

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 09 April 2024

TITLE	Hybrid Meeting and Council Chamber Technology		
Ward(s)	N/A		
Author: Paul Day	Job title: Digital Transformation Delivery Consultant		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Craig Cheney, Deputy Mayor: City Economy, Finance and Performance	Executive Director lead: Stephen Peacock, Chief Executive		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: To seek approval to procure and award the contract(s) for the provision of new hybrid meeting technology and audio-visual equipment for City Hall (and Incident Room in 100 Temple Street).			
Evidence Base:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Since the Covid pandemic the council has adopted hybrid working as standard for much of its workforce, particularly those working in office-based roles. It has piloted technology in a small number of meeting rooms and taken learning from this. With many employees now working remotely or in hybrid roles, and with its physical office space reducing, the council needs to provide more fit-for-purpose facilities that enable efficient, effective hybrid working. 2. To resolve this, a new project is proposed to procure and install suitable audio-visual and networking technology in City Hall and in the council’s Incident Management Suite. This would be scalable to further sites once the council’s future estate and office footprint is defined by the Estate Rationalisation Project and agreed. The project will include: replacing malfunctioning end-of-life A/V, webcasting and voting system in the Council Chamber; replacing or upgrading existing Covid-era temporary hybrid solutions in specific meeting rooms; and providing new hybrid technology solutions for a wider set of committee and meeting rooms, anticipated to include up to 50% of internal meeting rooms in City Hall and at the council’s Incident Management Suite. Subject to available budget headroom, it will also seek to improve A/V and acoustic provision within the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Hall. The project will help meet the needs of a new Committee System of governance, resolve a lack of hybrid technology available in the council’s Incident Management Suite, and improve the availability and accessibility of hybrid working and attendance for employees, with benefits for disabled employees in particular. 3. For the Council Chamber, the project aims to provide an automated Webcasting and Hybrid meeting solution, building upon existing audio-visual technology installed in 2016, to enable attendees, the public and external stakeholders to attend and participate in democratic council meetings remotely. This aims to improve transparency and equity of access, including automated speech to text transcription in the recording of democratic meetings. 4. The project’s Business Case remains in development and a refined-Outline Business Case indicates supply and installations costs of up to £1m, which includes contingency and all internal costs to run the project, and a 			

potential ongoing cost of up to £75k per annum for licensing, third-party technical support. Whilst most support of the system can be provided in-house within existing IT capacity, third-party support is needed for any out of hours issues or particularly complex technical fixes of problems. Funding of the one-off project costs is part of the approved Capital Programme 2024/25 and an existing Council Chamber Reserve, with funding allocation subject to Cabinet approval of this report. Ongoing support costs will be funded subject to efficiencies generated within the Policy, Strategy and Digital Division's existing third-party supplier budgets.

5. A supplier for the required equipment will be procured via Crown Commercial Services RM6225 Audio Visual Technical Consultancy & Commissioning, which is a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for public sector customers who need complex audio visual (A/V) services including support services for rooms that use a range of A/V technology.
6. In relation to potential environmental impacts, the net effects of the proposals are potentially positive provided energy usage is from renewables and/or fully offset, and if unnecessary travel to the office by motorised transport is reduced. Other impacts include potential generation of waste arising from old IT equipment, and small increases in electricity consumption by new A/V equipment. The proposals include mitigating measures including: the use of renewable sources for electricity; donating, reusing or recycling old equipment; reducing travel requirements for staff to attend City Hall; and requiring auto-shutdown/standby features on new hybrid technology (where available).

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

1. Authorise the Director – Policy, Strategy and Digital in consultation with the Deputy Mayor – Finance, Governance, Property and Culture, to take all steps necessary to procure and award the contract(s) for the provision of new hybrid meeting technology and audio-visual equipment for City Hall (and Incident Management Suite in 100 Temple Street) up to a total project value of £1m.
2. Notes the Digital Transformation Programme Board will govern the project and make any further non-key decisions required to complete it.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. The provision of the right technology and tools aligns with the council's ambition to be an Effective Development Organisation, as set out in the Corporate Strategy. This project seeks to design equity, inclusion, and resilience into the fabric of City Hall's technological capabilities, aligning to two of the core Building Blocks identified in the Corporate Strategy.
2. There is full alignment with the council's Digital Strategy 2022-27, including its 'Simple, Stable and Secure' priority of "Continue to consolidate, simplify, and standardise our existing content, technology, tools, and applications estate" and its 'Well Used and Used Well' aim to "Enable and support collaboration in line with our council values".

City Benefits:

1. Improves accessibility of democratic meetings and ability to participate in public hybrid meetings.

Consultation Details:

1. Corporate Leadership Board has approved a project mandate and the project has engaged with the Cabinet Member, Disabled Colleagues Network, Mayor's Disability Equality Commission, and a range of internal services (including Democratic Services) in shaping its outline business case.
2. The project is not subject to formal public consultation.

Background Documents:

[Digital Transformation Cabinet Paper, April 2022](#)

Revenue Cost	£75,000 (ongoing)	Source of Revenue Funding	Digital Transformation Third Party Contracts
Capital Cost	£1m	Source of Capital Funding	Capital Programme 24/25 - Hybrid
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: This report requests authorisation for the provision of new hybrid meeting technology and audio-visual equipment for City Hall (and Incident Management Suite in 100 Temple Street) up to a total project value of £1m.

The delivery stage comprises of £1m capital, to be funded via the capital programme agreed as part of the 2024/25 council budget. This £1m funding will be held as pending, to be released once the full Business Case has been completed and approved by relevant officers.

Funding of £160,686 to develop the Full Business Case has previously been approved by Capital & Investments Board. This is comprised of £123,065 plus £37,081 (30%) contingency and is funded as follows:

- £62,421 from Council Chamber reserve (revenue)
- £98,265 from ICT Capital Refresh (capital)

If project costs are higher than expected, these will need to be contained or mitigated within the agreed budget envelope, with the scope being reduced if necessary.

In addition to the capital and one-off revenue costs above, there will be an estimated £75,000 per annum ongoing cost in relation to recurring support and licensing costs. This will need to be contained within the Digital Transformation Third Party Contracts budget.

Any further provision of technology to other council sites will require a separate funding request.

Finance Business Partner: Kathryn Long, Finance Business Partner, 14 February 2024

2. Legal Advice: The procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations and the Council's own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor, 11 March 2024

3. Implications on IT: All architectural decisions that arise out of this project must be captured as a Dev Ops decision in EA Decisions Dev Ops project and must be reviewed by the EA Architecture Review Board.

IT Team Leader: Dave Morton, Solution Architect, 15 March 2024

4. HR Advice: The improvements in technology outlined are a positive and welcome step to improve accessibility to meeting spaces at City Hall.

HR Partner: Bryn Williams, HR Business Partner: Resources Directorate, 14 March 2024

EDM Sign-off	Stephen Peacock, Chief Executive	14 February 2024
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Craig Cheney, Deputy Mayor: City Economy, Finance and Performance	15 February 2024
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	04 March 2024

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	YES
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Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO