

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	16 October 2017
Report of the	-	Executive Director of Resources
Subject	-	Council Chamber Audio/Visual Equipment Upgrade

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That Members reconsider the level of investment considered appropriate and the type of capabilities required of the audio/visual offer within the Council Chamber, in light of the additional information provided and either confirm the original or make a new recommendation to Cabinet.

Introduction

1. As Members may recall, back in April the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) received a report on a number of options to upgrade the Audio / Visual equipment offer in the Council Chamber which is now over 10 years old and proving unreliable and inadequate (attached as Appendix A for ease of reference) (Minute OSC16/58 refers).
2. In summary, the options ranged from bare essentials (replacing the microphone system – Option 1) to complete overhaul (replacing projection equipment and installing fixed cameras – Options 2 and 3) to enable the video recording of meetings and potentially webcasting meetings in the future. The costs ranged from £34,000 to £68,000 and on-costs of £12,000 per annum to webcast.
3. The OSC recommended to Cabinet that a complete overhaul be agreed, but that webcasting not be pursued at the current time (the additional £12,000 per annum). The OSC had been advised that purchasing all three options at the same time would be cost effective, provide enhanced technology e.g. high definition screens and an improved sound system, provide additional flexible usage of the Chamber and generally improve the experience for all who attended Council meetings.
4. However, Cabinet was not supportive of the proposals and expressed concerns over value for money and the procurement process and deferred the decision pending further information (Minute CB16/99 refers). This report provides additional information for Members' consideration, including the results of an all-Member survey and the OSC are invited to reconsider their recommendation made earlier in the year in light of the additional information and either confirm or revise the recommendation.

Further Considerations / Additional Information

Procurement

5. The proposed minimum spend will activate the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules, and the procurement will be managed through the East Sussex Procurement Hub (ESPH), who manages all large-scale procurement exercises on behalf of the Council. The ESPH is a Procurement Service delivered by Wealden District Council (WDC) creating maximum value for a

partnership which includes Hastings Borough, Rother and Wealden District Councils. The ESPH was formed in 2009 and has created revenue and savings in excess of £8million. It also aims to create best practice across its partnership members and make doing business with local government in East Sussex straightforward and more transparent.

6. Due to the specialist nature of the goods / services to be purchased, it is likely that an existing Framework Agreement will be used. Such agreements offer opportunities to secure value for money and reduce the need to follow a competitive procedure where there are limited suppliers.

Neighbouring Authorities

7. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) webcast the majority of their meetings (hosted via Public-i) including Council, Cabinet, Planning, Scrutiny Committees and the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, all of which take place during the day. Data received from ESCC showing the usage is attached at Appendix B.
8. Hastings Borough Council (HBC) video records all its meetings for viewing after the event – none are streamed live. Data received from HBC indicates that the number of local viewers on the meeting videos from the period 6 March 2017 to 19 September 2017 is 897. Rother would have this capability if all three options were supported, but without the webcasting annual fee.
9. WDC also use Public-i. WDC decided to start webcasting meetings as a consequence of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which allows any person to attend public meetings of the Council and film. WDC Members were worried that the recordings would be taken out of context and put on You Tube; a similar concern shared by RDC Members when this was considered at that time. It also addresses the criticism that WDC no longer hold planning committee meetings in Crowborough following their move to Hailsham. Data received from WDC showing the usage is attached at Appendix C.
10. Lewes District Council (LDC) webcasts its full Council meetings only as these are held at ESCC's County Hall and they use their equipment; this seems to satisfy the LDC Members and there has not been any call to extend it.
11. Eastbourne Borough Council does not webcast any meetings as they are all held in Eastbourne Town Hall which does not currently have any facilities for this. As a result of Member interest, enquiries were made last year into what would be needed to be installed and how much it would cost to do this but in the end it was not progressed, as considered too expensive for little public interest.
12. Currently RDC already has the ability to audio record meetings and publish these on the website, via YouTube. The Community Governance Review Steering Group (CGRSG) agreed to audio record all its meetings, and recommended that other meetings where the Bexhill Community Governance Review was being considered be audio recorded to enable interested members of the public to listen to the debates, after the meeting, if they were unable to attend. The listener figures for the various meetings to date are as follows:

