

ANGUS COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 2nd DECEMBER 2010

PRIMARY SCHOOLS BROADBAND UPDATE - LETHNOT

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

ABSTRACT:

This report seeks to inform members of the actions taken to deliver improved broadband provision to Lethnot Primary school.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Corporate Services Committee approve the broadband upgrade to Lethnot Primary School using the BT Metroflex Managed Service.

2. BACKGROUND

Report no 764/10, considered by the committee on 21 October 2010, provided for regular review of available technologies with a view to improving broadband services to primary schools and for further reports to be provided should these technologies prove cost effective.

Historically, the length of line to Lethnot Primary school from the main exchange at Memus and the fact that the exchange required to be upgraded to enable further broadband services has meant that we have been unable to upgrade to the MetroFlex Managed Service offered by BT. This has meant that Lethnot Primary school has only been able to utilise an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) line running at 64Kb. A number of technological solutions were considered for upgrade to the school, including the potential to utilise satellite technology. A pilot was undertaken to assess the use of satellite, and after carrying out testing this option was found to be slower than the original ISDN line and therefore not suitable in practice, leaving ISDN the only usable option at that time.

3. CURRENT POSITION

BT have advised that the Memus exchange has now been upgraded enabling the MetroFlex Managed Service to be available to the school. This technology is currently successfully utilised to provide moderate speed broadband services to 16 rural primary schools. The service provides a maximum download speed to schools of 2Mb, though in some cases the download speed can be as low as 256Kb due to the poor quality of the copper circuits or the distance from the exchange. Uploads from schools can be up to a maximum of 448Kb, though more commonly 256Kb is achieved, again due to line quality.

4. PROPOSALS

It is proposed to upgrade the ISDN circuit at Lethnot Primary school to the Metroflex Managed Service from BT, with a minimum expected upload and download speed of 256Kb due to the distance from the exchange (4 times the current ISDN speed), and the potential of higher speeds if the quality of the circuit proves satisfactory. Although this provides only a moderate improvement in link capacity, a joint assessment of this proposal undertaken by Information Technology division and Education Department considers that this will provide an improvement to the usability of internet resources for curricular use and to operational systems for staff use.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The BT estimated total implementation cost of the improvement to be undertaken is £1,500, with a BT estimated recurring annual revenue cost of £1,600 per annum, based on the maximum potential speed of 2Mb being attained. Actual costs will be confirmed after implementation by BT based on the maximum download and upload capacity achieved in practice. These costs replace the current £3,450 annual cost, contained within the Corporate Services Information Technology revenue budget, of provisioning ISDN at Lethnot Primary school and at County Buildings, where connectivity to the corporate network is provisioned. Implementation of the Metroflex Managed Service will result in an overall saving of £350 in the first full operational year and £1,850 in future years, while providing an improved service to the school.

Any cash flow costs arising during the implementation period in financial year 2010/11 will be absorbed within the Corporate Services Information Technology revenue budget.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues contained in the report fall within an approved category that has been confirmed as exempt from an equalities perspective.

8. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Education, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report

COLIN McMAHON

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

IT/CS/KM