

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2020

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

WEBCASTING OF COUNCIL, CABINET AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Democratic Services Committee with an update on arrangements for the webcasting of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings and provide views on which meetings should be webcast.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives /Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate objectives / corporate priority/priorities:-

- **Supporting a successful economy** - taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all the people in the county.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human, and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

3.1 The Democratic Services Committee has the following functions and is supported by the Head of Democratic Services as necessary:

- i. Review the adequacy of provision by the Authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions, and
- ii. Make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Benefits of Webcasting Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings

4.1.1 A webcast is a transmission of audio and video over the Internet. This enables the public to view meetings from any location with internet access. It has been recognised that the following benefits can be achieved from the webcasting of public Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings:

- Transparent governance and accountability.
- Citizen engagement and understanding of the democratic process, for example understanding of planning decisions.
- Enablement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requirement for engaging members of the public in Scrutiny.
- Incentive for high standards of member attendance, engagement and conduct at meetings.
- Effective means of communicating information and decisions to officers and other members. Archived meetings can also be a useful part of officer induction and training.
- Opportunities for members to learn from peer observation and inform potential candidates about their role to encourage democratic renewal.

4.2 **Current Webcasting Arrangements**

- 4.2.1 The Council procured and introduced an innovative webcasting service for 2017/18 that combined the existing electronic facilities within the Council Chamber and available broadband technology to webcast Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings. The service arrangements included live streaming, recording and publication of webcast meetings with links to the Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) internet website.
- 4.2.2 With the previous contract expiring on 30 September 2019, the service required re-procuring and quotations were invited for the provision of webcasting services during 2019/20. Quotations were invited from 3 suppliers for webcasting services for 30 hours per annum to commence on 1 October 2019 until 30 September 2020, with the option to extend the contract for a further 12 months duration. Following the closure of the mini competition, 2 bids were received from suppliers, which were then evaluated, based on 40% Quality and 60% Commercial. On conclusion of the evaluation of the quotations, an award was made to the existing supplier.
- 4.2.3 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, which is the subject of a report on this agenda, includes a provision for the webcasting of all public meetings. In the event of that provision becoming law, officers will look during the next contract period at the feasibility of exploring alternative solutions for webcasting, namely through Skype and YouTube. It is anticipated that, subject to successful passage through the Assembly, the Bill would receive Royal Assent by the end of the Summer of 2020, with some provisions being commenced immediately and others being introduced for the start of the 2022 municipal term.

4.3 **Webcasting of meetings 2018/19**

- 4.3.1 The following webcast statistics are shown covering the 2018/19 year:

	Date	Meeting Name	Live Views	On Demand Views	Total Views
1	30-Aug-18	Development Control Committee	38	51	89
2	17-Sep-18	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3	11	131	142
3	16-Oct-18	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1	0	42	42
4	18-Oct-18	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2	22	47	69
5	18-Dec-18	Cabinet	27	31	58
6	03-Jan-19	Development Control Committee	10	28	38
7	14-Feb-19	Development Control Committee	70	72	142
8	25-Feb-19	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3	6	10	16
9	18-Mar-19	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3	10	32	42
10	19-Mar-19	Development Control Committee	55	120	175
Average Views			25	56	81
Total Views			249	564	813

4.4 Webcasting of meetings 2019/20

4.4.1 The following meetings have been webcast in 2019/20 to date and webcast statistics are shown:

	Date	Meeting Name	Live Views	On Demand Views	Total Views
1	29-Apr-19	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1	3	49	52
2	09-May-19	Development Control Committee	6	29	35
3	04-Jun-19	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1	42	64	106
4	03-Jul-19	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2	4	31	35
5	05-Sep-19	Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3	15	52	67
6	13-Nov-19	Special Cabinet	133	360	493
7	05-Dec-19	Development Control Committee	3	18	21
8	16-Jan-20	Development Control Committee	17	23	40
9	27-Feb-20	Development Control Committee	9	8	17
Average Views			26	70	96
Total Views			232	634	866

4.4.2 Democratic Services continue to work with the Communications Department to ensure that Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings that are to be webcast are promoted by the Council via its Social Media platforms to encourage citizens to view the webcasts. A link to webcasts is available on the home page of My Council on the Council's website.

4.4.3 Democratic Services are also working with the Council's webcasting services provider and Modern.gov to provide links on the Council website:

- On the 'Browse meetings' web page
- On the specific agenda page for the meeting to be webcast

4.4.4 Various forward work plans and committee work programmes have been reviewed with a view to establishing what meetings are proposed to be webcast over the next three months. In developing proposals consideration has been given to items that are considered of significant interest to the public. The following meetings are proposed for webcasting until the Annual Meeting of Council:

- Combined Meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 and 2 – 19 March 2020 (Learner Travel and Post 16 Education)
- Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 – 23 March 2020 (Working Towards Plastic Free Bridgend)
- Development Control Committee – 9 April 2020
- Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 – 27 April 2020 (Waste Management / Waste and Recycling Centres)

4.4.5 The schedule of meetings to be webcast after the Annual Meeting of Council will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

4.4.6 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to comment on the above list and provide its views on what future meetings should be webcast.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 The report does not have any impacts on Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 All financial implications contained within this report will be met from existing budgets.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That Democratic Services Committee:

- i. Note the update on arrangements for the webcasting of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings as detailed in section 4 of the report.
- ii. Comment on the list of meetings that are proposed to be webcast as detailed in section 4.4.4 of the report and provide its views on what future meetings should be webcast.

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