CYNGOR SIR *POWYS* COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

31 July 2012

REPORT AUTHOR:	**County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander** **Portfolio Holder for Learning and Leisure**
SUBJECT:	**Ystradgynlais Schools Modernisation Programme: ICT**

REPORT FOR:	**Decision**

Summary

Cabinet are asked to consider and approve the request for additional ICT capital funding as per the detail in this report. Funding is required to deliver the ICT element of the Ystradgynlais Schools Modernisation Programme for the four new primary schools and remodelled high school in Ystradgynlais.

Proposal

The Ystradgynlais Schools Modernisation Programme is the most ambitious building programme undertaken by PCC. It is a trailblazer project, acting as the benchmark for all future schools modernisation programmes in Powys. As such, it provides an excellent opportunity to modernise school design and implement new ways of using ICT to enhance delivery of all the activity that takes place in schools, including teaching, learning and business support systems. The potential benefits to the wider community are also significant.

The Ystradgynlais Technology Project is the first opportunity to create and deliver a vision for ICT enabled learning and business support on an area basis.

The project aims to implement 21st Century technology, accessible from anywhere using a range of devices to:

- help deliver improved outcomes (standards and well being) for children and young people

- support innovative teaching and learning to capture the imagination of children and young people to help them engage and succeed.

- deliver more efficient business support services on an area or where appropriate County / regional basis.

- contribute to the wider regeneration agenda in the Ystradgynlais area by providing benefits to citizens using other PCC services, local businesses and the wider community.

- Improve integration between service providers (within and outside PCC) to enable citizens to have seamless access to and benefit from service provision.

There is broad agreement that appropriate use of ICT resources contributes positively to raising standards, both at national level and as a result of more local research.

Nationally Becta has presented evidence that 95% of teachers believe that the use of technology is raising standards in schools and colleges (Raising standards, Becta, 2010). In the report "The impact of digital technologies on learning" (Becta, 2009) evidence was presented that classes with online learning, whether completely online or blended, on average produce stronger learning outcomes than learning face-to-face alone. There were also positive impacts from interactive whiteboards on literacy and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 once teachers had experienced sustained use and the technology had become embedded in pedagogical practice.

Continuous professional development of teachers is also supported by ICT. In their review for Becta, the Institute for Education highlighted the role that communities of practice can play in CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and the importance of individual access to technology to make best use of that (Continuing Professional Development in ICT for Teachers: A literature review, Becta, 2009).

Penrhos school in Ystradgynlais has been part of a pilot programme for Year 6 laptop use where students are allocated individual machines to use. This has shown significant progression for students and the proposed capital spend includes provision for other schools to adopt similar schemes.

The equipment proposed in this report is designed to work and enable full realisation of the value of networking equipment and teaching and learning resources already approved for installation in the new schools, including interactive whiteboards and projectors.

Corporate Improvement Plan

Improvement Objective Learning and Community Sub programme 2: Schools Modernisation:

We will reconfigure schools provision to match places to students and ensure our schools are financially viable and fit for purpose.

'Council' Improvement is another one of the 5 Improvement Objectives identified in the Powys Change Plan (Stage 1) June 2011. The' Council' Investment Objectives aims to constantly challenge what the Council delivers and how it is delivered to improve quality and reduce cost by

- transforming the ways in which our workforce operates,
- improving how we communicate with both the community and workforce
- Utilising modern technology to improve productivity.

Support Services Transformation is one of the sub programmes within the Council Investment Objective and includes significant reference to how ICT can increase capacity and capability and provide efficiency savings

The project supports the following objectives of the LSB One Plan

- People in Powys can easily access services
- People in Powys have the skills to pursue their ambitions

The project addresses the objectives in the respective Schools Services Strategy, 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme, the ICT Service Strategy, the Schools Service ICT Strategy and the Powys Community Focussed Services strategy. It is also informed by the Regeneration Strategy.

