REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
             COMMITTEE ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: RAISING
             ATTAINMENT CURRICULUM BREADTH AND DIGITAL
             INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRESS UP-DATE

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
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1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   To up-date Committee on progress in development of the Raising Attainment: Curriculum Breadth and Digital workstream within the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme and to seek agreement for the development of the Education networks digital infrastructure.

1.2   This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) 1 of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercising all the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   **It is recommended that Committee:**

   (i)   **consider and note the contents of the Digital Inclusion (Infrastructure) Business Case (Appendix 1);**

   (ii)   **agrees to the preferred Business Case option of addressing connectivity issues and supporting iPads which was informed through conducting a staff engagement workshop;**

   (iii) **agrees that the 12 month extension of the Senior ICT Officer post at a cost of £56,000 to be sourced from Transformation Reserves;**

   (iv)   **agrees that the external professional services to support implementation and training at an estimated cost of £10,000 to £15,000 would be sourced from the remaining £35,849 of the £50,000 agreed by the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 26 January 2022, previously allocated from the Transformation Reserves;**

(v) **agrees that the ongoing annual Mobile Device Management System (MDM) licence fee per device (current cost estimated at £8,000 to £9,000) would be funded from the Devolved School Management (DSM) Budget; and**

(vi) **notes that further reports will be presented to committee updating on progress and impact of the proposed solution to support the Curriculum Breadth and Digital Workstream.**

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council has established an Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP) to deliver transformational change across the authority, which was first approved by the Council on 12 December 2018 *(para 5 of the minute refers).*

3.2 One of the workstreams within this Programme is Raising Attainment: Curriculum Breadth and Digital. This workstream aims to provide and enable a digital learning environment to improve equity and access to the curriculum in order to deliver a range of outcomes.

3.3 At the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 14 December 2022 an Outline Business Case was presented for consideration in relation to digital learning, including the provision of 1:1 devices.

3.4 The Outline Business Case (OBC) presented a staged approach to investment in digital learning. The stages presented were

3.5 **Stage 1:** This stage is focused on preparing and developing the ICT infrastructure to ensure readiness for digital development and of the Education Digital strategy and approach. This would include ensuring that the school digital environment is ready for the increased use of devices and curriculum tools.

3.6 **Stage 2:** Prepare the workforce ensuring that they have the leadership, skills and digital confidence they need and that a culture is created to support enhanced use of digital in schools by preparing pupils and parents and ensuring support is available for the new approach.

3.7 **Stage 3:** The roll out of devices to staff and pupils at a scale and over a time period that is affordable and takes account of any external investment, in particular from the Scottish Government. This is likely to be over a number of years, for example Scottish Borders invested over a 7 year period.

3.8 This staged approach had been informed by a report commissioned from CGI Consultancy in order to provide a way forward to progress the development of digital education that would represent a more affordable approach given the council's financial position.

3.9 Based on a staff engagement workshop hosted by Martyn Wallace, Chief Digital Officer, Scottish Local Government on 19 April 2023, a Business Case

has been developed to progress the recommendations made by this Committee on 14 December 2022 (**See Appendix 1**).

3.10 The Business Case aims to help address the ICT infrastructure connectivity issues affecting many Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, Primary and Secondary Schools in Moray. It also intends to ensure that the Council is in a position of readiness for any possible future investment in digital devices.

3.11 To date, the ICT service has made a number of improvements to the ICT infrastructure for ELC Settings, Primary and Secondary Schools. This includes the removal of legacy devices with Windows 7 operating system which were not able to be upgraded and adjusting the log-on profiles. While these actions have had some positive impact there continues to be scope for further improvement.

3.12 The aim of the Business Case is therefore to identify further actions that could be taken by the Council to provide further improvement in the performance of the schools ICT network to ensure that digital solutions are easy to use to their maximum effect.

3.13 The approach for identifying these improvement actions was the workshop held with Council ICT, Primary and Secondary Head Teachers and Learning Estate colleagues. The workshop explored a range of potential investment options that were assessed against the selection criteria of 'Improving Connectivity', 'Supporting Learning Outcomes' and 'Affordability'.

3.14 Following the application of the selection criteria, the preferred option was to "Address connectivity issues and support iPads"

3.15 The rationale for this decision is that there has been a significant growth in the use of iPads from 28 devices in 2014 to 1524 devices in 2023 across Moray Schools and this has undermined overall network performance. The devices are used by both staff and pupils in schools to support learning.

3.16 Although the procurement of these devices is not the preferred approach of the Council's ICT service because it requires 2 separate operating systems to be supported, which is more resource intensive, under Devolved School Management arrangements, schools are able to purchase and utilise iPads if they choose to. The number of iPads deployed and the feedback from the workshop are both strong indications of the preference of schools and so it is reasonable to plan for their continued use.

3.17 The unintended consequence of the increased use of iPads across Moray Schools is the detrimental impact iPads have on the overall performance of the Education ICT network as a result of the way in which they download up- dates and thereby utilise the education network bandwidth. This is a major factor contributing to slow logon times experienced by many ELC settings and Schools.

3.18 The solution as outlined in this Business Case is the procurement of a MDM that is designed to support Apple products such as iPads and manage their bandwidth requirements. A dedicated MDM for iPads will improve the overall

performance of the ICT education network by ensuring that the bandwidth available is efficiently used.

3.19 The Business Case notes that there are a range of different MDM options that would result in improved network performance. However the identification of the optimum option for this Council would need to be based on the outcome of a procurement exercise.

3.20 The indicative cost for this preferred Business Case option is £50,000-£65,000. Thereafter, there would be an annually recurring cost estimated at £8,600 to support 1500 iPads. This cost would depend on the outcome of the procurement exercise.

3.21 If the preferred option identified in this Business Case is endorsed, then a detailed Implementation Plan would be developed. The execution of the plan would be undertaken by senior officers within ICT, supported by the temporary ICT technician post and overseen by the Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development.

3.22 It should be noted that workshop participants were clear that any future investment programme leading to the increased procurement of 1:1 devices by the Council would need to be based on an extensive engagement exercise with both learners and teachers. However, the increased up-take of iPads over the last 10 years requires an immediate solution due to the impact that the extensive use of Apple products is having on the overall performance of the Council's ICT Infrastructure Network.

4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
The Improvement and Modernisation Programme is the development of the commitment in the Corporate Plan to a programme of modernisation and improvement to contribute to a financially stable Council.

The report also relates to "Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray" as part of the LOIP and the priority "to provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence" as part of the Corporate Plan.

(b) **Policy and Legal**
Policy and procedures would be reviewed if the Council is to increase its ICT support for Apple devices.

(c) **Financial implications**
The following table provides a breakdown of the costs for this project.

	Item		Estimated Value
1.	Senior ICT Officer support (temporary) Salary costs for a 12 month post at grade 9.		£56,000

2.	Professional services for implementation and training		£10,000-£15,000
3.	MDM to support iPads through appropriate MDM solution option. Cost per annum based on the number of devices		£8,000-£9,000
		Total	£74,000-£80,000

In relation to row 1, the source of funding for the Senior ICT Officer post would be from Transformation Reserves.

In relation to row 2, the source of funding for professional services for implementation and training would be sourced from the remaining £35,849 of the £50,000 agreed by the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 26 January 2022, allocated for consultancy engagement. This was also previously allocated from Transformation Reserves.

In relation to row 3, the annual MDM cost (based on a licence fee per device) would be funded from the Devolved School Management (DSM) Budget. While recognising the council's financial position, this is considered to be a pressing operational requirement to support the delivery of modern educational tools in our schools and no additional recurring budget is requested.

(d) Risk Implications

The Business Case outlines a range of high level project risks. These risks include that enhanced infrastructure support for iPads could result in an increased up-take of these devices across Moray Schools Additional ipads may also come from the strategic view on future devices. Annual costs could therefore escalate above the current estimated cost of £8,000-£9,000 to support 1500 devices and schools would have to accommodate this additional cost.

There is also a risk that if DSM budgets were to come under pressure for budget savings that it would not be possible to meet the costs of the mobile device management licences from these budgets.

(e) Staffing Implications

The Business Case includes the salary cost of extending the contract of an existing ICT technician at grade 9 for a further 12 months. The related cost for this post would be £56,000.

(f) Property

There are inter-dependencies between this project and the modernisation of the Council's Learning Estate. Officers will ensure good communication between these initiatives and the Learning Estates Manager will also sit on the Project Management Group.
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(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
For the purposes of this report an Equality and a Socio Impact Assessment is not required.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts
There are no immediate climate change implications directly arising from this report. The future commissioning and de-commissioning of digital devices will however have an impact on the Council's carbon footprint and this will need to be assessed in due course.

(i) Consultations
The Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Head of Finance, Procurement Manager, Quality Improvement Manager (East), Head of Economic Growth and Development, Learning Estates Manager, Quality Improvement Manager (West), Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, ICT Infrastructure Manager, ICT Information Systems Manager, Learning Technologists, Democratic Services Manager.

In addition, colleagues who also participated in the workshop have also been asked to comment on the Business Case.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 An investment in a MDM to support Apple products aims to improve the ICT Education network performance for ELC settings, Primary and Secondary Schools. It also aims to provide a strong foundation for any future investment in digital learning in Moray.

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Background Papers:
Ref: