

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy and Resources
DATE	1 December 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Purchase of Audio Visual Equipment for schools
REPORT NUMBER	ECS-16-079
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is to seek the committee's approval to initiate a mini competition to appoint a sole supplier for the provision of Audio Visual (AV) equipment to schools for a period of three years, with an option to extend for two years thereafter.

1) RECOMMENDATION(S)

The committee is recommended to:

- a) recognise that there is an ongoing requirement for the provision of Interactive Audio Visual equipment in schools. This arises from a number of factors including
 - i) Replacement and upgrading of existing equipment
 - ii) Additional equipment required due to expansion of some schools and new builds.
- b) approve that a mini-competition process is undertaken between the four suppliers in the Scotland Excel "Presentation and Audio Visual Equipment" Framework in line with the Council's Procurement Regulations, Financial Regulations and EU Legislation to appoint a Sole Supplier for the provision of Audio Visual and associated equipment to schools for a period of 3 years (with an option to extend for a further 2 years).
- c) approve the total estimated expenditure for the 5-year period as outlined in the report (over a 3 year contract with an option to extend for up to 2 years); and

- d) approve the award of the contract in accordance with the criteria stated in the Mini-Competition and subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the contractual documentation.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At present the procurement and installation of AV equipment is conducted separately by a number of centres within Education. This includes individual schools and centrally deployed teams. The purpose of this report is to provide a single mechanism for pricing, procurement, installation and commissioning of interactive AV equipment which may be used by all parties. This will reduce time spent in individual establishments on procurement tasks and will ensure a uniform, high quality of provision through a prolonged relationship with a single supplier.

Estimated expenditure during the three years of the contract will be approximately £400,000 per year with a further £400,000 in each of years four and five if extension is required.

This provision of AV equipment will be funded from existing sources including existent ICT supplies and services budgets, individual school budgets and those budgets for the provision of new schools.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Mini-competition will be based on a “Basket of Goods” which best represents the present requirements of schools. Due to the fast pace of development within ICT/AV marketplace it will be necessary to allow for regular updating of the range of equipment provided under this contract.

Much of the equipment and pricing upon which the existing framework is based is already becoming out of date and, in some cases, no longer available. Hence the need for a more flexible approach.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- a) Scotland Excel “Presentation and Audio Visual Equipment” Framework, Schedule Reference 12/14, is used for the purchase of audio visual equipment. This Framework runs until 31 March 2018 with the option for the Scottish Government to extend the contract until 31 March 2019. There are four companies on this framework.
- b) A combination of items contained on the Scotland Excel Presentation and Audio Visual Framework core catalogue, and items not on the core catalogue would be purchased through this contract.
- c) A proportion of purchases during the next three years will be from items not on the core catalogue or will be items where prices or specifications have altered substantially. We will

therefore conduct a mini-competition exercise for the awarding of this contract. This ensures best value whilst maintaining compatibility with our existing equipment, software and teaching methods.

- d) We will conduct regular reviews of pricing and specifications during the contract period to account for fluctuations in market and specification of equipment. This will ensure that the solutions provided by the supplier remain up to date while also ensuring best value.
- e) Aberdeen City Schools use a variety of audio visual products in the classroom. The most common of these are interactive whiteboard (IWB) displays and projectors. These are used for whole-class teaching. Additionally projectors, sound systems and digital displays are used around the school to enhance learning. Interactive LCD screens with lower maintenance and running costs are now becoming affordable for classroom use.
- f) It is recognised that each classroom, where viable, should have a form of whole-class display such as a SMARTBoard. (some teaching areas such as Technical Workshops may not be suitable for this type of equipment)
- g) There is a continuous demand for Audio Visual (AV) equipment to meet the requirements of new teaching areas (due to rising school rolls), new build schools and for refreshing equipment that has failed or reached the end of its serviceable life.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

The Scottish Government strategy document “Enhancing Learning and teaching through the use of Digital Technology” emphasises the importance of Digital Technologies for learners and teachers. The provision of interactive display devices in learning spaces is an important component of the overall objective to enhance learning and teaching. Aberdeen City schools are investing in digital technologies and, in particular, in mobile devices. There are now many more devices in classrooms in addition to the traditional teacher’s pc.

Modern interactive displays integrate well with mobile devices (iPads etc.) and allow teachers to engage in a variety of teaching approaches. It is also easier to provide for the needs of pupils with visual impairment through the use of Mirroring technologies.

Equipment in some schools is now at or beyond end of life and requires replacement. Some schools do not have the same quality of provision as is found in newer (eg 3Rs) schools. It will be important to address equality of provision and opportunity through the implementation of this contract.

Improving Staff Experience –

It is beneficial to ensure that the equipment used in schools is of a similar type and standard in all establishments. This ensures equality of experience and opportunity for all learners and ensures that staff are well trained and familiar with the equipment regardless of the setting. Support staff are able to be more effective where the range of equipment is standardised.

Improving our use of Resources –

A single supplier agreement will reduce the workload associated with specification and procurement for support staff and will ensure predictability for schools wishing to refresh their AV equipment. This brings the provision of schools' AV equipment into line with the catalogue approach used by ICT for other purchases via the Service Now portal.

In addition to modernising and refreshing the learning experience the provision of modern equipment reduces support requirements and also reduces energy use. For example: the whole life cost of modern LCD screens is predicted to be significantly less than for a system using a projector.

Corporate -

This project will directly contribute to the Education Service commitment to maximise digital connectivity and the effective use of technology. Modern AV equipment supports the Smarter City agenda through improved access to digital services in classrooms. Modern system designs have greater longevity and have reduced whole life costs. This reduces maintenance requirements and energy consumption.

Public –

There is unlikely to be any public interest in this report and no EHRIA or PIA is required.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There is a risk if we do nothing. Failure to modernise the AV equipment in schools will render some equipment unusable as we upgrade other parts of the school infrastructure. For example, some older equipment will not function on recent versions of the Windows operating system.

Although the framework provides for a direct award to a single supplier there is a risk of challenge from unsuccessful bidders. This risk will be mitigated by the mini-competition process.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There is unlikely to be any public interest in this report and no EHRIA or PIA is required.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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