

Report to Stronger Council Select Committee

Date of meeting: 13 October 2020

Subject: Accommodation Programme



Officer contact for further information: Louise Wade

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee note the progress on the Accommodation Programme.

Executive Summary

The accommodation programme is progressing. We are now at a critical stage of the project, in confirming the design. The accommodation Programme Board continues to meet monthly to oversee the delivery of the programme and covers the following workstreams:

1. Refurbishment works
2. Infrastructure and Technology
3. Travel Plan
4. Furniture, fixtures and fittings
5. Change & Ways of Working
6. Partners and Commercial opportunities
7. Customer Service Workstream

There are also several opportunities which are managed in line with the accommodation programme looking at reducing our storage footprint, cost reduction and efficiency by outsourcing printing and posting services.

This report notes the progress made across the seven programme areas. The corporate plan provides key milestones for the full year 2020/21.

Officer responsibility for delivery has now been transferred from Sacha Jevans to Louise Wade as of October 01st 2020.

1. Refurbishment Works

The contract with ISG is now a third of the way through having completed successfully the strip out and partition removal works. With the removal of walls, the Civic has now transformed in to an open and bright space. The contractor is currently completing the mechanical and electrical installation including ventilation and running power cables. The contract is remaining on time and budget. The refurb works will be undertaken over quarters 2, 3 and 4 of 2020/21 with an anticipated completion date in quarter 1 next year. ISG are still operating on a 'covid' free environment with all appropriate policies and guidelines in place.

The consultants Gardiner and Theobald who are appointed as Cost Managers and Employers Agent are providing regular cost and quality reports reflecting the progress while raising risks with mitigation actions as appropriate. The Programme Board's decision for our people to continue to work remotely has enabled the contractor to minimise all health and safety related

risks. Most employees continue to work from home due to the Coronavirus pandemic effectively.

2. Infrastructure and Technology

The design for an audio visual (AV) solution is completed and the relevant technical specifications align with our vision to create collaboration spaces enabled by technology. We have also approved a resource booking tool that will allow us to book the appropriate space to suit our activity such as meeting rooms, desks, pool cars etc. See Appendix 1 for further information on the AV solution and meeting room booking system.

Employees have responded with positive feedback on the provision of ICT equipment which has enabled them to continue to work remotely and from home in the past few months. Specifically, in the use of Microsoft Teams as a document collaboration tool as well as for the use of video calls.

We are in the process of developing a training plan for all new tools that will be available to ensure employees are using them consistently and effectively.

3. Travel Plan

Our intention was to bring a travel report to this committee meeting and whilst we are not ready to provide a detailed report of solution, we would like to highlight that detailed discussions with the newly appointed Sustainable Transport Officer are underway. We are exploring sustainable options for travel to the office as part of the wider sustainable transport project and the use of DRT (Demand Responsive Transport). This is a bookable service which allows users to plan journeys in advance. Officers are in discussion with Epping Forest Community Transport who provided a DRT service to Princess Alexandra Hospital staff during the peak of Covid-19 earlier in the year. It is intended to run a DRT pilot scheme early next year and for which a report will be presented to Cabinet in December. The available spaces in the Civic building are currently being modelled based on both the council and commercial use of the building and considering the new effective flexibility way of working. A full travel plan proposal will be shared with members in advance.

4. Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings

The requirements for furniture and fittings are at the final stage of design. The result will be an open and modern environment retaining and showcasing the listed features of the Civic. The space will offer a mix of collaborative workspace areas for employees and Members. Our reception will become a welcoming space for our guests, partners and public. While our officers will be able to support people by appointment, our customer services will also be available and there will be self-serve stations in reception and online channels of communications all of which will be supported by Customer Services and communications.

In the next few weeks the programme team will be engaging with the Members and employees on 'look and feel' sessions to take them through the space layout, furniture, technology and colour scheme.

