

Portsmouth Cost Sharing Group Investigation Findings Report



Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary
1.1. Introduction
1.2. Investigation Approach
1.3. Findings
1.4. Recommendations
2. Introduction
3. Project Approach
3.1. Project Governance Structure
3.2. Scope
3.3. Project Management Approach
3.4. Related Projects
3.4.1. Super Connected City
3.4.2. Building Schools for the Future (BSF)
3.4.3. Havant College Shared Service Discovery
3.4.4. University Technical College (UTC) in Portsmouth
4. Research & Investigations Undertaken
4.1. Workstream 1: Schools Investigation - Current Problems and Opportunities
4.1.1. Online Surveys
4.1.2. School Visits & Schools Technicians Workshop
4.1.3. Presentations and Forums
4.1.4. Cost Sharing Group Site Visit
4.2. Workstream 2: Google Apps & Chromebooks Pilot
4.3. Workstream 3: Wireless Upgrade Pilot
4.4. Workstream 4: Business Models, Legal and Financial Considerations
5. Findings
5.1. Overview of ICT Investment in Schools
5.2. Summary of Survey Responses
5.3. Results from Google Apps & Chromebook Pilots
5.4. Wireless Upgrade Pilot
5.5. Summary of Opportunities and Threats
5.6. Case Studies
5.7. Results from Legal and Financial Consultancy
6. Options Analysis
6.1. Potential Shared Services
6.2. Potential Business Models
7. Recommendations
7.1. Summary of Investigation
7.2. Recommendation Overview
7.3. Further Recommendations
8. Appendices

Definition of Commonly Used Terms

Term	Description
Academy Schools	Academies are self-governing schools not regulated by a local authority.
BSF	Building Schools for the Future Government investment programme in school buildings during the 2000s.
CSG	Cost Sharing Group A group designed to supply its members with services exempt from VAT. The group may also benefit from efficiencies of scale.
FE	Further Education (such as a college).
HCC	Hampshire County Council.
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England A public body responsible for the distribution of funding to universities and colleges.
HEI (or HE)	Higher Education Institute (such as a university).
ICT	Information & Communication Technology Comprises all elements of computing and telephony, including software, hardware, audio-visual equipment, and telephone and computer networks.
IS	Information Services for both PCC and UoP; teams responsible for managing and supporting an institution's IT provision.
New ICT curriculum	The new curriculum considers ICT as a fourth science. It includes a broad range of computing fields, including practical experience of computer programming.
PCC	Portsmouth City Council.
Primary Schools	Primary education begins in the UK at age 5 and continues until age 11, comprising key stages one and two under the UK educational system.
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education An independent agency established to monitor standards and improve the quality of higher education in the UK.
Secondary Schools	Secondary education begins in the UK at age 11 and continues until age 16, comprising key stages three and four under the UK educational system.
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Its effect is to move employees and any liabilities associated with them from the old employer to the new employer by operation of law. TUPE is an acronym for the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.
UoP	The University of Portsmouth.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

On 15th April 2014 The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) gave an award to the University of Portsmouth (UoP) to explore the feasibility of a setting up a cost sharing group (CSG) to deliver IT services to education providers across Portsmouth, in collaboration with Portsmouth City Council (PCC). HEFCE defines a cost sharing group as an organisation which can:

“supply VAT-exempt services to member organisations that are themselves providers of VAT-exempt services and supplies. These new structures can offer services to institutions more cost-effectively and with no VAT impact. Existing shared service organisations within the sector can reduce the VAT impact on their members by operating as CSGs.”

The objectives of this investigation were to:

- Determine whether there was an appetite among Portsmouth education providers to engage in a not-for-profit, VAT-exempt CSG,
- Investigate which services could realistically be shared,
- Assess the various models that could be adopted to provide these services and outline a recommendation for moving forwards.

The ultimate aim of the initiative is to help raise the standards of IT across the city whilst reducing costs and service duplication, as well as an opportunity to share best practice.

1.2. Investigation Approach

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, the project was split into four different workstreams:

- An investigation into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within schools.
- A pilot of the UoP deploying and supporting Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks within two schools,
- A pilot of PCC providing robust, easy-to-install wireless services to schools.
- An investigation into potential business models, as well as the legal, HR and financial implications of each.

Across the four work streams the project has gathered feedback from 35 Portsmouth Schools and engaged in a number of presentations and forums, including Headteacher Conferences, PCC forums, the British Educational Training and Technology Show 2015, the Higher Education Efficiency 2015 Forum.

As and HEI we found a number of challenges and surprises whilst working with other education institutions during this project, it was immediately apparent that whilst we are all within the education sector the School's environment and culture is completely different to an HEI. We went through a steep learning curve for us to understand the pressures, politics and drivers for Schools in the city.

We expected an immediate interest in the project's aims and a willingness to engage fully by schools, this was not the case, possibly due to the following factors:

- Hesitant to engage due to previous failed initiatives, such as Building Schools for the Future.

- General election and possible change in Government and direction.
- Focus on pressures for schools to support the changes to curriculum or move to academy status.
- Concern about competition from the recently announced University Technical College in Portsmouth.
- A surprise general lack of interest, despite evidence that the project's aims could help resolve their IT concerns.

1.3. Findings

Pilot of the UoP deploying and supporting Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks and the PCC providing robust, easy-to-install wireless services to two schools:

Feedback from both staff and students was extremely positive. It was proven that both the UoP can successfully provide professional services to schools and this has produced a cost effective model for other Schools to consider.

A key finding was that the advice and guidance provided by the UoP gave both Schools the confidence and resource to investigate, and ultimately choose, a new and affordable approach for IT provision within their School.

Investigation into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within schools and identifying any potential cost sharing business models:

Many schools have severely limited IT budgets and resources, with many aspects of IT provision delegated to an external party. This is particularly noticeable in primary schools, with 73% of institutions relying heavily on 3rd party support. In-house IT expertise is often limited to a single IT co-ordinator, which may not be a full-time role.

Four main 'themes' have arisen from the feedback that was provided to the project, and observations made during the pilots and interviews. These are:

- Low budgets assigned to maintain and develop IT services,
- Limited resources available to support IT services,
- Apparent low level of engagement in IT decision-making at a strategic level,
- A lack of understanding of the marketplace and the implications of various options within key decision making areas.

A combination of the pilots undertaken by the project and investigation into an existing CSG in Cornwall suggests that the establishment of a CSG in Portsmouth could address all of these issues. By acting as a dedicated centre of expertise, the group would be able to provide reliable and consistent support to participating schools, able to cover for leave, illness, and other absences. The group would also be able to provide advice and guidance at a more strategic level, and by representing multiple schools could generate economies of scale when purchasing hardware, software, and training.

However, there are risks and issues associated with such an initiative. Fundamentally, many schools are risk-averse, and may be hesitant to engage with an as-yet untested operating model in order to

manage their IT services, particularly one that is run externally to the school and could be seen to involve them losing direct control of their resources. Additionally, careful consideration would have to be given to the legal, financial and HR implications of setting up a CSG; further information on these points can be found in section 5.7 of the full report.

1.4. Recommendations

Local schools are not currently in a position to set-up a cost-sharing group either due to a lack of resources, interest in, or understanding of, the possible operating model. The UoP will continue to engage with Schools, with a long term view to review the establishment of a cost-sharing group when, and if, the environment changes. This will reduce any risks of investing in an as-yet untested operating model. Engagement will also build the relationships needed to kick-start any future cost-sharing initiative. This mirrors the successful approach taken by the FX Plus cost-sharing group in Cornwall.

