

JOINT CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

3 September 2007

The meeting commenced at 8.30 am in the Avondale Centre,
Dyke House School, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillors Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder) and Pamela
Hargreaves (Performance Portfolio Holder)

Officers: John Collings, Assistant Director, Children's Services Department
Colin Scott, Strategic Director, e-Learning, Children's Services
Department
Joan Chapman, Principal Strategy Officer, Corporate Strategy Division
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Computers for Schools Project 2007/09 (*Director of Children's Services and Assistant Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

Key Decision (Test (i) and (ii) apply)

Purpose of report

To approve the implementation of the national Computers for Schools initiative which provides disadvantaged children and their families with computer facilities including broadband connectivity.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director of Children's Services presented a report which gave the background to this initiative and the timescales involved. The funding for this initiative was targeted at Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils (years 8-11) resident in the 10% most deprived areas in England and placed the emphasis on personal access to ICT at home. It was noted that the Strategy fits with a number of other strategies, including the Children and Young People's Plan, Bridging the Digital Divide and Building Schools for the Future.

In response to a Member's question in relation to how pupils would be chosen to participate in this project, the Assistant Director responded that a formula using social deprivation at family level would be used, including the provision of free school meals. The Strategic Director for e-Learning provided clarification on the options for wireless connectivity including 2.4 and 5.8 network. The Assistant Director indicated that monitoring reports would be provided for the Portfolio Holders on a regular basis, including the tracking of progress of pupils and attainment outcomes. In addition to the report, the Assistant Director submitted an article which supported earlier studies that there was no firm evidence available that wireless computers posed a health risk.

It was suggested that this project could run alongside the current Members ICT Strategy. The Principal Strategy Development Officer noted that it would be difficult to link the two different streams of specific funding together.

Members had concerns about some young people missing out on the benefits of having computers and internet connectivity but were pleased this project would provide disadvantaged children and their families with computer facilities including broadband connectivity. The Strategic Director e-Learning indicated that it was hoped that children across all schools, including primary schools would be able to access the wireless connectivity once the technology was available.

Decision

The implementation of the Computers for Schools Initiative to provide disadvantaged children and families with computer facilities including broadband connectivity was approved.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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