

Hwb Programme

Memorandum of Agreement

SUPPORTING NOTES

1. Introduction

This Memorandum of Agreement [Agreement] sets out the principles between the Welsh Government and a local authority in respect of services and funding initiatives provided as part of the Hwb programme (formally known as the Learning in Digital Wales programme). This Agreement sets out the commitment the Welsh Government and the local authority make concerning the delivery of the Hwb programme.

The Agreement does not constitute a legal commitment or create a legally enforceable agreement. It is an agreement entered into in good faith to support the collaboration activity between the Welsh Government and the local authority in respect of Hwb services (for which the Welsh Government is the contract owner) and/or where Welsh Ministers have provided significant EdTech digital investment to support all maintained schools in Wales.

2. Who signs the Agreement?

The Agreement should be signed by the EdTech Delivery Authority representative and countersigned by either the Section 151 Officer or Chief Executive.

Fundamentally, the provision of the Agreement relates to the entirety of the Hwb programme, however **it should be noted a signed Agreement is required for local authorities to access funding from the Hwb in school investment initiative.**

A signed Agreement should be returned to the Hwb Team by the 31 October 2019.

3. Background

As part of the Hwb programme, the Welsh Government has initiated and successfully delivered several investment initiatives since 2012 to help transform the way digital technology is accessed and used for teaching and learning in schools across Wales.

The investment and collaboration between the Welsh Government and local authorities across Wales is widely recognised as having a significant impact on the transformation of digital education services, as well as providing a national platform capable of supporting and delivering real transformation to the education sector.

This pivotal programme of work provides stakeholders across Wales with consistent access to a range of digital infrastructure, tools and resources that can support and assist the transformation of digital classroom practices.

The next phase of the Hwb programme focuses on how the recent investment programmes are able to support schools in adopting and embedding digital learning in the classroom, as well as continuing to streamline and standardise the way digital and ICT is delivered in a school context.

The Welsh Government has set out the [strategic objectives](#) for the Hwb programme which focus on opportunities to further exploit and embed the foundations that have been put in place.

Through engagement with local authorities and schools, it was identified that the level of understanding and investment in ICT and digital across schools is generally lower than other areas of the sector, namely further and higher education. If schools, learners and practitioners are to fully embrace digital transformation, it is recognised we need to ensure schools are equipped to adopt digital services and prepared to maintain them.

The Minister for Education has committed to continued investment in this area of work and officials have created national governance arrangements to ensure sector representatives better understand the landscape in schools across Wales and explore how we maximise the opportunities available.

4. Scope of Delivery

Through the Hwb programme, the Welsh Government delivered superfast broadband connectivity to all maintained schools in Wales, via the PSBA network. These services meet the aims of the classroom today, while the use of dedicated fibre also provides an easy and sustainable future upgrade path as demand increases.

In parallel, the Hwb platform has delivered an all Wales solution which provides teachers and learners with access to a consistent range of digital resources, online tools and services. Furthermore the Hwb platform has become the gateway for digital education services in Wales, with the platform continuing to go from strength to strength. Work is underway to embed these services and identify new opportunities to support education priorities such as Our National Mission and online personalised assessments, as well as leveraging the potential for all Wales economies of scale which have been demonstrated via the national Microsoft licensing model.

Using these existing platforms, the Welsh Government will continue to provide a range of digital services which will inspire our teachers and learners to confidently embed digital practices, while developing the culture, competencies, skills and knowledge to underpin Our National Mission.

Despite the significant work undertaken to date, it was also acknowledged that further work and investment was needed. Officials recently commissioned an independent evaluation of school ICT networks across Wales. The assessments identified areas of improvement for in-school infrastructure across Wales to help address and/or alleviate the current constraints faced by schools when exploiting ICT to deliver teaching and learning in the classroom. Further work with schools and local authorities also highlighted that strategic planning and investment around digital and ICT was either non-existent or was often under profiled.