A number of sources highlighted that the support for schools wishing to investigate the use of Google Apps for Education from a trusted, independent partner was extremely beneficial and would be highly desirable.

The UoP will do the following:

- Provide two free consultancy days in the coming year to our pilot Schools to assist them with any further development of their Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks. We will develop an additional service package whereby we can provide other local schools considering Google Apps for Education with initial support and guidance.
- Continue with the current engagement with Schools IT network managers including ongoing attendance at the PCC Network Managers and IT Development meetings and continued support of the successful Portsmouth Education IT Hub.
- Use the knowledge and experience gathered during this project to continue to identify possible shared service candidates across the city. As lead sponsor of the University Technical College in Portsmouth we are in an excellent position to identify opportunities for viable shared services with this new venture.

2. Introduction

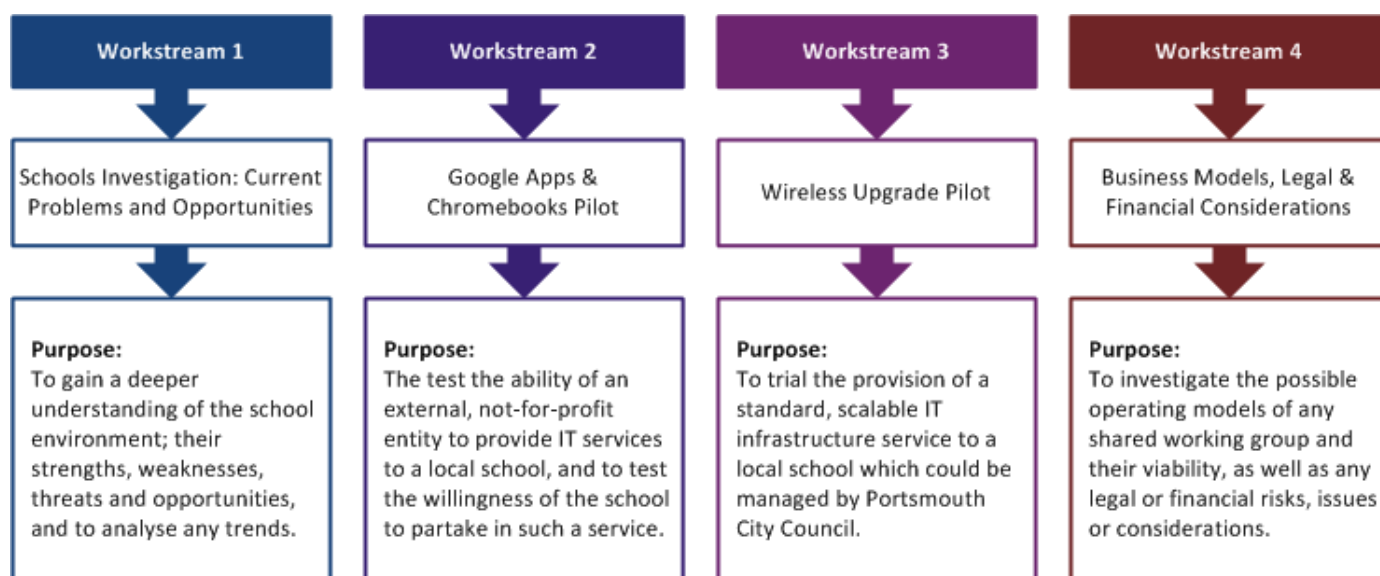
On 15th April 2014 The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) gave an award to the University of Portsmouth (UoP) to explore the feasibility of a setting up a cost sharing group to deliver IT services to education providers across Portsmouth, in collaboration with Portsmouth City Council (PCC). The objectives of this investigation were to:

- Determine whether there was an appetite among Portsmouth education providers to engage in a not-for-profit, VAT-exempt cost sharing group,
- Investigate which services could realistically be shared,
- Assess the various models that could be adopted to provide these services and outline a recommendation for moving forwards.

The ultimate aim of the initiative is to help raise the standards of IT across the city whilst reducing costs and service duplication, as well as an opportunity to share best practice. This is particularly timely as the withdrawal of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme may have left some schools in difficulty with their ICT provision. This work complements the UoP's strategic aim of engaging with the local community and raising learning outcomes across the city.

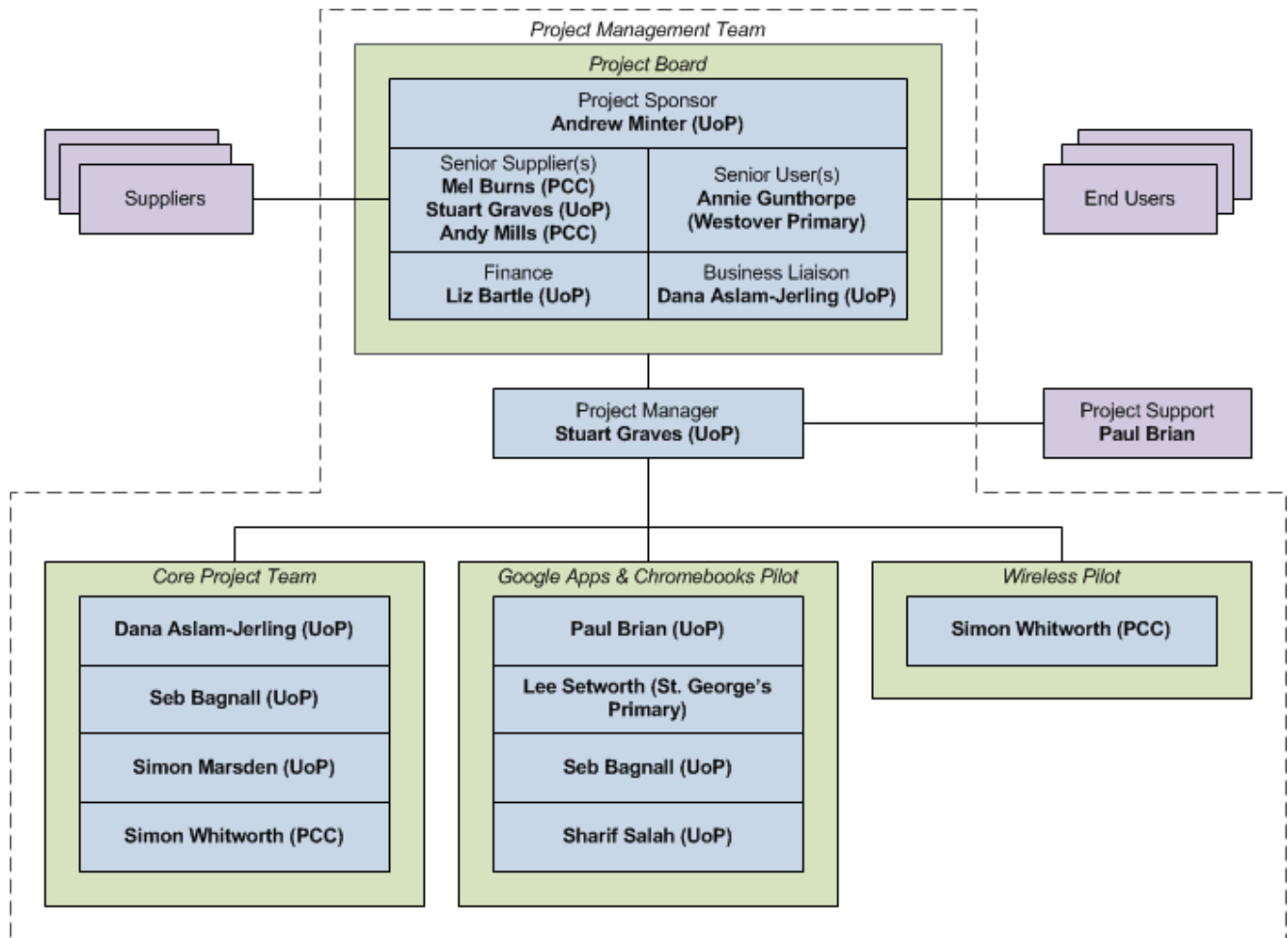
3. Project Approach

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, the project was split into four different work streams (see table below). Further information on each of these work streams can be found in section 4.



3.1. Project Governance Structure

The Project Board and Project Team comprised key stakeholders from UoP, PCC, and local schools, split into working groups that enabled the project to manage the four key work streams. The final project structure is illustrated on the following page.



3.2. Scope

The following areas were agreed to be **included** within the scope of the project:

- To install a modern WiFi solution within a school with Portsmouth City Council,
- To pilot the implementation of Google Apps for Education within one or more primary schools for the purposes of teaching and learning activities, supported by a pool of Chromebook devices,
- To research current school setups, environments, and IT provisions, and how this supports their teaching and learning goals,
- To investigate existing cost-sharing mechanisms and business models,
- To carry out a feasibility study into whether a cost sharing group would be suitable for use amongst Portsmouth schools, and if so, what a viable business model might be,
- To create a business case to identify potential benefits and cost savings to members of the cost sharing group.

The following areas were agreed to be **excluded** from the scope of the project:

- Provision of any IT services, hardware or software to schools unless required for the purpose of the pilots listed above,

- Extension of the pilot studies beyond the initial Google Apps, Chromebook and WiFi infrastructure offerings,
- The creation of a cost sharing group,
- Investigation into Schools information systems (SIMS) or their administration networks.

3.3. Project Management Approach

The project followed the UoP's IT-enabled project management framework for planning, risk and issue management, and reporting.

3.4. Related Projects

There are a number of other projects in Portsmouth which have either had an impact on this project, or are very closely related to the overall aim of raising the standards of IT provision in education across the city. These have been taken into consideration throughout the project.

3.4.1. Super Connected City

In 2011, the government set aside £100 million for an Urban Broadband Fund (UBF) to create up to ten 'super-connected' cities across the UK, including Portsmouth. Super connected cities benefit from faster and better broadband for small businesses, and almost all of the participating cities deploying wireless coverage to city centres and inside public buildings. This project utilised the findings from the Portsmouth Super Connected City project to help identify and provide a suitable *Network in a Box* solution; more information can be found in section 4.3.

3.4.2. Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

BSF was the government's investment programme in school buildings during the 2000s, which would have resulted in the rebuilding / refurbishment of Portsmouth Secondary schools, provision of a cost effective IT Managed Service linked to Education outcomes for Secondary Schools, with options to procure a Primary Managed Service, reducing the total cost of ownership of technology across all schools. The scheme was well supported. On 5th July 2010 the BSF programme was scrapped, meaning a lot of useful resources for schools would no longer be available. The outcome of this decision has had a significant impact on the thinking and morale of education providers within Portsmouth, who in some cases are now more reluctant to engage with centralised service provision.

3.4.3. Havant College Shared Service Discovery

In 2012 the University of Portsmouth began a shared service discovery with Havant College. The UoP were invited to complete an audit of their IT systems and services, identify cost and resource savings, and highlight any possibilities for sharing services. This project was successful in identifying cost and resource savings, but found that the added VAT costs for services meant that they were not financially viable at the time. This project is referred to in section 5.6.

3.4.4. University Technical College (UTC) in Portsmouth

It was announced in March 2015 that the bid to open the UTC had been successful. The new college will open in September 2016 and is expected to provide young people with skills sought by employers. The project was jointly led by the UoP and PCC and has backing from the Royal Navy, BAE Systems, QinetiQ, Airbus, Pall Europe and Ben Ainslie Racing. From September 2016, students aged 14–19 will have the opportunity to study 'hands-on' technical subjects alongside a traditional academic

education. It is anticipated that around 75 year 10 students and 100 year 12 students will enrol in the first year.

4. Research & Investigations Undertaken

4.1. Workstream 1: Schools Investigation - Current Problems and Opportunities

A number of methods were used to gain an insight into the problems facing local schools and their current priorities, including:

- Online surveys to Headteachers, Teachers, and IT personnel,
- Schools visits and discussions with staff,
- Workshops with school IT personnel,
- Attendance at appropriate presentations and forums,
- Site visits to an existing cost sharing group,
- Meetings with additional stakeholders.

4.1.1. Online Surveys

Surveys were sent to all Primary and Secondary schools, and were responded to by a combination of teaching staff, IT personnel, and Head Teachers. The surveys asked questions on how their IT services were provided, which devices and platforms were used, how IT services were supported, their overall level of satisfaction, and areas for improvement. Surveys consisted of Likert Scales multiple-choice questions to enable quantitative analysis of results.

The results from the surveys can be found in section 5.2.

4.1.2. School Visits & Schools Technicians Workshop

The Project Team aimed to meet face-to-face with as many local schools as possible to identify, assess and prioritise the issues they faced with their ICT provision. The aim of these visits was to help identify patterns across the city, as well as enabling the Project Team to build relationships with local schools.

Additionally, five School IT technicians and managers representing 14 schools in Portsmouth attended workshops based at the University. The aim of the workshops was to gain specialist insight into the types of services that would be considered valuable within schools, as well as facilitating knowledge sharing between schools.

The result from school visits, interviews and the technicians workshop can be found in section 5.5. The list of questions asked to schools can be found in appendix E.

4.1.3. Presentations and Forums

Members of the Project Team attended the following events to learn more about the current environment and the general feeling among education providers:

- CAS (Computing at Schools) Hub
- Headteachers Conference
- PCC Forums
- PCC Strategic Directors Board and Traded Services Board

- BETT (British Educational Training and Technology) Show 2015
- The Higher Education Efficiency 2015 Forum

The findings and discussions arising from these events have helped shape the recommendations put forwards in section 7, and also led to working with the first school on the pilot implementations in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

4.1.4. Cost Sharing Group Site Visit

FX Plus is a cost sharing group that supports 8000 members of staff and students from the universities of Falmouth and Exeter at their campus in Penryn, Cornwall. Originally created to support a new campus location, the group is able to provide standardised services to the universities at both reduced cost and resource. The Project Team visited FX Plus to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing an existing cost sharing group as well as some of the benefits realised.

4.2. Workstream 2: Google Apps & Chromebooks Pilot

Two pilots were undertaken involving small-scale deployments of Google Apps for Education on Chromebook devices at two schools; Westover Primary School, and St. George's Beneficial Church Of England Primary School. The aim of the pilots were to:

- See whether or not schools would be interested in working with the University to provide and manage IT services,
- Test whether the University had the skills and experience to advise and work within a Primary School environment,
- Ascertain whether a combination of Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks would be a simple, cost-effective strategic fit for local schools.

Google services are widely used at UoP and have been successful in reducing operating costs and enabling a much greater degree of collaboration between staff and student groups. Additionally, UoP staff are experienced in deploying and supporting the services.

