



Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Cabinet

25 November 2020

Joint Report of the

Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning – Aled Evans

and

Director of Finance and Corporate Services – Hywel Jenkins

Matter for Decision:

IT Equipment for Schools

Wards Affected: All

Purpose of report

1. To enable the Council to procure and provide IT equipment for children in all schools.

Background

2. The Welsh Government are over a 3 year period providing a specific grant to improve the availability of IT equipment and systems in schools across the whole of Wales via their HWB Grant initiative. This grant commenced in 2019/20 and is currently expected to end in 2021/22, although we are awaiting confirmation of such funding for next year which is due as part of the Welsh Government Budget approvals in early 2021.
3. There are currently 21,300 children and 1,240 teachers in our schools that require the appropriate IT kit and systems to improve learning opportunities.

4. Year 1 grant was targeted towards network infrastructure to ensure that each school had a modern and performant network to underpin the changes in curriculum delivery. An investment of £1.1m has already been made in network infrastructure. By ensuring that the appropriate device was selected and a willingness to change suppliers it was possible to spend most of the allocation on the network leaving £705k to be allocated to purchase IT devices. An order was issued for 540 iPads, 1,089 Chromebooks, 300 Windows devices and 420 teacher devices which have been received and distributed to children and teachers via schools.

IT Requirement for Learning

5. As a result of the Covid pandemic and the need to provide a blended education learning provision head teachers have reviewed requirements and wish to acquire technology to provide the following provision and support for learning:

Key Stage	Device Ratio	Apple	Chrome	Windows
Foundation	3.5	100%		
KS2	2	20%	70%	10%
KS3	1		90%	10%
KS4 /KS5	1		90%	10%
Teachers	1			100%

6. As mentioned earlier WG have provided the following funding available for the purchase of IT Devices:

	Total Device Spend
Grant Funded 2019/20	£705,701
Grant Funded 2020/21	£1,196,421
Grant Funded 2021/22 - Expected Amount	£591,716
Total Grant Funding	£2,493,839
NPT Own Funding	£303,506
Grand Total	£2,797,345

7. The above table shows that WG have already provided £1.9m to date with a further £592k expected in 2021/22. However to provide a device in line with the above mentioned ratios a further £303.5k is needed from the Council's own capital programme. As part of the HWB grant conditions there is a requirement for Schools to establish a replenishment reserve to ensure sufficient funds are available to replace the devices in future years. Discussions have been had with LLAN and NAASH who have agreed that they will make annual budgetary provisions to establish/replenish the replacement programme from their delegated budgets.
8. To meet the ratio of devices agreed for primary schools and a 1:1 ratio for secondary school pupils, 718 iPads and an additional 2,984 Chromebooks will need to be procured.
9. The Council has already placed orders for delivery of 4,527 devices. It was originally envisaged that these would have been delivered by now but due to the pandemic and the international demand for devices it is not expected that these will be delivered until early 2021.
10. In order to ensure that we are able to maximize learning opportunities via blended learning to our learners it is requested that authority be given to place orders for the remaining devices needed of 718 iPads and 2,984 Chromebooks and the allocation of £303,500 be made within the Council's Capital Programme. This will be funded via loan repayment over a 5 year period and will initially this year, if required be first call on the Treasury Management Reserve, with future years funding built into the 2021/22 Budget. It is also proposed to place orders to procure £592k of devices for delivery from 1 April 2021 to utilise the expected HWB grant funding due for that financial year. Thus enabling IT devices be provided to children as soon as they become available.

Financial Impact

11. Welsh Government has provided a HWB grant to improve learning and to fund IT devices for schools over 3 financial years. An additional £303,500 is required from the Council's own capital programme to fund the required number of devices. This will be built

into the Council's Capital Programme together with its funding from April 2021 onwards. Schools will set aside funds from their delegated budgets to establish an IT replacement fund.

Integrated Impact Assessment

12. No integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out as this proposal is to provide 1:1 devices for all secondary aged pupils together with increased number of devices for pupils of primary school age. Early placement of a procurement order will assist in securing devices as they become available which will then be distributed to schools.

Valleys Community Impacts

13. The policy and device allocation will apply to schools across the whole of the County Borough

Workforce impacts

14. IT services have received additional grant funding to manage the implementation of IT infrastructure improvements.

Legal impact

15. Procurement of IT devices will be made via the agreed Welsh Government platform and contracts.

Risk management

16. The Council have various IT security arrangements in place and will maximise the use of WG resources and support to acquire these devices and infrastructure to improve blended learning for children in our schools.

Consultation

17. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

18. It is recommended that Members approve that:

- the ICT Service Manager places orders via the WG platform to purchase devices for schools as set out in this report.
- That additional funding of £303,500 be made available from the Authority's Capital Programme to fund the required additional devices.

Reason for proposed decision

19. To enable the Council to make provide IT support for learners as set out in the report.

Implementation of decision

20. The decision is an urgent one for immediate implementation, subject to the consent of the relevant Scrutiny Chair and is therefore not subject to the call-in procedure.

Appendices

21. None

List of background papers

22. Welsh Government HWB Grant Scheme

Officer contact

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