Options Considered/Available

Four options have been considered to deliver the ICT element of the schools modernisation. The aim is to implement a 21st century ICT model into each school complemented with a robust training programme to maximise the technology and create efficient teaching ability with the technology.

The four options are:

- Zero new spend (£1,500) – redeploy existing equipment into the new schools at a small cost

- Minimum spend £168,700) – add to the existing equipment with basic functionality and computers to power the new interactive whiteboards

- Medium spend (£353,050) – fully equip the high school and deliver laptops for all teaching staff in all the three primary schools for September

- Full spend (£546,800) – full provision for all the schools in Ystradgynlais including a class set of tablets for each primary school to pilot this new technology

Zero New Spend Option

Schools have existing equipment in reasonably volume – for example Ysgol Penrhos has over 80 desktop computers and laptops currently being used for curriculum delivery and school administration. Each school also has an NGfL project server providing basic email and file sharing.

However much of this equipment is, in ICT terms, antiquated and becoming unreliable. Some of the computers are 8-10 years old and are not capable of meeting basic school needs such as internet browsing. Additionally this older equipment tends to be physically bulkier and using CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) rather than flat monitors which make the ICT more dominating of physical space and makes the classrooms less flexible.

The audit of existing equipment suggests that around 150 computers over the primary schools are currently suitable for continued operation, based on a very modest minimum specification. If there was no additional investment in ICT schools would be left with a poor pupil to computer ratio, be unable to confidently and reliably use the interactive whiteboards specified as part of the new build, and there would be no mobile or personal ICT for staff to support their own development.

The secondary school has a reasonable number of existing devices currently under a lease arrangement. Desktop computers are ageing and there is plummeting confidence in their reliability amongst staff and students. This lack of confidence either results in staff having to plan lessons for the alternatives where ICT is or is not working effectively, or avoiding technology and therefore missing out on the opportunities it could bring. There is currently little use of ICT in support across a broad range of the curriculum and little use of specialist software in areas such as media and language.

In both cases, doing nothing would not immediately remove any ICT provision from schools, but system reliability would continue to decline, and as a corollary to this use by teachers and students would drop. Classrooms would quickly become unable to effectively make full use of investment in the new buildings, including the whiteboards. In addition to reduced opportunity for students, teachers professional development would be reduced through lack of access to resources, ideas and their wider professional community. Finally the role the school might directly or indirectly play in the wider community would suffer. Opportunities for community use of facilities to improve skills or simply access the internet could not be reliably offered.

The capital cost of this would be near zero (excepting the cost of moving and reconnecting ICT), but the school would be required to spend significant sums in the near future to even maintain the current level of opportunity. Revenue commitment from the schools would be minimal, though there are implications for continuing the leases on equipment in some schools, and entering a new contract for printing and copying which would combine capital and revenue.

Zero New Spend

PRIMARY			SECONDARY	
	Budget			Budget
Sofware Upgrades (Legacy)	£0.00		Software (High School)	£0.00
Software (Primary)	£0.00		Printers (High School)	£0.00
Printers (Primary)	£0.00			
Total	**£0.00**		**Total**	**£0.00**

Desktop ICT - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£0.00		Desktop ICT - Maesydderwen	£0.00
Desktop ICT - Golog y Cwm	£0.00			
Desktop ICT - Bro Tawe	£0.00			
Desktop ICT - Cribarth	£0.00			
Total	**£0.00**		**Total**	**£0.00**

NAS - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£0.00		Servers - Maesydderwen	£0.00
NAS - Golog y Cwm	£0.00			
NAS – Bro Tawe	£0.00			
NAS – Cribarth	£0.00			
Total	**£0.00**		**Total**	**£0.00**

Install & Train	£1,500.00
Contingency	£0.00

Grand Total	**£1,500.00**	**Grand Total**	**£0.00**
Met from FF&E Budget	£81,480.00		

Total Funding Required	**£1,500.00**
New Funding	£0.00

Minimum Spend Option

The minimum investment that could be made in ICT for the schools would be a limited refresh of equipment, replacing key servers, providing a computer per classroom for the whiteboard and a small number of computers for staff to share to prepare resources and access the wider professional teaching community. This would cover the three primaries opening in September and the high school.

