

Council Meetings - webcasting and ICT developments

The City of Edinburgh Council

23 August 2012

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide details of the benefits and related costs of introducing webcasting of Council meetings in response to a motion along with an update on other ICT developments supporting increased accountability and public participation for Council and Committee meetings.

2 Main report

- 2.1 At its meeting on 28 April 2011 the Council approved the following motion by former Councillor Johnstone:

“To acknowledge that access to Council debates, particularly for residents who would otherwise be unable to attend, would be greatly enhanced if these meetings were webcast or podcast and calls for a report outlining costs and potential benefits, including free public access Wifi.”

2.2 Webcasting

- 2.3 A Webcast project team was established and the costs for introducing the webcasting of Council meetings for a one year pilot were investigated. The tender specification for the necessary cameras and software was drawn up, and the pilot contract awarded to Public-i, a specialist technology company with over ten years experience of webcasting within the public sector.
- 2.4 The services provided by Public-i include live transmission of Council meetings, plus the archiving and book marking of meetings. This will allow members of the public to search the archive library for specific topics, and will be linked into Council Papers On-Line (CPOL).
- 2.5 Web cams have been installed in the Council Chamber. Webcasting will be trialled at this meeting, but will not be advertised to the public. Live webcasts will commence in the Autumn, subject to completion of successful systems testing and training.
- 2.6 Drop-in information sessions for members and senior officials will be held in August 2012, followed by training sessions in September.

- 2.7 There are a number of Data Protection and Human Rights issues associated with the live transmission of Council meetings. These are addressed in the attached Protocol.
- 2.8 E-Petitions
- 2.9 To support the establishment of the petitions committee e-petitions are being developed in order to allow petitions to be submitted online. This will provide a simple, efficient and direct method for members of the public to raise an issue with the Council and will use the existing technology available on the Council website. Guidance will be provided on how to use e-petitions on the Council's website.
- 2.10 Wi-fi & ipads
- 2.11 To support the electronic distribution of meetings papers, a wi-fi network for elected members was installed within the City Chambers in June 2012 and is fully operational. Separate systems for officers and for the public are being developed and will be available in the near future.
- 2.12 The development of the wi-fi network has facilitated the roll out of ipads to Councillors. Ipads have been provided to Councillors and Senior Officials to utilise at Council and Committee meetings as an alternative to paper copies of reports. This initiative aims to embrace the use of technology, reduce the Council's impact on the environment and cut the costs of running committee meetings.
- 2.13 The use of ipads has been undertaken on a phased basis alongside paper copies. It is now expected that paper copies of Council and Committee reports will be phased out as the use of ipads increases.
- 2.14 E-Voting
- 2.15 Potential options are being investigated to provide an electronic system of voting for Council and Committee meetings. This aims to provide a fast, efficient and transparent system of voting. Any further developments of the system will be reported to the Council.

3 Financial implications

- 3.1 Webcasting: The total cost for the pilot year is £30k, £17k of which would be ongoing costs should the pilot be extended into a second year. Staff support, both for project development and ongoing, will be met from existing resources.
- 3.2 Wifi and Ipads: the total cost of ipads was £18,000 and this was met within existing budgets. Savings from the reduction in printing costs for committee papers is currently being determined but will significantly exceed the initial outlay.
- 3.3 E-Petitions: the existing website is being updated by staff in the Web Team within the Communications Service and the staff costs will be met from existing resources.

4 Equalities impact

4.1 There are no equalities implications as a result of this report.

5 Environmental impact

5.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

6 Recommendations

6.1 To note the ICT developments in relation to both Council and Committee meetings.

6.2 To note the progress with webcasting Council meetings, and agree to progress to live transmission in Autumn 2012 at the earliest, subject to successful completion of user acceptance testing, and appropriate training being provided to all members and relevant officers.

6.3 To approve the Webcasting Protocol and its application at Council meetings, commencing in Autumn 2012.

6.4 To note a report will be provided at the end of the pilot phase of the project making further recommendations on the future scope and application of webcasting.

Alastair D Maclean
Director of Corporate Governance

Appendices	Appendix One: City of Edinburgh Council – Protocol for Web Casting of Council Meetings
Contact/tel/Email	Carol Campbell. Acting Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance Tel: 0131 529 4822 Email: carol.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk Kirsty-Louise Campbell, Corporate Governance Tel: 0131 529 3654 Email: kirstylouise.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk Allan McCartney, Corporate Governance Tel: 0131 529 4246 Email: allan.mccartney@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	National Outcome 15 - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
Background Papers	None

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

**PROTOCOL FOR WEBCASTING OF
COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Introduction

The City of Edinburgh Council ("Council") has agreed that certain meetings should be the subject of live web transmission ('web casting'), or recorded for subsequent transmission. Fixed cameras are located within the Council Chamber for this purpose. Items in Part B of any Agenda will not be web cast. This protocol does not affect existing restrictions in the Council's Standing Orders on the recording, photographing or filming of proceedings by any person other than the Council.

Main Provisions

This protocol has been produced to assist the conduct of web cast 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 web cast by the Council:

1. The Lord Provost has the discretion to terminate or suspend the webcast if in his opinion continuing to web cast would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Circumstances that could lead to suspension or termination of web casting include public disturbance or other suspension of the meeting or the potential infringement of the rights of any individual.
2. No exempt or confidential (Part B) agenda items shall be web cast, and no part of any meeting will be web cast after the Council has voted to exclude the press and public because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information.
3. Subject to paragraph 4 below all archived webcasts will normally be available to view on the Council's website for a period of one month.
4. Archived web casts or parts of web casts shall only be removed, prior to one month after the meeting, from the Council's website 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 law, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information.
5. The Council owns the copyright in the webcasts.
6. Any elected Member who is concerned about any webcast should raise their concerns with the Director of Corporate Governance.
7. Data containing personal or confidential information will not be retained or archived.
8. Children will not be filmed.

Agenda Front Sheets and Signage at Meetings

Included in 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 Council's internet site – at the start of the meeting the Lord Provost will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Generally the public seating areas will not be filmed. However, by entering the Council Chamber 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 or training purposes.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Committee Services on 0131 529 4105 or Committee.Enquiry@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Conduct of Meetings

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 web cast, and that the Lord Provost may also terminate or suspend the web casting of the meeting, in accordance with this protocol. This will be confirmed by the Lord Provost making the following statement:-

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet and will be capable of repeated viewing. I have the discretion to terminate or suspend filming, if in my opinion allowing filming to continue would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting.

Members are reminded that the cameras are activated by the sound system, and that they must switch on microphones when speaking”.