Jersey's strategy and Education's Vision for IT. This has involved some collaborative initiatives between Education, Sport and Culture and Digital Jersey and significant industry based projects, such as those seen at the Digital Hub.	The Minister for ED welcomes recognition by the Sub-Panel of the tremendous progress already made and the momentum being built across both industry and schools in the digital sector. This momentum needs to be maintained and scaled up however if Jersey is to achieve its longer term Growth priorities.
39	Jersey is not alone in recognising the opportunities presented by continually evolving technology, and the need to develop appropriate skills to seize them. Malta and Estonia are often cited as particularly clear examples and are demonstrably more advanced than Jersey in delivering associated strategies.	Whilst other jurisdictions may currently enjoy a 'lead' over Jersey in certain areas, it is important that the Island identify niche areas where it can make early progress and then make the strategic Government investment required to secure 'market leadership' position.
40	Presently only 7.5 per cent of interactions between Islanders and government are carried out in a digital form, electronically.	The current Minister for ED fully supports the drive to achieve the stated 2018 interactions target however recognises that a significant financial investment will be required by the States in order to

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	The States aim to increase digital interactions with Islanders to nearer 75% by 2018.	ensure delivery. It is encouraging that e-government is making good progress with the award of the first significant contract for the detailed design phase due to be awarded in Q4 2014.
41	£7 million is available under current funding for delivery of Phase 1 of the e-government programme, including the establishment of a full service e-government platform by the end of 2016.	The current Minister for ED fully recognises that a significant financial investment will be required by the States in order to ensure delivery of Phase 1 of the e-government programme. The Council of Minister has approved funding for the project which is on schedule. This funding was reconfirmed in the 2015 budget presented to the States by the Minister for Treasury and Resources.
42	Phase 1 of the e-government programme links existing core systems through an 'enterprise service bus', allowing them to talk to each other. This establishes a single citizen portal whereby citizens will be able to digitally interact with the States.	
43	'Tell Us Once' is a core objective of e-government and will require Phase 1 to deliver the necessary capacity for States IT systems to effectively and appropriately talk to each other.	
44	There is an ongoing longer term funding requirement for the second phase of e-government between 2016 and 2019 which will be subject to a successful bid from the next Medium Term Financial Plan.	Funding for Phase 2 of e-government will be a vital component of the 2016-19 MTFP and the new Minister for ED will work closely with the new Council of Ministers to ensure that appropriate priority and funding is given to this work.
45	There is confidence amongst the stakeholders that the target of increasing online/digital interactions with Islanders from 7.5% to near 75% by 2018 is very realistic and should be achieved in the relatively short to medium term.	The Minister for ED shares the confidence of Stakeholders and will work closely with Ministerial colleagues to ensure that appropriate priority and funding is given to this work and delivery against the targets.
46	To help the 25% not accounted for by the States e-government interaction target of 75%, the need for digital skill development initiatives and plans is recognised.	The Minister for ED will work with Digital Jersey and social support groups to put in place a plan for assisting 'the other 25%' to engage with e-government. This will include, but not be limited to, access to both the equipment and training to reduce this figure within a relatively short timeframe.
47	To avoid creation of a community digital divide it will	The Minister for ED will work with Digital Jersey and social support groups to put in place a plan for

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	be essential to train and prepare the population to use the e-government platform effectively, both in terms of skills and connectivity.	assisting 'the other 25%' to engage with e-government and have access to both the equipment and training to reduce this figure within a relatively short timeframe.
48	Digital Jersey has a particular responsibility through its social objectives to address digital divide concerns for the whole community, not least the '25%' group.	The Minister for ED will work with Digital Jersey to put in place a plan to help minimise the digital divide and encourage future online participation.
49	Digital Jersey has accepted that its business plan and strategy does not have adequate depth around general skills development in the overall population and is working to address this situation.	The Minister for ED will work with Digital Jersey to put in place additional components to its current plan that increasingly reflects the need to up-skill a much greater part of the local population.
50	The States also have a responsibility towards the '25%' group and aim to undertake associated education and infrastructure provision through libraries, Highlands College and the Parishes. The States will also continue to offer traditional platforms for service delivery.	
51	The involvement of the Parishes will be critical in achieving some of the targets regarding e-government, particularly for vulnerable sections of society.	
52	Failure to improve the digital skills of the 25% might exacerbate digital divide and may further disadvantage already vulnerable groups in turn undermining major objectives, such as the growth of e-health.	The Minister for ED will work with Digital Jersey to put in place a plan to help minimise the digital divide and encourage future online participation.
53	In the short term, most e-government services will be provided online and require insubstantial connectivity to enable basic web browsing.	The bandwidth required for e-government services to be accessed will not exceed that required to enable basic web browsing (typically 2Mb/sec).
54	More advanced e-health type applications will require higher levels of connectivity, which should be assisted by	The Gigabit Jersey project will deliver the potential for every residential and commercial property to access bandwidth of up to a world-leading 1Gb/sec. This infrastructure will be capable of supporting

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	infrastructure initiatives such as Gigabit Jersey.	present and future e-Health initiatives.
55	In implementing its Gigabit Jersey programme, JT has installed its fibre network to all schools in readiness for Education, Sport and Culture's tender process to provide a new IT network for schools and to over 10,000 homes.	The Minister for ED is grateful for the efforts of ESC and JT in achieving this early-stage investment that will play an important part in Schools delivering future education initiatives capable of reducing future skills and digital divide deficiencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1	The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture must ensure momentum is maintained in the implementation of the 'Vision for IT in Education' to avoid the significant potential consequences of <i>'if you miss it by a month you have missed it by a year'</i> regarding the academic year.				
2	The Minister for Economic Development must ensure that appropriate gathering of statistical information and key performance indicators are undertaken in relation to, and by, Digital Jersey, to inform progress against objectives on an ongoing basis.		Accept	This is standard practice and is already implemented at a number of levels as part of standard EDD Governance activity established in the partnership Agreement.	
3	The next Minister for Education, Sport and Culture will need to prioritise the development of a long term strategy to complement and underpin the long-term objectives of the 'Vision for IT'.				

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
4	The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture must ensure that appropriate gathering of statistical information and key performance indicators are undertaken in relation to the Vision for IT in Education to inform progress against objectives.				
5	It is imperative that the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture secures the required funding in the next Medium Term Financial Plan to keep momentum behind the planned pedagogical changes and associated digital skills development.				
6	The Chief Minister should ensure that Ministers fully comply with the Code of Practice for Scrutiny Panels and the Public Accounts Committee, paying particular attention to the need to provide timely and adequate information to Panels.				
7	The Minister for ES&C must ensure that appropriate support to schools continues to be provided throughout the delivery phase of the 'Vision for IT', and beyond, in order to help achieve its long term ambitions.				
8	All schools should be required by ESC to work in appropriate clusters.				
9	ESC should facilitate scheduled meetings of all Head Teachers (Primary and Secondary) to share best practice in IT. The same should occur for all Heads of IT, either at the same scheduled meetings as Head Teachers or separately.				

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
10	Education, Sport and Culture must work to provide consistency across the Island schools to ensure that the acquisition of digital skills is not a postcode lottery.				
11	An examination should be undertaken by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture about the merits or otherwise of introducing a social premium to the funding of the IT strategy for education from 2016.				
12	School e-safety policy should also educate and equip students to be safer users of the internet outside of school.				
13	It must be ensured that teachers are provided with ongoing training support, and that training and standards of teaching using IT are subject to ongoing monitoring.				
14	A structured, comprehensive programme of identified teacher training requirements should be developed and be ready to implement by Education, Sport and Culture from the start of term in September 2014.				
15	Education, Sport and Culture will need to ensure that new expectations regarding the use of technology to effectively enhance learning are fully communicated to the Professional Partners.				
16	Through assessment of appropriate statistical monitoring and working in partnership with the digital industry, Education, Sport and Culture should be flexible provide appropriate higher education courses and learning opportunities tailored to the digital sector.				

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
17	Through assessment of appropriate statistical monitoring and dialogue, the Ministers for Education, Sport and Culture and Economic Development must work together to help support the growth of the digital sector and achieve associated local employment opportunities.	EDD/ ESC	Accept		
18	Where inward migration occurs, it should be specialised in nature.	EDD	Accept	As a HAWAG Member, the Minister for ED will work with Ministerial colleagues to ensure that priority is given to skilled employees where inward migration is concerned.	
20	To help the success of the highly important 'Tell Us Once' principle, individual departmental IT systems and strategies should be subject to validation by a central co-ordinator to ensure compatibility.				
21	It is imperative that the Minister for Economic Development secures the required funding in the next Medium Term Financial Plan to keep momentum behind the e-government programme.	EDD	Reject	E-government is a cross-government initiative as part of the wider Public Sector Reform Programme and therefore it is the responsibility of ALL Ministers to secure the required level	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
				of funding to sustain momentum.	
22	The Minister for Economic Development should ensure that Digital Jersey adds adequate depth around general skills development in the overall population, including the more vulnerable groups, to its business plan and strategy.	EDD	Accept		
23	There is a need to ensure that the States and Parishes work in unison and with sufficient resources to achieve provision of the required community support for e-government, so that it can be successfully implemented without creating a digital divide.				
24	If not achieved already, the Minister for ES&C will need to provide necessary impetus and resources to make sure that all schools connect to the fibre network now available to them at the earliest possible opportunity.				

CONCLUSION

The Minister welcomes the Report of the Sub-Panel which adds strength to the debate and support for the continuation of work and investment in this key area.