Norfolk Schools ICT Service

To support schools in the strategies of embedding and transforming ICT, Children's Services has enhanced the ICT services previously available to schools and developed a service to ensure the refreshing of ICT hardware and infrastructure on a planned cycle.

The three elements are

- Norfolk Schools' Broadband Network - previously offered as Broadband support

- ICT Solutions' Support contracts

- ICT Refresh Programme - a new service to ensure planned replacement of ICT resources on a 4 year programme by utilising the additional funding available to schools in Devolved Formula Capital and Schools Development Grant. These monies are new to schools' budgets for 2006-07.

The ICT Refresh Programme will be managed by a Management committee consisting of headteachers, governors, and officers.

When purchased together the three elements will offer schools a totally managed ICT service to support curriculum initiatives, providing a reliable system that teachers can use with confidence.

How does this differ from previous years?

Norfolk Schools' Broadband Network

A number of new services are now available by using the Norfolk Schools Broadband Network. The service now links through our providers to the JANET network and by April 2006 the National Education Network.

This links Norfolk to the National Digital Infrastructure and provides the opportunity for schools to maximise the use of ICT resources by collaborating with other schools, colleges and universities anywhere in the UK. It allows schools to video conference with other parties anywhere and share learning resources. Access to the complete ICT framework enables schools to take a strategic approach to ICT.

ICT Solutions Support contracts

These continue to be developed by ICT Solutions to allow modular support packages.

To ensure that the package you subscribe to is of a quality that you would expect, ICT Solutions is going through the process to be accredited by Becta for adopting its Framework of ICT Technical Support (FITS) in 2006.

The emphasis of FITS is on proactive tasks as well as reactive ones. It views technical support not just as a function responsible for resolving incidents, but as a service provider whose main objective is to prevent incidents from occurring in the first place. Consequently ICT Solutions has evaluated additional services to monitor switches and servers to prevent incidents from arising. ICT Solutions has taken account of customer feedback evaluations to improve processes and customer care.

ICT Refresh Programme

In April 2006 additional money is being devolved to schools in Devolved Formula Capital and Schools Development Grant for ICT Hardware and Infrastructure. The aim is for schools to ensure they maintain the Pupil: PC ratios provided by previous phases of NGfL/ ICT in Schools funding by replacing assets and infrastructure on a planned basis and ensure that ICT strategy keeps in line with Becta/DfES strategy.

The refresh programme will allow schools to utilise this funding by benefiting from the local authority's buying power, ensuring investment in ICT that meets curriculum specification requirements and is future-proofed to accommodate new services as they become available.

The Management Committee will manage the funding and accounting history ensuring the school's contribution is identified. Your ICT Solutions' Customer Contract Officer will work with you to develop a replacement strategy schedule and scope of work over the four year contract period.

Becta recommends that schools "also need to embed ICT in their financial plans to take account of the cost of replacement, upgrade, future developments and the technical support of a sustainable and reliable ICT infrastructure."

The Refresh Programme is designed to develop and deliver with you a replacement schedule, which takes account of the elements above and the Total Cost of Ownership.

Benefits to schools of the Refresh programme

- Best value prices on products and services, which meet the needs of schools.

- Consistent and compatible products and services, which have been tested and evaluated for stability in a school environment to increase the confidence of teachers and learners.

- The Programme will reflect Norfolk's involvement in the National Digital Infrastructure for Education to ensure that participating schools have the tools and advice built into their refresh plan to reflect this initiative.

  Two of the aims of this Vision are:

  Reduce the technical burden on schools, allowing them to focus on the use of technology in teaching and learning rather than its management.

  Coherent and reliable technology at an affordable and sustainable price.

- The Refresh Programme will be based on the best practice processes of Becta's Framework for ICT Technical Support including ICT financial management so you can measure the total cost of ICT and make informed spending decisions.

- The Refresh programme will be resourced relative to service take-up to provide you with a coordinated plan from procurement, through installation to training. This means participation in the scheme will enable us to provide service level agreements so you know the timescale of the start to finish processes.

More information on the Refresh programme will be sent to Heads and ICT Co-ordinators in January 2006.