The pilots were followed by a study into educational outcomes of both staff and students, carried out by the UoP's School of Education and Continuing Studies. The aim of this study was to evaluate how staff and students perceived the engagement with Google Apps to have contributed to learning and teaching. The aim of this study is to provide evidence to help the project understand the impact of the pilots from an educational rather than technical viewpoint, and to help inform the recommendations for moving forwards.

The outcomes from the pilots, training and subsequent study can be found in section 5.3.

4.3. Workstream 3: Wireless Upgrade Pilot

A further pilot of high-speed wireless services - provided as part of the *Super Connected Cities* initiative - took place with Westover and St. Georges schools. The aims of the pilot in relation to this investigation were to:

- Trial the provision of a purely technical IT service (i.e. networking) alongside the Google Apps & Chromebook pilot,

- Identify a suitable scalable, cost-effective service that could be provided to schools by Portsmouth City Council,
- Ensure that an adequate and reliable wireless service was in place to support the Google Apps & Chromebooks pilot.

The intention was for this pilot to provide a high-quality wireless infrastructure that can carry 'My City WiFi', a '*Network In A Box*' (i.e. minimal configuration) solution, and the possibility of universal authentication, which would allow pupils to access their learning resources whenever they are connected to My City WiFi.

This pilot supported Workstream 2, as a reliable and secure wireless solution is prerequisite to many modern IT solutions, including Google Apps for Education. The outcomes from the wireless upgrade pilot can be found in section 5.4.

4.4. Workstream 4: Business Models, Legal and Financial Considerations

The project engaged the services of HE Shared Legal to advise on the financial, legal and other operational implications required to deliver IT services to Schools in Portsmouth. Clarification was sought on the following points:

- The most viable business model in order to provide IT services to schools (e.g. as an independent cost sharing group, directly from the University, or some other option),
- Criteria needed to qualify as a cost sharing group,
- The appropriate financial structure, including how to report funds from a cost sharing group,
- How staff should be employed by any cost sharing group, and what the responsibilities would be of the organisations that have provided staff to the group,
- If a cost sharing group was not viable, what would be legal implications and responsibilities of the University offering IT services to schools,
- VAT implications of offering services to education providers as a University,
- What insurance would be needed to deliver IT services.

The outcomes of the consultancy can be found in section 5.7. The consultancy requirements report can be found in appendix A (Potential Services to be Offered Report).

5. Findings

The combination of research undertaken by the project has resulted in a range of findings relating to the current status of ICT provision within schools, common problems, and considerations for setting up a cost sharing group to address these problems. This section will summarise the most relevant findings from the investigation; further information can be found in the appendices.

5.1. Overview of ICT Investment in Schools

The current ICT situation in schools is that third party commercial providers are supporting schools via a commissioning cycle, with no impartial advice being available for a sizable investment. Whilst these providers can deliver operational needs of the school, they don't meet the strategic investment needed as technology increasingly embeds into all areas of the curriculum.

What has become evident is that there is a difference in the level of support available between Secondary schools employing resource onsite and primary schools who may not be able to have support on site at all times and either informally rely on their destination secondary school or well meaning staff members.

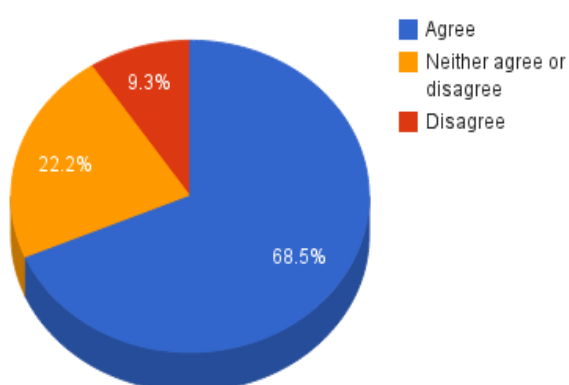
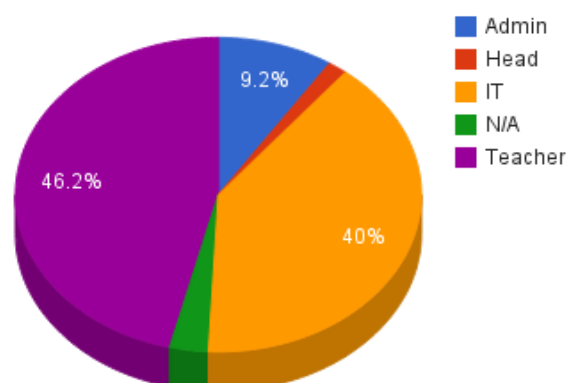
This situation has come about due to the fast development of IT and the lack of sustainable investment from schools, local education authorities and government. This started with New Opportunities Fund - designed to upskill teachers around IT in 2000 and continued with Building Schools for the Future. Developing a strategy for schools can help build a sustainable plan for the embedding of IT into every area of schools.

5.2. Summary of Survey Responses

65 responses were received from the surveys carried out by the project, representing a total of 35 different infant, junior, primary and secondary schools. This section illustrates the key findings from the survey responses.

Role of respondents

A majority of respondents to the survey were teachers (46%) or IT staff (40%). The relatively low number of Headteachers responding (6%) supports the project findings that IT decisions are typically delegated to an appointed IT coordinator or other role.



Satisfaction with current ICT provision

A majority of respondents shared the opinion that their current IT offering effectively supports the new ICT curriculum, with only 9.3% disagreeing and 22.2% having no opinion. Additionally, 85% of respondents rated their current IT support as being good, very good, or excellent. These results seem to contrast the information gathered from face-to-face discussions, which have highlighted a number of areas for improvement. More information is included in section 5.5. These satisfaction results remained the same when IT staff were excluded.

Third party support

- 73% of primary schools rely on third party support for their IT services, and only 12% have dedicated in-house IT support team or individual (typically an *IT coordinator*).
- In comparison, only 13% of secondary schools rely on third party support. 100% of them have some form of IT support in-house.

- 100% of academy schools have their own in-house IT support teams.

5.3. Results from Google Apps & Chromebook Pilots

The feedback of the pilots from both staff and students both via the project and from the outcome of the School of Education research was hugely positive and generated a number of recommendations and questions relevant to this investigation:

Working in partnership with schools

Both Westover and St. Georges were very keen to work with the University from the outset, although this was not typical of many schools we visited. The feedback received from staff about the level of support received and the confidence this gave them was overwhelmingly positive. As this was a free service, further investigation will be required as to the best business model moving forwards: whether schools would be willing to pay for the service (even if operated on a not-for-profit basis), whether limited services could be provided for free, or if subscribed schools could operate a joint cost-sharing service and cover the cost themselves.

Skills and experience provided

University staff were able to operate within and on behalf of both schools efficiently and effectively, and feedback indicates that the support received was always satisfactory. Technical support was given by the UoP's Information Services team, and specialist advice on the applications that could be used for certain subject areas was provided by the School of Education and Continuing Studies. If a cost sharing group was set up this specialist knowledge could be even further developed.

Solution benefits

Feedback indicates that the use of Chromebooks and Google Apps in the classroom provided real benefits in terms of student engagement and collaboration, as well as reducing the amount of administration required by tutors. The low cost of devices was desirable to schools: a fully mobile IT suite with 24 machines and charging station could be deployed at a fraction of the cost of a similar static IT lab. The use of Google Apps for Education itself is completely free, which is another major benefit for schools.

A final benefit to note here is the very low cost of supporting the devices, with the Project Team spending a total of 5 hours over the full two-month pilot providing additional help and guidance. If a shared, centralised support group was setup to provide services to a number of schools, this could be one area where significant savings are made.

Training

Initial teacher training in the use of Google products was provided by C Learning for both the Westover and St George's pilots. In order to evaluate whether this could be delivered by a shared service group moving forwards, the UoP IT Training Team attended both training sessions. The following feedback was received:

- The training content already offered by the UoP is close to matching that offered by a third party both in content and quality.
- Content on specific products (Google Sites and Google Groups were the ones noted) could do with additional development.

- A trainer with previous - or current - experience of working in a primary school environment offers more knowledge of using the applications in context.

5.3.1. Conclusions from the Perspectives of the value of Chromebooks and Google Apps in learning and teaching research

Those undertaking the pilot project were enthusiastic about the benefits that the Chromebooks and Google Apps could provide to enhance learning and teaching, even though the pilot only lasted one term the opportunities for embedding technology into curriculum delivery were deemed apparent. As one participant explained his view of the benefits in these terms, they

“help one to one engagement with the lesson and give (children) more opportunity for independent learning”, (they provide) “opportunities to engage in lessons through devices and services in more ad hoc manner. I think it opens up more opportunities to learn in the way (some children) may feel more comfortable with..”

This approach to a more seamless provision of technology is implicated as one of the factors that will allow the development of ‘powerful new ways of thinking’ that are deemed important for effective learning.

Technology was also seen as providing a way of engaging children and “capturing their imagination” by one participant, and as all education processes explore the need for motivation if learning is going to occur (Condie and Munroe, 2007) technology can be seen as a way of providing that motivation. This was perhaps best illustrated by the teacher who talked about the poor writer in her class, who could now through access to the Chromebook not only be motivated to produce more writing, but also because the device was flexible remain with his peers working rather than have to be at a PC away from the other children. However, it was also noted that all the children felt the Chromebooks and Google Apps helped them in their learning.

Using technology in this more flexible way was seen to be developing essential life skills and open up new possibilities for children with a teacher reporting how one year four child had declared

“I really want to be a computer programmer if I can’t be a computer programmer I’ll be a doctor – what a choice – but it enables them to make those decisions, I think it opens their world to them”.

This insight was shared as recognition of the transformative effects that education can have upon children when they begin to feel empowered and confident in their learning.

To truly be effective the move to working in the cloud requires a cultural shift within not just individual schools, but across the education sector in order to overcome issues such as intra school moderation, if children’s work is in the cloud and not all paper based. Both schools recognised the issues of convincing a whole staff team to embrace a “new mind set” and had thought about how these might be overcome in their particular situations. One school suggested it needed a whole school approach to training and implementation to avoid resistance in staff some of whom were seen to be “embedded and ...set in their ways so I suppose the culture change has to come in”. They went on to explore what they felt might be the implications of an approach that was not whole school by talking about possible inequalities in the student experience if some of the school are resistant to embrace new ways of working.

The argument here for equality of opportunity is understandable but not the only approach that could be considered. The other teacher suggested that following the pilot they were looking to create a model that built upon the children's own expertise with the tools as they progress through the school. This approach does require that teachers are comfortable working with children who may in the initial stages be the experts (Gahala, n.d.) and also requires a model that provides the flexibility for the teacher experts to demonstrate and support new ways of working. Where the expertise lies in the teaching staff and how that can be shared e.g. peer observation of practice, is therefore also one of the factors that will contribute to changing cultures within school. Staff in both pilots acknowledged that it would have been difficult to do what they did without the onsite support from the university in the early stages. The recognition that engaging with any new technology is a sacrifice of time that could be spent learning content is part of the cost/ benefit analysis, but once children have learnt how to use, care for and respect a tool then teachers can be supported in understanding how they can deliver content with it. In this instance the move is not just to a new piece of hardware but embracing a new way of working in the cloud which is requiring a 'new approach to pedagogy' to be developed (Codie and Munroe, 2007 p.76).

In conclusion therefore the pilot has indicated that using Chromebooks can provide in class access to technology quickly and easily. It has been suggested that it is a flexible resource that can be used to support children's learning and motivation. The Google Apps suite was seen as a positive tool that could be used to deliver most of the curriculum, notably topic and literacy, and had functions to support teachers with effective planning and both formative and summative assessment opportunities. The collaborative nature of the tool was seen as very positive for enhancing a range of learning opportunities and providing children with independent learning occasions as well as helping them to develop life skills and digital citizenship. The pilot was therefore a success with both schools already having purchased some Chromebooks instead of traditional alternatives. The success of the roll out now depends upon the strategies and support for the staff team to enable them to embrace the culture shift and begin to confidently embed the technology within their classroom practice.

Full report on the Perspectives of the value of Chromebooks and Google Apps in learning and teaching (Appendix B).

5.4. Wireless Upgrade Pilot

Options available

Two solutions were considered for the wireless upgrade: Aruba, provided by Khipu who provide the University wireless, and Cisco Meraki, which is used to deploy My City WiFi to many public buildings within Portsmouth as part of a government-backed 'Super Connected Cities' project.

The Project Team decided to deploy the Meraki wireless to the pilot schools due to the ease of installation (no wireless controllers required) and due to its ability to integrate with the existing, proven My City WiFi service.

Result of pilot

The robustness of the Cisco Meraki solution was proven through its successful use in Westover and St George's Primary. Although it is was a slightly higher cost than the Aruba solution in a fixed cost comparison, the softer costs saved due to it being far simpler to install and manage mean that the Meraki solution is recommended by PCC for schools.

The Cisco Meraki option also benefited from being compatible with the current PCC web filtering service and as it has been extensively used across the city for the Super Connected project there is a lot of technical knowledge available from PCC if required.

The feedback from both pilot schools following their use of the solution was overwhelmingly positive, with Westover reporting that they had no issue or outages with the service since installation, and were impressed with the ability to provide guest access via 'My City Wifi'. Feedback from the Network Manager at St George's was also very positive, and following a short trial the school have agreed funding to replace their current wifi solution with Cisco Meraki. They were especially impressed with the ease of installation and ongoing administration, and they concurred with the PCC evaluation that the initial higher cost is outweighed by these benefits.

5.5. Summary of Opportunities and Threats

During discussions with more than 30 schools and attendance at the events outlined in section 4.1, the Project Team compiled a list of recurring issues and concerns faced by local education providers.

The following table summarises the most prominent themes throughout this exercise, as well as an explanation of the threats or opportunities they present to the establishment of a cost sharing group. The full feedback analysis document can be found in appendix K.

