



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Non-key Decision

01 October 2020

Councillor Kelham Cooke

The Leader of the Council

Installation of Webcasting Equipment in the Council Chamber

The report sets out the funding requirements to enable the installation of equipment to enable webcasting of meetings from the Council Chamber, along with the installation of a meeting application for all Councillors to allow meeting to be conducted with both onsite and remote delegates.

Report Author

Gary Andrew, Future Technology Lead

Tel: 07834 049725

Email: g.andrew@southkesteven.gov.uk

Approved for
publication:

Councillor Kelham Cooke, The Leader of the Council

5 October 2020

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

1. To allocate £36,371 from the ICT reserve for the project for the first year costs. Subsequent yearly costs will be met by agreed budgets.

1 The Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek authority from the Cllr Kelham Cooke, Leader of the Council to allocate £36,371 from the ICT reserve for the project for the first year costs. With the current Covid-19 pandemic the Council had to rapidly adapt and change working practices to facilitate and maintain services. Council Meetings have been managed through Skype for Business which has enabled local democracy to continue but does not provide the required functionality or meet the longer-term aspirations of the Authority. A better solution for hosting and broadcasting of the meetings is required.

2 Background Information

- 2.1 In March 2020 lockdown measures were introduced meaning officers and Councillors moved to working remotely. Legislation was changed to remove the legal requirement for public meetings to be held in person. The Government has temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person. This means that councils have powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology. [Appendix A](#)
- 2.2 Skype for Business was setup to facilitate council meetings remotely. The software has enabled meetings to be held, with public access being permitted. However, the limited functionality sees some delay in meeting procedures and is not appropriately tailored to running meetings of this nature.
- 2.3 Officers examined the market to identify and procure a purpose-built solution. This will enable improved support to remote, onsite and hybrid meetings of the Council. The solution includes cameras within the chamber, a link to the onsite microphones, recording and broadcasting of meetings and have functionality for requests to speak, voting and motions.
- 2.4 The procurement process was in accordance with the Council's Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules by inviting three suppliers, who have responded to a request for quotation. Following the completion of the procurement exercise, the winning supplier was Public-i.

Preferred Option

- 2.5 Whilst funding can be built into ICT budgets for future years, the utilisation of the ICT reserve is required to enable the project to commence in 2020/21. Recent announcements have confirmed that existing Covid-19 restrictions are likely to be in place for at least another six months. It is, therefore, essential that appropriate technologies are in place to support the smooth operation of Council meetings.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost for installation is £22,836 and there is £13,535 annual costs for licensing, support and maintenance. The cost for year one will be £36,371 and can be funded from the IT reserve in order that the project can be implemented this financial year. Thereafter the annual costs will be incorporated into annual budgets.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Interim Director of Finance

4 Legal and Governance Implications

- 4.1 On the 31 January 2019 Council approved that the utilisation of the ICT reserve be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Commissioning in

consultation with the Council's S151 Officer. The Cabinet Member for this is now known as the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Shelley Hardy Legal Services

5 Equality and Safeguarding implications

- 5.1 The software to connect to meetings for councillors and officers is available via the devices supplied by the Council. IT will support all users and testing will be carried out before each meeting. Public access is available via our Modern.gov platform which is accessed via the internet.

6 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?

- 6.1 If the Government legislation is permanently amended to allow remote delegates to attend public meetings it could lead to reduced travel for Members who wish to make use of the technology.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A : <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/remote-council-meetings/regulations>

8. Background Papers

- 7.2 Minutes from Council on 31st Jan 2019 - <http://moderngovsvr:8080/mgAi.aspx?ID=22432>

Report Timeline:	Date decision due to be made	28 October 2020
	Call-in deadline	5 November 2020
	Date decision effective (subject to call-in)	6 November 2020