

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 17 JUNE 2019

PART I - DELEGATED

8. AUDIO VISUAL SYSTEM IN THE MEETING ROOMS AT THREE RIVERS HOUSE (CED)

1 Summary

- 1.1 To consider improvements in the Penn Chamber and adjoining meeting rooms with regard to the audio visual systems.

2 Details

- 2.1 Over the last year there have been increasing concerns and issues raised with regard to the audio visual system's quality in the Penn Chamber and adjoining meeting rooms.

- 2.2 The equipment in the Penn Chamber, Dickinson Room, O'Connor Room, Members' Room and Lounge has been in place for some time and is coming to its end of life.

- 2.3 There have been ongoing issues with the equipment and presentation display screens provided at the monthly Planning Committee meetings. The technical set-up for these meetings is a lengthy and time-consuming process and has meant block booking the Penn Chamber for the whole day of the meeting to undertake the set-up for the meeting. The set-up has now become outdated due to the cabling required, outdated equipment which is at its end of life and the output no longer meeting both Members' and public requirements and needs.

- 2.4 The Councillors attending meetings (District, Parish and County) and the members of the public either observing or speaking at Committee meetings have expressed concerns that both the audio visual systems in the Penn Chamber and adjoining meeting rooms needed to be reviewed, assessed and details provided on how the equipment could be improved.

- 2.4.1 Particular areas of concern identified included:

The quality of the microphones and their output within the meeting rooms;

The quality of the display of the presentations;

The wall speakers' ability to broadcast the sound throughout the meeting rooms;

The microphones being able to block any interference from external sources;

The limited ability to amplify the sound around all the room(s) when holding public meetings;

Making the meetings democratic for all to participate in and to provide the opportunity for observers of the meeting to be part of the democratic process.

- 2.4.2 In order to overcome these issues, officers put together a tender specification which was advertised on the Procurement portal in December 2018.

- 2.4.3 Following the advertisement of the tender, three companies expressed an interest and submitted tenders. The tenders were assessed by the Facilities Team and an outside technical expert who currently manages and provides support on the current

equipment we have. Three companies submitted tenders and each of the tenders was assessed by the Facilities Team and the Council's External Technician who currently provides technical support for the audio visual equipment. The findings of the assessments, costs and solutions of the three tenders were not provided to the Committee Team, Planning Team or Members so that we went into the subsequent presentations with no pre-formed opinion.

- 2.4.3 All three companies were subsequently asked to present their options/solutions to both Members and officers.
- 2.4.4 Each of the three Group Leaders was contacted to provide representatives from their Groups to attend the presentations and the Members put forward were Councillors Sarah Nelmes, David Sansom and Joan King. Councillor Sarah Nelmes was able to attend Company 1 and 2 presentations, Councillor David Sansom Company 1 presentation, Councillor Joan King Company 1 and 3 presentations. Councillor Angela Killick attended Company 3 presentation as a substitute for Councillor Sansom.
- 2.4.5 Following the three presentations, officers from the Facilities and Committee Teams met to assess them and the advantages and disadvantages of all three companies which included Member and officer feedback. From this process, officers identified which companies should be considered to take forward to the next stage of the tender process.
- 2.4.6 From this meeting it was identified that Company 1 would not be taken forward due to the significantly higher cost of the tender, the technical and over-complicated features of the microphone system, the lack of structure to the presentation of the equipment and concerns regarding the support to be provided by the company in the future.
- 2.4.7 It was agreed that Companies 2 and 3 would be contacted again by the Facilities team to ask them to revisit their quotes on the cost of improvements to the meeting rooms bearing in mind the decision not to take forward the electronic voting system (as identified by the Members and officers attending the presentations).
- 2.4.8 Subsequently Company 2 came back with a revised quote of £53,903 and Company 3 came back with a revised quote of £49,720. Both quotes are very similar in the solutions they would provide to both the AV and sound systems in the meeting rooms and have both quoted to provide the next generation of microphones on the current system we have in place. The areas where there were differences was in the type of speakers and visual equipment solutions.
- 2.4.9 Company 3 proposed to install speakers at numerous locations within the ceiling of the Penn Chamber which would be a departure from our current speaker system (the speakers are currently on the walls around the room). This work would have involved additional disruption to the room which officers felt was a risk. In addition they had proposed to install large projector screens in the Dickinson/O'Connor Rooms which due to the room layouts would not have been utilised to their full potential.
- 2.4.10 Company 2 proposed an upgrade of the microphones providing for the same make, type and style but using the latest technology to ensure that the interference issue currently being experienced was eliminated. It would also provide for a smoother transition as the operation of the new microphones would be familiar to Members. Company 2 also proposed to use a Crowd beamer solution for the Planning Committee meetings which would eliminate the complicated cabling system

currently used for planning meetings. The system would be accessible by downloading the crowd beamer app and logging into the internal Wi-fi of the crowd beamer which would allow for up to 175 users. This would enable members of the public to view the photographs, plans and drawings on their own device or from the existing projectors/on the current screens.

