

Replacement of Hybrid Conferencing Equipment

Date: 9th May 2022

Report of: Project Manager (Jon Sidebottom)

Report to: Resources Director (Neil Evans)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The Future Ways of Working (FWW) Programme was set up to change the way we use our buildings, to ensure that all staff are supported to work in different places and in different ways and to subsequently rationalise the number of Council buildings.
- Much of this shift was accelerated because of the Covid pandemic with over 8,000 staff working predominantly from home. Following staff survey feedback, it is envisaged that there will be different styles and locations of working in the future with much less of a focus on being 'in the office' and more facilitating people to work in effective ways.
- The Council has recently migrated to Microsoft Teams from the Skype conferencing platform with the introduction of Microsoft Teams providing a host of advantages. These include the capability of integrating with other Microsoft Office applications in addition to the introduction of additional tools allowing for greater meeting collaboration and increased effective management of meetings and meeting spaces. Unlike our existing equipment the proposed replacement hybrid conferencing equipment integrates seamlessly with Microsoft Teams to provide a much improved and simplified experience for meetings hosts and participants located within the office and located remotely.
- Feedback regarding the existing hybrid conferencing equipment, which has been in place for over 5 years, was that the audio/visual quality needs to be improved given the increasing use of hybrid meetings where some attendees are together in a room and others are remote.
- Following a successful pilot, this report covers the decision to undertake a replacement programme of hybrid conferencing equipment across Council sites.

Recommendations

- a) Approve the ATS for £411K, from the Capital Contingency Fund, to fund the replacement of existing hybrid conferencing equipment within Leeds City Council.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

Following a successful pilot, this report covers the decision to undertake a replacement programme of hybrid conferencing equipment across Council sites.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 1 We will be working with a framework partner to manage the procurement of all necessary hybrid conferencing equipment and provision of the necessary installation services to replace existing hybrid conferencing equipment across the estate.
- 2 The replacement of existing hybrid conferencing equipment will deliver a more effective visual and audio experience during meetings further supporting the objectives of the Future Ways of Working programme (FWW) of improving the ways we utilise buildings.
- 3 Altogether a total of seventy-nine meeting suites and rooms, across twenty-one sites, will see existing hybrid conferencing equipment replaced. All these buildings are Leeds City Council sites.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 4 Consultation has taken place within Integrated Digital Service (IDS) to address the necessary skill sets required to deliver this programme.
- 5 Consultation and engagement have taken place with our framework partner to define the requirements to deliver the programme. A subsequent supporting quotation has been provided for the hardware and associated installation costs.
- 6 Consultation took place with end users of the new hybrid conferencing equipment as part of the pilot. The Audio and Visual experience has been received positively with remote participants particularly noting the better sound quality from within the room and the camera switching and speakers making it easier to feel part of the meeting.
- 7 Best Council People and Culture have been consulted regarding the initial pilot and the subsequent proposal to implement the new solution across the Council.
- 8 Engagement has not taken place with the public as whilst the public may benefit from the improved hybrid conferencing equipment, should they participate in public council meetings, the implementation and impact of this change is purely internal to the council.

What are the resource implications?

- 9 The procurement, storage and shipping to site of the new hybrid equipment by our framework partner will ensure that we have the capacity to place one single order attracting a purchase price discount and remove the need for internal resource to manage the logistics process.
- 10 The procurement of installation services will remove pressure from internal resources to instead focus on the configuration and commissioning of the hybrid conferencing equipment and undertake testing and quality assurance tasks once the equipment has been installed on site.

11 The capital and revenue implications of progressing the scheme are set out in the tables below:

Capital Effects

Previous total Authority to Spend on this scheme	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2022 £000's	FORECAST				
			2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	0.0						
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0						
INTERNAL DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0						
OTHER FEES / COSTS (7)	0.0						
TOTALS	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2022 £000's	FORECAST				
			2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	0.0						
FURN & EQPT (5)	190.3		190.3				
INTERNAL DESIGN FEES (6)	87.0		87.0				
OTHER FEES / COSTS (7)	134.1		134.1				
TOTALS	411.4	0.0	411.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2022 £000's	FORECAST				
			2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026 on £000's
LCC Corporate Borrowing	411.4		411.4				
Revenue Contribution	0.0						
Capital Receipt	0.0						
Insurance Receipt	0.0						
Lottery	0.0						
Gifts / Bequests / Trusts	0.0						
European Grant	0.0						
Health Authority	0.0						
Private Sector	0.0						
Section 106 / 278	0.0						
Government Grant (Specify)	0.0						
Departmental Borrowing	0.0						
Any Other Income (Specify)	0.0						
Total Funding	411.4	0.0	411.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance / Shortfall =	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Revenue Effects (there is a recurring revenue saving as outlined in the table below)

REVENUE EFFECTS	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 SUBSEQUENT YEARS £000'S
EMPLOYEES		
PREMISES COSTS		
NEW SUPPLIES & SERVICES		24.4
CURRENT SUPPLIES & SERVICES		-30.5
EXTERNAL INCOME GENERATED		

What are the legal implications?

12 This is a Significant Operational Decision and is not subject to call in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

13 The risk of not proceeding and replacing the existing hybrid conferencing equipment is that we will continue to provide an audio and visual experience which is not in line with user expectations.

14 A secondary risk of not proceeding is that some technology components are in short supply. The placing of one single order at the start of the project will ensure that we can procure all the equipment we require upfront.

15 A third risk of not proceeding is we will have the additional overhead of supporting two hybrid conferencing solutions. The majority being the current, legacy hybrid conferencing equipment and the new hybrid conferencing equipment which was rolled out as part of the pilot.

16 A fourth risk of not proceeding is users have an inconsistent experience with some rooms having legacy hybrid conferencing equipment and some having the newer equipment.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

17 The replacement programme to move to new hybrid conferencing equipment will deliver a better audio and visual user experience. Meeting participants, particularly remote participants, will feel a greater sense of engagement.

18 The ability to effectively participate remotely in meetings will provide colleagues with greater flexibility on their choice of location whether that be from home or remote office locations. This will reduce the need for potentially unnecessary journeys to fixed office locations for face-to-face meetings.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

19 The other option considered, post pilot, was to do nothing. This option would have seen the legacy hybrid conferencing equipment remain in place alongside the new equipment implemented as part of the pilot.

20 This option was discounted for the following reasons:

- a) Overhead of supporting two hybrid conferencing solutions
- b) Inconsistent user experience owing to two hybrid conferencing solutions being in place
- c) Audio and visual experience not in line with user expectations.

How will success be measured?

21 A rollout schedule will be developed to manage and deliver the replacement programme by mid- September 2022.

22 Feedback will be gathered, consistent with the pilot, so we can monitor the effectiveness of the new equipment and respond where required.

23 Support call, system availability and usage metrics will be analysed to monitor the improved stability we are expecting to see from the implementation of the new hybrid conferencing equipment.

What is the timetable for implementation?

24 The timetable for implementation is to replace all the existing legacy hybrid conferencing equipment by mid-September 2022.

Appendices

25 Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening form Hybrid Conferencing Equipment FINAL v1.0 doc

Background papers

26 Hybrid Conferencing Proposal FINAL v1.0.docx