



DORSET
Local Enterprise Partnership

Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

Local Growth Fund (LGF)

End of Project Report

Defence BattleLab

PROJECT SUMMARY

The BattleLab project was to construct and fit out 2,108 m2 office space and 450 m2 workshop space for the MoD to collaborate with SME's. The BattleLab building was completed and delivered by Dorset Council in July 2022 at the Dorset Innovation Park site in Wool.

Project start date	June 2020
Project construction start date	January 2021
Project completion date	April 2022

CHANGE REQUEST

Dorset Council submitted a change request for the Defence BattleLab on 25 October 2021. There were delays on delivery due to lockdown and the COVID-19 outbreak.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES:

Outputs

- Construction of 450 m2 workshop
- Construction of 2,108 m2 office space
- Installation of 5G Network for development of new technologies
- Installation of site infrastructure to host servers on site in the 'Data Centre'
- Procurement and installation of Wi-Fi network infrastructure with the main office and workshop building
- Installation of module pods for use of the 5G infrastructure

All of the above project outputs were delivered.



Above are a couple of Defence BattleLab photos and a selection of reference articles can be found below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-defence-battlelab-to-drive-innovation#:~:text=A%20new%20hub%20designed%20to,officially%20opened%20in%20Dorset%20today.>

<https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2022/05/defence-battlelab-heralds-a-new-dawn-for-the-armed-forces-and-its-land-industrial-strategy/>

<https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2022/05/27/new-innovation-hub-officially-opens-at-dorset-councils-innovation-park-near-wool/>
<https://defencebattlelab.com/>

Outcomes

The project outcome indicators are:

- 91 direct jobs created on site
- 20 additional jobs created by new businesses
- 36 indirect jobs created in the surrounding area
- 2,558 m2 of commercial floorspace
- £2.8m GVA to the local economy

The Defence BattleLab has certainly brought interest in the Dorset Innovation Park site and created jobs. The economic climate has created some difficulties toward the delivery of the project, which have been overcome by looking at alternative ways to bring collaboration between industry and MoD together. The project is being reviewed to consider changes to meet industries' needs in support of the development of new products for MoD.

Dorset Council has over 600 businesses registered for use of the hot desks and over 1,000 registered for MoD newsletter of events and activities, highlighting the interest in the project. Additionally, the Council hosted visits from other sites with innovation centres to support and foster the collaboration.

BENEFITS REALISED TO DATE

One of the key benefits is facilitating business to business collaboration, where large businesses can support small businesses through knowledge exchange.

FINANCES

The budget for the project was £4,780,000, which was fully spent. There was £3,100,000 MoD match funding and £1,680,000 grant from Dorset LEP.

LESSONS LEARNT

The Council came up against a few building variations throughout the project which required additional time and further resource. Additional time was spent getting the design agreed and signed off, whilst minimising changes. The Council has implemented this approach on the new commercial unit that is currently being built.

The major risk was delivering on time to meet the funding constraints from both funding sources. Having a reduced planning process and regular progress meetings allowed the project to deliver on time.

SUCCESS STORY

The project achieved what it originally set out to, by building a facility where MoD end users can meet with industry and academia to discuss innovative product development.



Minister for Defence Procurement, Mr Jeremy Quin MP, celebrated the bright future of Defence innovation and collaboration, May 2022.



Businesses and MoD personnel discussions of innovative products during the MP visit.

Babcock International used the Dorset Innovation Park and BattleLab to demonstrate its 'SwarmCore' technology and how it can be used in the field. The video link below provides more detail.

<https://www.babcockinternational.com/news/babcock-develops-cutting-edge-communications-and-control-technology-in-partnership-with-arqit/>

Dorset LEP

dorsetleppmo@bournemouth.ac.uk

www.dorsetlep.co.uk

Dorset Council

connectingdorset@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk