

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>REPORT NO:</b>	HCCS/51/18
<b>DATE:</b>	6 September 2018
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	Head of Democratic Services
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Linda Roberts (Tel: 292221)
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Webcasting of Council Meetings
<b>WARD:</b>	N/A

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To consider the practicalities and implications of expanding the webcasting of Council meetings.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 5 July 2018 the Committee received a report on the practicalities and implications of webcasting all Council meetings.
- 2.2 The current webcasting contract with Public-i was awarded for three years with the option to extend for a further one year. The three years end in January 2019 and Members need to decide whether they wish to continue broadcasting meetings beyond that date and on what basis. Members are also asked to consider reviewing the current arrangements with a view to expanding the webcasting of Council meetings.

## **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Option 2 be recommended for approval by the Head of Corporate and Customer Services.
- 3.2 A further report be presented to Democratic Services Committee on the following:
  - (a) A review of the current arrangements for archiving recordings to consider alternative methods for longer term availability of recordings
  - (b) The Council's Webcasting Protocol be reviewed taking into consideration the Council's ICT & Digital Strategy 2017 - 2020

## REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- i. To strengthen public engagement and display openness and transparency.
- ii. To enable a proper procurement exercise to be undertaken in a timely manner.
- iii. To monitor the webcasting of Council meetings

## 4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 Webcasting of meetings is not currently a legislative requirement but is strongly supported by Welsh Government and is linked to the provisions within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to strengthen local democracy in ensuring that local authorities reach out to and engage with all sectors of the community they serve.
- 4.2 At its meeting on 8 March 2018 this Committee were asked to consider whether council meetings should continue to be webcast after the current contract with Public-i expires in January 2019 and if so on what basis webcasting services should be procured. The Committee agreed that consideration should be given to webcasting all Council meetings and that a report on the practicalities and implications of doing so be brought back to the meeting on 5 July 2018.
- 4.3 At its meeting on 5 July this Committee raised a number of issues including the following:
  - (a) **Clarification on whether archived webcast recordings could currently be accessed by Members and if so, confirmation of the procedure.**  
Archived webcast recordings can be requested from Public-i at a cost of £75 per recording.
  - (b) **Confirmation on who owned the webcast copyright and if the Council came out of contract with Public-I would they keep the webcast archives.**  
The Council owns the copyright of the webcasts. Public-i only retains any archives during the contract period. Public-i have recently indicated that they will be deleting their archive records, but before doing so they will make provision for the Council to bulk export webcasts direct from their servers free of charge. They are currently working on the functionality of this which should then be available in the next few weeks.
- 4.4 On 5 July the Committee also established a Task and Finish Group to consider the webcasting issues raised in more detail. The Task and Finish Group met on the 15 and 29 August.
- 4.5 On 15 August officers from the ICT department attended the Task and Finish Group to explain what would be required to provide a webcasting service in-house. The current lease contract has advantages in providing the equipment together with maintenance support which would need to be factored into any in-house solution. The Task and Finish Group recognised that this was not a viable option to pursue due to a number of issues including lack of resource to provide such a service in-house and the Council's ICT Strategy which is the purchase of hosted solutions.

- 4.6 The Task and Finish Group considered whether a transcription service was possible to aid availability of meeting content. At present there is a free service provided through Public-i. This provides an uncorrected automatically generated transcript. This has been tested by our Committee Services Team but does not provide a sufficiently accurate transcript for publication. There are additional services available to purchase but these are prohibitive at present in terms of officer time required to provide manual corrections or in terms of cost for a third party to correct the transcripts.
- 4.7 In addition the Task and Finish Group reviewed the archiving of webcasts and considered how other Authorities are dealing with this issue. At present our webcasts are available for public viewing for a period of 6 months after broadcast through Public-i. The Group looked at the possibility of a dual system for storage of webcasts, considering 6 months availability through Public-i together with use of the Council's YouTube channel to make webcasts available for longer. The advantages of Public-i include the provision of index markers during the recording providing a link to particular speakers during debates and the integration with the Council's Mod.Gov applications allowing access to the relevant reports. These facilities are not retained when uploading recordings to YouTube, as the recording appears as a whole broadcast with no additional functionality. When using YouTube to store webcasts there is a potential for video clips from recordings to be used elsewhere. If this route is pursued, it will also be necessary to consider a back-up of recordings in case YouTube became unavailable.
- 4.8 When considering such changes, it would be necessary to review our current Webcasting Protocol which currently provides notices that footage will be on the website for 6 months. The current Webcasting Protocol was approved by Council 21 May 2014. A review could also consider updating the terms and conditions for the use of clips subject to the Council's copyright e.g. to limit when material can be adapted, altered or manipulated. Such a review would also take into account the Council's ICT and Digital Strategy 2017-2010 which includes:
- We will follow the principles of 'open data' and 'data transparency' making more public data available online, enabling others to share and use that data and increasing the transparency of the Council by allowing stakeholders to understand the reasons for the decisions we make (para 4.5).*
- 4.9 The Council's webcasting equipment is located in the Council Chamber and it would require the relocation of all meetings to this room and the practicalities of extending a full webcasting service to all Council meetings relate in the main to the use of the Council Chamber. An evaluation of the draft calendar of meetings for 2018/19 has identified that the majority of meetings could be accommodated in the Council Chamber, however having regard to the preparatory work required prior to a webcast meeting it is advised that holding two or more webcast meetings on one day should be avoided. It should also be noted that there will be less flexibility to change dates/add additional meetings once the calendar has been agreed for the year.
- 4.10 An alternative option considered by the Task and Finish Group is to install a separate smaller webcast system in Guildhall Meeting Room 1 to make this available for Scrutiny Committees. One of the main limitations of the Council Chamber is the lack of media facilities for presentations so the availability of webcasting in Meeting Room 1 would provide wider options for presentations.

