
Subject: Digital Skills Scrutiny Review

Dear Connetable

Thank you for your letter of 11th November 2013, inviting me to make a written submission to your Panel's review of Digital Skills. I apologise for the delay in my response. If I can be of any further assistance to your work please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gigabit

Largely, the relationship to Gigabit Jersey is one that is focussed on providing ubiquitous fibre connectivity, so that the speed of connectivity is in reality only limited by the quality of the equipment that sits on the end of the fibre network. The fact that every broadband connection on the Island will be provided over fibre means that where once the extent of access to online skills and learning materials would be limited, this will no longer be the case. Fundamentally, this applies not just Digital Skills but to skills and education generally. However in the case of the Digital Skills agenda specifically, it is fair to say that without the appropriate connectivity it would be significantly hampered if not impossible to achieve.

Internet connectivity costs.

At one level, this is an issue arising out of Jersey being an Island that requires resilient connectivity, which is why we are so well-served by the number of fibre-optic submarine cables offering competitive services to users. This is expensive infrastructure but the T&R Minister understands that JT is working closely with Economic Development to put in place appropriate offers to ensure that such connectivity costs (whether they be perceived or otherwise) are not a barrier to growth. In addition, CICRA is currently undertaking a review of connectivity and the Minister looks forward to seeing the output of that work.

1. To examine whether the approach to improving digital skills in the Island contained within the *Digital Jersey Strategy and Business Plan*, to enable delivery of its key objectives and related targets, is supported by stakeholders

Digital Jersey is focusing as follows:

- i. Short term: working with school leavers in a 'start-up' environment, aiming to increase the numbers getting employment in the digital sector in Jersey
- ii. Short/medium term: Providing an extension of the provision of services to FE and HE in the island, through the 'digital learning hub'
- iii. Longer term (>1 year): Addressing 'adult skills' through the Digital Learning Hub and access to courses (e.g. learning coding in a day through Decoded)

Stakeholders are invited to discuss the business plan in detail and provide feedback, at a 'deep dive' session on 27 November.

The learning hub is receiving support from the investment and entrepreneurial communities in Jersey, who see it as an important constituent of the digital ecosystem necessary for diversification and growth through new endeavour. Digital Jersey foresee strong take-up of the facilities to be provided in Q1 of 2014 for both learning and supporting small young businesses. There will be two distinct user groups, save the small young businesses, those still in school and those who have just left.

2. To examine whether the approach to improving digital skills in schools contained within the *Vision for IT in Education*, is supported by stakeholders

On 11th October Education, Sport and Culture released their vision for IT education in the island at an event, titled 'Thinking Differently'. The Vision was fully supported by those in attendance.

The presentation underlined the creative and supportive attitude that the States of Jersey are demonstrating towards using IT to enhance learning within and beyond the classroom. The underlying principles for the vision are:

- Inspiration – A broadened and enhanced learning experience
- Accessibility – Providing pupils with access to an effective IT infrastructure
- Safety – Creating a safe learning environment for pupils
- Sustainability – Investment in the future of IT education in the island, enabling continuity

Teaching and learning will be innovative, bringing a new and engaging computing curriculum for 21st century education, with emphasis on employable skill for girls, as well as boys. Students will be able to get to grips with skills such as primary coding and computer theories, and be able to personalise their learning experiences. High quality teachers will be maintained in the island's schools, who will be supported by continual professional development.

Access to effective IT infrastructure, through high speed and e-safe WAN, LANs and wi-fi will be provided to all local schools. Technology will be used innovatively in schools to explore new ideas and innovations to equip and enable pupils both in school and in their future careers. Pupils will be taught about the risks of using technology, and the importance of acting responsibly online.

Industry will support education through advice, learning and by providing relevant experiences to students. Students who want to pursue a career in IT will be able to find the engagement and encouragement of local industry.

A total of £6,000,000 is being invested in this scheme, with the costs being broken down as follows:

- Teaching and Learning - £2,415,000
- Infrastructure and Technology - £3,365,000
- Business and Education - £220,000

In the development of the Vision, it was noted that some schools were more IT advanced than others (e.g. VCP students are issued with iPads). And some schools/colleges, dependent on their staff, are more 'IT savvy' than others. Department of ESC have launched the Vision as a platform for schools and colleges to develop their IT strategies.

3. To examine whether the *Vision for IT in Education* and the *Digital Jersey Strategy and Business Plan* are complementary

Digital Jersey and ESC are in regular contact through Digital Jersey Snapshot Updates to ESC and through the Education and Skills Technical Advisory Group (TAG), attended by Christine Walwyn (Finance Director art ESC). Digital Jersey are working together on an event for March ('Be Very Afraid') and a major technology event in April and will continue to do so going forward. This fits well with the schools' curriculum changes for more interaction with industry.

Digital Jersey is excited to see such support within the States of Jersey in the development of a talent pipeline that will invest in both the youth of the island, but also the future.

4. To compare the *Vision for IT in Education* to related strategies developed in other relevant jurisdictions

5. To identify the framework for the implementation of the *Vision for IT in Education* in schools, with particular attention on the process and criteria for the development of individual school strategies

All schools and colleges' strategies will be streamed through the Department for ESC, to ensure that there is consistency across the Island, and where additional support is required resources will be allocated on a school by school basis.

6. With particular regard to Digital Jersey's e-government objectives and targets, to examine the existing and proposed provision for adult training and education to improve digital skills in Jersey

Working with user skills through a Social TAG/Working Group, focusing on an inclusion programme in partnership with the States of Jersey and consultation with Jersey Consumer Council, Jersey Employment Trust and Jersey Community Relations Trust.

Regards, Philip

Senator Philip Ozouf | Minister for Treasury and Resources