Theme	Description	Analysis
IT strategy	There is little evidence of strategic IT management within primary schools. In most cases, headteachers delegate IT decisions to their local IT support, who are not in a position to make strategic decisions and do not have control of budgets. Additionally, because many schools rely heavily on third party IT support - who generally respond to fault requests - there is little consideration given to long-term IT strategy.	Opportunity: A cost sharing group would be able to take on part of this responsibility from schools, as their primary focus would be keeping up with IT trends and making the best strategic decisions for Portsmouth schools. Threat: Although there are clear benefits to be gained from a cost sharing initiative, the perceived lack of interest in IT strategy suggests that many schools may be unwilling to tackle the issues that they have.
Knowledge sharing	A common issue raised by technical staff was the lack of a private trusted forum of IT administrators within the area to ask for advice and to generate ideas. Although most IT staff appear willing to assist others with solutions or advice there does not seem to be a vehicle to enable this currently.	Opportunity: A cost sharing group would be ideally suited to share knowledge of best practices with its members. The apparent willingness of IT staff to work together is also a promising start for the formation of a cost sharing group.
Budget restrictions	Budget restrictions are in many ways the underlying issue for many of the other themes on this list. Despite understanding the increasing need for robust IT service provision, schools are forced to prioritise IT below other pressing requirements. Smaller schools can also suffer from a lack of buying power, as they may not receive the same competitive quotes as the larger schools.	Opportunity: A cost sharing group would be able to benefit from economies of scale, as well as being better positioned to find solutions that present the best value for money. Opportunity: A cost sharing group may also be able to better negotiate with

		suppliers because they are acting on behalf of a larger group of customers.
Reduction of centralised local authority support	Most schools rely on a service supplied by PCC. The perception was that PCC curriculum support has reduced following cuts. Schools feel that the results are delaying actioning of service requests, minimal support, lack of training and a loss of strategic planning and development. Schools feel that they have to either continue with their current IT problems, or engage expensive third party support.	Opportunity: A cost sharing group could provide value-add Curriculum IT support services to schools. Opportunity: PCC could better inform schools of the services they offer as resources have actually increased in certain areas rather than the perception that they have been cut.
Control over local authority-provided services	There is a requirement from some schools to have more control over services provided by their local authority, for example the ability to control web filtering (which websites and services can be accessed).	Opportunity: A cost sharing group could provide services that schools can administer themselves, giving greater flexibility. This is unlikely to be offered from the outset due to the complexity of different requirements from schools.
Wireless (Wi-Fi) provision	Many schools lack a reliable, sustainable Wi-Fi service, although they realise how important this is to a modern IT offering. The cost of setting up, managing and replacing Wi-Fi is a growing concern.	Opportunity: This is a service that could be offered by a cost sharing group moving forwards, as demonstrated by the wireless pilot. Opportunity: Wider communication of the projects WiFi findings could help provide a cost effective solution to Schools.
IT support capability	There are varying levels of IT support capability in schools, with some schools having highly-skilled teams and others having no in-house support at all.	Opportunity: A cost sharing group could pool IT staff to provide a subscription based IT support service to schools. This would be of the most benefit to those areas that currently have no in-house provision.
Need for suitable and affordable technology to support teaching	Many schools have found that their IT provision has not kept pace with technology requirements. Many are now in a position that they have to upgrade significant sections of their IT estate, with budgets being tight and expectations high the need to provide affordable and sustainable IT is essential.	Opportunity: A cost sharing group could provide the services required to install the IT required to deploy and support schools future teaching and learning requirements. Threat: There appears to be a reluctance from some IT staff to engage in open discussions about new technologies, possibly due to lack of knowledge in that area or a fear of losing control or influence in front of their senior management team.
Training	A very common piece of feedback was that there is a need for more IT training for both IT and teaching staff, including continuing professional development (CPD). As training is often overlooked, teachers either avoid new technology or cannot get the most out of it. Technical staff who do not receive training find it very difficult to implement or consider new technologies.	Opportunity: Generic Training services, if offered on a not-for-profit basis, may be cheaper than training available from private suppliers. The cost sharing group may not be able to offer formal accreditation.

IT product awareness	A lack of up-to-date understanding of the marketplace can result in schools being unable to gain benefits - including cost savings - from modern IT approaches. Too many IT solutions available on the market: the BETT 2015 conference suggested that for any given IT problem, around 10-20 solutions are available from different suppliers. Without specialist knowledge, this can make it very difficult for schools to choose the best option for their requirements.	Opportunity: A cost sharing group will be able to act on behalf of the schools to perform market research and select the best solutions, removing many of these barriers.
University viewed as competitor	Feedback was received from a number of sources indicating that the University is viewed as a competitor of some of secondary schools and FE colleges in the authority area, as a result of the recent successful University Technical College project bid.	Threat: This development may have reduced the willingness of schools to engage with the University as a shared services provider.

5.6. Case Studies

FX Plus

FX Plus is a successful cost sharing group that supports 8000 members of staff and students from Falmouth University and the University of Exeter at their campus in Penryn, Cornwall. Key points noted from discussions with group included:

- Their business model developed slowly over a period of 10 years. Initially it was an informal group that relied on memorandums of understanding, which developed into the more structured CSG model used today. Initially only one service was offered.
- The creation of the group as a method to provide services was more obvious in this case due to both universities sharing resources on campus.
- FX Plus offer a fixed list of services which is universal to all customers, regardless of whether they are staff or students. Anything beyond this is funded by the individual or group requesting the service.
- IT have a single service level agreement (SLA) which is agreed and understood by all members of the group. This SLA sets out an availability target of 99% and they have a 90% satisfaction rating from their customers.
- The CSG Chair rotates between Falmouth and Exeter Vice Chancellors; there are 3 members from each University on the board including the FX Plus Director.
- The group buy in services from the individual institutes where needed. For example, HR services are provided by Falmouth University at a cost to FX Plus.
- All staff delivering FX Plus hosted projects TUPE into FX Plus under the T&C's from their previous employer.
- The main challenge involved with the inclusion of ICT within FX Plus has been the culture change involved. Many staff feared redundancies would be made, but this hasn't been the case; in fact, no redundancies were made as a result of the ICT team moving from Falmouth University into FX Plus.

A number of these points may present challenges for a cost sharing group in Portsmouth. Schools in Portsmouth do not share a physical location, and currently have vastly different requirements.

Havant College Shared Service Discovery

The shared service discovery initiative identified the following points:

- The cost savings gained through the UoP's tendering power for services and devices were reduced by the requirement to add VAT. In the end this made them cost neutral, or in some cases more expensive.
- When sharing services across locations (between institutions), careful consideration needs to be given to the physical infrastructure requirements needed to maintain a stable connection.
- The UoP support culture was primarily focused on supporting university teaching and learning. If the UoP were to support external customers there would either need to be a change of support priorities, or a separate team to resolve requests and issues.
- A clear SLA for the services offered would help all parties involved to understand their responsibilities and avoid confusion.

5.7. Results from Legal and Financial Consultancy

HE Shared Legal provided the following advice on the financial, legal and other business-oriented implications required to deliver IT services to schools in Portsmouth.

VAT implications of providing services via a cost sharing group

- The sharing of solely educational services is possible without incurring VAT charges. However, the provision and sharing of IT services may be subject to VAT.
- The UoP, PCC, schools and colleges meet the relevant criteria/conditions to allow the formation of a CSG, able to supply members with certain services at cost and exempt from VAT.
- The CSG can also provide services to non-members, but these would be subject to VAT.
- In order for the service sharing exemption to apply, the CSG must:
 - Reclaim from its members an exact reimbursement of their joint expenses,
 - Have no profit-making objective, or the VAT exemption could be seen as competition distortion.

VAT implications of the UoP providing services directly

- Provision of IT services to schools would incur full VAT.
- In principle Schools may be able to retrieve VAT on services provided, although they are generally limited in their scope for recovery (because of the supply exemption), as compared to commercial concerns.
- There is however VAT exemption for services supplied to non-profit organisations termed as "an association, the primary purpose of which is the advancement of a particular branch of knowledge" and "a body which has objects which are in the public domain and are of a [...] civic nature". But this is not recommended and full details can be seen in appendix F.

