

APPENDIX V

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 7 JULY 2009

Title:

COUNCIL CHAMBER REPLACEMENT CONFERENCE (MICROPHONE) SYSTEM

**[Portfolio Holders: Cllr Mike Band
Cllr Adam Taylor-Smith]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

The Executive is being asked to consider urgently bringing forward plans to replace the Council Chamber conference (microphone) system to the 2009/10 Capital Programme as the existing system is proving increasingly unreliable and the audio link to webcasting can be of poor quality.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The provision of an effective microphone system in the Council Chamber supports the effective operation of democratic process and the operation of the Council's business. The microphone system ensures debates and decisions made in public can be clearly heard by councillors and the public present in the Public Gallery and by those people following business through viewing webcast meetings.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The microphone system would be connected to the existing induction loop in the Council Chamber to assist those people with hearing impediments.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

This report proposes replacing the existing microphone conference system, which is approaching twenty years old, with a new system at an estimated cost of between £28,000 - £32,000. There is no provision for this expenditure in the 2009/10 Capital Programme and therefore expenditure will either require the approval of a supplementary estimate or need to be met from identified savings or slippage on scheme(s) contained in the 2009/10 capital programme.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications.

Background

1. The Council's existing Phillips Conference System is now approaching twenty years old. The system is no longer supported by the manufacturer and over

recent months the system has been increasingly subject to breakdowns in service. The audio link to webcasting is poor and has also been subject to criticism by users. For these reasons there is now an urgent need to replace the system.

2. Officers have engaged Sound Advice Ltd to prepare the detailed technical specification for the new system. Quotations are being sought from three leading suppliers in the marketplace. Sound Advice is a specialist independent conference system and audio visual company with wide experience of installations of conference systems in Council Chambers across the country. The company also work closely with Public-i the Council's existing webcasting system providers.
3. The quotations being sought are based on a fixed-wired digital microphone solution which will also link into the Council's existing webcasting system and infra-red hearing induction equipment. The system will also allow for alternative webcasting solutions should these be considered in the future. Subject to approval, the installation of the new system would be carried out in August during the Council recess.
4. The specification also contains provision for future potential enhancements to the basic microphone system which the Council may wish to consider adding in the future such as full voting electronic voting modules.
5. Officers have been examining various microphone systems and it is proposed to set up a demonstration for member representatives to view the options being considered.
6. Outline details of the equipment requirements are attached as an Annexe to this report.

Conclusion

7. The Executive is being asked to consider bringing forward the scheme to replace the Council Chamber conference (microphone) system. The estimated cost is assessed at between £28,000 and £32,000 and quotations for the system are being sought from three conference system suppliers.
8. There is no specific capital provision within the current year's Capital Programme for this expenditure and the options for the Executive are either to:
 - i. seek approval to a supplementary estimate, or
 - ii. identify specific slippage or savings in the current year's capital programme.
9. In accordance with Procedure Rules, if the Executive approves the proposal to bring forward capital expenditure on the replacement conference system it will require the formal approval of full Council to this expenditure.

Recommendation

It is recommended to the Council that:

1. the proposal to bring forward the scheme to replace the Council chamber conference system at an estimated cost of between £28,000 and £32,000 be approved;
2. either a supplementary estimate of up to £32,000, or specific slippage or savings in the current year's capital programme be approved; and
3. authority to approve the selection of the system be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Deputy Chief Executive.

Background Papers (SD(E))

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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Comms/exec/2009-10/063

Conference System

Basic configuration

- 3 X Chairman Units (one of these on small round table at foot of the Dais).
- 65 x Microphone Units
- For webcasting automatic camera follow capability
- Upgrade public gallery speaker otherwise connect into existing speakers
- One roving microphone
- One lapel clip on microphone
- Supply and fit onto existing equipment rack

Optional items:

- Voting module/software parliamentary style
- Display screens for voting results plus link to existing monitors and plasma screen
- Link to existing webcasting cameras - showing delegates names
- Identification system for delegate registration - ideally card based
- Control unit (console or PC) enabling chairman to take speakers in order as they register on their microphone their wish to speak
- Synoptic layouts
- Separate audio recording facility