SOUND AND VOTING SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Executive summary

1. A replacement sound and voting system is acknowledged as an 'Improve the Parliament' objective in the 2019/20 Delivery Plan. The project is aligned to the Organisation’s Strategic Plan and, in particular, the “Efficiently provide the Parliament with high quality, effective corporate services and good governance” aim.

2. This paper sets out the proposed governance arrangements for the project and requests approval by the LG.

Background and Options

3. The Sound and Voting system in the debating chamber is a critical asset without which normal plenary business could not take place.

4. The original system manufacturers will be withdrawing their support of this system in the next two years as they update their products ranges and at this time the current system will be classified as being obsolete. Combined with this impending loss of support, an upward trend in the number of hardware faults has been identified by the Broadcasting Office and are attributed to the ageing of the system.

5. It is considered that there is a real and significant risk that chamber business will be disrupted if these failures become more frequent or take prolonged periods to resolve.

6. Plans are underway to replace the system in the summer recess of 2021. As a first step, a market research on options and suppliers will shortly commence ahead of a full procurement exercise.

7. Leadership Group considered outline plans for the governance of the Replacement Sound and Voting System project at its meeting on 3 June.

8. Leadership Group approval is now requested to endorse the proposed governance arrangements for the project with a project board appointed and comprising of the following members:

   - Tracey White (chair/SRO)
   - Bill Ward (Broadcasting Office)
   - Malcolm Graham (Digital Service)
   - Veronique Malcolm (Procurement Office)
   - Irene Fleming (Business Team), and
   - one other independent member from outside the organisation with an expert knowledge of broadcasting.
9. John McArthur (FM) has agreed to be the project manager, reporting to the board. A project team will also be in place to support the project manager with staff drawn from offices including Broadcasting, Official Report, Internal communications, Chamber, Committee, SPICE and Procurement.

Resource Implications

10. A budget bid has been submitted to the Finance office and the SRB. This bid forecasts the budget requirement over 2 years from 2020/21 and 2021/22 and is based on a like-for-like replacement of the current system. The baseline for the budget is the actual system renewal costs from in 2009 with the costs increased by the appropriate inflation indices. It assumes that internal resources will be covered by individual office budgets and the cost plan will continue to be refined as the project progresses.

Dependencies

11. The key dependencies in terms of supporting the project work and its effects on business are mostly represented on the project board. The BIT office has highlighted that if they face resourcing issues within their team they may ask the project to cover the costs of an external resource to complete necessary work. This has been discussed with the finance office.

Governance Issues

12. The appointed project board will make the key decisions on the project.

13. This project is funded through the Digital Strategy Board (DSB). The DSB will be updated on regularly on progress through their agreed reporting methods. They will also be notified of any arising issues or exceptions.

14. The LG will be updated on a quarterly basis based as this project is listed on the delivery plan.

15. The project will run over two financial years and budget bids will be made each year in line with the project cost plan.

16. The SPCB and the Bureau will be consulted and asked to comment on key aspects of the project including how member feedback will be obtained, communication to members and also to agree what approvals will be required from the SPCB for the project. This paper will be submitted to the SPCB in September 2019.

17. A visual representation of the governance arrangements for the project is provided below. All of the links such as monthly and quarterly reports to DSB are not shown.
Publication Scheme

18. This paper can be published but any sensitive supplier or commercial information should be removed.

Next steps

19. A Business case and cost plan have been drafted and, along with other project documentation, will continue to be refined as the project progresses.

Decision

20. Leadership Group is invited to endorse the proposed governance arrangements for this project.

Tracey White
September 2019