5. Change and Ways of working

Throughout the most recent months we have experienced a different way of working and one that has introduced greater flexibility. From October, our communications and engagement plan will focus on training and workshop delivery on how the new space can be used effectively and consistently. Our vision and objectives around 'Effective Flexibility' will be

communicated through interactive sessions, policies, standards and user guides to ensure we embed and sustain our new ways of working.



We have taken several actions to support our employees during this time including use of IT equipment and peripherals, vouchers to procure office furniture and wellbeing toolkits.

Our employees continue to embrace remote working and make full use of the digital collaboration tools available to support the public, members and colleagues. Many initiatives and quick wins have been implemented to ensure our customer services continue without disruption and are improved.

An individual has been appointed to specifically focus on the change and communications of the project with our stakeholders, including members, employees and residents. This is a critical role in the successful delivery and adoption of the project.

6. Partners and Commercial Opportunities

We are in the process of appointing Estates Agents who will be leading the marketing of the commercialisation of some of the space within the Civic offices. This will help with generating more income for the Council as well as bringing more businesses on the high street offering job opportunities. Negotiations with Partners are progressing following recent site visits. A further detailed report will be provided as part of member briefings.

7. Customer Service Workstream

It was recognised that a specific workstream to ensure the customer journey was a key focus of design and implementation was part of the programme. Ensuring that both the expected use of the civic and the digital channels of engagement ensured we were catering for all of our residents. An initial design of the journey has taken place to understand how a customer would visit the civic and discussions with the dependent workstreams to understand how these are being met and where alternative options would need to be considered.

Programme governance:

The contract sum is within the agreed 2020/21 budget approved at Full Council and is monitored via the Programme Board on a monthly basis.

