

Title of meeting: Resources Portfolio Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 12 October 2017

Subject: Report on Broadcasting Council Meetings

Report by: Director of Customer and Communication

Wards affected: N/A

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: Yes

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report is to comply with the resolution passed at the Council Meeting held on 21 March 2017 when Notice of Motion b) - Transparency in Council Meetings - was referred to the Cabinet Member for Resources to consider a report on the broadcasting of cabinet and committee meetings with a request to report back to Council.

2. RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet Member for Resources

Recommends to Full Council

- (1) That the broadcasting of Cabinet/Portfolio and Full committee decision meetings, together with the Scrutiny Management Panel, be web streamed with effect from 1st November 2017, thus allowing the necessary notices and meeting room changes to be made after the Full Council decision**
- (2) That the web-streaming of themed scrutiny panel meetings be referred to Scrutiny Management Panel to assess and determine for the reasons given in paragraph 3.6**
- (3) That it notes the Cabinet Member for Resources will keep the arrangements under review, including whether any refinements are needed in due course.**

3. Background

- 3.1 At a meeting of full Council on 21 March 2017, the Council supported extending the broadcasting of meetings from Full Council meetings only to cabinet and committee meetings (including all decision making and scrutiny meetings). The resolution is set out below:-

Notice of Motion (b) - Transparency in Council Meetings

RESOLVED that

"The broadcasting of Full Council meetings has been a success. Since July 2015, when live and on-demand streaming began, each meeting has been watched (at least in part) between 400 and 2500 times. This is far more than can physically fit in the council chamber and is far in excess of expectations. Council notes that the cost of recording equipment continues to fall. It also notes that members of the public now sometimes record cabinet and committee meetings and it welcomes this development: it sees it as a sign that there is unmet demand to access video of these meetings from the wider community. Council therefore resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Resources to bring forward a report on the broadcasting of cabinet and committee meetings (including all decision making and scrutiny meetings) and in the event that a change to standing orders is required the matter is referred to Governance & Audit & Standards Committee before reporting back to Council."

- 3.2 The Council Chamber has since been upgraded to enhance its capability as a fully functional Council meeting facility with wider usage capabilities and to address the previous system's increasing microphone system unreliability.

The upgrade includes:-

- A fixed wired microphone system, for members and officers, integrated with a public streaming service, with three wide angle video cameras, to allow automatic tracking to the active speaker
- A fixed wall mounted projector with hanging screen above the Lord Mayor's seat
- Integrated power distribution throughout the Chamber to allow members to use/charge mobile devices whilst in their allocated seats.
- More energy efficient LEDs and associated works - resulting in much brighter and cleaner lighting.

- 3.3 During this upgrade and in order to meet the Council's transparency agenda, the opportunity has been taken to review the facilities in the Executive Meeting Room in the Guildhall (it already has some equipment to aid those who are hearing impaired and also sound amplification). Consequently, It is intended to provide basic web streaming and audio recording facilities through the installation of a single fixed camera (which would be permanently set-up) and additional wired microphones. The latter have been acquired from another local authority, as the wireless microphones previously used in the Council Chamber were nearing the end of their serviceable life.

- 3.4 It is envisaged that all decision meetings will be web streamed from either the Executive Meeting Room or the Council Chamber in the Guildhall with effect from 1st November. In respect of the Executive Meeting Room, it will involve utilising the existing equipment previously used in the Council Chamber, until the above mentioned more permanent web streaming equipment has been installed.

- 3.5 In connection with the extension to the web streaming aspirations of the Council the cameras will be positioned so as to avoid filming members of the public.
- 3.6 In respect of scrutiny panels, which are not decision making bodies, it is proposed that the possible web-streaming of these meetings be firstly assessed by the Scrutiny Management Panel, with a view to phasing these in if the Panel determines that necessary measures are in place to ensure the themed panels are able to perform their roles without affecting the way they undertake their work. The Panels operate very differently and less formally than the Council's decision meetings. For example they regularly interview external witnesses about sensitive matters and such witnesses may not all be comfortable with the formal public transmission of their interviews, with the risk of compromising the effectiveness of a scrutiny review through being unable to elicit the requisite information. It is worth noting that the final reports from the scrutiny reviews are submitted to the Cabinet to determine which recommendations are taken forward and that these Cabinet meetings are web streamed.
- 3.7 At present, there are no facilities in the Civic Offices for live streaming or recording meetings as no room has the necessary equipment. Should a further back up meeting room be required in the Civic Offices at any time (bearing in mind there is currently no room allocated exclusively for public Council Committee meetings), a temporary tripod and camera would need to be set up and wired microphones arranged and connected up to a microphone control system which would have to be acquired. Whilst this would obviously be labour intensive and time consuming it is anticipated that such usage would be infrequent.
- 3.8 Should usage be more frequent than currently envisaged, the Resources Portfolio Holder /Council may wish to give consideration to setting up a meeting room in the Civic Offices on the same basis as the Executive Meeting Room in the Guildhall, which would overcome the inherent setting up issues mentioned and ensure that an additional reliable and quality recording/web streaming service is available.
- 4. Reasons for recommendations**
- 4.1 To address the proposals set out in the original Notice of Motion and highlight the inherent issues in respect of the scrutiny process.
- 5. Equality impact assessment**
- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 Where a local authority meeting is open to the public, any person attending is already permitted to report on the proceedings. Any communicative method can be used to report on the proceedings, including the internet, to publish, post or share the results.
- 6.2 "Reporting" includes filming, photographing, making an audio recording and providing commentary on proceedings and also allows for the use of social media.
- 6.3 In public meetings where reporting is likely to take place, aspects of the following legislation will need to be taken into account and the officers will provide the necessary guidance on agendas and at meetings. Over time, based on experience, refinements may be needed to procedures, particularly to reflect any future legislative changes. Also, there is likely to be a need to regularise Council rules to reflect the legislation, but as the legislation takes primacy and will be obviously be applied, that will not hinder implementation.
- The Data Protection Act 1998.
 - The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998).
 - Defamation law.
 - Copyright law.

7. Director of Finance's comments

None in respect of the recommendations in this report.

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Signed by:

Appendices: Nil

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
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The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by: