Landlink Estates

Sector	Previous Finance System	Number of iplicit users	Go Live Date
Farming, land development	**Twinfield and SAP Business One**	**21 full users**	**May 2024**

iplicit meant big time savings and better reporting for Landlink Estates

The finance team at Landlink Estates faced two problems at once.

One business in the group had a small finance system, which was bogging down the team in manual work. Another had a big finance system, designed for large enterprises, that was overly complex and inflexible.

iplicit – a system designed to offer the power of big ERP systems without the disruption and high price tag – turned out to be the solution to both challenges.

"With iplicit, we have everything in one place and it's such a slick process. Our onboarding team helped us ensure that we have a robust system, and things go where they're supposed to. That's a big time saving."

> Previously, the team and I spent a lot of time building reports for other people because they didn't know how to code and get the information out of the system. Now, they can do it in a few clicks.

Tom Marriott
Senior Finance Manager

About Landlink Estates

Landlink Estates is part of a family group of companies that manages significant farmland in West Sussex and Suffolk. The two companies moving to iplicit are the farming operation and a property business which specialises in getting residential planning permissions, building commercial retail and, more recently, renewable energy, as well as managing leased investment assets.

"The group is owned by a very entrepreneurial farmer, with farming very much at its core, however it only flourishes due to its diversification. With a wide range of different businesses, a 'onesize fits all' ERP system was never going to succeed for us – so we looked for a dynamic system in line with the group's activities" says Peter O'Brien-Ward, Finance Director for Langmead Group and Landlink Estates Ltd.

Tom Marriott, Senior Finance Manager with Landlink Estates, says: "On my side of the business, the property side, we've got a run of billing which happens at the start of each month for all our tenant rental invoices, and then we probably process more than 100 accounts payable invoices every month across various entities. It might not sound a huge number but it's enough. Our previous AP process was archaic. It now flows far better with greater visibility of bottlenecks and our data entry controls in place ensure that only the correct codes are selected where applicable reducing time previously spent recoding.

"Then you've got the monthly management reporting to do which is far more easily achieved with iplicit both at entity and consolidation levels."

'iplicit ticked all the boxes'

"The system we had on the farming side of the business was very much a small system, whereas on the property side they had a big system," says Rob.

"We suffered with the small system. Functionality-wise, it wasn't strong enough to cope with what we wanted to do, or with the number of users we had. Meanwhile, on the property side, they had a SAP system, which was very big, strong, functionality-rich, but once you've cast a system like that, it's set in stone and isn't flexible."

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> My advice for onboarding with iplicit is to spend the time figuring out where you want to get to – because iplicit can take you there.
>
> **Peter O'Brien-Ward**
> Finance Director

Peter says SAP Business One was being used because it had originally been adopted by the third part of the group, its herb business. "That was thought to be what the herb business needed and other parts followed suit," he says.

"There probably wasn't anything like iplicit around back then, but SAP has proved to be a bit too big and not very flexible for the kind of dynamic, diverse business we are."

Tom led an 18-month search for alternative systems before Rob mentioned that he'd heard about iplicit.

Peter adds: "We had some demonstrations and were impressed. It ticked all the boxes."

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> The experience with iplicit has been very positive. We've got something that's really user-friendly, with great UX. We're able to dive in and control the destiny of the system we're using. We're confident with it, which makes us far more agile.

Rob Searle
Director of Cloud Finance Department

'People have embraced the system'

"Our implementation went very well. Ian Ross, our Implementation Consultant, was outstanding," says Tom.

"The thing that stood out was how patient and thorough he was – and how well he explained things while training the team. He spent a lot of time ensuring everyone was clear on all the benefits that a particular module could deliver and as a result, I think we're using things much more effectively, as they were intended.

"We had quite a few sessions which were very collaborative in terms of troubleshooting our problems and coming up with solutions."

The Landlink Estates team is full of praise for the iplicit user experience.

"It's so intuitive and quick," says Tom.

"The rest of the team are finding it very easy to use. SAP is fine when you're used to it, but when you're new, there are a lot of draws you can open, only to find you don't need what was in there. But with iplicit, we've had nothing but positive feedback from the team."

Peter adds: "It's so easy to use. You don't have to think too hard. For example, you can start typing the name of a project and as you type the first letters, the project pops up on a dropdown list.