CGRSG – 22 February – 90 listeners
Cabinet – 3 July – 10 listeners
CGRSG – 10 August – 18 listeners

Members' Survey

13. Without prejudice to the outcome and any final recommendations, all Members were sent an e-mail questionnaire on 29 August to gauge the level of support for upgrading the Council Chamber AV equipment. Members were asked to indicate their support or otherwise as follows:

Option 1 – replace the existing wireless microphones – cost in the region of £34,000 – SUPPORT – YES / NO

Option 2 – replace the current projector and screen in the corner of Council Chamber with two mobile screens allowing greater flexibility and use of the room – cost in the region of £20,000 – SUPPORT – YES / NO

Option 3 – install fixed cameras within the Chamber to provide video capability and possible future webcasting of meetings – cost in the region of £14,000 plus £12,000 per annum to live stream, if webcasting meetings – SUPPORT – YES / NO

14. By the closing date, 15 Members (39.5%) had responded, the results are as set out in the table below:

Option	Number / Percent
1	3 (20%)
1+2	6 (40%)
1, 2 + 3	3 (20%)
1 + 3	2 (13%)
None	1 (7%)
Total	15 (100%)

15. From the results it is clear that the majority of Members are in support of Option 1 (93%) and 60% in favour of Options 1 and 2. Comments made by Members are reproduced at Appendix D.

ICT / Infrastructure & Service Desk Comments

16. Specifically regarding the presentation equipment, the current system continually fails to provide reliable service, and having been installed 17 plus years ago, this is hardly surprising. Another issue with the age of the system is its lack of any modern connectivity support. This will lead to increased public dissatisfaction/criticism as well as potential reputational damage when visitors are unable to display via normal technology; put simply, the system no longer meets its base requirements to present.

Conclusions

17. The Council Chamber AV equipment is in need of an upgrade; there is sufficient money within the allocated budget to accommodate all of the options, if considered necessary. Cabinet Members were concerned at the level of investment and specification required and sought further information as set out within this report.

18. From the officers' perspective, there is no doubt that Options 1 and 2 are the minimum requirements for this upgrade and this appears to be the opinion of the majority of Members who responded to the questionnaire; the microphone system is now unreliable and the presentational equipment is also unreliable and out of date. It is acknowledged that the additional spend for fixed cameras to enable the videoing of meetings and the potential to webcast in the future is very much "an optional extra" that may not be required at the current time.
19. In light of the additional information, Members are asked to consider again the level of investment considered appropriate and the type of capabilities required of the AV offer within the Council Chamber and make an appropriate recommendation to Cabinet.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director of Resources

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to invest and upgrade the AV equipment could lead to increased public dissatisfaction/criticism when the public are attending meetings within the Council Chamber and are unable to hear debates. Ensuring that the Council has adequate facilities for Members who are audibly impaired also ensures accessibility and full participation for all.

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	24 April 2017
Report of the	-	Executive Director of Resources
Subject	-	Council Chamber Audio/Visual Equipment Upgrade

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That Members views are sought on the level of investment considered appropriate and the type of capabilities required of the audio/visual offer within the Council Chamber and an appropriate recommendation be made to Cabinet.

Introduction

1. The current wireless microphone system in the Council Chamber is fast approaching 10 years old, and as Members are no doubt aware, is becoming unreliable and in need of replacement.
2. In addition, as previously reported to Members, as a result of changes in legislation, in particular the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the Council is keeping under review the audio and video recording of formal Council meetings.
3. This report outlines the key considerations around these issues and seeks a steer from Members with regard to the level of investment considered appropriate and the type of capabilities required of the audio/visual (AV) offer within the Council Chamber.
4. The Council has already set aside funding within the Capital Programme to fund the Rother 2020 programme, which includes the upgrading of the Council Chamber AV equipment.

