

Report

Report to:	Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 September 2021
Report by:	Chair of Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Steering Group

Subject:	Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project – Subsidy to Support the Extended Learning Management System (LMS) Contract
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ request that the Joint Committee approves the proposal to utilise Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group (CVLDG) project funds to subsidise the implementation costs for the extension of the Brightwave LMS contract

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that £23,000 of project funds to provide a one-off subsidy to Member Councils taking up the extension to the LMS contract (section 5.2), be approved;
- (2) that £2,150 of project funds be utilised by North Lanarkshire Council to fund software licences (Articulate) for a period of one year (section 5.4); and
- (3) that the £19,150 of funds required to be drawn down from the carried forward reserves to assist in meeting the total costs of £25,150 (section 5.6), be approved.

3. Background

- 3.1. In a paper presented to the Joint Committee on 14 June 2021, the Joint Committee noted that the CVLDG would be entering into a Non-Contractual Extension with suppliers Brightwave Ltd to provide an e-learning platform (LMS). The extension is fixed for a period of two years.
- 3.2. In accepting the Non-Contractual Extension, Brightwave offered Members a choice between switching to a new technology platform which offered a modern and more functionally sophisticated system or staying with the older technology product.
- 3.3. The Joint Committee has experienced small underspends over several years which the Joint Committee agreed could be transferred to the Balance Sheet and held in a reserve to manage future project activities proposed by the Steering Groups and approved by the Joint Committee. The current balance on this reserve is £30,451.

4. Non-Contractual Extension Options

- 4.1 The advantages of opting for a Non-Contractual Extension to the LMS contract have previously been noted by the Joint Committee, however, the conditions applied to take up this option limit the extension to two years.
- 4.2 At the time of writing, ten of the Clyde Valley Member Councils have opted to take up the offer to move across to the new technology platform (option one) and two have opted to remain on the old technology (option two).
- 4.3 One council has indicated at a late stage that they may change their decision and instead opt for the new technology. Should this eventuality come to pass there would be 11 councils opting for the new technology and one for the old technology.
- 4.4 Whilst choosing option one provides greater functionality and potentially greater savings to Members (through extending access to online learning to a wider range of council employees), there are one off implementation costs associated with establishing the new technology. As these costs require to be funded at the outset, the costs in year one are higher than for the second year of the contract.
- 4.5 As Brightwave responded to the CVLDG request to retain the option to provide the old technology, the costs of maintaining this system also increased. This has resulted in an increase in the annual licence fee for Members opting for option two.

5. Recommendation for Use of Reserves to Manage Cost of Subsidy

- 5.1 In recognition that Member Councils would be facing additional implementation costs in year one of the contract extension, the Steering Group has recommended the offer of a subsidy to those Councils taking up the extension offer.
- 5.2 A sum of £2,000 has been proposed to subsidise the costs of those Councils implementing the new technology platform and a sum of £1,000 to subsidise those councils opting to remain on the old technology. Total costs of £23,000 (assuming all 11 councils referred to at section 4.3 opt for the new technology).
- 5.3 In recognition of the fact that North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) – a Full Member Council and member of the Joint Committee – already has a Learning Management System in place it is proposed that a similar sum should be allocated from the project fund to NLC for appropriate Learning and Development activities.
- 5.4 NLC has requested that two software licences (Articulate e-learning authoring software) can be funded for a period of one year using an existing CVLDG procurement framework. The cost of these licences would be £2,150.
- 5.5 The total cost of the proposals in sections 5.1 to 5.4 is £25,150.
- 5.6 The 2021/2022 budget currently has £6,000 available to meet part of these costs and approval is being sought to draw down the remaining £19,150 required from the £30,451 of reserves carried forward on the Balance Sheet from previous years.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. None.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. The financial implications are detailed in section 5 of the report. If the proposals are approved, this would leave £11,301 left in the reserve to be carried forward for use in future years.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1 The information contained within this report has no sustainability or environmental implications.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 The supplier has a consistent track record of providing services to the Clyde valley over a period of 12 years. Full financial appraisals have been completed for the supplier at the outset of each contract and again recently when the non-contractual extension was awarded.
- 9.2 Any risks to the funds being allocated to the proposed subsidy are mitigated by the fact that the subsidy is only triggered when each respective member council signs off the contract Terms Sheet and makes payment to the supplier.
- 9.3 The Terms and Conditions associated with the non-contractual extension have been thoroughly appraised and evaluated to ensure compliance with legislation, South Lanarkshire Council regulations and Standing Orders.
- 9.4 The supplier's IT security arrangements have been assessed and approved by South Lanarkshire Council's IT Security Manager.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1 Consultation has taken place with the Steering Group (Full Clyde Valley Members), as well as participating and procurement members who use the existing e-learning contract.
- 10.2 An equality impact assessment will be completed once the non-contract extension is activated.

Gill Bhatti

Chair, Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Implementation Steering Group

19 August 2021

Previous References

- ◆ 14 June 2021 CVLDG – Non-Contract Extension for Provision of e-Learning Platform (Learning Management System)
- ◆ 22 February 2021 – CVLDG – Update on Membership and Funding for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project for 2021/2022
- ◆ 9 December 2019 – CVLDG – Membership and Funding for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project for 2020/2021
- ◆ 10 December 2018 – CVLDG – Update on Membership and Funding for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project for 2019/2020

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee Minute of Agreement

Contact for Further Information

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

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