

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	25 JUNE 2024	8
FULLY FUNDED ADDITION TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME REPLACEMENT MICROPHONE SYSTEM – COUNCIL CHAMBER			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

RELEVANT LEAD MEMBER

This item is within the remit of Lead Member for Customer & Operational Services (Councillor Michelle Morris)

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide details of the proposal to replace the current microphone system in the Council Chamber to address long standing challenges with the reliability of audio quality in meetings and in live streams and recordings.

RECOVERABILITY

This decision is recoverable under section 7 of part 3 of the constitution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Executive Committee is requested to support the decision to replace the microphone system in the Council Chamber.
2. To approve an addition to the capital programme in the sum of £43,000 in 2024/25 fully funded from the council's Capital Investment Reserve.
3. To delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Customer and Operational Services, to carry out the appropriate procurement and selection of a system that meets the specification within the report.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

1. Stakeholders using the Council Chamber have experienced challenges with the reliability and quality of the audio system which has impacted on in-person meetings and live-streamed or recorded sessions. Addressing this will improve communication, enhance public trust, and reduce technical support demand. The existing microphone system no longer meets the need for reliable audio transmission. A replacement system is required that will better support transparency, accessibility, and effective governance.
2. A 'fit for purpose' audio system is required to deliver the following:

- a. Modern, reliable audio setup in the Council Chamber.
- b. Support the transparency and accessibility of council meetings.
- c. Be easy for stakeholders to operate.
- d. Compliance with legal standards and health and safety.
- e. Minimum technical resource for system support.
- f. Compatibility for future video upgrades.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENT

3. The requirement to replace the existing system has been under consideration for some time, every effort has been made to address the issues with the current system prior to considering a replacement. The current system has had improvements introduced in response to user feedback and technical issues, but these have not been resolved. The current system will be retained for use in other council operated meeting rooms and venues.
4. The proposal is to replace the system in the Council Chamber with a facility that meets the following requirements:
 - a. Sufficient participant units and one control unit to ensure all stakeholders can communicate clearly and effectively and the system can be centrally managed.
 - b. Secure and reliable connectivity.
 - c. Easy to operate with minimum requirement from the user.
 - d. Ability to capture audio from a seating or standing position.
 - e. Professional installation and support.
 - f. On site user training.
 - g. Compatible with digital video or live streaming.
5. There will be a requirement for any potential supplier to provide proof of concept through a demonstration of the system either onsite or at a venue currently operating the system.

BUDGET REQUIREMENT

6. Officers have looked at several systems used at other local authorities and have held discussions with providers. Based on this research and extensive enquiries with suppliers in the market covering system requirements, installation, support, and quotes already informally provided, a budget of £43,000 would be sufficient to procure a high quality modern 'fit for purpose' and future proof system.
7. It is proposed that the £43,000 budget is fully funded from the Capital Investment Reserve and it is added to the capital programme for the current financial year 2024/25 to allow for the system to be procured and installed as soon as practical.
8. There are no additional revenue implications to this proposal, the system will be maintained and supported by the facilities and IT teams.
9. Procurement will be carried out through an approved list of A.V. equipment specialists in accordance with regulations for projects of this value, a direct award will be made based on specification submitted from a minimum of three quotations.

CONCLUSION

10. Members are asked to approve the decision to replace the existing audio system in the Council Chamber and to allocate £43,000 to the capital budget programme for the current financial year 2024/25, with the budget to be fully funded from the Capital Investment Reserve. Members are also asked to delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Services to work with the Lead Member for Customer and Operational Services on the procurement and selection of a system that meets the stated requirements and is within budget.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report recommends an addition to the capital programme in the sum of £43,000 in 2024/25 fully funded from the council's Capital Investment Reserve. There are no additional revenue implications to this proposal as the new equipment will be managed within existing resources.
Legal	None arising from the report
Community Safety	None arising from the report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from the report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising from the report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising from the report

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS
Finance and Democracy Committee 26/9/2016 approved the “proposed works in relation to the Accommodation Project in the sum of £518k (that being £363k for Phase 6 (Option 2b)”. Phase 6 of the Accommodation project included the IT installation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS REVELANT TO THIS ITEM		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Gemma Broadley	Gemma.broadley@fylde.gov.uk & Tel 01253 658513	07/06/2024

No Attachments