This would prevent the investment in infrastructure from being completely wasted, but does not take advantage of the revolutionary improvements that could be made by truly embracing the potential of ICT.

Spending a minimum would prevent the programme from meeting its aims of truly exploring the potential of new ICT models such as the use of tablet computers as included in the proposed ICT solution. Tablets are rightly considered potentially revolutionary in both mainstream and ALN environments, offering a new route to the individual learning experience that has proved so successful in initiatives such as the Penrhos laptop project cited above. Individual or personal access to devices for whole classes simultaneously, individual pupils during their whole school day and staff are all opportunities that will be missed in this minimum model.

Lastly, if there is ever to be significant investment in Ystradgynlais and its schools then when the new buildings are opened is the most auspicious time. The exciting new school buildings present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to inspire staff, students and wider community to embrace learning. The expectations of the school communities are high, and failing to meet an effective standard of ICT provision would be politically extremely unpopular.

Minimum Spend

PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
	Budget		Budget
Sofware Upgrades (Legacy)	£0.00	Software (High School)	£1,500.00
Software (Primary)	£1,000.00	Printers (High School)	£10,000.00
Printers (Primary)	£10,000.00		
Total	**£11,000.00**	**Total**	**£11,500.00**

Desktop ICT - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£0.00	Desktop ICT - Maesydderwen	£100,550.00
Desktop ICT - Golog y Cwm	£8,000.00		
Desktop ICT - Bro Tawe	£8,000.00		
Desktop ICT - Cribarth	£5,650.00		
Total	**£21,650.00**	**Total**	**£100,550.00**

NAS - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£0.00	Servers - Maesydderwen	£20,000.00
NAS - Golog y Cwm	£1,000.00		
NAS – Bro Tawe	£1,000.00		
NAS – Cribarth	£1,000.00		
Total	**£3,000.00**	**Total**	**£20,000.00**

Install & Train	£1,000.00
Contingency	£0.00

Grand Total	**£36,650.00**	**Grand Total**	**£132,050.00**
Met from FF&E Budget	£81,480.00		

Total Funding Required	**£168,700.00**
New Funding	£87,220.00

Medium Spend Option

A middle ground between a minimum and optimal investment would be to focus on key infrastructure improvements for all the schools, deliver the preferred solution to the high school and refresh the three primary schools to its current level of provision but with modern rather than outdated computers.

This would allow confident use of ICT facilities for all teachers and pupils, but would not deliver the planned pilot of tablet computers in the primaries and would limit the scope of those schools to equip a class with 'one device per child'. One of the primary schools has chosen a group of tablets instead of laptops, but none of the class sets proposed have been included.

This would prevent the investment in infrastructure from being wasted, but does not take advantage of the revolutionary improvements that could be made by truly embracing the potential of ICT.

This approach does include a laptop per teacher in all the schools to encourage and support their personal development.

The ICT provision met under this budget would include:

- 3x computer suites for the high school
- 1x new desktop for each whiteboard in all the schools
- 3x sets of tablets for the high school
- 1x laptop per member of teaching staff
- 1x new desktop for the offices in the primary schools

Compared to the full budget, cuts have been made to budgets for software, upgrades of existing computers, printing and installation/training. This will have an affect on the immediate familiarity and ability of teachers to use the ICT equipment, but the baseline provision will be in place. The lack of funds for training and support in using the equipment is the big risk to overall success and value of ICT in schools in this option.

The prices used to calculate the cost of desktop and laptop computers are based on upper estimates of procurement costs. It is likely that the final price of equipment will drop around 10-15% from this figure as a result of competitive tendering.

Currently the 8 primary schools have 129 desktops and 80 laptops. This option would involve redeploying 65 desktops and 66 laptops, plus the purchase of new machines to give a total of at least 250 devices across the three schools.

An additional cut from the full spend is the pilot of tablet computers. The full spend plan includes the provision of a class set of tablet computers to each primary school. The intention was, building on the pilot of laptops for year 6 in Ysgol Penrhos, to investigate the potential for the use of these devices in the classroom. There is existing evidence of the impact of Windows-based Tablet PCs on staff confidence and use of ICT back as far as 2005 (Tablet PCs in schools, Becta, 2005) and a series of current projects including a large scale collaboration between the eLearning Foundation and Carphone Warehouse (http://www.e-learningfoundation.com/tablets-for-schools). Such a pilot would be worth considering as a separate project if not funded at this time. Tablet computers are achieving wide acceptance internationally as tools for learning – particularly supporting some ALN, individual creativity and self-paced learning. Experience in an area such as Ystradgynlais would create a demonstration site for other schools in the county looking to apply this technology themselves.

Medium Spend

PRIMARY	Budget
Sofware Upgrades (Legacy)	£1,500.00
Software (Primary)	£3,000.00
Printers (Primary)	£11,250.00
Total	**£15,750.00**

SECONDARY	Budget
Software (High School)	£15,000.00
Printers (High School)	£20,000.00
Total	**£35,000.00**

	Budget
Desktop ICT - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£0.00
Desktop ICT - Golog y Cwm	£30,000.00
Desktop ICT - Bro Tawe	£30,000.00
Desktop ICT - Cribarth	£20,000.00
Total	**£80,000.00**

	Budget
Desktop ICT - Maesydderwen	£197,800.00
Total	**£197,800.00**

NAS - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£0.00
NAS - Golog y Cwm	£1,000.00
NAS – Bro Tawe	£1,000.00
NAS – Cribarth	£1,000.00
Total	**£3,000.00**

Servers - Maesydderwen	£20,000.00
Total	**£20,000.00**

Install & Train	£1,500.00
Contingency	£0.00

Grand Total	**£100,250.00**
Met from FF&E Budget	£81,480.00

Grand Total	**£252,800.00**

Total Funding Required	**£353,050.00**
New Funding	£271,570.00

Full Spend

The solution as proposed would deliver a mixed economy provision for all five schools, balancing reuse with capital spend.

A significant amount of existing equipment would be reused, following a software and hardware audit, plus in some cases minor upgrades such as new keyboards and mice. New computers would be installed with each new interactive whiteboards and staff would be given individual access to laptops to support their planning, administration and on-going development.

Personal equipment for teachers is expected to increase the opportunities available to staff to locate and design resources; to manage data on pupils to inform personalisation of lesson content; and to participate in the wider professional community to get ideas and expertise from the rest of the county and country.

Each primary school would have at least a class set of tablet computers, plus a number of new and legacy laptops capable of being deployed flexibly by teachers. Schools have expressed enthusiasm for the flexibility of mobile devices to cater for a variety of learning and lesson styles.

The high school will benefit from specialist media equipment, reflecting the growing popularity of this area of the curriculum and increasingly media-savvy and creative young people.

Support staff are not excluded in this solution – with new computers to support the reliability of critical business systems in the school office, and at least one shared computer in the staff room for the use of teaching assistants.

The mix of old and new equipment would mean that future upgrade needs are spread out over time, reflecting a more sustainable approach than a 'big bang' of only new equipment. This also reflects the PCC commitment to sustainability and getting the maximum effective lifespan from equipment. Around 700 new devices would be purchased, and around 150 would be reused.

