



Summary

Rock-IT Enterprise is a Sussex based social enterprise formed as a Community Interest Company (CIC) involving; **Albion in the Community**, the registered charity of Brighton & Hove Albion FC, **Abcom**, a successful Sussex I.T. company, **RML Community Partners**; a Sussex based social enterprise which gives business support and funding help to the voluntary sector, **American Express** and **Brighton & Hove County Council** through its - Education Business Partnership.

The primary delivery of Rock – IT is skills training and support for isolated, unemployed young people leaving school with few or no formal qualifications. To deliver this Rock – IT is being structured to become a refurbishment and re-cycling facility for old, redundant, faulty, asset realised I.T equipment, including laptops, desktops, screens, phones etc. Through this registered WEEE re-cycling process and later, a tender capability, it will generate income to deliver both practical and theory based I.T. training for young people to gain employment opportunities or have access into additional education and training. Although education is the primary objective of the Rock-IT initiative the project has three, long term outcomes, these being;

1. **A multi-tiered I.T. educational programme designed to attract disengaged young people, that provides training in valuable I.T. skills and equips these young people with the skills and encouragement to seek further education, training, volunteering or employment opportunities.**
2. **Generation of an income stream for RML Community Partners, through which to offer the provision of pro bono (free) business, funding and consultancy support to the counties' smaller charities and smaller voluntary community groups.**
3. **The creation of a small charitable trust that will build a fund for Charities, Voluntary and community groups in Sussex to access funding for I.T equipment to support their deliveries.**

Further benefits derived from the success of Rock-IT Enterprise are; the reduction in electronic waste produced within Sussex through the re use of otherwise discarded I.T. equipment. The up-skilling of otherwise disengaged young people and an increase in numbers entering further training and employment. A cost effective, valuable and highly visible opportunity for Sussex based corporate's to

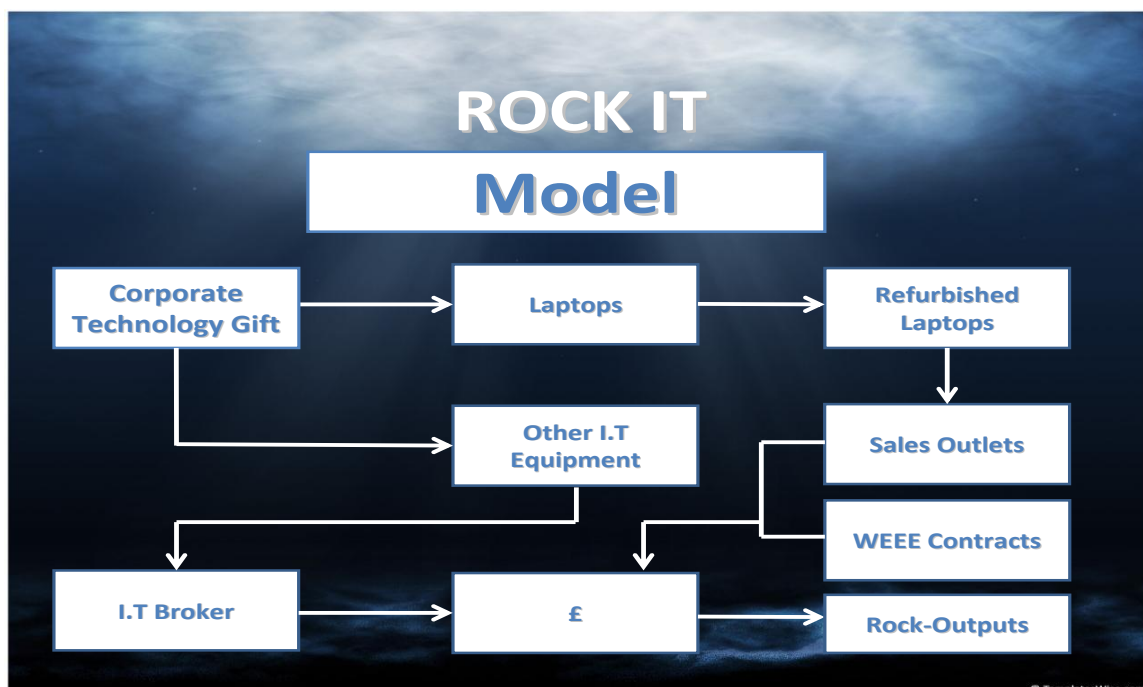
ROCK – IT - A Social Enterprise – Making a Difference