Considerations

5. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allows any person to attend public meetings of the Council and report on the meeting, using any communication methods, including the internet, to publish, post or otherwise share the results of their reporting activities, during or after the meeting; this can include the filming, photographing or audio recording of proceedings.
6. Since the introduction of the new regulations there has been relatively few meetings which have been videoed and/or audio recorded, both openly, with our full knowledge and assistance, and covertly, without prior knowledge, only coming to light subsequent to the meeting; the meetings involved that we are aware of being Cabinet, full Council and Planning Committee meetings.
7. When Members first considered the new regulations in autumn 2014, concerns were expressed at the potential for editing and subsequent misrepresentation of the discussions and decisions made at meetings and to this end it was suggested that the Council reconsiders video or audio recording its meetings for publishing after the meeting and/or webcasting live meetings, as they happen.

8. In autumn 2015 Members considered the matter again, in light of previous concerns and it was agreed that audio or video recording of public meetings would be kept under review, mostly in recognition of the costs and lack of demand for such a service. Whilst meetings have been recorded, both openly and covertly, as outlined above, there has been no instance of these recordings being used in any way, to our knowledge, to misrepresent Members.

Options

9. Due to the continued unreliability of the microphone system, officers had an exploratory meeting with a leading supplier in the field in February this year and considered the options for a replacement microphone system.
10. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to have exploratory discussion and obtain indicative prices for a complete overhaul of the AV equipment in the Council Chamber. The following paragraphs set out the options and indicative costs:
11. **Option 1: Conference and Audio System Upgrade** – to replace the current wireless microphones with a Bosch Dicontis wireless microphone system, which is easy to use, with 25 wireless microphones (allowing for 1 between 2), including the necessary Wireless Application Protocol, battery packs and chargers. A digital signal processor would also be required to handle the various AV inputs and outputs. This system has recently been installed by Hastings Borough Council within their new Chamber and from first-hand experience and talking to staff operating the system it seems to work well. Benefits of installing new microphones include improved clarity/hearing for Members, officers and the public.

Total cost to deliver Option 1 – £34,000

12. **Option 2: Video/Presentation System Upgrade** – to install two TV screens either side of the top table on moveable trollies together with installing 4x output plates around the room to allow the screens on their trollies to be moved to other locations in the room. The installation of moveable TV screens will allow for presentations/other media content to be accessible from various locations within the Chamber to allow greater flexibility and use of the room.

Total cost to deliver Option 2 – £20,000

13. **Option 3: Camera & Webcasting Encoder Installation** – as part of a complete modernisation of the room and to future proof it to capture content locally (video) or start to stream in the future, cameras with an encoder (computer) could be located within the system. The installation of cameras within the Chamber will mitigate against the risk of content being taken out of context by members of the public and enable the Council to keep a genuine record of meetings with the cameras and content copyright to Rother District Council.
14. Should the Council wish to live stream (webcast), licences would be required to turn on the camera control (mic activation) and streaming software. Estimated 100 hours of hosted content per annum based on the frequency and variety of meetings, budget figures for this would be £12,000 per annum

with the potential for discounts for longer term contract periods. This would allow the Council to webcast live meetings allowing interested parties to watch meetings as they happen remotely, rather than travelling to the Town Hall.

Total cost to deliver Option 3 – £14,000 one off cost plus £12,000 per annum to live stream

15. As can be seen above, the minimum spend just to replace the microphones will be £34,000. Should the Council decide to include Option 2, the total spend rises to £64,000 and should all three Options be procured at the same time the spend rises to £78,000 plus £12,000 per annum should meetings be webcast. There is likely to be a reduction in these costs if the Council were to purchase all three options at the same time.
16. There is no choice but to replace the microphones (Option 1), however, Members' views are sought as to whether Options 2 (presentational equipment upgrade) and 3 (cameras) are pursued at the same time.

Procurement

17. The proposed minimum spend will activate the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules, and the procurement will be managed through the East Sussex Procurement Hub where it is expected that a Framework Agreement can be used.

Conclusions

18. The Council Chamber AV equipment is in need of an urgent upgrade; there is sufficient money within the budget to accommodate all of the options contained within this report. Members views are sought as to the level of investment considered appropriate and the type of capabilities required of the AV offer within the Council Chamber and an appropriate recommendation be made to Cabinet.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director of Resources

















Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to invest and upgrade the AV equipment could lead to increased public dissatisfaction/criticism when the public are attending meetings within the Council Chamber and are unable to hear debates. Ensuring that the Council has adequate facilities for Members who are audibly impaired also ensures accessibility and full participation for all.