Liability to schools & insurance

- Liability will not be determined by the VAT status of the business model (i.e. CSG or not), but from the services offered. However, the choice of a suitable corporate vehicle will help the UoP manage liability.
- Detailed agreements for the provision of IT support services would need to be drafted and entered into by the service provider, either in the form of a corporate structure set up for the

project, or by the UoP itself. Generally liability to schools on the part of the UoP could arise in connection with:

- The delivery of the service itself,
- Measures put in place to protect school data and confidentiality issues,
- Intellectual property rights,
- HR issues,
- TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) matters.

The relevant contracts would contain provisions covering apportionment/limitation of liability and relevant indemnities, as agreed between the parties. The exact types of insurance required would be determined by the specific services offered. In any case, public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance would be required as a standard if the UoP was to offer the service itself, and not in the context of a shared service structure.

Suitable structures

- Regardless of whether services are to be provided by the UoP or a CSG, the use of a separate vehicle would be recommended, in the form of either a:
 - Private company limited by shares (a trading arm of the UoP, UPEL),
 - Private company limited by guarantee (most appropriate if the case of a CSG).
- This is mainly because the UoP and other members would benefit from limited liability, and therefore protect the parties involved from liability arising from the delivery of the service. The company could employ its own staff and enter into contracts in its own name, making the operation more efficient and cost-effective.

If two or more parties are involved (UoP and PCC for example), the setting up of a separate 'in-house' company could provide an additional benefit of using the 'Teckal' exemption and avoid the application of a full procurement regime for the award of certain contracts.

Other corporate structures were not researched as they are unlikely to suit the specific requirements of the proposed service provision.

Employment and TUPE

The setup of a company may require the transfer of employees. The following points need to be considered:

- Secondment agreements, variations to existing terms and conditions or new employment contracts,
- Reduction of the number of employees required resulting in redundancies,
- Setting up a company to share IT services currently delivered 'in-house' is likely to mean that employees involved will automatically transfer to the new entity on their existing terms (with some exceptions) together with all associated rights and liabilities,
- Dismissal of employees due to the transfer, or a reason connected to the transfer that is not for an economic, technical or organisational reason should be avoided,
- Identifying which employees are covered by TUPE may not be entirely straightforward - especially where current roles only partially involve services to be delivered,
- TUPE imposes specific obligations related to information provision and consultation,
- Management of employment and funding related issues (e.g. redundancy payments).

Pensions

If a new company is set up with the participation of PCC and schools/colleges (on a CSG basis or otherwise), it is likely that a number of transferring employees will be members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The following matters would need to be considered:

- The company may be given 'scheme employer' status by the LGPS and employees could remain members,
- The new company may be required to provide access to a pension scheme to any new employees.

Collaboration Considerations

The QAA's Quality Code for Education defines collaboration as "two or more partners working together in a particular area of business, which may involve combining existing operations, pooling areas of expertise or creating something entirely new". Although the Code mainly focusses on academic standards, quality of learning and awards, it also arguably applies to activities such as the sharing of IT services/resources which facilitate the delivery of learning opportunities. Therefore the UoP is required to ensure that policy requirements and standards are those expected of a UK HE provider, with its own policies and procedures are adhered to.

There is a requirement applying in collaborations where one of the parties involved is not itself a HE provider (in this case PCC and any schools) that steps should be taken to establish a good shared understanding (between the parties) of the institutional ethos and culture of the UoP as a HE provider. There would likely be an extensive overlap between what is sought by sector guidance (i.e. collaboration guidelines contained in the Code) and what would be required anyway in the context of legal and financial due diligence and implementation of the regulatory and 'commercial' aspects of the arrangement.

The full consultancy report can be found in appendix A.

6. Options Analysis

The findings from this project have resulted in a number of options both with regards to which services could realistically be offered by any service-sharing initiative, and also what legal structure any group might take to deliver these services. The following sections outline the options that are available along with pros and cons for each.

6.1. Potential Shared Services

Service Option 1: IT Support & Services

Provide support for all elements of teaching and learning ICT provision, including devices, software, networking, consultancy, and training. This is an 'umbrella' option that encompasses many of the later options listed

Pros	Cons
• Not-for-profit shared services could present significant cost savings for schools that	• Current lack of interest from schools to buy into this, potentially because the benefits are

cannot afford to run in-house support. • Services would be provided that are tailored to the school's requirements rather than commercial interests. • UoP and PCC have experience providing similar services to large numbers of internal customers.	not immediately clear to them or because schools are already happy with the level of third-party support they receive. • Direct competition with third party support companies. • Perception of poor service could affect the reputation of the UoP/PCC (depending on business model).
---	--

Service Option 2: Tendering & Purchasing

To act on behalf of a number of schools who wish to buy in the same services, software or hardware.

Pros	Cons
• Economies of scale would provide savings to the members of the group. • Better buying / negotiation power with suppliers. • Possibility of loan / temporary items for test purposes or one-off events.	• May be challenging to identify a common set of requirements for tenders due to the diverse nature of schools. • Some savings may only work with certain business structures due to VAT considerations - see section 6.2.

Service Option 3: Training

Provide IT training to schools in the use of new technology solutions.

Pros	Cons
• We have the skills and knowledge with the UoP already. • The UoP is experienced in providing training for a number of solutions that are fit for school use, including Google Apps and Microsoft applications. • UoP resources such as training rooms could potentially be used. • Not-for-profit training may have low costs than private sector offerings. Additionally, members of the group could share courses for further savings (one trainer costs the same, whether it's one or 10 training delegates).	• Further investigations into costings and requirements is needed. • If required, Accreditation will not be provided by a cost sharing group initially. • Schools have limited training funds.

Service Option 4: Service Delivery Management (SDM)

An individual or group that is able to offer impartial advice and guidance to schools regarding their IT strategy, procurement options, available solutions and best practices.

Pros	Cons
• There are many schools who require advice in these areas. • This individual or group would have a common understanding of the issues and opportunities across the city, not just an individual school.	• No obvious source of funding, although a similar post did previously exist in the PCC. • It is not clear whether schools would be willing to pay for this service, even on a not-for-profit basis.

• This could improve the level of engagement with head teachers in IT strategy.	• Schools may be cautious of an external party and may not view the SDM as representing their best interests.
---	---

Service Option 5: Google Apps for Education Services

Provide consultation, trial devices, deployment and ongoing support services if a school wishes to investigate moving to Google Apps for Education and/or Chromebooks.

Pros	Cons
• UoP has experience of providing this service to tens of thousands of internal customers. • Pilots have proven that we can support schools well. • Pilots have proven that these technologies are very cost effective methods of improving teaching and learning in primary schools. • Supports the UoP strategic goal of widening participation and raising pupil attainment within the city.	• UoP culture may not currently support paying customer requirements. • Staff resource would need to be identified.

Service Option 6: Wireless Connectivity

Upgrade school wireless infrastructure to PCC's Cisco Meraki solution.

Pros	Cons
• Will enable schools to upgrade their wireless infrastructure to a very high standard for minimal cost. • Will enable schools to look at new, more cost effective solutions (Chromebooks for example). • Very easy to install and administer - minimal in-house expertise required. • May promote a single standard across the city, enabling enhanced support and knowledge sharing. • Ability to carry <i>My City WiFi</i> as a guest solution. Could also carry Eduroam.	• Cisco Meraki technology may not require a dedicated support offering; there is little requirement for ongoing support from a cost-sharing group.

