

Appendix B

The head of customer, community and democratic services contacted a range of local authorities across the UK to determine their usage of webcasting of council meetings. The responses were from a range of Unitary, Borough and Metropolitan Councils.

Of the 75 authorities that were originally contacted, 23 replied. There were some positive comments in respect of webcasting, however, a summary of the key areas that were highlighted include;

- It was acknowledged that the webcasting of meetings could lead to greater transparency of meetings (excluding exempt sessions)
- Verbatim records of meetings were helpful with minute writing and providing unequivocal records of what was said at the meeting
- Webcasting has never been previously considered
- Over half of the respondents either, *don't*, or no longer use webcasting
- There does not appear to be a sound business case for capital investment to make council chambers and committee rooms suitable for webcasting
- Lack of customer demand for webcasting
- Delays in getting archive material available online
- Resource commitments in respect of officer time and ongoing training support is prohibitive, as well as preparation time before meeting and follow up work after the meeting
- Using Twitter to inform the wider public of updates from council meetings appears to be cost effective
- Webcasting is not cost effective
- Problems with the clarity of pictures making it difficult to determine who was speaking, leading to frustration of the public
- Rapidly changing technology and low usage can lead to expensive capital investments being under utilised