ABSTRACT

This report informs members of the need for a contract for an e-learning service and seeks authority to proceed with the procurement.

1 RECOMMENDATION

The committee authorise the Chief Executive to procure an e-learning service for the council on the basis as set out in this report.

2 BACKGROUND

The majority of training and development in the council is delivered in traditional classroom style situations. This method of delivering training can be resource intensive and large scale roll-outs of training can take a long time.

The way training and development is designed, implemented and delivered requires to be modernised to ensure it can be provided in the most efficient way.

E-learning is the use of technology to allow people to learn at a time and place convenient to them.

The council currently uses a small number of e-learning resources which have been developed and are hosted externally by e-learning providers on their Learning Management Systems (LMS).

A more comprehensive e-learning system enabling greater use of e-learning would allow a blended approach to be developed - one that combines the use of technology and traditional methods of learning. It would help ensure training can be provided in a timely and efficient way while providing a more flexible solution for learners, and in the medium to long term would allow a reduction in traditional delivery methods with consequent resource savings but no reduction in the effectiveness of training.

3 E-LEARNING - A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

A comprehensive e-learning system has already been developed for a group of councils working together to deliver more efficient learning and development practices for its members.

The Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group (CVLDG) is a partnership of councils working to develop shared services around the design, development, delivery, commissioning and evaluation of learning and development. It consists of eight member councils; East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.

The group was set up to deliver efficient learning and development practices using methods and models which will be delivered more efficiently through shared working than by an individual council by council approach. This minimizes duplication of effort. Service delivery is being modernised through improving practice and optimizing the use of information technology.

Following a detailed tender exercise, Brightwave, a leading UK workplace e-learning provider, was appointed to develop a system that would provide a shared e-learning service to the CVLDG.
The system that has been developed provides councils with the facility to create, maintain, deliver and track e-learning and allows councils to share materials that have been developed by other members of the group. Sharing e-learning materials minimises duplication of effort and allows member councils to design training and development solutions more efficiently.

Any council in Scotland can join the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group as associate members so that they can buy in to the Brightwave contract at the discounted costs. There are currently 15 Scottish councils using the system; the eight CVLDG members and an additional seven associate members who have joined the group to take advantage of this contract.

4 PROPOSAL

The e-learning system offered by Brightwave would provide the council with an opportunity to work collaboratively to develop training, share resources, and enhance the provision of learning and development available within the council. The system would enable the development of a flexible and responsive e-learning service for the council as well as access to a large number of courses that have been developed by other councils.

It is proposed that the council join the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group as associate members and procure the e-learning system from Brightwave for an initial contract period of three years at the discounted costs available, as detailed below.

5 PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY

Sourcing Strategy

Section 16.8 of Financial Regulations relating to procurement authority and advance reporting came into operation on 31 January 2011. This new approach has therefore been applied.

The procurement is not considered to be a major procurement within the meaning of Financial Regulation 16.8.4 so approval of this report would mean that the contract can be accepted without the need for further approval by the Committee. In accordance with the new arrangements contract award will be reported to Committee for noting only.

No national Procurement Scotland or Scotland Excel contracts exist for an e-learning system. The collaborative arrangement put in place by the CVLDG however offers direct cash savings of 25% discount on normal rates, efficiency savings in terms of avoidance of duplication of effort and crucially the ability to make use of e-learning resources already developed on a collaborative basis. The procurement process deployed by the CVLDG has been scrutinised in some detail by the Corporate Procurement Manager and the Head of Law and Administration and has been approved for the current purpose.

The learning system required is specialist and award of the contract to Brightwave is not likely to have any significant local supplier impact.

Key Terms Proposed

It is envisaged that the e-learning service would commence on 1 May 2011 for a 3 year period. The cost of the service which is based on the size of the local authority, calculated by the number of employees is estimated to be £71,812.50 for the 3 year period broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Set up and installation</th>
<th>£11,062.50</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Licensing and hosting costs</td>
<td>£20,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year 2 Licensing and hosting costs £20,250 - 2012/13

Year 3 Licensing and hosting costs £20,250 - 2013/14

At the end of the three year period there would be an option to extend the contract for a further two financial years.

These are the estimated whole life costs of the system over the three year period and there are no other significant associated costs.

Procurement Procedure, Contract Evaluation and Award Basis
Because the council is using the existing CVLDG contract, no further procurement tendering procedure is required. The specification of the service offered by Brightwave has been compared against the council's requirements and found to fully meet them.

The value for money to the council was also assured by the competitive tendering process undertaken by the CVDLG and the ongoing and possibly increasing discounts offered by the provider for new joiners to the contract.

The Corporate Procurement Manager has been consulted on the proposed procurement process and outline requirement and agrees that this will produce the required level of quality service required by the council along with good value for money.

**Procurement Risks**

A risk assessment has been undertaken for this tender and other than the normal risks inherent in carrying out any procurement exercise no other significant risks have been identified.

**6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The costs of the e-learning system as outlined in section 5 above totals £71,812.50 as follows:-

- 2011/12 £31,312.50
- 2012/13 £20,250
- 2013/14 £20,250

and will be met from the Corporate Training Budget within Other Services revenue budget in the relevant years.

**7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

**8 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

**9 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

The proposal in this report contributes to the following outcome within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus:

- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs.

**10 CONSULTATION**

The Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance, Head of Information Technology and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted on the terms of this report.

RICHARD STIFF  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**NOTE**  
No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.