Service Option 7: IT Hosting Services

Allow schools to take advantage of managed virtualised server / storage hosting services.

Pros	Cons
• The UoP already provide this service to internal customers. • Hosting solution from a trusted vendor. • Added value support from the UoP.	• If this service is offered by a group external to the UoP this would need specialist knowledge and skills to develop and support. • If this service is offered by UoP, there may be a lack of available staff resource. • No mechanism currently in place to support charging. • UoP culture may not currently support paying customer requirements. • Lack of clear requirements from schools at present.

	Current external cloud based solutions may be cheaper and more suitable.
--	--

Service Option 8: Broadband and Web Filtering Service

Provision of a broadband and web filtering service to schools, similar to the current SWAN provision.

Pros	Cons
- Could look at bespoke web filtering per school. - Economies of scale.	- This service would take significant investment to set up and provide effectively. - The existing service provided to schools meets a majority of their needs. - Very high risk if web filtering is misconfigured, and little existing knowledge of requirements. - It is unlikely that a centralised provision for this service will be required in a few years due to technology advances.

6.2. Potential Business Models

There are a number of operational models that could be adopted to deliver one or more of the services outline in section 6.1. The following tables summarise the options available as suggested by the research and legal consultancy undertaken by the Project Team, along with pros and cons of each.

Business Option 1: Cost Sharing Group Between Schools

Creation of a cost sharing group which is available to all schools in the city.

Pros	Cons
- Would allow member schools to maximise the use of their current resources and services by sharing skills and expertise. - Schools would gain from economies of scale when purchasing or tendering, and would have more bargaining power when represented as a collective. - A pool of resources would be available to schools; particularly beneficial to schools that currently only have one member of staff (or none at all) for IT support. - The group could help take on some of the responsibilities of IT strategy and decision making. - The group would be able to develop a good understanding of the current marketplace and available technology solutions. - By representing multiple schools, the group would be able to understand issues and opportunities holistically rather than just looking at one school. - A CSG would reduce liability to individual Schools.	- In spite of the apparent benefits, schools seem reluctant to engage with external partners. - Technical staff may feel under threat from redundancy, even though this is unlikely to be the case. - It is unclear who would be responsible for driving this initiative forwards, as no school has the time or resources to 'kick-start' the initiative.

Business Option 2: Cost Sharing Group Including UoP / PCC

This is the same as business option 1, but with the UoP and PCC included in some capacity - either as partners or facilitators/organisers for the CSG.

Pros	Cons
As with option 1, plus: • Further enhancement of the CSG's buying power if the UoP / PCC were also tendering. • Potential to loan or resell existing services to the cost sharing group. • The UoP and PCC working together have a better chance of getting such an initiative off of the ground.	As with option 2, except: • Schools may feel further threatened by, or cautious of, UoP and PCC involvement.

Business Option 3: UoP-provided Free Services

Specific agreed services are provided free of charge to schools.

Pros	Cons
• Could raise the UoP's profile and reputation. • Feeds in to the UoP vision of working in partnership to support educational attainment in the city. • Could be relatively easy to achieve with certain, easily-scalable services that have a proven record of being supplied successfully (Google Apps is one good example).	• We are unclear of the size of the market. • School expectations may exceed what UoP can provide as a free service. • Impact on business as usual due to increased resource requirements would have to be carefully considered.

Business Option 4: UoP-provided Chargeable Services

Specific agreed services are provided to schools at a cost, which may be on a not-for-profit basis.

Pros	Cons
As with option 3, plus: • Increased turnover for the UoP. • Costs to the UoP would be charged to schools.	As with option 3, except: • This would effectively place the UoP as a competitor to existing third parties who already have a close relationship with schools. • No mechanism to support charging within IS, although estimated costs for some services have been drafted. • Unsure of how willing schools would be to pay for these services.

A further option has been investigated involving PCC expanding their portfolio of services to schools, however PCC are not currently considering this.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Summary of Investigation

This investigation has evidenced that schools in Portsmouth can be broadly categorised into two groups; those which have a dedicated team of in-house IT specialists (usually academies and secondary schools), and those that rely heavily on external support, with in-house support often

limited to one part-time role (typically primary schools). It is clear that the latter group would benefit most from the establishment of a cost-sharing group.

If setup correctly and adequately staffed, a cost-sharing group could provide the following benefits to participating schools:

- Economies of scale when purchasing hardware, software, and training
- Increased buying and negotiation power with suppliers
- Consistent support, with staff able to cover illness, leave, and other absences
- More reliable, scalable IT services
- Enhanced strategic direction and a greater understanding of the IT marketplace.
- Reduced liability for it's members.

In short, a cost-sharing group could address a majority of the themes explored in section 5.5: tight budgets, limited resources, low strategic engagement, and a lack of understanding of available solutions. Equally, many of these benefits could be gained by IT services being provided directly by the UoP, as evidenced during the pilots with Westover and St. Georges Primary School. It should be noted that these pilots were offered free of charge, and moving forward a viable charging mechanism would need to be developed.

In spite of these benefits, there are a series of risks and challenges associated with forming a cost sharing group or providing services directly. Fundamentally, schools operate in an understandably risk-averse culture, resulting in:

- Reluctance to resource or consider major changes to IT provision and structure
- A fear of 'losing control' if IT staff are seconded to an external cost-sharing group, or if IT is placed in control of an external organisation
- Hesitancy to engage with external organisations and other schools.

It should be noted that by working with the local Schools community it would further help raise the profile of the UoP within the community and would support a number of the key aims of the University vision:

- being a proud part of Portsmouth and our region, working in partnership to support and influence the economic, educational, social and cultural life of the city
- raising expectations and creating ladders of opportunity for people in our region to take part in higher education
- building on our financial strength and increasing the contribution to income that comes from research and commercial activities
- supporting and developing our people to deliver excellence with commitment and passion
- developing a flexible physical and digital environment that promotes enjoyment and engagement within a community of learning and discovery

7.2. Recommendation Overview

Local schools are not currently in a position to set-up a cost-sharing group either due to a lack of resources, interest in, or understanding of, the possible operating model. The UoP will continue to engage with Schools, with a long term view to review the establishment of a cost-sharing group when,

and if, the environment changes. This will reduce any risks of investing in an as-yet untested operating model. Engagement will also build the relationships needed to kick-start any future cost-sharing initiative. This mirrors the successful approach taken by the FX Plus cost-sharing group in Cornwall.

A number of sources highlighted that the support for schools wishing to investigate the use of Google Apps for Education from a trusted, independent partner was extremely beneficial and would be highly desirable.

The UoP will do the following:

- Provide two free consultancy days in the coming year to our pilot Schools to assist them with any further development of their Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks. We will develop an additional service package whereby we can provide other local schools considering Google Apps for Education with initial support and guidance.
- Continue with the current engagement with Schools IT network managers including ongoing attendance at the PCC Network Managers and IT Development meetings and continued support of the successful Portsmouth Education IT Hub.
- Use the knowledge and experience gathered during this project to continue to identify possible shared service candidates across the city. As lead sponsor of the University Technical College in Portsmouth we are in an excellent position to identify opportunities for viable shared services with this new venture.

8. Appendices

- A. [HE Shared Legal Guidance Notes](#)
- B. [Perspectives of the value of Chromebooks and Google Apps in learning and teaching in a pilot project undertaken by the University of Portsmouth](#)