Implementation plan

Provider name/consortia members	Highbury College, Portsmouth Enrolments online with better processes at half the cost
Project title	iHighbury: The fully online campus
Project summary	Implementation of a fully online and automated campus (iHighbury) to enable online enrolments, e-payments, diagnostic testing, learner agreements and online course delivery which will ultimately lead to leaner processes and new delivery models, improving efficiency and increasing effectiveness with a return on investment of £70,000
What were the aims of the project?	The project aimed to streamline the College's online applications and enrolments procedures by automating much of the process. American Community Colleges are now reporting that over 60% of students undertake their enrolment and administration and study online if this trend is to follow to the UK Colleges need to adapt their systems and processes. Highbury College is seeing more and more applications submitted online. The table below shows data from the College's MIS system

	2010-11	2011-12	Difference (+/-)
Online Applications	1504 (23%)	2202 (29%)	698
Paper Applications	5056	5362	306

From this table you can see that there was a 6% rise in the number of applications received online by the College. The total number of enrolments is considerably higher therefore we believe that there are considerable savings to be made with this project.

Feedback from our student focus groups indicate that the students want to complete as much of the process online as possible. We therefore want to develop digital learner agreements and enrolments as well as develop an online portal for developing interviews to ensure a consistent and automated approach.

Our research showed that the cost of manually enrolling a student at our College is approximately £10.15 per application. By automating the processes we estimate the costs will be dramatically reduced.

The key deliverables for this project are:

- Development of an end to end enrolments, diagnostics and course delivery system underpinned by automated workflows.
- Implementation of digital learner agreements and digital signatures reducing paper and print costs as well as archive and retrieval costs.
- Online initial assessments and diagnostics
- Online course delivery with an interactive online classroom

| What did you do? | The first step which the College took was to form a project group of the key stakeholders involved in the process. For Highbury College this consisted of:

- Head of Technology & Innovation Services (Chair)
- Executive Director, Finance & Corporate Services
- Head of Information Services
- Head of Business Intelligence
- Applications and Database Officer
- Web Developments Officer

This group had bi-weekly project meetings to track progress and discuss and resolve any issues. Monthly update reports formed part of the report which went to the College's Leadership Team as part of Business Results.

The first undertaking of the group was to formulate a process map which formed the basis of the technology solution. The process map is illustrated below:
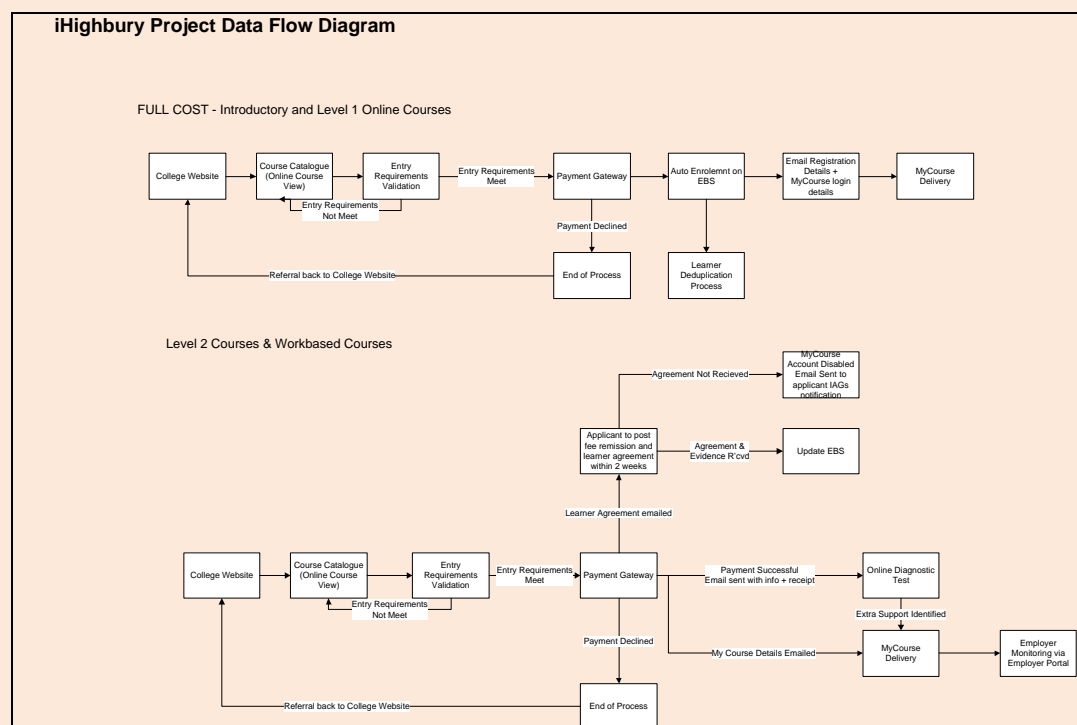
From this process map developments were untaken to design and implement the solution. An iterative approach was taken to testing to ensure that testing was embedded throughout the lifecycle of the project. This represented a less risky strategy for the project team. |
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The College's online course portal was modified and configured to allow students to enrol onto a programme. The enrol button then linked into an online form for the applicant to complete.