Full Spend

PRIMARY	Budget	SECONDARY	Budget
Sofware Upgrades (Legacy)	£30,000.00	Software (High School)	£15,000.00
Software (Primary)	£10,000.00	Printers (High School)	£25,000.00
Printers (Primary)	£20,000.00		
Total	**£60,000.00**	**Total**	**£40,000.00**

Desktop ICT - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£75,000.00	Desktop ICT - Maesydderwen	£197,800.00
Desktop ICT - Golog y Cwm	£45,000.00		
Desktop ICT - Bro Tawe	£45,000.00		
Desktop ICT - Cribarth	£35,000.00		
Total	**£200,000.00**	**Total**	**£197,800.00**

NAS - Dyffryn y Glowyr	£1,000.00	Servers - Maesydderwen	£20,000.00
NAS - Golog y Cwm	£1,000.00		
NAS – Bro Tawe	£1,000.00		
NAS – Cribarth	£1,000.00		
Total	**£4,000.00**	**Total**	**£20,000.00**

Install & Train	£10,000.00
Contingency	£15,000.00

Grand Total	**£289,000.00**	**Grand Total**	**£257,800.00**
Met from FF&E Budget	£81,480.00		

Total Funding Required	**£546,800.00**
New Funding	£465,320.00

Preferred option and reasons.

The preferred option is the Medium spend option. This will achieve a balance between level of provision in the schools and the need for fairness and austerity in comparison to the rest of the county. The three primary schools in particular will be able to benefit from an acceptable level of ICT, and staff will be able to fully participate in professional development. The high school will be modern and well equipped, meeting the needs of teachers and pupils. This option excludes piloting tablets in the primary schools, which could be addressed at a later date; and the Welsh Medium primary school which does not open until January 2013 therefore can be more effectively addressed in the Autumn term. Extra resources should also ideally be identified for staff training and support.

Notes on revenue (all options)

The school service has made provision to support the ongoing revenue costs for the project in 2012/13 and subsequent financial years of £71,560

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This £71,560 has been sourced from savings achieved through the closure of the schools in the catchment area over the last and present year, together with a contribution of £20,000 from schools delegated budget.

Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

N/A

Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

N/A

Local Member(s)

N/A

Other Front Line Services

N/A

Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)

The Principal Accountant (Capital) confirms that the Ystradgynlais modernisation budget contains an allowance for ICT of £81,480. In the first instance it is proposed that the additional £271,570 is funded from within the overall capital budget for the Ystradgynlais schools. If there is insufficient underspend to fund all or part of the £271,570 the balance will need to be funded from Schools Major Improvements capital. In any event it is proposed that the £271,570 is reimbursed from School Improvement capital budget over two years to maintain the overall capital provision for schools modernisation.   The ongoing revenue costs of £71,560 have been identified by the Schools Service.

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

N/A

Communications

N/A

Statutory Officers

The Strategic Director, Finance & Infrastructure (Section 151 Officer) notes and supports the comments of the Principal Accountant regarding funding. The Strategic Director also considers it appropriate that an independent review is undertaken of how we arrived at this position and to ensure that sufficient early consideration is given to ICT in future 21st Century School proposals.

Strategic Director Law & Governance has confirmed that he has no comment to add.

Members' Interests

Members' Interest

Any Member who is any type of Governor, including an LEA Governor, at any of the schools mentioned in the report should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form. LEA appointed Governors may speak and vote. The Standards Committee have also granted a blanket dispensation to all Governors with a prejudicial interest in school modernisation allowing them to speak and vote at meetings, provided that if the prejudicial interest is a pecuniary one the Councillor may speak but not vote.

Members also need to consider whether they may have other personal interests which need to be disclosed. Examples are children attending the schools or teachers or other staff working at the schools. This includes pupils and employees, family and close friends.

As with School Governors, the Standards Committee has granted a blanket dispensation in respect of other types of prejudicial interest, provided it is not a pecuniary one, in which case the Councillor may speak but not vote.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To implement the Medium Spend Option and vire £271,570.00 from the Ystradgynlais Schools Modernisation project in accordance with the Principal Accountant's proposal.	**To deliver the ICT workstream of the Ystradgynlais Schools Modernisation Programme**

Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	**Y**	**Within Budget:**	**Y**

Relevant Local Member(s):	

Person(s) To Implement Decision:	**Stephen Rogers – Head of Schools**
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	**September 2012**

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

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