

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Council on 9th October 2024

Council Chamber Audio Visual Solution

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Classification	This report is public.
Contact Officer	Karen Hanson

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To seek approval from Council for funding to enable the implementation of a new Council Chamber audio and visual solution.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 During 2022/23, the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee concluded its review of Member's ICT and Support, and ICT Service Delivery and made 13 recommendations to Executive.
- 1.2 One of the key findings was '*that the ICT equipment within the Chamber and meeting rooms required an urgent review to ensure it remained fit for purpose for current and future delivery of meetings. This would need to include replacement microphones, voting facilities, provision of cameras to enable full use of online meeting software and recording/streaming of meetings where required. Due to ongoing lobbying for a change of legislation in relation to local government meetings, the Council must ensure it is able to deliver more accessible public meetings where required.*'
- 1.3 This finding was one of the recommendations approved by Executive at its meeting on the 3rd of April 2023. Additional feedback from the Member's working group that was formed after the review, established that Members had experienced issues with the quality of the microphones and the sound quality of the speakers in the Council Chamber.
- 1.4 The current Council Chamber equipment is approximately 9 years old; the microphones are no longer manufactured or in support, and several of the microphones are no longer working. The current equipment is not configured to enable the streaming or recording of meetings automatically. A work around was arranged during the pandemic, but this required additional staff to operate the cameras and produce the streams.

- 1.5 The Council has therefore engaged audio-visual suppliers to provide demonstrations of solutions to replace the current audio-visual equipment in the Council Chamber with fit-for-purpose solutions, taking into considerations the Scrutiny recommendations and feedback from Members. A demonstration of a potential solution was provided to the Leader and Deputy Leader, Senior Managers and Governance in May 2024, which has led to this report.
- 1.6 The project to procure the new solution for the Council Chamber is likely to cost in the region of £180,000, this will be added to the capital programme, and the cost can be funded through the Council's ICT Reserve. The maintenance of the system will be £5,000 per annum, and at the outset this figure is usually set for 4 years. This will be a cost to the Council's general fund.
- 1.7 Following approval of the budget outlined above, work will commence immediately to procure the equipment.

2 Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 Purchasing new equipment is the only way to solve the issues identified by the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee, the current equipment cannot be upgraded or altered to make the required improvements.

3 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 3.1 To do nothing would mean Members' would see no improvement in their Council Chamber meeting experience.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1 That Council approve a budget totalling £180,000 to be funded from the ICT Reserve to purchase audio-visual equipment to make the Council Chamber fit-for-purpose.
- 2 That Council approve an increase in the revenue budget of £5,000 per annum to cover the maintenance of the system.

Approved by the Portfolio Holder - Cllr Clive Moesby, Executive Member for Resources

IMPLICATIONS.

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

There is sufficient balance in the ICT Reserve to fund the capital purchase of £180,000. The revenue cost of £5,000 per annum, will be a cost to the Council's general fund.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

There are no legal or data protection issues arising directly from this report.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Details:

Not applicable to this report.

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

There are no human resource issues arising directly out of this report.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards, or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: Revenue - £75,000 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies.</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No

District Wards Significantly Affected	All
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Details:

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, and Environment.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title

Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).
None