

CASE STUDY:



# MANUFACTURING YOUR FUTURE



## High Value Manufacturing - Alconbury Enterprise Campus

The new Alconbury Enterprise Campus in Cambridgeshire needed a clear vision to develop the economic potential of the exciting new facility. It required a better understanding of the sector strengths of the region, and to identify any gaps that could be used to inform decisions on training provision for its technical and vocational training centre. The Campus worked with IfM Education and Consultancy Services (IfM ECS), Cambridge and Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (GCGP LEP), the local councils and private developers on a project to consult with stakeholders and to gain commitment for its new approach. The project followed similar successful work carried out by IfM in Swindon and Wiltshire and in Liverpool. IfM ECS works with national and local organisations in the public and private sector to develop manufacturing strategies leading to competitive advantage.

The Alconbury Enterprise Campus is located on the site of a former airfield between Huntingdon and Cambridge in a relatively low cost area with excellent transport links, and adjacent to the high skills, fast growth, high cost city of Cambridge. While Cambridge is acknowledged for innovation, the rest of the region contains clusters of excellence in manufacturing, cleantech and financial services.

In late 2014, the partnership known locally as 'EDGE - sharper skills for enterprise' - engaged IfM ECS to conduct a study to support the development of priorities for Alconbury. As part of the EDGE partnership, Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and private developer Urban&Civic collaborated with IfM ECS to review the strengths and opportunities existing in the region. Importantly, a further partner was Huntingdonshire Regional College, as the implication of the work for education priorities was clear. An important step in regeneration of the Campus came when the LEP secured

£10 million in funding to develop a technical and vocational training centre to support development of manufacturing, engineering and management skills in the area.

The UK National Competency Framework for High Value Manufacturing (HVM) was developed by IfM ECS and Innovate UK (then the Technology Strategy Board) in 2012. It included the identification of 22 'national competencies' including for example: smart materials, energy management and flexible manufacturing (Refs. 1 and 2). Building on this work, the methodology has been applied to establish regional priorities in other areas of the UK, taking into account local priorities and vision.

Andrew Gill, Principal Industrial Fellow at IfM ECS, led the 16 month project, using the proven National Competency Framework to facilitate the integration of the Alconbury work into national policy. A wide range of stakeholders were involved with the development of a 'landscape' for HVM that identified

potential sectors and required competencies for success. This led to a natural set of priorities for the training centre.

The **objectives** of the work were:

- To agree the strategy and key activities required to provide the environment and skills needed for HVM in the area to compete nationally and globally
- To define the kind of facility needed to deliver the skills HVM businesses need, which will be delivered through the Alconbury Enterprise Campus
- To provide support to collaborating companies to develop their own skills and growth plans in line with the emerging strategy and partner support and funding.

### The Process

An initial piece of secondary research, combined with interviews, produced an overview of the trends, drivers and potential sectors, products and services that were likely to be of interest to the

## IfM ECS

IfM Education and Consultancy Services works with companies of all sizes to help create and capture value, and with national and regional governments to support and grow their industrial sectors. It does this by transferring the new ideas and approaches developed by researchers at the Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) through a programme of education and consultancy services. IfM ECS is owned by the University of Cambridge. Its profits are gifted to the University to fund future research activities. For more details on its work visit: [www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/services](http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/services)

## GCGP LEP

The Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership is focused on helping to drive forward sustainable economic growth in the Cambridgeshire area – with local business, education providers, the third sector and the public sector working together to achieve this. The area currently has a population of 1.3 million people, which is estimated to grow to 1.5 million by 2031. It hosts a number of globally significant business clusters, world class research capacity linked to its universities, a number of thriving market towns, and is the UK leader in agriculture, food and drink. The area boasts 700,000 jobs, 60,000 enterprises and generates £30 billion per annum. [www.gcgp.co.uk](http://www.gcgp.co.uk)

## EDGE

EDGE Sharper Skills for Enterprise is a partnership initiative between the private and public sector led by the Alconbury Enterprise Campus Skills Group. Launched in early 2015, the partnership promotes and delivers industry-led training and development to support future economic growth across Huntingdonshire and beyond. [www.sharperskills.co.uk](http://www.sharperskills.co.uk)

### References:

1. Manufacturing Your Future – High Value Manufacturing at Alconbury Enterprise Campus, May 2015
2. High Value Manufacturing Study: [http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Resources/Reports/TSB\\_UKHighValueManufacturing.pdf](http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Resources/Reports/TSB_UKHighValueManufacturing.pdf)
3. Working with Government: [http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Services/Images/Government\\_and\\_Agencies/Creating\\_the\\_conditions\\_for\\_growth\\_web.pdf](http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Services/Images/Government_and_Agencies/Creating_the_conditions_for_growth_web.pdf)

Campus. A ‘first pass’ landscape for HVM in the region was then produced, linked back to the Innovate UK National Framework, and this was presented at a series of stakeholder meetings.

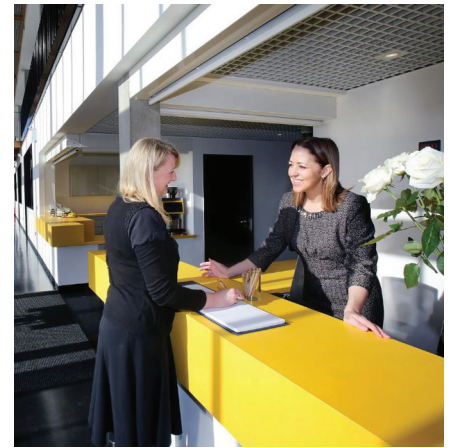
A workshop involving local companies and other key stakeholders provided a clear draft vision. It emphasised the need to develop manufacturing in the region, especially in fields such as systems modelling, additive manufacturing / 3D printing, electronics and materials engineering.

IfM ECS recognised that feedback from local industry was important in developing the vision and the competencies that would be required to achieve it. The educational requirements implied by the findings were also documented. Circulation of the initial report, supported by interviews, allowed for validation and further stakeholder engagement.

### A new vision

The new vision included the following: “The Enterprise Campus will build on local strengths...to maximise the benefits of future economic developments...including flexible manufacture, lightweight materials and energy and resource security.” ‘Gap closure’ plans were produced to address skills shortcomings – a set of priorities for the technical and vocational centre in fields including: production automation, modular construction and nuclear energy.

To ensure maximum agreement and commitment to the programme, IfM ECS managed a set of follow up interviews that enabled the involvement of a wider group of stakeholders, and resulted in the publication of the final report. “The IfM ECS work was jointly commissioned by the EDGE partnership, and has been extremely valuable in determining an independent and expert opinion on the local skills needs”, says Sue Bedlow, Economic Development Manager at Huntingdonshire District Council. “All partners now have a clear and shared



Above and front: Alconbury Enterprise Campus

understanding of the priorities for training provision required at Alconbury Weald if we are to unleash the full economic potential of this exciting new development so close to the Cambridge epicentre of UK growth.”

According to Strategy & Planning Director at the LEP Adrian Cannard: “By having a clear vision and shared sense of purpose with our partners to unlock the potential economic growth within our area, we can target our efforts at projects that will deliver maximum returns”.

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The IfM ECS process employed a strong theoretical underpinning with a pragmatic execution to deliver a highly actionable set of agreed priorities, linked directly to national manufacturing priorities. This will benefit Alconbury Enterprise Campus and the surrounding area for many years to come.

➤ For more on Alconbury Enterprise Campus, visit: <http://alconbury-weald.co.uk/enterprise-campus>

**EDGE** Sharper skills  
for enterprise

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