

Ratification of Procurement Approval

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER

For decision

- 1.1 The paper is to ratify the approval of a procurement.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The procurement was for an IT infrastructure refresh and because of the value of the contract (£255k) Board approval was required. The deadline for approval fell out with the Board Meeting schedule and so approval was sought by email.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

- 3.1 I recommend that the Regional Board: -
 - 3.1.1 Ratify the procurement for the IT infrastructure refresh.

4.0 BACKGROUND/MAIN PAPER

- 4.1 The paper submitted to Board for approval via email is attached in Annex A.
- 4.2 The Board Secretary sent the attached paper, and the ITT originally issued, to Board on 4 February 2025 with a request for approval by 7 February 2025. The tight turnaround for approval being the result of the deadline for acceptance of the quote.
- 4.3 Of the 17 Board Members in post at the time who the email was sent to, 71% replied and they were all in agreement with progressing the procurement as recommended. At least 50% of Board Members must be in agreement.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

The full implications can be found in the attached Annex A.

5.2 Learner Implications

The full implications can be found in the attached Annex A.

5.3 Staff Implications

The full implications can be found in the attached Annex A.

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

The full implications can be found in the attached Annex A.

5.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

The full implications can be found in the attached Annex A.

6.0 RISK COMMENTARY

6.1 The risk commentary can be found in the attached Annex A.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Members are asked to ratify the procurement for the refresh of the College IT infrastructure.

R McCowan

Chair of the Board

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals: None

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Annex A

Regional Board

IT Infrastructure Refresh Procurement

PURPOSE OF PAPER

For decision

- 1.1 The purpose of the paper is to provide the Committee with an outcome of the procurement exercise for the replacement of the current IT Infrastructure within the College estate.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The current IT infrastructure is nearing end-of-life and requires to be replaced. A bid was submitted as part to the 2024/25 capital plan and approved by the Board on 27 June 2024.
- 2.2 A procurement was undertaken in line with the Colleges Procurement Policy via an approved framework. Appendix A contains the Invitation to Tender for the procurement. The tender deadline was 18 December 2024.
- 2.3 Four bids were received and have been fully evaluated for both quality and price. The scores for each bidder are shown in para 5.3. The highest scoring bidder is European Electronique.
- 2.4 The bid received from European Electronique is under the budget approved within the Capital plan. The bid submitted is £255k, resulting in a budget saving of £383k

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

- 3.1 I recommend that the Board approve European Electronique as the preferred bidder.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The current IT infrastructure which was part of full refresh was installed in 2017 and is coming to the end of its life with many elements due to be unsupported. The risk of using devices that are at end-of-life support exposes the organisation to security threats, compliance issues, performance degradation and compatibility challenges.

- 4.2 A capital bid was included as part of the Capital Plan approved by the Board on 27 June 2024. The table below details the budgets approved and included a contribution from Borders Further Education Trust (BFET). The budget was based on the average prices received from 3 potential bidders.

	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	Total £000's
Estimate Spend	202	121	315	638
BFET Funding	(111)	(18)	(36)	(165)
Net Funding from Capital allocation	91	103	279	473

- 4.3 A grant application was submitted to BFET for £165k and was approved on 18 November 2024. The funding can be drawn down at any time.
- 4.4 The Colleges Procurement Policy requires all procurements to be undertaken in a robust way and where possible to use frameworks available to the College. For suppliers to be added to any framework requires them to meet high quality thresholds and to agree to standard Terms and Conditions. The use of established frameworks ensures the College can purchase goods and services which have been nationally negotiated for the sector.
- 4.5 The use of a Framework also ensures the College is adhering to all the required legislative requirements including Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016.
- 4.6 The Procurement Policy requires all procurements over £250k to be approved by the Regional Board.

5.0 PROCUREMENT OUTCOME

- 5.1 APUC recommended the use of Higher Education Networking Supply Services 2 (HENSS2) framework for the procurement. This framework provides access to suppliers who are able to provide the full services required and meet the quality required.
- 5.2 In conjunction with the sector procurement experts, Advanced Procurement for Universities & Colleges (APUC), an Invitation to Tender (ITT) was produced to detail the scope required and provide background information to the suppliers. The ITT document is contained in Appendix A for information. The agreed weighting for scoring is 60% Price and 40% Quality. The closing dates of bids was 18th December 2024.
- 5.3 Four bids were submitted and have been fully evaluated. The table below details the scores for each bidder. The bids were evaluated against the award criterion contained on page 9 of the ITT contained in Appendix A.

Supplier	Quality score %	Price score %	Total score %
European Electronique	40.0	60.0	100

Insight IT	39.0	56.6	96.6
Circle IT	39.5	41.6	81.1
Specialist Computer Centre	40.0	34.3	74.3

5.4 The top scoring bidder is European Electronique, who ranked top for quality and price. All bidders performed well on quality with the deciding factor being price. The price bid by European Electronique is £255k. It is recommended European Electronique are appointed as the preferred bidder.

5.5 The table below details the next steps following award approval of the preferred bidder.

Activity	Date
Contract Award Notification	10 th Feb 2025
Commencement of Contract	28 th Feb 2025
Design Phase commenced	7 th April 2025
Installation phase commenced	23 rd June 2025
Installation completion and sign off	2 nd Sept 2025

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

6.1.1 The £165k approved grant awarded from BEFT has no conditions or restrictions on when we can call the funds down or any relationship to the final amount expenditure for the project.

6.1.2 The table below shows the approved budget available, after the rephasing of the BEFT grant and the breakdown of the expenditure from the preferred bidder. This shows approved funding is available in the years of implementation and the release of funds back to the capital plan.

	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	Total £000's
Rephased budget	202	157	279	638
Preferred bidder spend profile	191	64		255
(surplus)/Deficit	(11)	(93)	(279)	(383)

6.2 Learner Implications

The infrastructure will ensure the learner connectivity needs are met to ensure they are able to complete their studies.

6.3 Staff Implications

The infrastructure delivered will ensure staff have the IT infrastructure to deliver the curriculum.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

Equality and diversity implications will be considered through the design and implementation of the infrastructure.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

EE will partner with Borders College to meet and enhance commitment to sustainable procurement objectives and will contribute to the College sustainability strategy to become a national leader in contributing to Scotland circular and green economies. They will assist the College in tackling scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions through intelligent power control; explore collaborations with partners to introduce low carbon solutions for IT infrastructure; and conduct a carbon footprint analysis at the start of the contract.

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 The unavailability or breach of security for the IT infrastructure is a key risk to the College. The refresh of the current IT infrastructure will reduce the risk of unavailability or breach of security.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 A full robust procurement has been completed in line with the College's Procurement Policy. The use of frameworks has resulted in a very competitive price and it is recommended the European Electronique are appointed as the preferred bidder.

Kirsty Robb, Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Services

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

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