

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
27 August 2015

Agenda Item	19.
Report No	ECAS 65/15

ICT in Learning Strategy

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report provides information on the implementation of the ICT in Learning Strategic Action Plan. The report also demonstrates how collectively the work is contributing to the delivery of the Council Priority: 'We aim to provide our pupils with a technology-rich environment, to address their learner needs and curriculum goals, and transform their learning experience'.

1 Background

- 1.1 In February 2015 members of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee endorsed the Care and Learning Service ICT in Learning Strategic Action Plan. Since February, significant progress has been made on key areas such as ICT Reprovision, Infrastructure Development, Devices, Training and Distance Learning.

2 ICT in Learning Pilots

- 2.1 In order to develop further Technology Rich Environments in schools, in early 2015 a 'Highland Chrome Pilot' was established. It was designed to evaluate the use of internet enabled devices for learning on a one device per pupil model. The pilot also sought to evidence how the use of technology could support the transition to secondary school.
- 2.2 Developing the right ICT Infrastructure to support enhanced technology in schools was a critical factor to the pilot project. The Interim review conducted at an early stage in the pilot has demonstrated impressive positive impacts in each of the participating schools.
- 2.3 The pilot has been running in one secondary school for the S1- S3 pupils and two primary schools for the P7 pupils since Easter 2015. This involves the use of Google Apps for Education (GAFE) and the provision on a one device per learner model using Chromebooks. P7 pupils in the primary schools and S1-S3 in the secondary school. The pilot is ongoing and a final report will be produced July 2016.
- 2.4 An interim evaluation of the Highland Chrome Pilot has been carried out to support the ICT Reprovision developments and to report back to the ICT Development Board. The Executive Summary is provided in Appendix 1.

- 2.5 Alness Academy has also continued the use of iPads in school, as previously reported to Committee, and this work continues to inform the ICT in Learning Strategy.
- 2.6 In addition, Merkinch Primary School has been identified by a major provider as a school to invest in, and it is presently having its ICT capacity enhanced by participating in a 'Connected Classrooms' project, which will provide further learning points.

3 ICT in Learning Strategy

- 3.1 The future model for ICT provision in Schools has been developed by the cross-Service Strategy Group, and was presented to Head teachers at a seminar in June. This involves:
- A reduced number of managed devices (desktops), retaining teacher, support for learning and subject specific devices such as computing science and graphic communications.
 - The provision of a device for learners from P6 to S6 - the preferred device is a Chromebook.
 - The ability for personal devices to be used for learning purposes by staff and pupils (where approved)
 - Access to a wider range of technology in primary schools suitable for very young learners.
- 3.2 After extensive research / trials in Google Apps for Education (GAFE), the ICT in Learning Team are now building the use of GAFE into the future model for ICT provision. This early adoption of GAFE supports staff and learners as we transition to the future model, and there has already been rapid take up in Highland and evidence of impressive outcomes for learners and staff using the suite of tools.
- 3.3 The ICT in Learning Team are now in a position to offer GAFE access to those wishing to use the apps and suite of tools now. Designated Highland accounts for both staff and pupils can be created and support is available for schools wishing to take advantage of this.

4 Open and Distance Learning

- 4.1 Open and Distance Learning (ODL) provides opportunities for learners in the Senior Phase to access courses online which may not be available to them in the school. Barriers to ODL were ascertained through consultation with Tutors and Head Teachers. These include access to technology based collaborative tools that support anywhere, anytime learning, skills for independent learning and support for learners in the form of mentors in the school.
- 4.2 Part of the ICT in Learning Strategic Action plan is development of ODL by providing access to tools online that can facilitate good communication and collaboration. The Highland ODL Tutors are being supported and have been trained to use the online tools.
- 4.3 The current 15/16 school year has seen a record uptake in Highland Council provided ODL Courses; this has been in German, Geology, Classic

Languages such as Greek and Latin. Each learner has a dedicated mentor in the school. 37 pupils have taken up places the Senior Phase online courses.

5 Training

- 5.1 The ICT in Learning Team have begun the process of developing a training model, and in April, May and June carried out a number of school visits to present to staff and ascertain ongoing training requirements. The model of training to be offered will include face-to-face, online and area based events. It will include both practical use of ICT and pedagogical approaches. The developments are in response to survey work carried out in 2014 on ICT in Learning where teachers wished to have both geographically convenient and timeous access to training and support.