"Staff can use the mobile app to approve invoices and raise POs, which is a seismic shift from just emailing finance to raise it. That was quite a waste of time and it's much quicker for them to do it themselves in iplicit. Approvals can also be done on a mobile. Previously, the only way to do it on the move was to type out an email in Outlook, so that's a big benefit.

"I suppose the biggest accolade is that we've had very little pushback from the non-finance people. They've embraced it very quickly.

"I implemented Oracle once, in a previous life, and that was an absolute beast. The big challenge then was getting the non-finance users to accept it, but we've had very little resistance to iplicit. They have really embraced the change of process, which is down to Tom's good rollout but also the system itself."

'We've got the analysis we wanted'

Landlink Estates has seen huge improvements in its ability to report and analyse. It uses iplicit's Excel integration to generate the management information it needs.

"Starting afresh has enabled us to really build the analysis that we wanted and needed but couldn't quite achieve because we'd set up these codes and dimensions that were sort of set in stone under SAP," says Tom.

With iplicit, non-finance users get to serve themselves to the data they need.

"That visibility is another key improvement, because previously anyone without a SAP Business One licence couldn't see anything, and if they wanted to know how much we'd spent in a certain area, they had to ask us," says Tom.

"Now, they can query it themselves. Having them all set up in the system and having the controls in place so their access is limited to what they need has been really helpful."

Peter adds: "It's early days but this will certainly give them the tools so they no longer have to keep asking Tom's team for information. Either we'll build a report and it spits it out, to be emailed to them at the appropriate time, or they can go in and refresh their view of the data in the system. I see lots of future benefits for efficiency."

The system has brought substantial time savings.

"I think the biggest time saver is approval workflows," says Tom.

"Previously, we didn't really have a document management system or anything like that set up, so it was all down to the accounts team knowing where to route the invoices and sending an email with an invoice attached. It took so long and trying to gather approvals also took time – and people probably didn't enjoy searching their emails to find outstanding approvals to do.

"Now, it's all in one place and it's such a slick process. Because of the work we did with Ian to troubleshoot the workflows, it's all quite robust and things go where they're supposed to. That's a big time saving."

> **"** We had some demonstrations and were impressed. iplicit ticked all the boxes.
>
> **Peter O'Brien-Ward**
> Finance Director

The feature that's 'worth its weight in gold'

Each of the team has a favourite feature. For Peter, it's the iplicit app, which allows users to approve spending, see data and submit expenses wherever they are.

"We do a lot of our banking on apps and now, with the iplicit app, we can do things at the touch of a button. It brings us into the 21st century, whereas SAP was a bit of an archaic monster," he says.

Tom says: "My favourite feature is the Excel add-in. With SAP, you could achieve a similar result, but you'd have to know SQL code to extract the information and link tables. iplicit has an enquiry feature, with a series of drop-down filters, so anyone can load them up, select what they want and export the data to Excel to manipulate. It's worth its weight in gold.

"Previously, the team and I spent a lot of time building reports for other people because they didn't know how to code and get the information out of the system. Now, they can do it at the click of a few buttons."

Rob is confident that his favourite feature is going to be the reporting. "We spent a long time ensuring we would be experts at using it. We're now focusing on how we extract information from it and I think we're going to get some big value adds. Everything points to that being a real bonus," he says.

'Know where you want to go and iplicit can take you there'

The key to changing finance systems successfully is to really know what you want from the change, according to the Landlink Estates team.

"I think the best piece of advice is to spend a good amount of time thinking about what best practice looks like," says Tom.

"What is your number one outcome? What are you trying to achieve?

"The second piece of advice is not to rush it. Spend that time up front on planning."

Peter agrees. "What you don't want to do is set off on one path and realise you should have taken another one 10 steps back," he says.

"You need to spend time figuring out where you want to get to – because iplicit can take you there."

Rob sums up: "The experience generally has been a real positive with iplicit. We've got something that's really user friendly, with great UX. With Tom's expertise and the skills he's learning, we're able to dive in and control the destiny of the system we're using. We're confident with it and with making changes, which makes us far more agile."

Accounting software for multi companies

iplicit's powerful accounting software enables multi-company businesses to make data-driven decisions by providing a single platform that showcases real-time information from all the entities within the group in one view.

When you're handling the finances of a multi-company business, you can't afford to be held back by entry-level software.

With iplicit's automation tools you can close month end fast and with unlimited reporting dimensions, get critical insights quickly.

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