Glasgow City Council

Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee

Report by Interim Executive Director of Education Services

Contact: Lorna Goldie Ext: 72442

CONNECTED LEARNING DIGITAL REFRESH REPORT

Purpose of Report:

To update Committee on the progress of the Connected Learning Digital Refresh Programme.

Recommendations:

Note : Committee is asked to note the progress on the Connected Learning Digital Refresh Programme.

Ward No(s):   Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐   consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

---

1 Background

1.1   In 2017, Glasgow City Council launched a multi-million-pound IT initiative aimed at transforming digital learning across schools and nurseries by deploying around iPads across the city. This project, delivered in partnership with CGI, became the largest Apple education deployment in Europe.

1.2   The wider benefits of the introduction of digital devices were realised during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the iPads proved invaluable, allowing remote learning and continuity of education.

1.3   As part of the council's digital strategy, the Connected Learning programme aims to transform learning and teaching and contribute to positive outcomes by equipping pupils and teaching staff with a refreshed digital iPad device. The iPad refresh project was a significant investment in Education via the Council's capital programme to deliver a Technical Refresh of 61,000 iPads to the latest generation of device (generation 11) of Apple iPad. The digital refresh is costing in the region of £23.5m.

1.4   The Connected Learning project provides:
- 1:1 iPads for P6 to S6
- Shared devices P1-P5
- 1:1 iPads for all teaching staff, supported by an accredited professional learning programme
- An allocation of devices to Early Years practitioners
- Digital infrastructure upgrades: Faster internet and Wi-Fi in every teaching area
- Equal access to technology fostering an inclusive, accessible, creative and collaborative learning environment that meets the needs of every learner

1.5   As part of the Council's Digital Strategy, the Connected Learning 2.0 is a transformational initiative designed to enhance learning and teaching and improve outcomes for children and young people. The programme equips pupils and teaching staff with iPads, ensuring equitable access to high-quality digital tools both in school and at home.

1.6   The recent iPad refresh project represents a significant capital investment in Education, delivering a technical refresh of 61,000 devices to the latest generation (Generation 11) Apple iPad. This upgrade ensures improved performance, enhanced security, longer device lifespan, and compatibility with current and emerging educational applications.

1.7   The Connected Learning Programme supports:

- **Enhanced learning experiences** – enabling interactive, personalised, and accessible learning through digital resources, multimedia content, and adaptive technologies.
- **Improved engagement and attainment** – supporting creativity, collaboration, research skills, and real-time feedback.
- **Equity and inclusion** – reducing the digital divide by ensuring all learners have consistent access to a device, regardless of home circumstances.
- **Support for additional needs** – through built-in accessibility features such as voice-to-text, screen readers, translation tools, and assistive technologies.
- **Teacher innovation and efficiency** – allowing staff to plan, deliver, and assess learning more effectively using digital platforms, streamline administrative tasks, and provide timely feedback.
- **Blended and flexible learning** – strengthening resilience by enabling continuity of learning beyond the classroom where required.

1.8   Collectively, the programme strengthens digital literacy, prepares learners with the skills required for further education and employment, and supports a modern, innovative approach to teaching and learning across the authority.

2   Refresh Programme

2.1   The schools refresh programme began in July 2025 with the teachers' devices being delivered on the first in service day (11th and 12th August). This was followed by a staged roll out across the secondary schools by stage to ensure that there was less disruption for senior pupils during the critical exam phase. The next roll out was for the primary estate which included a refresh of shared devices for primary 1-5 and one to one devices for primary 6 and 7. At the time of writing the shared devices are still being worked on. Primary 5 are keeping their one to one devices until they move into primary 6 and then they will be able to continue with a new one to one device and the new P5 pupils will remain on shared. This was to ensure that the project was affordable and has meant continuity for the primary 5's in terms of accessing a one to one device.

2.2   The next stage of the rollout will be the central teams, and the Early Years will be the final part of the estate to be refreshed for digital devices.

2.3   The rollout timetable was very aggressive and was managed collaboratively between the Connected Learning Team within Education, Project management provided through Digital Services, and our delivery partners of CGI, Commsworld, JAMF, SSUK, and XMA. The group also received significant support from Apple throughout the refresh. The project also supports the circular economy through a buy back scheme for the old equipment. At the time of writing there have been over 56,500 devices refreshed. The project was successful throughout its implementation with all issues being addressed through the co-ordination group of all the stakeholders.

2.4   The new iPads have been distributed in protective cases to reduce screen breakages, as well as a protective screen film/glass which has demonstrated early evidence of reducing the amount of breakages to both the screen and the digitisers which have previously proven costly in terms of repairs.

2.5 The devices come with a suite of pre-installed apps to support learning and teaching including Keynote, Pages, Numbers, Apple Classroom, iMovie, Translate, Clips, Books, Magnifier, Preview. A selection of specifically selected applications, such as Showbie, Magma, Read & Write MS Suite can all be downloaded to enhance learning and teaching.

2.6 In addition, all the existing MAC Mini caching devices (233) have also been refreshed as part of the wider infrastructure upgrade programme. This technical refresh will ensure optimal performance, improved resilience, and alignment with current security and compliance standards. It also future-proofs the service, reduces operational risk, and supports the continued delivery of high-quality digital services across schools and corporate settings.

2.7 Audio Visual equipment is also being replaced in the schools including all 4,500 Apple TVs (previously referred to as Smart TVs) and 1,500 projectors. During the project each primary and secondary school received an upgrade to their network.

2.8 To support online safety and safeguarding, all iPads are configured with a security filtering solution managed by CGI. This provides centrally controlled content filtering, helps protect users from inappropriate or harmful material, and ensures compliance with the Council's digital safety and acceptable use policies.

2.9 The Connected Learning 2.0 project is on track to deliver all devices by March 2026.

3 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	The connected learning digital refresh is fully funded from the Council's capital programme.
Legal:	
Personnel:	
Procurement:	Procurement has been undertaken using the council's procurement framework.
Council Strategic Plan:	Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

• Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities
• Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our

citizens
• Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative, and efficient way for our communities

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.

Yes

1. Advancing equality of opportunity

2. Improving outcomes for children and young people

3. Supporting inclusion and accessibility

4. Promoting fair and inclusive service delivery

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

(positive impact in assuring equity for Glasgow's children.)

• Socio-economic equality

• Disability inclusion

• Race and language equality

• Gender equality in digital skills

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

The digital refresh will help address socio economic disadvantage to ensure that all children have equal access to digital resources. Yes — the proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

By providing every pupil access to an iPad, the programme reduces the digital divide and ensures that children from lower-income households are not disadvantaged by lack of access to technology. It supports equitable access to learning resources, homework, and digital skills development, helping to narrow

attainment gaps linked to poverty and improve longer-term outcome

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	Yes
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	• Reduced paper consumption • Energy-efficient • Sustainable asset
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	Although the carbon reduction impact is indirect and incremental, Connected Learning 2.0 supports the transition to lower-carbon, digitally enabled public services in line with Glasgow's net zero objectives. The refresh programme also supports the circular economy through the sale of old equipment,
Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	No
Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N	
If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out	

4   Recommendations

4.1   Committee is asked to note the progress on the Connected Learning Digital Refresh Programme.