Norfolk Broadband Service consultation

Norfolk County Council is tendering to replace the connectivity and internet services for schools as well as corporate services and other partners. The tender will include the option for telephony services. We will be asking the market to propose services based on the requirements and outcomes that schools require from services.

To ensure that we involve as many schools as possible in the process and cover schools requirements, we are developing a consultation and communication plan to align with the procurement process timeline.

Firstly we attended Headteacher Association meetings where possible before Easter, secondly we held a workshop with Schools' ICT Steering Group colleagues and a separate one with some Schools Network Managers to help us devise a plan for speaking to as many schools as possible throughout the process. We would welcome the opportunity to attend cluster meetings to discuss any particular concerns or feedback.

Process –
A detailed procurement timetable will be made available as soon as possible. We envisage placing an OJEU advert in mid-May and provisional contract award in early December 15. Initial dialogue and then whittling down to 3 suppliers by September.

Key success criteria for the procurement
The following key success criteria have been identified for the initial interest for potential bidders . We are playing them back to customers we are meeting with to address any additional feedback or concerns for schools they represent:

1. **It goes without saying that we all require a secure, robust, flexible service**
2. **Savings ie lower costs**
3. **Reasonable equity of access**
    a. Consistent, reliable and fast broadband access is essential for all schools with emphasis on the rural schools,
    b. The council is neutral as to technical solutions but will expect the successful provider to adopt an approach that provides consistent, reliable and fast access. This may well require the use of a range of solutions from a number of infrastructure providers
4. **Workforce mobility**
    a) A significant proportion of the workforce needs to be able to access data on the move.
    b) Effective and seamless access to mobile and wireless data is therefore critical.
    c) There is a requirement for more cost-effective mobile device management (MDM) solution
    d) including lower-cost secure email and calendar functionality for smart phones.
    e) All staff, including school staff, increasingly operate across multiple sites and this needs to be supported in a seamless fashion.
5. **Commercial flexibility**

a. The ability to flex bandwidth (up and down) and to rationalise the property estate without incurring commercial penalties is key to the council and indeed schools.

b. Similarly, a reasonable degree of flexibility will need to be provided to schools, which are free agents and will only use the contract if the terms are attractive.

c. We will need the contract to keep pace with changes in technology.

6. **Social Value**
   a. Just as connectivity is essential to the operation of the Council and its partners, it is also essential to the economic and social sustainability of the county more generally. All businesses and communities now need high-speed broadband and mobile connectivity to be competitive.
   b. The need for connectivity for Council and partner organisations across the county presents an opportunity for service providers to extend the infrastructure requirement to deliver public sector requirements, and support wider economic and social gains at the same time.

7. **Manageability**
   The council integrates a wide range of services from different providers. It therefore requires:

   a. the ability to rapidly change configurations, such as firewall rulesets and router configurations;

   b. reliable, real-time and detailed information about network status, so that faults can be diagnosed, apportioned (between the network and other providers) and fixed

An online survey will be available from early next week until 11pm Wednesday 6th May 2015 for schools to comment on any particular requirements to be added into the Invitation To Tender process document.

As the tender process moves forward we will arrange other opportunities to discuss your priorities and choice options for potential bundles of services, for example from purely a connection and router through to a fully managed offering including email, filtering etc. The concept will be for the successful bidder by the end of the process to be able to offer schools a menu of options to meet individual school's requirements and budget.

Once the selection process is complete and the contract awarded then schools will be offered the options available to purchase services from 2016.