

**Report to:** Scrutiny Management Panel.  
5 March 2009.

**Report from:** Senior Local Democracy Officer.

**Report by:** Jane Di Dino, Scrutiny Support Officer.

## **MONITORING THE OUTCOMES FROM SCRUTINY REVIEWS.**

### **THE REVIEW OF AUDIO RECORDING OF MEETINGS AT WHICH DECISIONS ARE MADE.**

#### **1. Purpose.**

This report provides an opportunity for the Panel to receive an update on the progress made with the recommendations arising from the review of Audio Recording of Meetings at which Decisions are Made.

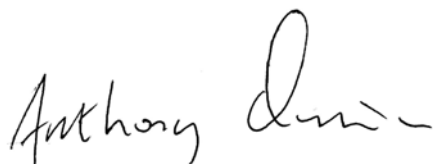
#### **2. Recommendations.**

The Panel is asked to consider whether it wishes to make any further comments regarding the progress made with the implementation of the recommendations arising from this review.

#### **3. Background.**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 12 July 2006, the Policy & Review (Oversight) Panel agreed that relevant Executive Members should be invited to meetings on a rolling basis to provide an update on the progress made with implementing recommendations arising from completed scrutiny reviews. On 25 November 2008 the Council agreed that the Scrutiny Management Panel should continue with this role under the new scrutiny arrangements.
- 3.2 The review of Audio Recording of Meetings at which Decisions are Made was undertaken by Topic Panel B between November 2005 and October 2006.
- 3.3 At the Council meeting on the 11 October 2005, a Notice of Motion regarding audio recording of council meetings was referred to the Policy and Review (Oversight) Panel for consideration.
- 3.4 On 1 November 2005 the Oversight Panel considered the notice of motion and agreed that a review of audio recording of meetings at which decisions are made be undertaken and allocated it to Topic Panel B.
- 3.5 At its meeting on 30 November, Topic Panel B agreed the following objectives: to consider the current arrangements for the audio recording of Council meetings; to consider whether the audio recording of meetings would contribute to good corporate governance; to review the types of systems available for recording meetings held in both the council chamber and the Civic Office conference rooms; to evaluate the capital and revenue costs of audio recording meetings; to assess the cost of providing transcripts of meetings; to consider the effect of audio recording on staffing resources; to consider how any recording system adopted by this council would be managed, including data protection and to consider the practices undertaken by other local authorities.

- 3.6 The Panel took evidence from key officers and the Democratic Services Manager, Isle of Wight Council.
- 3.7 The Panel's principal recommendations were that steps should be taken as a matter of urgency to improve the amplification in the council chamber by installing a new public address system that utilises boundary microphones and that the full audio recording of meetings of the Full Council should recommence and that the recording of full Executive meetings should now be introduced and that these changes should be reviewed after 12 months.
- 3.8 The report was referred to the City Council on 30 October 2006 as the review was undertaken in response to a notice of motion. At the council meeting on 19 December 2006 all the recommendations were agreed.
- 3.9 The Head of Democratic & Community Engagement confirmed that in 2008 a project specification was prepared and a tender put forward to upgrade the IT facilities in the Council Chamber and the Executive Meeting Room. This would have included a screen for the public, microphones and electronic voting. The finances for this were allocated from the Planning Service budget. However, the funding was no longer available due to budget pressures in this service.
- 3.10 Subsequently, a capital bid was submitted for the 2009/10 council budget, but was not successful due to other priorities in the Council.
- 3.11 The Head of Democratic & Community Engagement and Head of ICT Services are currently looking at a way forward.



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Senior Local Democracy Officer.

**Review of Audio Recording of Meetings at which Decisions are Made.**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Policy Framework</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
1. That steps should be taken as a matter of urgency to improve the amplification in the council chamber by installing a new public address system that utilises boundary microphones and that these changes should be reviewed after 12 months.	City Solicitor	Within policy framework	The Panel recommends that this be done effectively by installing 6-8 boundary microphones, 2 microphones for the Lord Mayor’s bench, an auto mixer, anti feedback unit and digital recorder at an approximate cost of £4,562-£7,693
2. That the full audio recording of meetings of the Full Council should recommence and that the recording of full Executive meetings should now be introduced	City Solicitor	Outside of policy framework	The Panel recommend the purchase of an additional digital recorder for use in the Executive Meeting Room at an approximate cost of £300 plus installation costs.  <b>NB: Recommendations 1 and 2 will need to include additional estimated revenue costs for operation, maintenance and management of approximately £1,725</b>
3. That the approximate costs of achieving these changes be the sum of £8,000 for capital costs, £2,500 for one off revenue costs and £2,3000 for ongoing revenue costs as outlined in the Policy and Budgetary Framework in Section 6.	City Solicitor	Outside policy framework	See other recommendations

4. That at present no other meeting of the council should be recorded	City Solicitor	Within policy framework	Not applicable.
5. That recordings of Full Council and full Executive meetings should be kept for 6 months and audio copies provided at a cost to the public upon request.	City Solicitor	Outside policy framework	Revenue cost estimated at £500 The Panel considers these could be partly offset by charge made for providing audio copies.
6. That no written transcripts of recorded meetings should be provided	City Solicitor	SO19 (h) will require revision	Not applicable.
7. That elected Members should be provided with facilities to listen to digital recordings	City Solicitor		May be possible to utilise existing IT facilities for Members
8. That a policy for ensuring the storage, management and copying of recordings in line with freedom of information, governance and data protection requirements be developed.	City Solicitor	Outside policy framework	Cost of officer time to develop policy would be contained within existing budgets but would be estimated at £2,000.

9. That Members and officers receive guidance on the effective use of any new public address system that is introduced to ensure that the decision making process is clearly represented on the recording

City Solicitor

N/a

Cost estimated at £500