

REPORT TO: Corporate PPB
DATE: 1st November 2011
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Enterprise
SUBJECT: RTH Civic Suite - Wireless Speaker System
WARDS: Grange Ward

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek support from members with regards the Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property allocating a sum of £20,000 out of the annual DDA budget to fund a wireless speaker system in the Civic Suite at Runcorn Town Hall.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 Members support:- the proposal to install a new wireless speaker system similar to that in the Council Chamber in the Civic Suite, and that this be funded through the 2011/12 DDA budget.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the Members Support Service Working Party group meeting held on 3rd August 2011 Property Services were requested to look into the feasibility of providing a wireless speaker system in the Civic Suite at Runcorn Town Hall similar to that installed in the Council Chamber.
- 3.2 The recent refurbishment of the Council Chamber included the provision of a wireless speaker system to replace the original fixed wired system. This has enabled the room to be used in a far more flexible way as the units can simply be moved to whatever location is required thus allowing the desk layout to be varied.
- 3.3 The current speaker system in the Civic Suite is over 10 years old and is of a fixed wired nature. It has become very unreliable and has caused problems at a number of recent meetings. The system does not enable anyone seated to the rear of the room or standing within the dining area adjacent to the kitchen to hear proceedings very well. There have been a couple of recent meetings in the room, where large number of the public have attended, and the current system proved inadequate.

- 3.4 It has been established that it is feasible to install a wireless system similar to that in the Chamber which could be linked through to the existing speakers in the area adjacent to the kitchen thus allowing for anyone standing in that area to clearly hear proceedings. The system would also include for personal inductive listening loop receivers to link into personal hearing aids.
- 3.5 The provision of a new wireless system will enable the room to be used in a far more flexible way as it will be far easier to create different table layouts if required.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The works will improve facilities within the Civic Suite and allow all those present to hear proceedings. It will also improve the facilities for the hard of hearing due to the new inductive loop receivers which can be used with the system, as such the works are in line with the Council's DDA Policy with regards making services and buildings more accessible.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The estimated cost of the project is £19,000 as such an allocation of £20,000 has been made from the current DDA budget, therefore no additional funding is required as the works will be funded out of the existing budget. The works will be incorporated into the current DDA programme of works and carried out in this financial year.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

n/a

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 As indicated above the works will improve accessibility and thus help address equality and diversity issues as the works will ensure that those present in the overflow area adjacent to the kitchen will be able to hear proceedings through the speaker system. It will also improve the facilities for the hearing impaired as new inductive loop receivers are being installed which can be used with the speaker system.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.