Once the applicant had completed a form which consisted of the information to collect the relevant personal data, they are then taken to a screen where they can select any fee remissions that may apply to them. If an applicant selected a fee remission an automated workflow would be called to email the applicant to provide evidence of this fee remission. Using the MIS report system the College is able to track the evidence to ensure that it had been received.

If the applicant have any fees to pay they will then be directed to a screen where their credit card payments can be taken. This is a secure system using NetBanx to undertake the transaction.

What did the project cost, including LSIS funding?	A breakdown of the costs for this project are illustrated below:

Cost	LSIS Bid	College Contribution
MIS Workflow module & Consultancy	£15,000	£0.00
Staff Time – Executive Director 10 days @£350 per day	£0.00	£3,500
Staff Time – Head of MIS 5 days @ £275 per day	£0.00	£1,375
Staff Time – Head of IT 20 days @ £275 per day	£0.00	£5,500
Staff Time – Applications Developer 40 days @ £175 per day	£0.00	£7,000
Staff Time – Head of IS 10 days @ £175 per day	£0.00	£1,750
Integration Consultancy & Development	£5,000	£0,00
Totals	**£20,000**	**£19,125**

Impact	All public sector organisations are under pressure to make substantive savings, improve efficiencies whilst protecting front line services.

The key impacts and outcomes for the project has been the implementation of a fully electronic and automated enrolment process with assessment and course delivery solution which radically reduces the overhead of managing applications and enrolments. The project has resulted in a leaner and more efficient process for the student enabling the process of applying for a course easier and quicker. |
| **What were the benefits of the project?** | The College has benefited as the process have been largely automated allowing staff to deal with greater volumes of applications and enrolments. Staff have spent less time manually arranging interviews as our online system has allowed students to select their own interview date, the paper work associated with the interview is automatically sent via the interview booking system again saving a great deal of human effort, printing and postage. |

What were the savings and benefits? How did you calculate them?	We anticipate a large reduction in staff time, printing, document storage, archiving and retrieval, telephone and the costs of delays to lost or mislaid paperwork. After successful trials with our January starts we believe we are now on target to achieve a saving of at least £70,000 per annum against an investment of £39,125.00. These savings have been achieved by: • Reduction in staff time processing applications, entering data into the student record system, filing and retrieving paper documents. • Reduction with print costs (paper, toner and printer maintenance) • Postage costs • Reduced errors (lost applications etc.) We have undertaken a study using the JISC cost tools to look at the cost of our current enrolments process. We calculated that our total cost for each learner enrolment under the existing system was £10.15. With the new on line process we were able to reduce this to £5.65.
What were the lessons learned? What tips do you have for other providers?	There were a number of lessons learnt from the project: • Ensure that there is a encompassing project team of all the stakeholders meeting regularly to monitor progress and resolve issues. This was very important of a project of this type where responsibilities spanned across a number of departments. • Use the LSIS advisor as a critical friend; be honest and open. They are very supportive and offer an external prospective to the project. • Track costs and manage the risks. In addition to the above we found it extremely important to review our existing processes and not just 'map' the current way we do things into a digital process. The project gave an ideal opportunity to question our processes and refine them enabling us to generate the return on investment required.
Further Resources	JISC Cost Modelling Tools http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/infokits/costing/modelling-tools/
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