A work programme to help standardise the approach across Wales and identify areas for improvement has begun. Through the development of the Education Digital Standards; Safeguarding Standards; the promotion of shared services and identifying opportunities for local authorities to work collaboratively through the use of Hwb services, officials in the Welsh Government and local authorities have started to see a shift in behaviours.

The Minister for Education has [recently announced](#) further funding for schools to improve their EdTech equipment. This funding will support schools on their journey, however it is essential that support is given to schools to ensure they understand and recognise their EdTech digital infrastructure as the 'fourth utility'.

5. Document Relationship

The following documents are integral to the Agreement:

- a) Hwb Strategic Overview – [strategic objectives](#) for the Hwb programme
- b) Hwb Charter (annex 1) – Roles and responsibilities for the delivery and use of Hwb programme services

Dated: 4 October 2019

(1) **Welsh Ministers**

- and -

(2) **Flintshire County Council**

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

1. Introduction

1.1. This agreement between Welsh Ministers and Flintshire County Council [authority] outlines the commitment of both parties to ensure all maintained

Hwb Programme Memorandum of Agreement | Welsh Government

schools in your authority can maximise the opportunities afforded by the Hwb programme; support the delivery of Our National Mission as well as meeting your authority's statutory obligations for education delivery.

- 1.2. The Welsh Government has made significant investment in areas including high speed broadband, in-schools infrastructure and the Hwb digital learning platform in recent years.
- 1.3. The investment and collaboration between the Welsh Government and local authorities across Wales is widely recognised as having a significant impact on the transformation of Education services, as well as providing a national platform capable of supporting and delivering real transformation to the Education sector.
- 1.4. Following recent discussions between the Welsh Government and the Socitm Cymru group, the Hwb programme has developed proposals to deliver an extensive infrastructure investment programme of work to build on recent investments and the fantastic work already taking place across Wales.
- 1.5. As well as transforming the way ICT services are delivered and managed in schools across Wales, the commitment from Welsh Ministers aims to ensure local authorities and schools build a sustainable model for ICT services in schools for future years.
- 1.6. Welsh Ministers support for the Hwb programme was underpinned by the letters of intent from all twenty-two local authorities to support this significant change programme.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To support the developments with education in Wales, and specifically the inclusion of digital competence at the heart of the curriculum, this Agreement outlines the agreed strategic approach to help ensure every maintained school in Wales receives a consistent experience to digital services.
- 2.2. To maximise the benefits of the Hwb platform, the Welsh Government, in collaboration with local authorities, has developed [strategic objectives](#) which outline the overarching approach for the delivery of digital services in Wales. It is expected that future developments and investment will inspire our teachers and learners to confidently embed digital practices, while developing their culture, competencies, skills and knowledge to underpin Our National Mission.
- 2.3. The Hwb programme can have a significant impact on the schools in your authority, but its success will largely depend on the ability of local authorities

and schools to fully embrace its aims and objectives, as well as understanding the critical role that technology can have in education.

2.4. This Agreement outlines the responsibilities each organisation needs to meet to ensure the Hwb programme can achieve its long term aims to:

- improve educational standards and outcomes;
- prepare learners for life and careers; and
- maximise the opportunities digital presents to reduce the burden on our workforce and to support the wider Welsh economy.

2.5. This Agreement is not intended to represent a defined time period, but instead underpins the working relationships between the Welsh Government, local authorities and schools throughout the life of the Hwb programme. It is fully expected the delivery mechanics and outputs will evolve, however it is hoped the structure being implemented as part of the change programme will provide the flexibility and agility to underpin the delivery of ICT and digital services in schools indefinitely.

3. Scope

3.1. The Hwb programme recognises it is impossible to deliver this ambitious programme of work without the support of local authorities across Wales.

3.2. Each local authority has agreed in principle to act as the conduit and ‘intelligent customer’ for their schools, while the Welsh Government commitment is underpinned by the [recent announcement](#) of further investment in EdTech technology.

3.3. To ensure the success of this ambitious change programme and realise the benefits of shared working across Wales, it is vital each local authority is fully committed to:

- Take strategic responsibility for all their maintained schools ICT infrastructure and services and act as the single point of contact for the Hwb programme;
- Ensure all Hwb programme funding allocations are aligned to strategic plans and budgeting cycles, while ensuring funding is spent by the end of the financial year and all implementation work completed by the beginning of the following academic year;
- Be accountable for all ICT financial capabilities and ensure sustainability plans are in place; and
- Undertake and maintain readiness/baseline assessments of schools to inform a holistic council delivery plan and strategy, with regular (minimum six monthly) reports to the EdTech Delivery Authority and Welsh Government until a fully sustainable model is achieved.

3.4. Welsh Ministers have outlined the importance of equitable funding as part of the Hwb programme moving forward.

3.5. In relation to the investment in EdTech equipment, officials have devised a funding formula in conjunction with colleagues working in the Local Government sector. The formula will initially apply an equal weighting based on the number of school buildings (50%) and the number of pupils on roll (50%). The initial weighting distribution is intended to reflect the initial priority of improving the core infrastructure requirements. Over time it is expected the weightings will be adjusted to favour pupils on roll (25% / 75% respectively) as local authorities progress through the programme objectives.

4. Welsh Government Commitments

4.1. The Welsh Government commits to supporting local authorities individually and collectively in accordance with the [strategic objectives](#) of the Hwb programme. In particular, the Welsh Government commits to:

- Develop and implement a strategic and sustainable approach to embed digital services in all maintained schools in Wales;
- Establish a simple and compliant route to market to purchase appropriate equipment and services at the most cost effective price;
- Ensure there is a suitable national infrastructure in place to consistently support the needs of schools in accessing and using digital services;
- Support the digital transformation of education through the delivery of bilingual digital services;
- Continue to support schools with safeguarding learners in Wales;
- Support local authorities and schools to enhance digital capability and skills; and
- Represent the needs of schools by identifying opportunities to secure EdTech funding for local authorities to deliver standardised, consistent and sustainable services to their schools.

4.2. The Welsh Government is committed to reviewing the [strategic objectives](#) on a regular frequency with the EdTech Delivery Authority. Frequent reviews will ensure the objectives and activities of the Hwb programme align to the majority viewpoint of local authorities in Wales.

4.3. The Welsh Government will provide strategic support to individual local authorities by providing dashboards and management information to support the uptake of Hwb services within the authority. The Welsh Government will also facilitate regional and national engagement events to help inform and share areas of good practice across Wales.

5. Local Authority Commitments

5.1. Your authority commits to working with the Welsh Government in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in the Hwb Charter (annex 1), as well as supporting local authorities individually and collectively wherever possible. In particular, your authority commits to:

- Act as the Strategic Digital Delivery Partner for all your maintained schools;

- Provide a nominated lead and dedicated team/function to streamline schools ICT support models and provide a centralised intelligent customer function to assist head teachers to understand and implement their ICT requirements;
- Champion the Hwb programme and ensure the key outcomes are supported within your organisation and across your maintained schools;
- Provide management responsibility for the delivery of the Hwb services and initiatives as outlined in the strategic overview of the Hwb programme;
- Facilitate procurement of ICT equipment to ensure the equipment is fit for purpose; provides value for money and is being purchased via a compliant route (supporting once for Wales principle); and
- Undertake regular strategic school reviews to emphasise the importance of ICT as the fourth utility and ensure sustainability of equipment and services is strategically planned and managed in schools.

5.2. The Welsh Government is committed to reviewing the Hwb Charter as the change programmes in local authorities evolve. The EdTech Delivery Authority will be responsible for reviewing the Hwb Charter.

