REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 18TH SEPTEMBER 2006

REPORT ON: THE SCOTTISH SCHOOLS DIGITAL NETWORK (SSDN)
               NATIONAL INTRANET - ACCESS TO SCHOOLS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 536-2006

1.0   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   This report seeks approval to sign the Customer Agreement with the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) and Research Machines Ltd (RM), (the service provider) for access to the tools, services and curricular content which will be provided free of charge to all local authority schools through the Scottish Schools Digital Network (SSDN).

2.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   It is recommended that the Education Committee note the contents of this report and approve the request to sign the SSDN Customer Agreement.

3.0   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1   The cost of implementing the SSDN intranet for Dundee City schools will be met from within the Education Revenue Budget provision for supplies and services.

4.0   LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1   The SSDN tools and services will enrich and enhance the learning development of pupils in Dundee City schools, and will offer any time, anywhere access to resources for teaching and learning. In time, it is expected that parents will also have access to certain agreed areas within SSDN to allow them to play a greater part in their children's education and, it may be that similar online environments are developed for the wider community, particularly to facilitate communication and collaboration amongst partnerships.

5.0   EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1   SSDN will ensure that pupils, schools staffs and other education professionals have safe and secure access to the national intranet environment.

6.0   BACKGROUND

6.1   The SSDN National Intranet, to be known as Glow, will link Scottish schools in a digital community, connecting over 800,000 teachers, support staff and pupils safely and securely. No other country's education system will have such a nationwide intranet, and Glow has far-reaching ambitions for teaching and learning and the wider community in Scotland.

6.2   The services provided within Glow include an online portal, e-mail, forums, chat, video-conferencing, and access to a range of curricular content.

6.3   Preparation for implementing SSDN has been underway in all education authorities (EAs) for some time now, with staff in Dundee from the education ICT Support Team and the Council's IT Division liaising with colleagues in the national SSDN team (from SEED, Learning and Teaching Scotland and RM). The Council's Support Services Department has also been involved and has had time to review the Customer Agreement. SEED requires each education authority to sign this tri-partite agreement (between SEED, RM and each EA), to allow access to the SSDN tools, services and the related training programmes. Before the agreement is signed, SEED has asked each EA to submit a detailed SSDN Implementation Plan so they can be sure that a rigorous methodology is in place to manage the complex implementation process. Dundee City's SSDN Implementation Plan has been produced in co-operation with colleagues from the IT Division.

6.4   Below are the current timescales:

Autumn 2006: EAs sign the Customer Agreement
September 2006-April 2007: Piloting by EAs of the individual components of SSDN National Intranet
April-October 2007: SSDN programme of central mentor training
August 2007: full availability of SSDN

7.0   **PROPOSAL**

7.1   It is now proposed that the Education Committee agrees to the Council signing the Customer Agreement so that schools can have access to the piloting, training and the full service provided by the SSDN National Intranet.

8.0   **CONSULTATION**

8.1   This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Head of Information Technology.

9.0   **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1   None.

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Director of Education

8th September 2006

AHW/RMc/DD