6 Members Workshop

- 6.1 The Care and Learning Service proposes to provide an opportunity for elected members to find out more detail about ICT in Learning. A workshop will be held to see examples technology in action and to hear more about how the work is developing in schools. The workshop will be held in a school, date to be confirmed.

7 ICT Reprovision

- 7.1 The ICT Reprovision programme takes account of the requirements for ICT in Learning. Although operating to tight deadlines the programme is progressing as planned. At the time of writing this report, the team are evaluating PQQ responses from potential ICT Service Provides, preparing documentation for the Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions (ISOS) sub-stage and progressing work on the Commodity Services

8 Category F schools

- 8.1 The ICT Reprovisioning Board has confirmed support to roll out the future model to the schools included in the Category F project (replacing 2,700 obsolete managed devices).
- 8.2 This proposal includes the deployment of locally managed devices such as Chromebooks, to supplement the significantly reduced numbers of managed devices (by 65% from current numbers).
- 8.3 Reports are being drawn up to formalise proposals covering the technical, financial, training, project management and governance implications.

9 Implications

- 9.1 **Resources** - Resources are committed to support the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan and ICT Reprovision programme. Overall savings are envisaged, albeit the final cost is dependent on the reprovision programme.

- 9.2 **Legal** There are no identified legal implications associated with Strategic Action Plan. Legal implications for the ICT Reprovision will be managed through the ICT Reprovision Team.
- 9.3 **Equalities** The Strategic Action Plan has been designed to ensure all pupils and staff have access to the technology required for learning and teaching. All aspects of requirements for inclusion have been considered including access to technology for learners with Additional Support Needs and Visual Impairment.
- 9.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment is an ongoing process ensuring that impacts are identified and addressed. Different models of ICT provision in school were examined and the Technology Rich Environments that include the provision of 1-1 devices are deemed to be the most inclusive approach.
- 9.5 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** The Strategic Action Plan includes actions based on being more efficient and effective with the use of our resources. The Technology Rich Environments aim to support the direction of paperless classrooms and reduced copying and printing.
- 9.6 **Gaelic** The use of ICT in Learning will seek to support the Gaelic Language Plan. The development of successful Open and Distance Learning has recently included the opportunity to deliver Gaelic language courses.
- 9.7 **Rural Implications** The use of ICT in Learning supports connecting classrooms and learners, creating more opportunities for course choices. This also includes the development of digital literacy skills. This work supports the priorities of The Highland Council and partners in increasing digital infrastructure and internet connectivity for all Highland communities.

10. Recommendations

10.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note how the work is contributing to the Council Priority of 'We aim to provide our pupils with a technology-rich environment, to address their learner needs and curriculum goals, and transform their learning experience'.
- ii. Note the ongoing work to implement the ICT in Learning Strategic Action Plan.
- iii. Note the offer of a member workshop on ICT in Learning.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 17 August 2015

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Highland Chrome Pilot – Executive Summary

The Highland Chrome Pilot Interim Report demonstrates that although the pilot is still in the early stages there is evidence of positive outcomes against the project evaluation criteria and additional key learning points. The Chrome pilot website contains extensive details of the background, developments and features learning examples from the pupils themselves, it has been very popular with over 2,500 views globally.

Most importantly the outcomes for the participating learners have been impressive over the first few months of the project. Feedback from pupils, teachers, parents and carers shows that the provision of the devices has 'motivated and excited learners' particularly during the transition to secondary school. The approach is deemed to be 'inclusive'; the provision of the same device in the class for each pupil is one that teachers find easy to manage. The new ICT provision has had far reaching impacts on the life and ethos of the school.

The ICT infrastructure in the participating schools is being monitored in terms of printing outputs, bandwidth usage and server storage. It can be concluded that there has been steady decline in both printing and server storage and although the bandwidth has spiked at odd times bandwidth usage remains at a steady 30-50% of the network capacity. Instant connectivity to the devices is important, fast boot up times retains the learner's excitement and enthusiasm to use it; teachers have been very impressed at the speed of access to the technology.

The evaluation has strongly demonstrated the suitability of the Chromebook as a device for learning, the devices meet all the expectations of teachers of accessing available browser based software and resources. The additional managed teacher PC in the class works in tandem with the Chromebooks as the Chrome Browser allows the teacher and pupils to work collaboratively in real time.

The use of Google Apps for Education has demonstrated how tools built into the browser can allow for personalised learning and provide evidence for assessment. It is the instantaneous access to these tools in 'short bursts' in the classroom that provide the 'appropriate access to technology' as per the ICT in learning Strategy.