

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

4TH MARCH 2009

NEW AUDIO/VISUAL FACILITES FOR THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Smith
Responsible Head of Service	Tony Beirne
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

The report seeks Cabinet approval for the virement of capital receipts to purchase new audio/visual equipment for use in the Council Chamber at a cost of up to £40K.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Cabinet notes the procurement exercise currently being undertaken by officers to determine the best solution available on the market and the costs associated with this best solution.

2.2 That Cabinet approves –

1. The virement of capital receipts of £40k to be utilised to purchase a new audio visual system for the Council Chamber, at a cost not to exceed £40k
2. That the Director of Services contacts all Members to ascertain the demand for training in using the new system.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The current audio system used in the Council Chamber has been in place for approximately 10 year. It is reaching the end of its life usage.

3.2 The quality of the audio system has been a cause of concern for some time as it is difficult for both meeting participants to hear proceedings as well as any audience.

3.3 The current microphone system is also fixed in place as it is 'hard wired' and this together with the bespoke furniture reduces the flexibility of the Chamber as a space for other events and functions.

- 3.4 The Chamber currently has only one screen from which to display visual material. This can present challenges from certain Members seating positions and for visitors to the public seating area.
- 3.5 In trying to find a solution to the problem officers have considered four options –
- 3.6 **Status Quo** – Leaving the current system in place – This is problematic as the current system continues to degrade and the set up limits the usage of the Chamber for other events.
- 3.7 **Hanging Microphones** - This system has been investigated but an independent sound engineer has advised that the acoustics in the Council Chamber are not good enough for such a system.
- 3.8 **A system for standing when speaking** – Research has shown that all modern systems are designed around people being seated when they speak. There is no bespoke 'standing' system currently available on the market.
- 3.9 **Wireless System** – This is the proposed solution. Specifically to replace the current hard wired system with a portable system that can be used in other locations if needed. Initial costs show such a system would cost up to £40K. However, it would have a lifetime expectancy of 10 to 15 years and would be portable so it could be moved to any future location.
- 3.10 **CCTV for Council House** – There is currently a programme included in the 2008/09 Capital Programme that relates to the provision of CCTV around the Council House. The funding, from capital receipts of £20k would not be sufficient to provide a networked system and it is therefore proposed that this funding is vired to the audio provision in the Council Chamber.
- 3.11 **Works on Council Buildings** – There is provision for £50k in the 2008/09 programme for buildings works on the Council property. A review of the works to be undertaken in this year has identified a saving that is proposed to be vired to fund the remaining £20k on the audio provision project.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The virements as detailed above equate to £40k from capital receipts to fund the improved audio equipment in the Council Chamber.
- 4.2 Various approved suppliers have been invited into the Council House to undertake informal site visits and to make recommendations and provide indicative costs for the project.
- 4.3 The project can be broken down into 3 key components plus 1 optional function:

1. A replacement microphone system – best practice would suggest that a digital radio system be used. Indicative cost £31k. This provides for 40 microphone units, control units, antenna, and installation. This is a fully mobile option and offers the potential for use in alternative venues and easy transfer should the Council House be relocated.

2. New Sound reinforcement system to the Chamber via new wall mounted speaker system. Indicative cost £3k.

3. Additional screen facilities around the Chamber to improve visual facilities to meeting delegates and public seating areas. The options available vary significantly – Indicative cost £2.5 to £4.5k.

4. Optional - The inclusion of hand held and lapel radio microphones for use in presentations or workshops. Indicative cost £1.2k

4.4 Total indicative cost £40k. Actual cost subject to final project selection and design and detailed site surveys through a competitive process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

This proposal supports the Council objective of ‘Sense of Community’, specifically equalities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

This proposal will give improved audio and visual quality in the Chamber and will mean that visitors will be able to hear clearly what is being said or debated.

The mobile nature of the equipment will also allow a more flexibility for other uses of the room.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

As mentioned previously a new system would offer a better audio and visual system in the room to the benefit of all users. It is also compatible with the current hearing loop system

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

This is an expensive proposal to improve the Council Chamber. However it is a long term solution and it will deliver improvements to the public address system and give more flexibility for using the room.

The proposed solution will have at least a ten year life span. It is mobile and can be used at other venues.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues – The procurement officer has been consulted and advised on the appropriate companies to bid for the work.
Personnel Implications – The delivery of a new system also gives the opportunity to offer training on using the new system in the most effective way. As part of the recommendations it is proposed that all Members will be offered the related training.
Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - None
Policy - None
Environmental - None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Executive Director - Services	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Heads of Service	Yes – Through CMT
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

14. APPENDICES

None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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