



## Chief Officer in Consultation with Committee Chairman Delegated Powers Report

<b>Title</b>	<b>Hendon Town Hall Audio Visual System Upgrade</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Executive Director Assurance
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public (with separate exempt report which is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended)
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	None
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### Summary

This report details the decision to award a contract to Auditel Rental and Service Limited following a competitive procurement process to deliver the following improvements to the audio-visual system at Hendon Town Hall: new microphones and speakers in the committee rooms; the ability to webcast Council and committee meetings; and provision of the technology to have hybrid meetings.

### Decision

**To award a contract to Auditel Rental and Service Limited for the provision of improvement to the audio-visual to deliver new microphones and speakers in the committee rooms; the ability to webcast Council and committee meetings; and provide the technology to have hybrid meetings for an initial 3-year period with an option to extend for 2 years subject to performance and budget.**

## **1. Why this report is needed**

- 1.1 Hendon Town Hall is a significant building in the Council's civic estate. At present, the Registration & Nationality Service and Mayor's Office are based there, and weddings and citizenship ceremonies are regularly held there. In addition, Council meetings, committee meetings, partnership boards, school admissions appeals and other meetings involving councillors and officers take place there. It is important that the Town Hall has an up to date and fully functioning audio-visual system to support these uses.
- 1.2 The public have a legal right to attend Council and committee meetings (unless exempt information is being considered) and it is important that the Town Hall can accommodate the public, and that they can see and hear proceedings at meetings. The Council have received an increasing number of complaints about the audio-visual system in the committee rooms. It is therefore necessary to replace the existing system to ensure that it is fit for purpose and up to date with current technology.

### **Audio-Visual Systems**

- 1.3 The Town Hall was refurbished in 2008/09 and audio-visual systems in the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms were upgraded at that time. In 2016, Facilities upgraded the audio-visual system in the Council Chamber following complaints from councillors about interference and feedback from the wireless system that was in-situ. The current system in the Council Chamber is provided by Auditel.
- 1.4 In the Committee Rooms, the overhead projector screens in rooms 1, 2 and 3 were upgraded around three years ago by Middlesex University who use some of the rooms during the day in term time.
- 1.5 The microphone system in the Committee Rooms has not been upgraded since 2008/09. The Council have received complaints from residents about the microphone system for at least 18 months.

### **Webcasting**

- 1.6 Many local authorities webcast (audio and visual broadcast) their Council and committee meetings to make them more accessible. Webcasting was considered as an option in 2015/16, but due to the costs involved with audio and visual webcasting systems, the Council opted to use an alternative system more cost-effective system, Audio Minutes, which provides an audio broadcast only of meetings. This system has been in-situ from 2016 and it has predominately worked well as it has enabled the public to listen to a live stream of the meeting and to listen back at their convenience.
- 1.7 Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, no face-to-face meetings took place at the Town Hall between April 2020 and May 2021. All Council and committee meetings took place virtually on Microsoft Teams. This increased public access to meetings by enabling people to observe and participate (where entitled to) in meetings from whatever their location.
- 1.8 The legislation which permitted virtual meetings to take place expired in May 2021 and Council and committee meetings have returned to the Town Hall. Since returning to face-to-face meetings there have been several issues with the Audio Minutes system including poor audio quality, live broadcasts not streaming, and recordings being lost.

Several members of the public have complained about the system and, despite the efforts of officers and the system supplier, issues have not been resolved. The Council have therefore stopped using the system for the time being. There is a business requirement for a replacement system which enables the public to see and hear proceedings at meetings without being physically present. The Audio Minutes issues are in addition to problems with the committee rooms microphone system.

### **Hybrid Meetings**

- 1.9 Technological advances have resulted in hybrid meetings becoming more commonplace in work settings. The Coronavirus pandemic has seen a significant increase the number of people working from home some or all the time. The current legal position is that councillors sitting on Council or in committees must be physically present to be able to vote at a meeting. However, it is legally permissible for others participating in the meeting (e.g. officers, applicants/agents, parties to a hearing, parents, non-committee members, public asking questions, etc.) to be able to access the meeting remotely. It should be noted that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities have recently issued a 'call for evidence' on local authority remote meetings which seeks views on future arrangements for remote and hybrid meetings. Whilst the outcome of this call for evidence is not yet know, it is possible that there may be provisions for remote or hybrid local authority meetings in the future. It is therefore prudent to invest in hybrid technology whilst the Town Hall audio-visual system is being upgraded.

### **Meeting Room Flexibility**

- 1.10 Occasionally there is a requirement for the audio-visual feed from one of the Town Hall rooms to be streamed to other rooms. For example, there is limited public seating in the Council Chamber and for meetings which have a lot of public interest there is a requirement for overflow rooms. The new system needs to have the capability of streaming into all other rooms and vice-versa to enable the Council to be able to scale-up capacity for large public meetings.

### **Procurement**

- 1.11 Following consultation with Facilities and Procurement, the Governance Service initiated a procurement in September 2021 for an upgrade of the audio-visual system at Hendon Town Hall to deliver:

#### All Meeting Rooms

- Ability to stream and share the audio visual from any meeting room (Council Chamber, Committee Rooms 1, 2 and 3) to any other meeting room as well as the reception or other areas on the council network

#### Council Chamber

- Upgrade visual equipment to display internal camera feeds as well as those participating remotely
- Install webcasting equipment including camera tracking functionality

## Committee Rooms 1, 2 and 3

- Complete audio-visual upgrade (including ability to display internal camera feeds as well as those participating remotely), including new conference microphones, speakers, digital connectivity in each room, HD camera tracking, webcasting and the ability to share the content online or to the Chamber and other Committee Rooms.

