

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

RESOURCES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE **To be held on Tuesday, 29th August 2006**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

AIR CONDITIONING IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report

This report is produced in response to a number of requests from individual elected members to investigate the possibility of providing air conditioning in the Council Chamber. Essentially, air conditioning is perceived as necessary to address the environmental problems inherent in the Chamber, airlessness and excessive heat that cause discomfort and drowsiness, which in turn makes concentration difficult.

The purpose of the report is to provide the information necessary for Members to make a decision on this issue.

2. Financial Implications

If the recommended technical solution was to be adopted the cost is estimated to be £65,000. There is no provision for this scheme in the capital programme. Therefore, the scheme would either need to be proposed for the capital programme for 2007/08, or the Council would have to be recommended to approve a supplementary capital budget in the current financial year.

3. Staffing and Legal Implications

None in addition to the normal work involved in letting a contract.

4. Risk Implications

There is always a risk with capital schemes of tender prices and actual costs exceeding the budget allowed.

5. Background

The Council Chamber is used for formal Council and Committee meetings on average 45 times per annum. In addition it is used for many other meetings, seminars and training events involving Kennet members and staff, and partner organisations.

A building services consultancy with the necessary expertise in this area has been asked to look at the issue and come up with possible options. A brief note on each of three options is attached to the report.

The consultant is recommending the third, most expensive option, at an estimated cost of some £65,000. It is worth emphasising the point made by the consultant that the system is designed to cope with external temperatures of 28C / 50% humidity as the "industry norm" for this country. A system that was designed to cope with external temperatures up to 35C, (still a rare event) would add an estimated £10,000 to the cost of option 3.

However, the consultant is also suggesting

"If finances are an issue then Option 1 should be considered as this option will improve the environment considerably, and as a cheap alternative this may be the best way forward in the short term where the improvements can be assessed. Should it be necessary to install the new Air Handling Unit plant at a later date then the work carried out under Option 1 would not become redundant as this forms part of the works under Option 3."

Option 1 could be achieved for an estimated cost of £10,000.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The environment within the Council Chamber can be quite uncomfortable, particularly when large numbers of people are present, and this is clearly not good for concentration. While mitigation of the problem is achievable at a relatively modest cost of an estimated £10,000, the full solution represented by Option 3 would cost an estimated £65,000.

Members are invited to instruct the Officers as to which option should be pursued, if any.

If either option 1 or option 3 is preferred, then Members will need to decide whether the works should be included in the 2007/08 capital programme or be the subject of a request to the Council for a supplementary capital estimate in 2006/07.

Director of Resources