

**Report of Chief Officer Democratic and Central services**

**Report to Member Management Committee**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

**Subject: Protocol for Webcasting Council Meetings**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. At its meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012 General Purposes Committee agreed to proceed with a trial webcast of the November State of the City meeting as a one off event. Subject to a satisfactory trial consideration will be given to introducing regular webcasts of Council meetings in the 2013/14 Municipal Year.
2. General Purposes Committee requested that an appropriate protocol be developed and agreed by Member Management Committee in advance of the trial
3. A number of other authorities already webcast Council meetings and have developed appropriate protocols for this purpose. Following a review of those documents a draft has been prepared for application here in Leeds (attached as Appendix 1).

**Recommendations**

4. Member Management Committee is asked to consider and approve the draft protocol for webcasting meetings of Council

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report seeks Member Management Committee consideration and approval of a draft protocol for the webcasting of Council meetings.
- 1.2 Subject to its approval, the protocol will be used for the proposed trial webcast of the November State of the City Council meeting and for any future webcast meeting should the authority decide to progress with more regular webcasts in the future.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 At its meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012 General Purpose Committee considered a report on the introduction of webcasting of Council meetings.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed to trial webcasting of the November State of the City Council meeting as a one off event, subject to appropriate protocols concerning the application and use of the webcasting system being drawn up and agreed with Members in advance of the trial.
- 2.3 They further agreed that any decision to extend the trial to the 2013/14 Municipal Year be subject to their approval of the outcome of the trial webcast

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 A number of authorities webcast Council meetings and other public committee meetings and we have been able to draw on their experience in drawing up a draft protocol.
- 3.2 Members have asked questions about how the proceedings are to be filmed and edited to provide the webcast. It is important to understand that the webcast is provided from fixed camera installations which are generally linked to the sound system with set camera positions for each individual microphone. As the microphone becomes live the appropriate camera view is shown. No editing or adjustments are made. The video simply records and broadcasts the speakers as the meeting progresses.
- 3.3 As the camera operation is fully automated there is no requirement for protocols relating to filming or editing the webcasts. However, most authorities have developed protocols relating to a number of other issues.
- 3.4 Protocols developed by a number of authorities have been considered and used to develop a draft protocol for Leeds and a copy of the draft is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 Elected Members have been consulted through General Purpose Committee and through this report to Member Management committee.

4.1.2 The City Solicitor has been consulted on the legal issues relating to webcasting of Council meetings and the draft protocol proposed in this report.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 The report to General Purpose Committee referred to benefits which webcasting may bring to people with disabilities and other parts of the community who may be unable to attend meetings but, through this medium, may be able to have access to the proceedings.

## **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 Webcasting of Council meetings could make an important contribution in promoting local democracy and increasing community engagement by enabling more citizens to have greater involvement in the democratic process.

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The report to General Purpose Committee considered the related resources and value for money issues.

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 The report to General Purposes Committee identified that it would be necessary to develop a protocol in relation to webcasting Council meetings. This report and draft protocol deals with the relevant legal implications.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 The risks associated with the implementation of a project of this type have been considered as part of the implementation plan. The development and approval of this draft protocol should reduce any potential legal risks.

## **5 Recommendations**

5.1 Member Management Committee is asked to consider and approve the draft protocol for wecasting meetings of Council.

## **6 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

6.1 Report to General Purposes Committee 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012 “ Webcasting Council meetings”

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

## **Draft Protocol for Webcasting of Council Meetings**

### **Introduction**

The Council has agreed that certain meetings should be the subject of live web transmission 'webcasting'. Fixed cameras are located within the Council Chamber for this purpose.

This protocol has been produced to assist the conduct of webcast meetings and to ensure that in doing so the Council is compliant with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Accordingly the following will apply to all meetings to be webcast by the Council:

### **Main Provisions**

The Chair of the meeting has the absolute discretion to terminate or suspend the webcast at any time and for any reason which the Chair deems reasonable. Such circumstances where the Chair may deem suspension reasonable may include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Public disturbance or other suspension of the meeting;
  - (ii) Exclusion of public and press being moved and supported;
2. No exempt or confidential agenda items shall be webcast.
3. Subject to paragraph 4 below all archived webcasts will be available to view on the Council's website for a period of six months.
4. Archived webcasts or parts of webcasts may be removed from the Council's website if, in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer, it may prejudice the council's or the public's interests. Content may also be removed if the Monitoring Officer considers that it is necessary because all or part of the content of the webcast is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision or common law doctrine, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information.
5. Any elected Member who is concerned about any webcast should raise their concerns with the Chief Officer Democratic and Central Services.

## **Agenda front sheets and signage at meetings**

6. On the front of each agenda and on signs to be displayed inside and outside the meeting room there will be the following notice:

### **Webcasting Notice**

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the County Council's website on the internet - at the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes by the Council.

Generally the public gallery is not filmed. However, by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Chief Officer Democratic and Central Services.

## **Conduct of meetings**

7. At the start of each meeting to be filmed, an announcement will be made to the effect that the meeting is being, or may be, webcast and the Chair will make the following statement:

'May I remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live via the internet and the record archived for future viewing.'

## **Other recording or broadcasting of meetings**

8. This protocol does not affect existing restrictions on recording in the Council's Constitution and no form of photography, filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings (other than webcasting for the Council's purposes) shall take place unless the Chair gives permission before the meeting.

## **Cessation of webcasting for private sessions**

9. No part of any meeting held will be webcast after members have passed a resolution excluding the public and the press because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information. The clerk of the meeting will ensure that filming and/or recording of the meeting has ceased and will confirm this to the Chair of the meeting before any discussion of exempt or confidential matters is commenced.