

West Dunbartonshire Council

Report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services

Children's Services Committee: 14 February 2007

Subject: Proposals on spend of additional funds allocated by the Scottish Executive

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform members of the current status of the spending plans for the allocation of additional funds by the Scottish Executive.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Scottish Executive provided West Dunbartonshire Education and Cultural Services with an additional £700,000 to spend on schools with a set of specific criteria (Appendix 1).
- 2.2** At a headteacher meeting in late November, agreement was reached that a proportion of the allocation would be downloaded to schools and the remainder would be directed strategically by the department to upgrade computer stock and infrastructure across the council.
- 2.3** Funds were downloaded on a pro rata basis to schools and centres in December. The remaining funds, totally just under £500,000 will be spent strategically by the department.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** A working group of headteachers will report in mid January to secure agreement on a preferred computer platform for future purchases. Currently there is a mixed platform of PC and Applemac computers used mainly by primary schools. It is anticipated that agreement will be reached on a common platform for all council establishments.
- 3.2** There is a disparity in the broadband connectivity for schools across the council. If West Dunbartonshire is to be able to access the national schools' digital network, then an upgrade to a higher level of connectivity will be necessary in some areas of the council.
- 3.3** Schools across the council have varying levels of up to date computer hardware. A strategic view of a minimum requirement for digital connectivity will be required. Schools will benefit from the additional funds in relation to their upgrade needs and current requirements.

4. Main Points for Action:

4.1 Following an appraisal of the available options, it has been determined that allocation of the remaining funds not already made available to schools will be based on:

1. The decisions made by the working group on the preferred computer platform.
2. The costs of broadband connectivity to ensure access to the digital network for all establishments.
3. The numbers of hardware systems and additional software identified to provide an allocation to each school.

4.2 Given the timescales involved, authority is sought to commence procurement and to put in place the necessary contracts to ensure maximisation of spend, once the above decisions have been made.

5. Personnel Issues

5.1 The report has no implications for personnel.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There are no risk analysis implications.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The delegated funds from the Scottish Executive will finance all proposals. Spending decisions will be made in accordance with council's financial regulations and standing orders.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The additional funds provided by the Scottish Executive have already provided local decision making on resource purchases for schools. The remaining funds of just under £500,000 will be spent strategically to the benefit of all schools and to upgrade computer provision across the council.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Members are requested:

- (a) to note the contents of this report;
- (b) to approve the procurement of the appropriate goods, services and works once the final scope has been determined; and
- (c) to seek a further report to committee advising on the final spend.

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