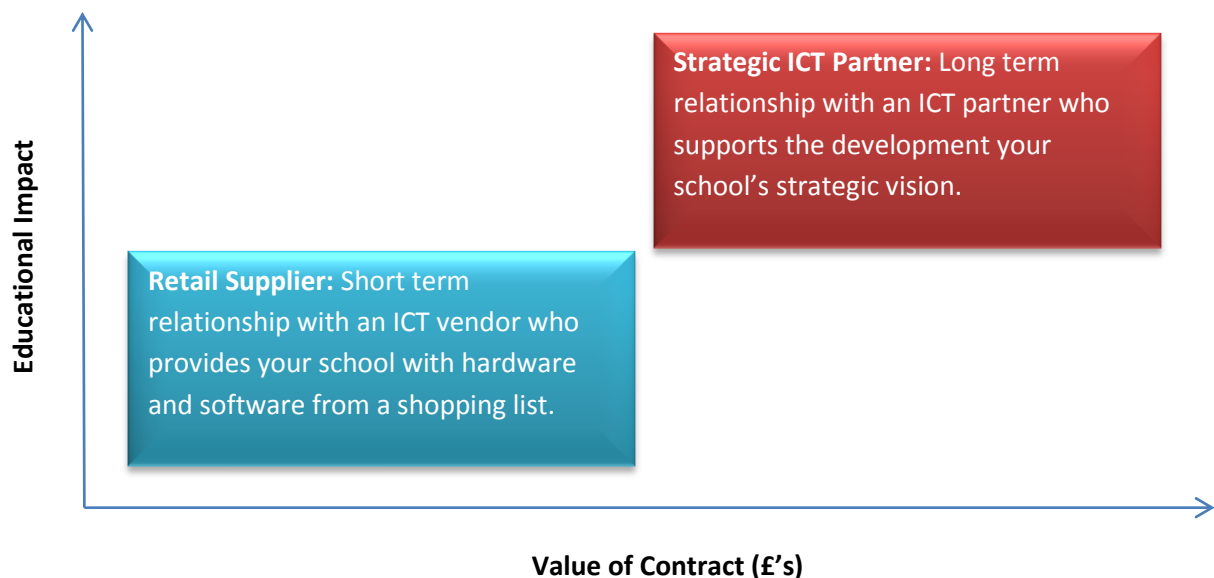# ICT Procurement Planning

ICT has irreversibly shifted mainstream educational paradigms. The growing importance of ICT within educational establishments and its ability to impact on every facet of schooling means that schools, colleges and universities need to raise and broaden the profile of ICT procurement from a peripheral activity to a mainstream one. Were education bodies have done this successfully they have seen tangible benefits for learners and their establishments.

This paper describes how schools can manage effective ICT procurement programmes by following effective planning principles.

There are a number of elements that make up the planning phase. These include identifying a broad set of products, services, requirements or outcomes; carrying out market research which may include visiting exemplar schools; developing a business case which describes budgets, timeframes and preferred financial service models; producing a procurement strategy; specifying goods and services required and the production of a procurement timetable.

Strategic ICT Partner: Long term relationship with an ICT partner who supports the development your school's strategic vision.

Retail Supplier: Short term relationship with an ICT vendor who provides your school with hardware and software from a shopping list.

Educational Impact (y-axis)

Value of Contract (£'s)

During the planning phase schools need to consider how they wish to engage with an ICT supplier. The above diagram describes two broad relationship models. A school's relationship with an ICT supplier at a 'retail supplier' level represents a very simple client-supplier relationship. The school draws up a list of hardware and software that is required and the preferred ICT contractor supplies, installs and commissions the hardware and services within an agreed timeframe and then steps away from the school until they are called upon again.

A school's relationship with a strategic ICT partner represents a more complex client-supplier relationship. In this instance the school recognises the breadth and depth of the supplier's ICT catalogue but more importantly the school acknowledges the value of establishing a long-term strategic relationship with the ICT supplier. Here the ICT supplier plays an active and participative role when supporting the development of the school's curriculum, thereby enabling ICT to have a positive educational impact on the school.

Financial Modelling

Effective ICT solutions are always supported by sound financial models. Moreover, ground breaking ICT services are always supported by innovative financial models.

The financial model will vary according to the relationship that is adopted by the school. The short-term relationship with the retail supplier will make use of the school's capital budget streams. The relationship with the strategic ICT partner will probably entail the school taking advantage of a revenue model to help finance the payment of ICT services over a longer period of time. The latter is framed by an ICT service model called 'Hardware as a Service (HaaS)' whereby a school will pay a monthly fee for hardware and associated ICT services from their ICT partner. For more information on HaaS, please click here.

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