East Sussex County Council – this is from the date range 07.09.16 – 07.09.17:

Webcast views in last 12 months (view must be a minimum of playing video for one minute)	2909
Visits to webcast page (this includes those watching the videos and those that don't watch and just read the agenda points)	7614

List of most popular webcasts over the past 12 months:

Webcast title	Live date	All views ↑	Live views	Archive views	Total length of viewing
 Full Council	2017-02-07 10:00:00	305	88	217	182 hours 39 mins
 Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2016-09-29 10:00:00	237	65	172	152 hours 53 mins
 Cabinet	2017-01-24 10:00:00	140	55	85	79 hours 23 mins
 Full Council	2016-10-18 10:00:00	127	27	100	63 hours 6 mins
 Sussex Police and Crime Panel	2016-09-23 11:00:00	119	5	114	33 hours 47 mins
 Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2016-06-30 10:00:00	117	0	117	32 hours 43 mins
 Full Council	2017-05-23 10:00:00	110	40	70	57 hours 48 mins
 Cabinet	2016-10-11 10:00:00	103	37	66	39 hours 18 mins
 Full Council	2017-03-21 10:00:00	101	25	76	42 hours 46 mins
 Sussex Police and Crime Panel	2017-01-20 11:00:00	91	36	55	76 hours 18 mins
 Full Council	2017-07-11 10:00:00	88	34	54	35 hours 40 mins
 Cabinet	2016-12-13 10:00:00	81	27	54	28 hours 33 mins
 Cabinet	2016-11-15 10:00:00	77	21	56	25 hours 9 mins
 Cabinet	2017-06-27 10:00:00	77	42	35	51 hours 45 mins
 Sussex Police and Crime Panel	2017-06-30 10:30:00	74	18	56	45 hours 54 mins
 Sussex Police and Crime Panel	2017-04-07 10:30:00	69	9	60	28 hours 33 mins