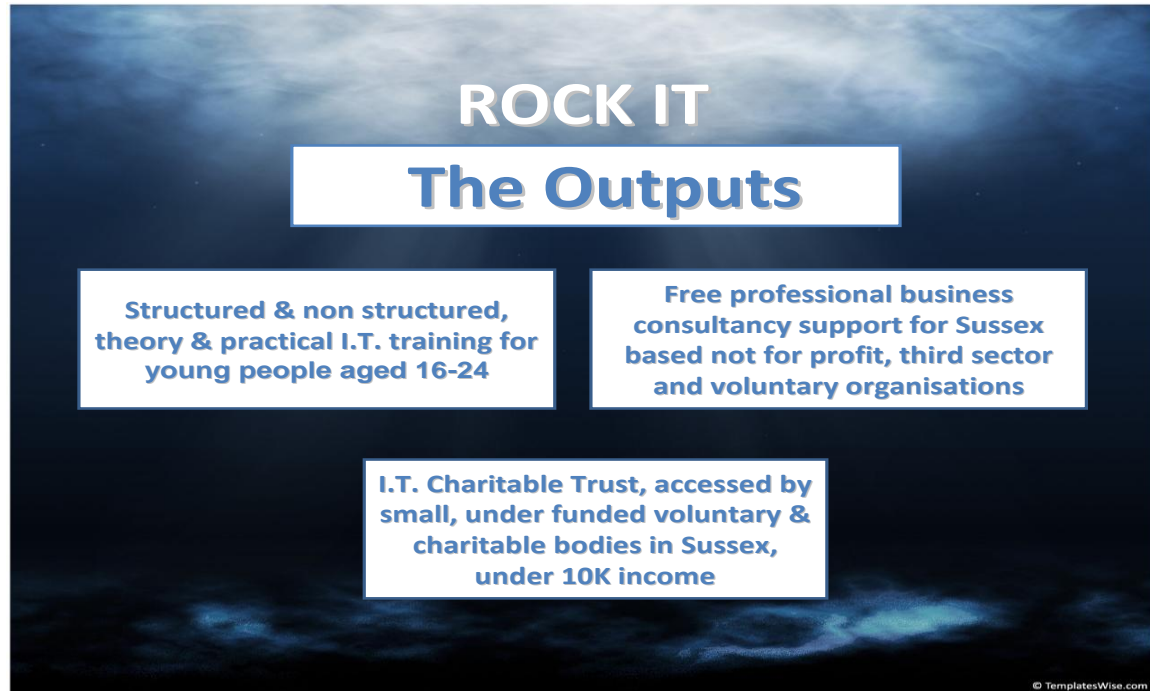
access and promote a community focused CSR initiative, for as little as the donation of a single, asset written down laptop. Although this multi-faceted delivery may seem complex the premise is really a simple one.

1. Engage young people using the power of football through AITC
2. Give them training and a skill which provides opportunities for them to move to further education or if possible employment
3. Sustain the enterprise through the sale of the laptops and other I.T equipment and in the longer term re-cycling services and tendering for WEEE commissions (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment), significantly increasing the potential turnover and delivery of the Social Enterprise.
4. Use a proportion of income to provide free business and funding support to local community groups
5. Develop a trust fund that small groups can access I.T. equipment through.

Educationally Sussex has problems like any other County, including a fast growing youth unemployment rate, nationally some 22% of the current 2.6M people registered as unemployed are in the 16-24 year age range. Rock-IT Enterprise aims to play a part in addressing the danger of a potential skills and employment gap in our community by giving opportunity to the most disengaged youngsters and hopefully offer a path back to further training, education or indeed employment. Additionally, with the increase in the minimum age at which young people can leave formal learning, there needs to be an increase in the range of alternative ways by which youngsters can take part. Failure to recognise this will only result in greater levels of disenfranchisement, as not everyone fits the standard education mode. Every young person needs to be given opportunity to achieve and find a future, for some this may take more than one attempt before a spark is ignited. The hope of this project is that, success, however small, will build belief and desire in learning and break a cycle of no hope and a bleak future for many young people, leaving education with little or no formal qualifications in Sussex.