APPENDIX 1 – Audio Visual Solution

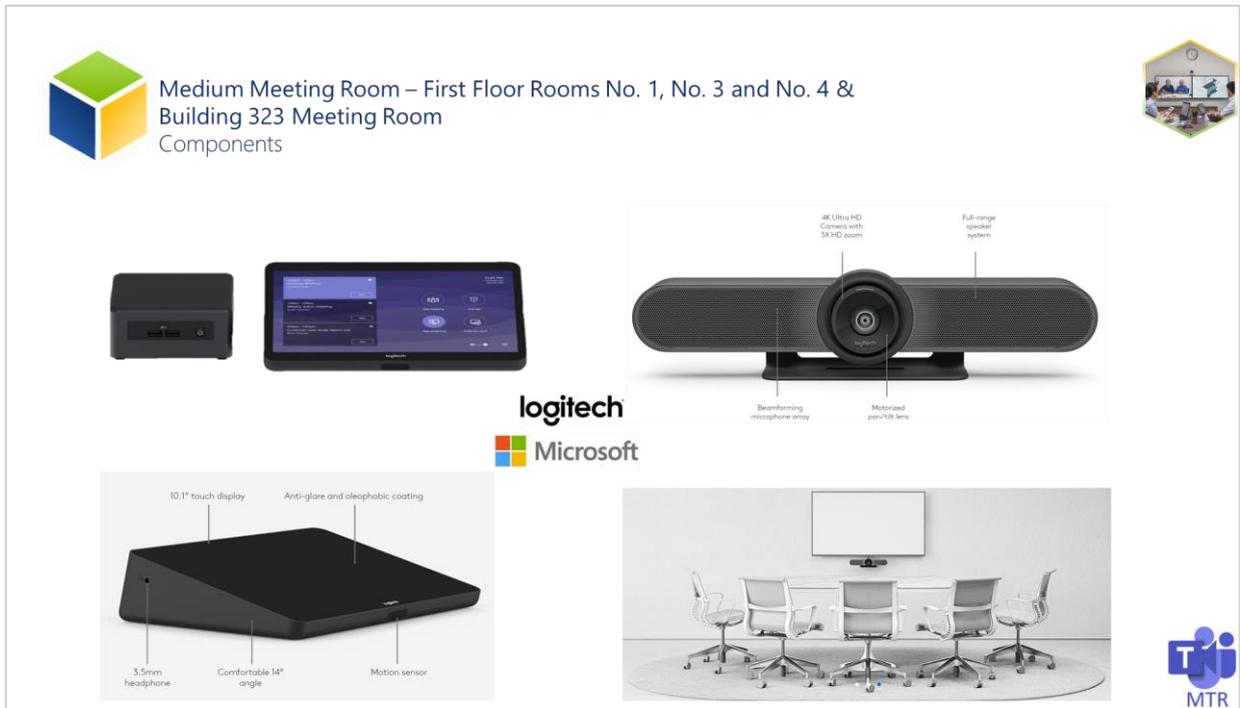


Image 1: Meeting room AV components and Teams Meeting room interface

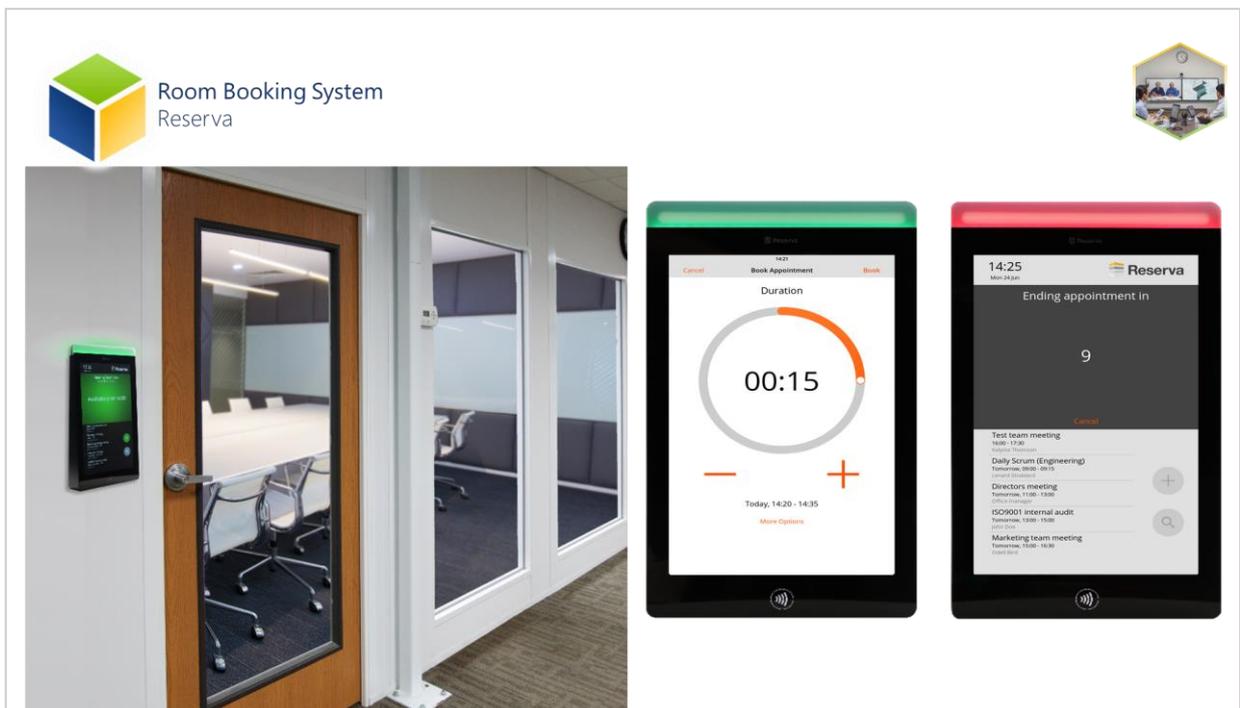


Image 2 – Meeting room booking system touchscreen



Image 3: Examples of our AV solution in meeting rooms