

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – TUESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2018

ADDITIONAL ITEM

Title of report	PROVISION OF FUNDING TO UPGRADE FIRE ALARM AND DOOR ENTRY SYSTEMS TO THE COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community No
Contacts	<p>Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services 01530 454819 glyn.jones@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454707 tracy.bingham@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Housing and Property Tel: 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To seek Cabinet approval to use £78k of the forecast 2018/19 underspend to fund the balance required to install new fire alarm and door entry systems to the Council offices in 2018/19.
Reason for decision	To ensure the office building is protected by resilient and modern security and fire alarm systems, and the risks associated with a failure of either existing system are mitigated.
Council priorities	Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The installation of these new systems will be managed using existing resources. Allocating the required £78k from 2018/19 forecast underspend on the General Fund will remove the need for the £110k provision currently shown within the draft 2019/20 Capital Programme.
Link to relevant CAT	None

Risk Management	The new systems will significantly reduce the risks associated with failures of the existing fire alarm and door entry systems.
Equalities Impact Screening	The new systems will increase the efficiency of accessing the building and managing any incidents, giving more time to address any mobility related issues for occupants
Human Rights	None
Transformational Government	None
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	None
Recommendations	THAT CABINET APPROVES THE USE OF £78K FROM THE FORECAST UNDERSPEND IN 2018/19 TO BRING FORWARD THE INSTALLATION OF REPLACEMENT FIRE ALARM AND DOOR ENTRY SYSTEMS TO THE COUNCIL OFFICES TO THE CURRENT FINACIAL YEAR.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following a survey of the Council office building in 2017/18, the replacement of the existing fire alarm system to the was identified as a Category 1 (urgent) requirement, as although it was operating adequately the supply of parts could no longer be guaranteed on a timely basis because of its age.
- 1.2 A provision of £30k was made in the 2018/19 budget for its replacement, and a specification created for a modern system, to ensure that we can maintain a fully fire safety compliant working environment for staff and visitors to the Council Offices.
- 1.3 In early 2018 we were advised by the suppliers that the current door entry control system (known as Cotag and provided by Spectra) was coming to the end of its life as a supported system in 2020. This system controls and monitors all day to day access to office areas by staff, ensuring protection from unauthorised persons and potentially violent customers. Historically the software has not been upgraded by the Council as newer versions have become available, so any faults are now resolved through the engineers having to recall

how the older system works. This represents a significant potential risk should there be a system failure and the engineers with knowledge of our version not be available. In the event of the door entry system failing, our only options would be to have uncontrolled access to the private office areas through unlocking all of the internal doors, or to provide individual keys to these doors to all staff. Both of these options are considered to present an unacceptable Health and Safety risk to the occupants of the building.

- 1.4 As a result of this new information regarding the door entry system we amended our approach to the fire alarm procurement process to procure the two systems for installations together. This approach will achieve financial efficiencies as a result of reducing installation costs, and minimise disruption within the offices. The new combined system will provide real time reporting information for use in managing evacuations, and much greater flexibility regarding locking down the various access points to the building in response to any incidents. It will also include the option to make broadcast messages to all rooms in the building, so in the event of a power failure (as we experienced recently) one message could be shared across the building when email is not available.
- 1.5 A fully compliant procurement exercise was conducted and a contractor selected to complete the replacement of both the door entry and fire alarm systems to the building at a total cost of £108k, against a forecast cost of £140k. A budget provision for the estimated balance required to fund both systems was included in the 2019/20 draft Capital Programme budget.

2.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 A number of faults with fire alarm sounders around the building (which are being replaced) has resulted in the timetable for installation needing to be brought forward, to avoid a situation where the system could fail, and we would have to introduce a manual alternative system.
- 2.2 On the 27 November 2018 there was a total mains power failure to the building and surrounding properties. This resulted in all the internal doors with magnetic locks defaulting to a locked position after the battery backup was exhausted, meaning that the doors would allow people out of the building but not in. Although most staff had left the office the fault prevented those managing the power cut from moving around the building to confirm if anyone was still inside. This was considered to represent an unacceptable level of risk, and therefore the installation of the new systems is recommended to be brought forward.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The original forecast budget requirement was £140k for both systems, but following the completion of the procurement process this requirement has been confirmed as £108k.
- 3.2 An existing Capital provision of £30k exists within the approved 2018/19 Capital Programme, leaving £78k to be funded.
- 3.3 A provision for the remaining forecast funding requirement (£110k) was planned to be sought from unsupported borrowing as part of the Capital Programme for 2019/20, and proposals are therefore contained with the draft General Fund Capital Programme 2019/20. The additional funding required has now been confirmed as £78k (not the

forecast £110k). Given the associated risk of system failure, it is proposed that the upgrade works are funded in year, utilising the additional surplus forecast on the General Fund for 2018/19.

- 3.4 The forecast underspend as at period 8 is £720k against the budgeted position of £299k. Utilising the required £78k in 2018/19 will take this forecast to £642k.
- 3.5 If this proposal approved, the provision of £110k within the current draft Capital Programme budget for 2019/20 can be removed.
- 3.6 It is therefore the professional opinion of the Head of Property and Housing that we must bring forward the installation of the door entry and fire alarm systems to 2018/19. A fully compliant procurement exercise has already been completed and has identified a preferred supplier. A mobilisation can be undertaken as soon as funds to complete the work are confirmed as being available. The Head of Finance recommends that the funding proposal being recommended by this report represents the most effective way of resourcing this.