The Rock – I.T. Model





The equipment is accepted by Rock-IT Enterprise from a point designated by the corporate partner and a receipt issued. From this point on in terms of WEEE Compliance it is the responsibility of the Rock-IT Enterprise. The equipment will be either assigned for refurbishment and re-sale or offered direct to an I.T broker. Anticipated primary sales markets will be through EBay, advised listings through the HR departments of corporate gifting partners, local colleges, schools and Universities or online via the Rock-IT Enterprise website, currently under construction.

Rock-IT has an initial first year sales target of some 600-700 laptops/desktops, growing to some 1,000 per annum, after three years at an average unit price of around £100 after sales costs. Each laptop sold will have a basic warranty with the option to purchase an extended warranty if required and will be either shipped or collected depending upon the purchaser's preference. To provide sustainability for the enterprise, a level of reserves and sufficient surpluses will need to be established, before structured training programmes will be implemented, anticipated to be approximately £20,000. An application for seed funding has already been made to support this need or will be developed through on-going sales.

The Training Programme

Young people in Sussex will be recruited to the Rock-IT course through The Albion in the Community delivered **Opt-in + and Want to Work** programmes which already attracts otherwise disengaged youngsters into a life skills and personal development course through the power and excitement of being linked to a major Championship League football club and is delivered at the fabulous new AMEX Stadium at Falmer.

Further recruitment will take place with Rock-IT's growing links with schools and FE colleges around the county which in the longer term is envisaged to create regional course delivery. All of the young people who complete the Opt-In + course will be offered placement on the Rock-IT Course 1. This assumed progression is designed to keep the young people engaged and through our links with FE colleges give them the best possible opportunity to progress onto further education, training, volunteering or employment. While undertaking the Rock-IT Course 1, students will participate in structured and non-structured I.T. training, anticipated to runs for 5 weeks, totally 50 hours in all. Plans are already being established to develop BTEC level Rock-2 courses for progression.

Delivery of Voluntary Sector Support

A percentage of the surplus derived from the sale of gifted equipment will provide the funding to enable RML Community Partners to deliver free business and funding support to those voluntary and community groups who could otherwise not afford it. In Sussex there are a total of 2652 registered charities of which 57% have an income of less than £25k plus 100s of voluntary groups all providing crucial yet unrecorded work. These groups form the backbone of our society in Sussex but they are under threat. More and more organisations are chasing an ever shrinking funding pot. Where funding is still available, funders are looking for “visible” high profile projects that make an impact. Therefore, groups that were previously able to achieve good work with a few simple applications to local funders are finding these streams closed or under pressure from additional applications. As the sector tightens its belt, these smaller, less organised groups need professional business support with a funding knowledge base that can direct them to appropriate opportunities as they become available. They need professional business support to help them describe their achievements in the best light and they need the same to guide them in strategic development, sustainability, consortia and forming partnerships with complimentary organisations to access funding in the most efficient manner. However, by definition, these small organisations are not in a financial position to embrace the services of a professional consultancy, regardless of the need, hence a vehicle to provide this support on a pro bono basis is required. RML envisage that income into Rock-IT will grow and reach a point that provides enough additional income to fund free, pro bono provision to such groups, effectively free at the point of delivery.

Creation of Rock-I.T Charitable Trust

The third and longer term aim of the Rock-IT Social Enterprise is to establish a long-term fund for small enterprises, charities, voluntary and community groups in Sussex that can apply for new or second user IT equipment and services to support their organisation.

Even the smallest organisations have a growing need for I.T. in how they carry out delivery but are often over charged and loose out on applications for equipment to larger, more structured organisations. Rock-IT, through its partners aims to offer a cost effective I.T service provision to such groups in the future and make available new and second user equipment through its charitable trust provision.

Rock-IT is a partnership of local organisations each bringing their resources and skills to the enterprise, including Abcom, Albion in the Community, RML Community Partners, Brighton & Hove City Council and Corporate Partners, including Amex and Southern Rail.