

Heritage Statement

Installation of IT data cable Blackpool Town Hall Council Chambers

Reason for additional IT data cable

The Council Chamber is being used on a daily basis by HM Coroner for Blackpool and Fylde to hold Coronial hearings, inquest etc which require the attendance of witnesses remotely by either video link using Teams and / or telephone as well as in person. In addition there is sometimes a requirement to play CCTV footage and other footage provided as and when directed by HM Coroner. The Coroners service also has a legal obligation to record the Inquest and current restrictions on IT connectivity make the provision of the recordings a unnecessarily time consuming process , which could be resolved by the recording equipment being connected directly into the Councils IT network.

Currently the Council chamber only has one functioning IT Port which limits the service ability to fulfil this legal role without having to utilise ports from other rooms .i.e. Mayoress Parlour and running wires/ cables through doorways, rooms etc which creates a health and safety hazard. This port is situated at the rear of the Chamber. In addition it restricts the ability of solicitors/ barristers who are attending to utilise their own IT for the purpose of participating in the Inquest fully.

Following consultation it was agreed that the most effective way of providing an effective and professional service is to install additional ports at both the rear of the Chamber and at the front where the Coroner sits when conducting an Inquest.

Type of System to be installed

In order for Blackpool Council to webcast successfully from the council chambers, additional 5mm IT data cables will installed with an MK K5091 pbs flush brass plate, a Hellerman RJ45 module data outlet and a surface back box painted powder coated to match the back box of the existing twin switch socket.

Building Description

This grade 2 listed building was built between 1895 and 1900 by Potts Son and Hemming in brick and stone dressing, the Town Hall was built in a Jacobean style.

The Council Chamber on the Market Street facade is lit by four tall west facing windows and features a steeply pitched roof surmounted by a belfry.

The windows were replaced in the 1940's following damage to the originals. These represent the activities for which Blackpool is known - Education - Light Industry - Agriculture - Sport and Recreation.

This elegant Victorian room with its ornate glass ceiling is steeped in history. The panelled walls are decorated with murals depicting several chapters in the history of the Wars of the Roses, including the marriage of King Henry VII of Lancaster to the Princess Elizabeth of York.

The Council Chamber provides seating for a maximum of 100 and the horseshoe-shaped seating to the southern end of the chamber is raised on a timber framed floor upper areas are finished in linoleum. Other areas are finished in carpet.

The walls to a height of 2.4 metre's are clad with solid oak framed panelling, with the central panels being mainly oak veneered plywood edged with solid plant on mouldings. Upper panels are interspersed with decorative carved infills. The panel framing finishes at its top with a solid oak horizontal capping mould which is flat on its top edge and forms the finish to the plaster painted walls.

Description of the installation and measures taken to mitigate its affect on the internal fabric

The installation of IT data cable in the town hall chamber presents a number of challenges regarding the reversibility of the installation which includes additional electrical and joinery fittings, and their compatibility and effect on the internal décor in particular lower upper wall surfaces, oak panelling/mouldings and ceiling and floor finishes.

The electrical IT data cable is proposed to be installed below existing carpet coverings without fixing and into the existing chamber desk. Only minor holes has to be drilled through at the rear and bottom of the table partitions to allow cables to pass through in a horizontal direction to the speaker's position. The carpet covering is not existing and all cabling can be withdrawn /removed without having a detrimental effect on existing floor and wall surface finishes.

The low voltage data cables will run vertically from floor level to the top of the oak panelling, being terminated into the existing trunk, fitted to the top of the horizontal top frame mould to minimise the visual effect of exposed horizontal cable. The mini trunk

is in dark brown plastic with detachable top access capping was fixed using an adhesive tape on top of the oak panel mould, being positioned close to the wall, its visual impact is mitigated to any observers sight line as its colour blends partly with the shadow created by the projection of the oak moulding. The trunk is also easily removed without having any mechanical fixings.

The cable is to be clipped to the underside of the ceiling plaster moulding and penetrate through the ceiling into the public gallery area. All cabling can be withdrawn /removed without having a detrimental effect on existing ceiling finishes as the ceiling can be made good.

On the 2nd floor, the cable will be hidden in the roof voids and can be easily removed without any effect on the building.