

Report

Report to:	Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	2 March 2009
Report by:	Chair of Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Implementation Group

Subject:	Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project - Shared Services Update Phase 2 E-learning
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ update the Joint Committee on progress in relation to the use of technology and e-learning to support the delivery of learning and development

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Joint Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that it be noted that the Clyde Valley councils are working together to develop a common approach to the delivery of e-learning across all authorities.
- (2) that it be noted that a tender opportunity has been identified for an external provider to provide a common learning management system and associated applications which will meet the requirements of the Clyde Valley councils.

3. Background

- 3.1 The central objective of the project is to identify and implement opportunities to deliver learning and development activities more efficiently and to a higher standard to all groups of employees working for the eight Clyde Valley Councils.
- 3.2 From the outset it was envisaged that greater use of information technology (IT) and, in particular, the exploitation of e-learning technology would be central to the project and that the Clyde Valley should explore these opportunities to the full. For this reason a significant aspect of phase two of the project was to review the opportunities for the Clyde Valley councils to make better use of technology in the delivery of learning and development across the Clyde Valley.
- 3.1 A condition of the grant award is that those outcomes achieved should be shared with other local authorities in Scotland. In addition, the outcomes should be scalable on a national basis where possible. This objective is of particular importance to the local government Improvement Service (IS) which is actively consulting with the Clyde Valley councils on their experiences of utilising IT in the field of learning and development.

4. Current position

- 4.1. The increased use of e-learning technology has been under consideration by many public and private sector organisations including Clyde Valley member councils for a number of years. In particular, councils have generally recognised the benefits of operating a learning management system (LMS) as a means of hosting e-learning content, tracking access to the learning, reporting on progress and outcomes achieved and evaluating effectiveness.
- 4.2. Two of the Clyde Valley councils (Glasgow City Council and Renfrewshire Council) have embarked on a pilot exercise to evaluate the use of the same learning management system during the past two years. As part of this evaluation, both councils have also tested the use of content development software, evaluation tools and 360° staff appraisal software. In addition, North Lanarkshire Council also has experience of using a learning management system to provide access to e-learning materials.
- 4.3. Other Clyde Valley member councils have used e-learning in varying ways without fully maximising the potential of the medium. As a result, the majority of councils are reliant on external organisations to develop, allow access to, and provide reports on employee completion of courses and evaluation of outcomes.
- 4.4. The different types of technology, courses developed, and approaches undertaken by the member councils have resulted in vastly differing e-learning strategies across the Clyde Valley. This is a missed opportunity to achieve the project's objectives more effectively through the establishment of common approaches to learning, shared development of materials, and interoperability of technology.

5. Benefits of a Common Approach

- 5.1. The use of a learning management system to facilitate the increased use of e-learning provides a number of benefits. These include:
 - ◆ Better value for money in delivery of cost effective training, learning and development
 - ◆ Greater flexibility to allow employees to access materials from any location, at any time and in a self directed way – contributing to the principle of agile and flexible working for local government employees
 - ◆ Opportunities to develop and share access to common e-learning content and to set standards for development across the Clyde Valley and beyond
 - ◆ Simple online evaluation of outcomes of learning events (both traditional classroom based and using e-learning)
 - ◆ Reporting and tracking facility to demonstrate progress with learning, provide a record for training required by legislation and testing of competence.
- 5.2. By encouraging the Clyde Valley to adopt the same technology to address our common e-learning requirements, the opportunity exists to develop a common branding for the Clyde Valley. Of greater significance, the learning platform (LMS) affords the opportunity for all Clyde Valley employees to gain access to the same materials, jointly developed by member councils. At the same time, individual council-specific materials can be restricted to the relevant councils by the LMS.
- 5.3. This potential approach has already been identified by the local government Improvement Service as both pioneering and an example of good practice to be shared by other authorities and public sector bodies in Scotland.

- 5.4 To this end the IS is seeking to become directly involved in the Clyde Valley's tendering process by using the same technology to develop access to training materials for Planning Services throughout Scotland. The opportunity of greater partnership working with the IS may provide further scope to maintain and extend the remit of the Clyde Valley Group as a sounding board and pioneer of change in Scotland.

6. Next Stage

- 6.1 Each of the Clyde Valley councils has agreed in principle to participate in a tender exercise for the provision of a learning management system (learning platform) and associated software to facilitate the delivery of e-learning. South Lanarkshire Council as lead authority is currently gathering background data from each council relating to the current technology used in each authority.
- 6.2 On receipt of this data, and in consultation with each member council, an invitation to competitive tender (ITT) document will be produced which specifies both the functional and technical specifications required by the Clyde Valley councils.
- 6.3 On the assumption that a suitable provider is found, the Clyde Valley councils will be in a position to develop e-learning materials to deliver training, learning and development more efficiently and effectively. As a result, the opportunities to share and jointly develop new materials will be significantly enhanced, resulting in long-term savings in delivery costs.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1 None.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 It is anticipated that councils will commit to a contract for an initial period of three years with a suitable provider. Costs of provision are generally pro rated on the basis of each council's size and will be subject to market prices. Indicative costs for an investment in the four products under consideration are in the region of £120,000.00 per year for the Clyde Valley, taking into account projected economies of scale discounts of some 30%.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 None.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1 An initial Impact Assessment was completed on 3 November 2008 using the South Lanarkshire Council online assessment tool. The assessment was completed with contributions from members of the Implementation Steering Group.

Gill Bhatti

Chair, Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Implementation Group

17 February 2009

Previous References

Clyde Valley Joint Committee Progress Report – Dec 2008

List of Background Papers

Clyde Valley EGF Training Bid

NBSS Clyde Valley Consortium Submission Nov 06

NBSS Clyde Valley Consortium – Secondary Paper December 06

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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