The indicative costs of leasing such a system from Public-i are as follows:

Year 1 £10, 038 – this would include the initial set-up costs, equipment, maintenance and support for 2 cameras, 12 microphone units plus hardware required.

Year 2 £5355.50

Year 3 £5355.50

Members are asked to consider whether to pursue this additional option and recommend to Council to decide if funding for webcasting using Meeting Room 1 should be identified.

- 4.11 As can be seen from Wrexham's viewing figures (Appendix 1) during the six month period December 2017 – May 2018 the facility is being used. The data highlights the number of actual viewers (reach) who have watched a webcast. It should be noted that viewing by Council Officers is also captured in the data. An analysis of the viewing data has identified that the majority of viewers access the webcasts during the month that the meeting was broadcast and the following month.
- 4.12 The following options relating to the current provision in the Council chamber are presented for consideration:

### **Option 1**

Take up the option, under the current contract, to extend it for a further one year up to January 2020. Webcast all Full Council, Executive Board, both Planning Committee meetings and a maximum of 10 hours for Scrutiny Committees with the facility to broadcast meetings in English and Welsh.

**6 month archive facility £14059**

**12 month archive facility £14837**

### **Option 2**

Option 1 plus the facility to purchase additional bundles of 20 hours, as required throughout the 12 months, enabling more Scrutiny Committee meetings to be webcast.

**Option 1 costs for 80 hours plus**

**Additional bundles of 20 hours @£560 for 6 month archive facility.**

**Additional bundles of 20 hours @£755 for 12 month archive facility.**

### **Option 3**

Take up the option, under the current contract, to extend it for a further one year up to January 2020. Webcast all Full Council, Executive Board, both Planning Committee meetings and all Scrutiny Committee meetings with the facility to broadcast meetings in English and Welsh.

**Option 1 costs for 80 hours plus**

**Additional 120 hours with 6 month archive facility £3360**

**Additional 120 hours with 12 month archive facility £4530**

## **Option 4**

Take up the option, under the current contract, to extend it for a further one year up to January 2020. Webcast all public Committee meetings, with the exception of Environmental Licensing Committee/Licensing Committee i.e. Full Council, Executive Board, both Planning Committee meetings, all Scrutiny Committee meetings, Audit Committee, Democratic Services Committee, Standards Committee and Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee meetings (when held at the Guildhall), with the facility to broadcast meetings in English and Welsh. **Option 1 costs for 80 hours plus Additional 150 hours with 6 month archive facility £4200. Additional 150 hours with 12 month archive facility £5662.50**

4.13 Members are asked to consider recommending Option 2 above for approval for the following reasons:

- The 12 months can be used as a trial period to assess and be better informed about which meetings and how many hours would be required in any new contract
- Any new additional legislative burdens which may be placed on Councils are yet unknown, particularly in relation to remote attendance, and it is considered prudent not to enter into a new longer contract at this time given that any new contract could potentially require provision for this service.
- A 6 month archive facility through Public-i is considered a reasonable period for the webcast to be available electronically. The assessment of viewing figures also identified that the majority of views were during the month the meeting was broadcast and the following month. Further exploration of alternative methods may result in more cost effective long term storage rather than paying for each hour archived through Public-i.

4.14 All six North Wales authorities use Public-i and Appendix 2 identifies the meetings each Council has broadcast over the six month period December 2017 – May 2018.