- 2.4.11 Following the assessment of the revised quotes, officers are recommending to Members that we take forward the quote from Company 2. Officers will be obtaining references before the Company undertakes any work or any contract is signed.

2.5 *Potential Revenue Generation*

- 2.5.1 The Facilities team receives enquiries from outside organisations with regard to the hire of the meetings rooms within Three Rivers House.
- 2.5.2 With the installation of the new equipment there may be a mechanism whereby the Council could look to generate income from the installation.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To consider giving authority to appoint Company 2 to undertake the work to upgrade and improve the AV and sound system in the Penn Chamber and adjoining meeting rooms.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report if agreed would be within the Council's agreed budgets.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The total cost of the project in 2019/20 will be £53,903. This will be mainly capital expenditure but will be all financed from revenue budgets.
- 5.2 The Facilities team would be able to provide half of the funding required (£25,000) from existing budgets (2019/20). The additional £25,000 required could be provided from an underspend (£27,000) in the 2018/19 Facilities team budget which it is proposed, subject to approval by the Policy and Resources Committee, to be carried over to 2019/20. It has been requested to allocate the underspend to this project. An outturn report will be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee at their 17 June 2019 meeting. If this is agreed by the Committee then all the costs for the installation of the new equipment could be funded within existing budgets.
- 5.3 The Committee Team would be able to cover the yearly maintenance cost from existing budgets (Democratic representation) and from the potential saving for the online e-petition system of £2,000. Officers are currently working with Firmstep to see if it is possible to set-up an online e-petition system as a replacement for the current service.
- 5.4 In addition, it could be considered that, with Members moving towards paperless working, the Members' stationery budget could be used towards the annual revenue costs along with a Member IT miscellaneous cost budget which amounts to around £1,500 per year.

CAPITAL IMPLICATION	Current Year		Future Years per annum £
	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	
Capital Expenditure	£50,900	-	
Revenue Consequences	(annual maintenance cost)		
Expenditure	£2,995	£2,995	£2,995
Income/Savings	0	0	0
Net Revenue Commitment	£2,995	£2,995	£2,995

6 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required? People have expressed their view that they are being discriminated from the public Council meetings as they are unable to hear and take part in the debates of the Council meetings and view the presentations on the screens.	No

8 Staffing Implications

8.1 The Facilities, Committee Team and ICT will need to be trained on the use of the new equipment and new instructions provided for all users of the meeting rooms.

8.2 Members will be provided with full training on using the microphones before full implementation.

9 Community Safety, Environmental, Public Health, Customer Services Centre Implications

9.1 None specific.

10 Communications and Website Implications

10.1 Details would need to be provided in future communications via social media or through our Council publications on the facilities available for potential room hirers..

11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

11.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Property and Major Projects Service Plan and Committee service plans. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within these plans.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Equipment stops working	Meetings are not inclusive and potential for attendees to be excluded from the demographic process Residents' poor perception of Council meetings	Attendees feel part of the democratic process Better facilities for the Council	Treat	Medium - 6
New equipment fails to overcome the sound and visual quality issues	A lot of money is spent and the perception of attendees is not improved.	Procurement – specification that equipment must meet requirements Project management ongoing throughout the installation and upgrade process and monitoring of any issues Facilities, Committee	Treat	Low – 4

		and ICT teams trained on equipment and to monitor for the future		
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11.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- ▼ Remote	Low	High	Very High	Very High
	4	8	12	16
	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	3	6	9	12
	Low	Low	Medium	High
2	4	6	8	
Low	Low	Low	Low	
1	2	3	4	
Impact				
Low	-----▶			Unacceptable

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

11.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

12 Recommendation

12.1 That Members agree to go with Company 2.

Report prepared by: Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager and Tracy Langley, Facilities Manager

Data Quality

Data sources:

Tender Specification, Presentation Feedback and Quotes

Data checked by:

Anne Morgan, Solicitor to the Council, Tracy Langley, Facilities Team

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	√
3	High	

Background Papers

Summaries of the three Company presentations

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 - Form A – Relevance Test