

**REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2023**

**REPORT ON: SCHOOLS FIBRE INTERNET SERVICE**

**REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

**REPORT NO: 334-2023**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for the installation of fibre internet and network security services for all schools.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) agree to the installation of high-speed fibre internet and associated network security services to all schools;
- (b) remit the Head of Customer Services & IT to appoint Commsworld to undertake this work; and
- (c) agree that the first five years be funded from the 2023-28 Capital Plan and that provision be made in future capital plans for the remainder of the contract.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The total cost of the project will be £2.6m. This includes installation costs, rental, security service and maintenance for a ten-year period.
- 3.2 The £1.6m cost of the first five years of the project will be funded through the Schools Connectivity budget of £1.2m included in the Council Capital Plan 2023-28 with the balance of £0.4m being met from the IT Capital budget.
- 3.3 To secure best value tenders have been sought for a contract of ten years which extends beyond the Council's five-year Capital Plan. Provision of a further £1m will therefore require to be made for the period 2029-34 in future Capital Plans.
- 3.4 Staffing costs to support the project to be met from existing Customer Services and IT staffing budgets.

**4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's IT Strategy which was approved at Policy and Resources Committee on 18 February 2019 (Report 81-2019). The Council's IT strategy sets out to deliver digital services, mobile and flexibly accessible services through cost effective solutions.
- 4.2 There has been a significant increase in the number of mobile devices being used in schools, such as laptops and tablets. There has also been an increase in the use of the internet for online learning and cloud-based services. The current internet services are under strain and often reaching maximum capacity. To accommodate the increase in demand and provide a robust, reliable service for the future, new high-speed fibre internet connectivity is required for all schools.
- 4.3 Fibre internet services will help enable improvement in digital learning and allow schools to make greater use of Office 365 and other cloud-based services. To ensure there is a continued development of digital learning in schools a new strategy is being developed. One of the aims of the strategy is to deliver one to one personal devices to pupils and staff. Further increasing the number of devices being used and demand on internet services.

- 4.4 Scottish Government's strategy for enhancing learning and teaching using digital technology aims to, "Improve access to digital technology for all learners", and "Ensure that digital technology is a central consideration in all areas of curriculum and assessment delivery." One of the building blocks of digital learning is digital infrastructure such as high-speed fibre internet.
- 4.5 The current internet service is provided over the Council network using wireless technology. This equipment is approaching end of life and will need to be replaced. There are limits on the capacity that can be provided over wireless technology and there have been some reliability issues in the past.
- 4.6 The IT service for schools will benefit from improved capacity and reliability with the new fibre internet service. This will allow Children and Families Service to take advantage of cloud and other internet-based learning tools. It will also provide enhanced security capabilities to ensure schools are well protected from cyber-attacks and have a safe environment for digital learning.
- 4.7 The new fibre network will provide all essential IT functions and internet access to schools. Using fibre connectivity makes this a future-proof infrastructure. Capacity can be increased easily and at low cost, to support future demand. The fibre network has the flexibility to provide many different services, which allows future changes in requirements to be met.
- 4.8 The fibre internet service will provide a framework for wider community access in schools. For example, services like public Wi-Fi could be supported within the school buildings. Spare capacity will be built-in to ensure future growth can be accommodated.
- 4.9 Over the course of the contract, provision has been made for the addition or removal of locations on the fibre network. This means new build schools can be added to the same fibre internet service in the future. It can also be extended to other Council buildings and services.
- 4.10 Within the procurement framework suppliers have agreed to provide community benefits. Following award of the contract the Council will engage with the Contractor to agree what benefits can be provided and how this could be tailored for schools within Dundee.
- 4.11 The period of the contract will be ten years. This helps to attain better pricing and avoids cost of changing to a different service every few years. The cost for the first five years of the contract will be £1.6m. This includes installation of the fibre internet and security service, the support and maintenance of the fibre internet and security service. Funding is available for the first five years of the contract. For years six to ten provision will require to be made in future Capital Plans.
- 4.12 A procurement exercise has been carried out using Crown Commercial Services Framework RM6116 (Network Services 3) Lot 1a (Inter Site Connectivity). Following the tender closing date, 8 bids were received. One of these bids was found to be non-compliant. The bids were evaluated on a quality and price evaluation. The result of the tender process is shown in the table below.

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>Cost/Quality Ranking</b>
Commsworld	85.43	1
Vodafone UK	71.46	2
BT PLC	66.98	3
Coconnect Ltd	64.36	4
Daisy Corporate Services Trading Ltd	63.52	5
Highland Network Ltd	59.12	6
GCI Network Solutions	57.05	7

Based on a quality and price evaluation it is recommended that the proposal from Commsworld be accepted.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

**JACQUI KOPEL**

**HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES & IT**

**ROBERT EMMOTT**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

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