Webcast title	Live date	Avg. length of viewing	All views	Live views	Archive views	All viewers	Live viewers	Archive viewers	Times shared
		This is per person	This figure is Live views and Archive views added together	This figure is higher than Live viewers because a single person may have clicked into the webcast several times	This figure is higher than Archive viewers because a single person may have clicked into the webcast several times	This figure is Live viewers and Archive viewers added together	This is how many viewers watched the webcast live	This is how many viewers watched the webcast after the meeting had finished	
Planning Committee North	24/08/2017 10:00	43 mins	79	25	54	56	15	44	0
Planning Committee South	17/08/2017 10:00	50 mins	101	31	70	64	22	47	0
Audit and Finance Committee	28/07/2017 09:30	33 mins	34	6	28	12	2	11	0
Planning Committee North	27/07/2017 10:00	42 mins	110	22	88	80	18	68	5
Planning Committee South	20/07/2017 10:00	44 mins	182	65	117	129	42	100	0
Full Council	19/07/2017 10:00	16 mins	39	7	32	33	7	27	0
Cabinet	12/07/2017 10:00	13 mins	36	2	34	16	2	15	0
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10/07/2017 09:30	36 mins	78	13	65	45	6	42	1
Planning Committee North	29/06/2017 10:00	58 mins	185	42	143	118	26	102	11
Planning Committee South	22/06/2017 10:00	59 mins	149	38	111	87	28	72	1
Planning Committee South	25/05/2017 10:00	56 mins	165	34	131	109	27	93	0
Licensing Sub-Committee	24/05/2017 11:00	33 mins	15	2	13	10	2	9	0
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22/05/2017 09:30	21 mins	43	4	39	32	4	30	0
Licensing Committee	18/05/2017 10:00	20 mins	26	6	20	17	5	14	2
Full Council	17/05/2017 10:00	11 mins	73	8	65	54	8	50	1
Planning Committee North	11/05/2017 10:00	37 mins	92	23	69	66	16	54	0
Planning Committee North	06/04/2017 10:00	59 mins	191	51	140	105	29	85	0
Planning Committee South	30/03/2017 10:00	29 mins	112	16	96	88	12	79	0
Full Council	22/03/2017 10:00	35 mins	275	45	230	192	31	171	0
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	20/03/2017 09:30	19 mins	92	8	84	64	6	61	6
Standards Committee	16/03/2017 11:30	7 mins	26	1	25	17	1	16	0
Personnel Committee	16/03/2017 10:00	2 mins	16	2	14	12	2	11	0
Audit and Finance Committee	15/03/2017 09:30	32 mins	23	3	20	10	3	8	0
Joint Planning Committee North and South	13/03/2017 13:30	42 mins	204	52	152	145	43	120	0
Local Plan Sub-Committee	13/03/2017 10:00	43 mins	374	83	291	273	60	232	2
Cabinet	08/03/2017 10:00	18 mins	142	8	134	101	8	95	0
Full Council	22/02/2017 10:00	23 mins	105	16	89	62	11	55	0
Planning Committee North	09/02/2017 10:00	15 mins	216	11	205	161	6	157	11
Planning Committee South	02/02/2017 10:00	25 mins	207	31	176	167	21	152	3
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	30/01/2017 09:30	43 mins	66	21	45	38	10	31	1
Cabinet	25/01/2017 10:00	11 mins	37	1	36	28	1	28	0
Audit and Finance Committee	23/01/2017 09:30	34 mins	29	5	24	13	5	10	0
Licensing Sub-Committee	20/01/2017 10:00	35 mins	19	3	16	12	3	12	0
Planning Committee South	05/01/2017 10:00	23 mins	119	18	101	91	12	82	0
Planning Committee North	15/12/2016 10:00	42 mins	121	29	92	82	19	70	1
Planning Committee South	08/12/2016 10:00	1 hour 8 mins	425	120	305	265	65	218	1
Cabinet	07/12/2016 10:00	12 mins	13	0	13	9	0	9	0
Full Council	23/11/2016 10:00	12 mins	123	8	115	99	5	96	1
Licensing Sub-Committee	18/11/2016 12:00	9 mins	18	3	15	14	3	12	0
Planning Committee North	17/11/2016 10:00	13 mins	292	23	269	254	16	244	0
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	16/11/2016 09:30	33 mins	41	7	34	26	5	23	0
Standards Committee	14/11/2016 10:00	12 mins	17	1	16	10	1	9	0
Planning Committee South	10/11/2016 10:00	44 mins	137	18	119	99	11	91	1
Planning Committee North	20/10/2016 10:00	29 mins	673	63	610	488	39	468	0
Cabinet	19/10/2016 10:00	12 mins	29	2	27	17	2	15	0
Planning Committee South	13/10/2016 10:00	1 hour 12 mins	350	79	271	189	43	163	0
Audit and Finance Committee	29/09/2016 09:30	26 mins	33	6	27	16	3	14	0
Personnel Committee	23/09/2016 10:00	6 mins	15	0	15	11	0	11	0
Planning Committee North	22/09/2016 10:30	23 mins	105	14	91	80	10	75	6
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21/09/2016 09:30	49 mins	43	11	32	24	5	21	0
Planning Committee South	15/09/2016 10:00	1 hour 4 mins	262	58	204	143	29	125	0
Licensing Committee	14/09/2016 10:00	6 mins	13	1	12	10	1	9	0
Cabinet	07/09/2016 10:00	10 mins	21	2	19	19	2	17	0
Planning Committee North	25/08/2016 10:00	21 mins	156	13	143	134	11	127	0
Planning Committee South	18/08/2016 10:00	51 mins	336	69	267	228	35	203	5

Comments received from Members:

- Save money. Members need to learn to speak up and clearly end of problem.
- Support all 3 Options depending on the debate.
- Option 3 - not convinced the feed needs to be streamed but at £12k a year I can't justify the cost.
- Support in the hope that we get a much more reliable system, all options.
- I am one hundred percent in favour for option 1.
- I agree that the projection system we have at the moment is not very satisfactory, but I have great reservations of only having two screens in the chamber for the Members to view, it depends on positioning Members and they do very often sits on the four sides of the room. We really must consider a new system for the Chairman and Chairmen of any committee. There should be a presentation by the suppliers before purchase. With regards to option three and four I do not agree with the provision of either.
- I agree the equipment need updating and or replacing so would in supporting any options required.