4.15 Given that all 6 North Wales authorities use the same system, enquiries are being made as to whether it would be possible to work on a collaborative basis in procuring webcasting services on a regional basis. Such approach would also need to take into account any guidance or legislation issued regarding future webcasting services.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Policy Framework** – The webcasting of Council meetings supports the vision in the Council Plan of being a strong and inclusive community leader and the Council's guiding principles in putting citizens at the centre of everything we do by facilitating greater access to Council meetings thereby supporting the Council's priority of Organisation in terms of public engagement.

5.2 **Budget** – Funding from the Council's cash limited budget has been limited to the provision of webcasting facilities for the current level of service for the period of the contract which is for three years commencing 5 January 2016. Any increase in the

current level of service/cost will require budget to be identified/compensating savings to be made.

- 5.3 **Legal** – Webcasting is not currently a legal requirement but the draft Local Government (Wales) Bill which was published for consultation on 24 November 2015 includes a requirement for proceedings of any meeting open to the public to be broadcast electronically. This provision is retained in the recently published White Paper Consultation – Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed. Webcasting records images which identify individuals and falls under the GDPR definition of personal data. The GDPR Storage Limitation Principle states that personal data shall be kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed. This principle will need to be taken into account when reviewing the Council’s Webcasting Protocol and the retention or archived webcasts.
- 5.4 **Staffing** – The adoption of the current system has resulted in a need to refocus the role of the Committee team who have responsibility for ensuring the proper working of the webcasting equipment in the Council Chamber. In addition there have been implications for staff in the Facilities Management team who are responsible for the room layout and microphones. The proposal to continue with arrangements similar to those currently in existence will not have staffing implications although alternative arrangements would require additional input from ICT officers and the Facilities Management team.
- 5.5 **Equality/Human Rights** – The webcasting of Council meetings improves access by members of the public to Council meetings by enabling them to follow proceedings without having to attend in person, although this will not assist those in poverty who do not have access to the necessary technology. An EIA has been carried out under reference CCS/EIA00157/2017.
- 5.6 **Risks** – There are no significant risks identified in this report. The expansion of webcasting to include some Scrutiny Committees puts the Council in a better position to meet any statutory obligation to broadcast meetings which may be introduced in the future.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.
8 March 2018 – Report to Democratic Services Committee Item 8		<a href="http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&amp;MId=3751&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&amp;MId=3751&amp;Ver=4</a>
5 July 2018 – Report to Democratic Services Committee Item 5		<a href="http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&amp;MId=4002&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&amp;MId=4002&amp;Ver=4</a>
ICT & Digital Strategy 2017-2020		<a href="http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/documents/ict_digital_strategy.htm">http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/documents/ict_digital_strategy.htm</a>

**Webcast Statistics – Viewers – December 2017 to May 2018**

<b>Webcast title</b>	<b>Live date</b>	<b>Viewers</b>
Planning Committee	04/12/17	101
Employment, Business and Investment Scrutiny Committee	06/12/17	66
Executive Board	12/12/17	81
Council	13/12/17	89
Planning Committee	02/01/18	122
Executive Board	09/01/18	211
Planning Committee	05/02/18	87
Executive Board	13/02/18	167
Council	21/02/18	240
Planning Committee	05/03/18	623
Executive Board	13/03/18	130
Planning Committee	16/03/18	60
Council	28/03/18	102
Planning Committee	03/04/18	86
Executive Board	10/04/18	232
Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee	19/04/18	24
Safeguarding, Communities & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	30/04/18	65
Planning Committee	01/05/18	96
Executive Board	08/05/18	67
Council	23/05/18	526

**Number and Type of Meetings Webcast  
December 2017 – May 2018**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Meetings Webcast</b>	<b>Number of Meetings</b>	<b>Months Archived</b>	<b>Welsh Website</b>
Anglesey	Council	4	6 months	Yes
	Executive	7		
	Planning	7		
Conwy	Council	4	6 months	Yes
	Cabinet	5		
	Planning	4		
	Scrutiny	3		
Denbighshire	Council	5	6 months	Yes
	Cabinet	5		
	Planning	6		
	Scrutiny	1		
Flintshire	Council Planning	6	12 months	No
		7		
Gwynedd	Council	3	12 months	Yes
	Cabinet	9		
	Planning	4		
	Scrutiny	7		
Wrexham	Council	4	6 months	Yes
	Executive	6		
	Planning	7		
	Scrutiny	3		

Anglesey have 2 Scrutiny Committees  
Corporate Scrutiny Committee  
Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Conwy have 4 Scrutiny Committees  
Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Denbighshire have 3 Scrutiny Committees  
Communities Scrutiny Committee  
Partnerships Scrutiny Committee  
Performance Scrutiny Committee

Flintshire have 6 Scrutiny Committees  
Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Gwynydd have 3 Scrutiny Committees  
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee  
Communities Scrutiny Committee  
Care Scrutiny Committee