

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. **Meeting:** Cabinet Member and Advisors, Education, Culture and Leisure Services

2. **Date of Meeting:** 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004

3. **Title:** Rotherham Learning Grid Update Progress update

4. **Originating Officer:**

5. **Issue:** 1.0

6. **Summary:**

Project is progressing to agreed timescale and budget for delivery of 10MB broadband circuits, and server farm (email, antivirus, internet access and web hosting) to all schools in Rotherham.

7. **Clearance/Consultation:**

Regular monthly updates requested by ECALS cabinet member and Advisors. Advised at fortnightly Customer meeting 17/06/04. Attendees Jason Ollivent (ICT Service Leader) Jon Knott(Project Manager), Dawn Rowley(Information & Performance Review Manager for Education, Culture & Leisure Services) and Bob Toms(Senior School Improvement Adviser, Performance and ICT).

Programme Board meetings scheduled between RMBC/RBT and Education Service.

8. **Timing:**

Reports and Programme Board Meeting monthly

9. **Background:**

For the past 3 years Rotherham secondary schools have had their curriculum network connected to the Internet. All the schools have been reasonably satisfied with the service although there have been concerns regarding virus protection and sustainability. A key issue with the current service is the bandwidth to the Internet which is insufficient to support current and expected future growth.

For the past 18 months approximately 23 primary schools have also been connected to the internet through BT (Metro VPN) funded by the National Grid for Learning(NGfL) budget (Broadband). This has been valuable to the primary schools but is expensive to maintain (approx £8000p.a) and so a viable, cost effective alternative has been sought for all schools, with the LEA's support.

The government have set a target date of September 2004 for all primary schools to be provided with 2mb internet access and all secondary schools to be provided with 10Mb internet access.

The Rotherham Learning Grid (RLG) project has been established to meet these objectives.

The project will deliver a network infrastructure which provides a 10MB connection to 105 primary schools into the Council's central backbone network, and a Server farm which will provide a standard resilient e-mail solution, including filtering and monitoring functionality, a secure network authentication solution, a cached 10mbps internet connection that is filtered using URL blocking and monitored, an area for schools to locate their websites and an antivirus solution.

## **10. Argument:**

The progress to date is:

- All of the circuits for 105 schools have been ordered from BT
- 5 sites have their circuits installed and connected into the grid. Against how many projected to be at this stage at this point in time
- 1 sites Local area network has been configured. Against how many projected to be at this stage at this point in time
- 15 circuits are in a status of delay due to issues such planning and ducting requirements. as Against how many projected to be at this stage at this point in time
- 5 circuits are in customer delay due to access issues.
- 58% of the planning has been commenced.
- 49% of the planning has been completed.
  
- The server farm is complete and user acceptance testing is currently underway.
- The enhanced internet connection to/from RMBC has been installed and configured.
  
- The network has been configured to allow all the secondaries to migrate off the RM solution – the audience will not know what this means – needs some context. Documentation has been provided to the schools to explain the work that is required by them to convert across to the RLG. RBT have provided documentation explaining what is required and have offered to assist where required. RBT are now awaiting contact from the schools.
  
- The Service Design document has been approved by Dawn Rowley. Dave finch, Andy Dickinson and Dawn are now working on an SLA to accompany this. The SLA may sit outside of the existing RBT/RMBC arrangements (subject to confirmation at Joint Board)
  
- Presentations and awareness training of the RLG have been organised through the School Improvement Service (ICT) and will be delivered at CENT over the 2 weeks following schools' return from holiday.
  
- The project is on budget and moving forward, but with a completion date for all sites circuit installs of 15/12/04

Additional services have been secured for the Project, namely

- Espresso software will be available across the Learning Grid. The server has now been purchased and configured. It is now awaiting the installation of the software. 68 schools have expressed a wish to have a licence to access this software, and work is ongoing to encourage the rest of the primary schools to take up this service too.

**11. Risks and Uncertainties:**

- Risk: The delivery dates have been affected by some schools being unable to provide access to engineers as required over the school holidays. This should ease now that the 2004/5 school year has commenced.
- The agreed branding of the grid has not been concluded due to the wide consultation process that is deemed appropriate by the LEA. An interim solution of a temporary web page has been put in place to allow access to the grid.

**12. Finance:**

The fixed cost to RMBC for this three year managed service is £3.1m.

**13. Sustainability:**

**14. Wards Affected:**

All

**15. References:**

**16. Presentation:**

All Rotherham Schools will get Broadband 1 year (9 months for some) ahead of Government targets. Primary schools will receive 5 times the minimum required speed.

**17. Recommendations:**

Progress is noted