6. Benefits / Outcomes

6.1. We anticipate the outcomes of a collaborative approach to deliver a national school digital infrastructure (geared to the delivery of the current and future curriculum needs) will result in the following outcomes:

- The removal of unsupported and aging equipment across school ICT networks which currently pose cyber security vulnerabilities and potentially significant information assurance risks;
- Enhanced and more consistent experiences for learners in using learning technologies as part of their learning programmes;
- The opportunity to deliver a more sustainable operating model to support school ICT networks, with local authorities ensuring consistent experience to schools and ensuring investment is maximised;
- The adoption of Hwb and other appropriate cloud services, which in turn simplifies the local ICT services and infrastructure needed within a school/local authority network and can realise significant cashable savings locally;
- Realise potential economies of scale through national procurement approaches, which could save the sector millions of pounds over the next several years;
- Schools being better equipped to meet Our National Mission aims and objectives and help demonstrate the Ministerial commitment to digital learning as well as emphasising the importance of using technology appropriately;
- The removal of 'perceived barriers' to enable schools/local authorities to plan and budget for ongoing ICT investment;
- Improve reliability, resilience and capacity of school ICT networks to support schools administration, teaching and learning and wider

community initiatives outside of school hours (such as Digital Communities); and

- Help support the reduction of bureaucratic practices/processes in schools to provide more time for our head teachers and teachers to 'teach'.

7. GENERAL

7.1. No variation to this agreement shall be effective unless, and until, signed by authorised representatives of each party.

7.2. Nothing in this agreement shall be construed as establishing or implying a partnership or joint venture between the parties or shall be deemed to constitute either party as the agent of the other or allow either party to hold itself out as acting on behalf of the other.

SIGNED BY the parties acting by their authorised representatives to indicate their agreement to the terms set out above

Signature Page

Signed by:

(Capitals)

(Signature)

(Date)

Deputy Director of Digital Learning Division, Welsh Government

Signed by:

(Capitals)

(Signature)

(Date)

EdTech Delivery Authority Representative or Director of Education for Flintshire County Council

Signed by:

(Capitals)

(Signature)

(Date)

Section 151 or Chief Executive Officer of Flintshire County Council

1 Hwb Charter

The following outlines the key characteristics and responsibilities needed within local authorities to support the delivery of the Hwb programme and ensure the outcomes and benefits of a shared approach to ICT and Digital in Welsh schools can be realised by schools in your authority.

This has been created as an annexed document to support changes identified by the EdTech Delivery Authority in a flexible and agile manner.

The authority will:

- Act as the Strategic Digital Delivery Partner for all your maintained schools;
- Provide a nominated lead and dedicated team/function to streamline schools ICT support models and provide a centralised intelligent customer function to assist head teachers to understand and implement their ICT requirements;
- Champion the Hwb programme and ensure the key outcomes are supported within your organisation and across your maintained schools;
- Provide management responsibility for the delivery of the Hwb services and initiatives as outlined in the strategic overview of the Hwb programme;
- Facilitate procurement of ICT equipment to ensure the equipment is fit for purpose; provides value for money and is being purchased via a compliant route (supporting once for Wales principle);
- Undertake regular strategic school reviews to emphasise the importance of ICT as the fourth utility and ensure sustainability of equipment and services is strategically planned and managed in schools;

- Develop adequate local governance arrangements and ensure senior management maintain a strategic oversight of the programmes implementation to ensure your schools fully benefit from the significant opportunities it presents;
- Develop implementation plans in conjunction with your schools to streamline the process and manage expectations;
- Active engagement from appropriate local authority representatives in forums and groups;
- Engage with local education group forums, e.g. head teacher forums to ensure the needs of the schools are reflected in local authority strategies;
- Regular engagement with Hwb Programme Team to inform programme outcomes and drive adoption of digital education services;
- Maintain schools data and intelligence including local variances, to inform national strategic planning and future investment initiatives/opportunities;

- Provide oversight/management for all maintained schools for core service deliverables e.g. PSBA network; Hwb platform usage; etc.;
- Support collaboration opportunities across the region / Wales to help standardise schools ICT networks and ensure consistent experience for all learners/practitioners;
- Ensure escalations relating to digital issues at schools are tracked and resolved in appropriate timeframes;
- Ensure digital investment decisions are informed and spend is occurring in the right places; and
- Ensure appropriate engagement with Welsh Government officials as required.