## Maintenance and Support

- To provide ongoing maintenance and support for all equipment specified, this is to include maintenance and reactive support for the duration of the contract period

## Installation and Training

- To provide installation of all equipment until user acceptance sign-off.
- To provide training and support to Council employees and support staff as required for the duration of the contract period.
- Provision of guidance/training manuals to assist on site staff in the operation of equipment and set up within the committee rooms, streaming and sharing of audio between rooms, recording for webcast.

- 1.12 Submissions were received from two suppliers which were evaluated in accordance with the Council standard approach. Following evaluation, the successful bidder was Auditel Rental and Service Limited (Auditel). Officers will proceed to contract award and implementation with the supplier.

## **2. Reasons for recommendations**

- 2.1 The Council have a requirement to upgrade the audio-visual system at Hendon Town Hall for the reasons set out in section 1 above.

## **3. Alternative options considered and not recommended**

- 3.1 The existing audio-visual equipment and Audio Minutes system could be retained. This is not recommended as the existing equipment is no longer fit for purpose as evidenced in the number of complaints received from Members and the public about the existing system.

## **4. Post decision implementation**

- 4.1 Officers will work with Auditel on the development and delivery of an implementation plan. During installation of the hardware and testing disruption to the day-to-day operation of the Town Hall will be kept to a minimum.
- 4.2 CSG IT will be engaged to support the Council with the installation of broadband connectivity to support the new hardware and software.

## 5. Implications of decision

### 5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 Implementing a new audio-visual system at Hendon Town Hall contributes to delivery of the Barnet Plan 2021 – 2025 Priority of Clean, Safe and Well-Run which seeks to provide good quality, customer friendly services in all that we do.

### 5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 Policy & Resources Committee, 16 July 2021, Business Planning 2022 – 2026, Appendix B sets out additions to the Capital Programme with include Colindale Future of Work Modifications up to £2.761m. £0.150m of this budget was allocated to the Hendon Town Hall AV Equipment Upgrade.

5.2.2 The total capital funding requirement is £0.230m (including a discount of £0.013m) and the revenue funding requirement is £0.016m annually for the 5-year contract term (total £0.078m). Revenue funding will be met from the Facilities managed budget. The total contract value is £0.308m.

5.2.3 A shortfall of £0.089m of capital funding has been identified and Policy & Resources Committee on 9 December 2021 have been requested to approve additional capital funding required to deliver the project.

5.2.4 The tender was evaluated using Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) principles which combined both quality and price. The outcome is as per the evaluation matrix below:

		<b>Bidder A</b>	<b>Bidder B</b>
<b>Quality 55%</b>	<b>% Weighting</b>	<b>Auditel</b>	
MS1	8.00	6.40	6.40
MS2	8.00	6.40	4.80
MS3	2.50	2.00	1.50
MS4	8.00	6.40	4.80
MS5	2.50	1.50	1.50
MS6	8.00	6.40	4.80
MS7	8.00	4.80	4.80
MS8	10.00	10.00	6.00
<b>Quality TOTAL</b>		<b>43.90</b>	<b>34.60</b>
<b>Price 45%</b>		45.00	44.74
<b>TOTAL 100%</b>		<b>88.90</b>	<b>79.34</b>

5.2.5 CSG IT have been engaged via a special project to deliver broadband connectivity to the Town Hall to support the new system. Project costs are to be confirmed but will be met from existing Governance Service revenue budgets.

### 5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 Constitution, Contract Procedure Rules, Authorisation and Acceptance Thresholds –

details that the bid acceptance process for procurements with a value of £189,330 and £500,000 is Council Officer as designated by approved Scheme of Delegation and documentation is Officer Delegated Powers Report. The Director of Assurance Scheme of Delegation states that acceptance for values between £189,330 - £500,000 is Director in consultation with theme committee chairman.

#### **5.4 Insight**

5.4.1 N/A

#### **5.5 Social Value**

5.5.1 Introducing webcasting and hybrid meetings will improve accessibility to the democratic decision-making process by enabling more people to see and hear proceedings at meetings, plus provide additional ways for people to participate in meetings other than by physical attendance at the Town Hall.

#### **5.6 Risk Management**

5.6.1 The project implementation plan will have a risk register which will be regularly updated.

Failure to improve the audio-visual system at the Town Hall carries a reputational risk due to the increasing number of complaints from Members and the public about the system.

#### **5.7 Corporate Parenting**

5.7.1 N/A

#### **5.8 Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 The Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee has been consulted and has agreed to the approach.

#### **5.9 Environmental Impact**

5.9.1 Implementing webcasting and hybrid meetings is expected to have a positive environmental impact as there will be fewer journeys to the Town Hall for Council and committee meetings.

### **6. Background papers**

- 6.1 Policy & Resources Committee, 16 July 2021, Business Planning 2022 – 2026, Appendix B sets out additions to the Capital Programme with include Colindale Future of Work Modifications up to £2.761m: [Agenda for Policy and Resources Committee on Wednesday 16th June, 2021, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 6.2 Policy & Resources Committee, 9 December 2021, Business Planning 2022 – 2026: [Agenda for Policy and Resources Committee on Thursday 9th December, 2021, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

**Decision taker's statement**

*I have the required powers to make the decision documented in this report. I am responsible for the report's content and am satisfied that all relevant advice has been sought in the preparation of this report and that it is compliant with the decision making framework of the organisation which includes Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Budget and Policy Framework and Legal issues including Equalities obligations.*

**I authorise the above decision:**

**Signed**

**Clair Green**

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**Designation**

**Executive Director Assurance (in consultation with the  
Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee)**

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**Date**

**7 January 2022**

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