

**RECORD OF EXERCISE OF DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY OFFICER
PURSUANT TO REGULATION 13 OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES
(EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO
INFORMATION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012 & THE OPENNESS OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014**

<u>SUBJECT OF DECISION</u> Award of Contract and Approval to Proceed with Replacement of Council Chamber Audio Visual Facilities	
<u>DECISION REFERENCE</u> DO/34/2026 (MW)	<u>SOURCE OF AUTHORITY AND REFERENCE</u> (i.e. Committee/Constitution/Minute No. etc. 2025/2026 General Fund Budget 19th February 2025 Council Meeting CL56 Recommendations from Cabinet and Other Committees vi) General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/2026 & 2026/2027 General Fund Budget 25 th February 2026 Council Meeting CL70 Recommendations from Cabinet and Other Committees iv) General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/2027 Note – to be capitalised and included in September 2026 report to Cabinet and Council for transparency. 3D OFFICER DELEGATIONS - Part A - General Delegations 3D.2 Financial Resources a) Incur normal expenditure up to the limit of provision within the budgets under his/her control, subject to compliance with contract standing orders, financial standing orders, financial regulations and financial instructions. b) Invite and accept tenders or quotations for contracts, subject to contract standing orders, financial standing orders, financial regulations and financial instructions.
<u>DATE OF DECISION</u> 09/07/2026	<u>DECISION MAKER (Name and Job Title)</u>  Matt Wallbank Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance

RECORD OF THE DECISION

a) The issue

The existing audio-visual facilities within the Council Chamber are in excess of 20 years old, with elements of the system having failed and the Council no longer able to effectively record and live stream meetings. The current infrastructure presents increasing maintenance and reliability issues and does not adequately support the Council's requirements for modern democratic engagement, transparency, accessibility and hybrid working arrangements.

A Level Two Business Case was developed and subsequently approved through the Council's project governance arrangements. Following approval, a procurement exercise was undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Sufficient budget provision is available within the approved project budget to facilitate contract award and project delivery.

b) The Decision

To award and enter into the contract for the replacement of audio visual equipment in the chamber to ensure microphones are functional, cameras are working in addition to recording and live streaming.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

The decision will enable the Council to replace aging and increasingly unreliable audio-visual equipment and deliver a modern solution capable of:

- Live streaming Council meetings.
- Recording meetings for publication and public viewing.
- Supporting hybrid meetings through Microsoft Teams integration.
- Providing improved microphone facilities and audio performance.
- Supporting accessibility requirements including induction loop provision.
- Improving public engagement, openness and transparency in local decision making.

The preferred supplier was identified through a compliant procurement exercise and submitted the most economically advantageous tender against the published evaluation criteria.

The project remains within the approved budget allocation and supports the Council's Corporate Plan objectives relating to resident engagement, transparency, accountability and the delivery of a modern organisation.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED IN MAKING THE DECISION

Option 1 - Do Nothing (Rejected)

Retaining the existing system would leave the Council without reliable recording and live-streaming facilities and would increase the risk of further equipment failures. This option would not support the Council's transparency and engagement objectives.

Option 2 - Full Chamber and Committee Room A Replacement at Higher Cost (Rejected)

A complete replacement of all equipment within the Chamber was considered during pre-market engagement but was estimated to exceed available funding and therefore did not provide the preferred value-for-money solution.

WARD RELEVANCE

Non directly but it is noted that the project supports the operation of the Council's democratic decision-making arrangements at the Town Hall and benefits all residents across the Borough.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The project has an approved budget allocation of £100,000 based on the 2025/2026 budget of £50,000, carried forward to 2026/2027. The 2026/2027 also had £50,000 so a total budget of £100,000. The project has been procured within the total budget of £100,000. The option of a wireless solution was selected as it limits intrusive works in the chamber, it doesn't rely on existing and old cabling and provides additional flexibility, such as utilising the table in the middle of the chamber and a potential to move into Committee D and B subject to successful testing for smaller public meetings. It was also noted, 80% of installations are going wireless.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN WITH MEMBERS/OFFICERS

Consultation and engagement have included:

- Senior Leadership Team.
- Corporate Programme Review Board.
- Democratic Services.
- Procurement Services.
- ICT Services.
- Health and Safety Team.
- Relevant Portfolio Holder and Leader (past and current).
- Market engagement exercise with potential suppliers.

<u>ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED BY ANY MEMBER CONSULTED</u> None declared.
<u>IN RESPECT OF ANY DECLARED CONFLICT BY A CABINET MEMBER, ANY DISPENSATION GIVEN BY THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE</u> (Note if the decision is a non-executive decision, no dispensation can be given). Not applicable.
<u>EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS (including any Equality Impact Assessment)</u> The new system will improve accessibility through modern audio facilities, enhanced hearing loop provision and the ability for residents to observe meetings remotely through live-streaming and recorded content. No adverse equality impacts have been identified.
<u>HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS</u> None arising directly from this decision. Appropriate training will be provided to relevant officers, users and members of the system as part of implementation.
<u>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</u> The expenditure will be funded from the approved budget allocation for the project. Ongoing maintenance and support costs (annual checks and reviews) will be met from existing approved revenue budgets.
<u>HEALTH EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS</u> No direct health equalities implications identified.
<u>SECTION 17 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS</u> None identified.
<u>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</u> The principal risks relate to project delivery timescales, temporary loss of Chamber functionality during installation and compatibility of equipment. These risks have been considered through the approved business case and project management arrangements and will continue to be monitored through the Council's project governance framework. As the wireless system is to be used, there is a risk of audio interference between mics however, officers have trialled and undertaken a demo with the proposed equipment and microphones, and they worked well and have a significantly better output and quality compared to the current microphones.

SME (SMALL/MEDIUM ENTERPRISES) & LOCAL ECONOMY IMPLICATIONS

The procurement exercise provided opportunities for SME participation and supports the Council's commitment to achieving social value.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The project will replace aging equipment. The microphones will be battery powered which will require charging but the microphones will not require constant electricity supplier to operate. Each battery has a 25 hour life on the basis it is used consistently for 25 hours at one time.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement process has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and relevant procurement legislation. The formal contract will be executed before the commencement of installation.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS

The project has received approval through the Council's project governance process and funding arrangements are in place. Contract award will allow implementation to proceed, with installation currently programmed to commence during September 2026.

**PLEASE RETURN TO THE MONITORING OFFICER AS SOON AS A
DECISION IS MADE OR AS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE THEREAFTER**