

APPENDIX I

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 20TH MAY 2008

Title:

NEW COMMITTEE ROOMS AND IMPROVED MEMBER FACILITIES

[Wards Affected: All]

Note pursuant to Section 100B(5) of the Local Government Act 1972

(Exempt) Annexe 1 to this report contains exempt information by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded during the item to which the report relates, as specified in Paragraph 3 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely;-

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Summary and purpose:

To seek approval from the Executive to a scheme to provide new Committee Rooms that meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and improvements to member facilities including access improvements.

Environmental implications:

The proposed Committee Rooms will include energy efficient lighting and be constructed to high levels of thermal insulation and incorporate measures to reduce solar heat gain.

Social / community implications:

The scheme would provide accessible venues for public/Committee meetings within the Council Offices building and in particular meet the needs of those people with mobility problems.

E-Government implications:

The meeting rooms and Members' area would be linked to the Council's IT network.

Resource and legal implications:

The financial implications for this scheme and estimated costs are set out in the (Exempt) Annexe 1 to this report.

Information / Background

1. The Council's only Committee Room (Committee Room 1) does not comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 on accessibility because to gain access or egress to and from the room it is necessary to navigate a narrow flight of steps.
2. Officers have considered various means of making Committee Room 1 accessible but the layout of the area makes it impossible to provide a fully accessible meeting room. The provision of a lift mechanism with the capacity of handling a motorised wheelchair was considered but such a lift could not be installed in the existing stairwell. It is currently very difficult if not impossible for disabled or frail individuals to attend public meetings held in Committee Room 1. In addition the Government's Planning Inspectorate have indicated recently that Committee Room 1 is not suitable as a venue for holding planning appeals.
3. As well as the need to provide a public meeting room facilities that meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act there is a shortage of meeting room facilities at the Council Offices which this scheme would address and in particular the increasing pressures for meeting facilities required for planning related meetings.
4. The proposed scheme would provide a new Committee Room of approximately 60sq m, which is larger than the existing Committee Room 1 which is approximately 40sq m. The new Committee Room will be designed to provide a flexible space which would be capable of being used as two separate smaller meeting rooms when needed. In addition a further smaller Executive/Committee meeting will be created next to the new large Committee Room facility.
5. A number of associated minor office moves and alterations will be required to provide the space needed to provide the new Committee Rooms.
6. A plan of the proposed Committee Rooms will be displayed at the meeting.
7. The current Committee Room 1 will be adapted to provide improved facilities for members.
8. Subject to approval of the scheme it is intended that all the works will be completed by September 2008.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the scheme to provide new accessible Committee Room facilities and improved Member facilities be approved.

Background Papers (DoE)

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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