Webcasting of Council Meetings

Progress update in respect of the City Council's ambition to enable Webcasting of Council meetings from the Council Chamber.

There is an ambition to webcast Council meetings to make them accessible to residents. To this end, the following solutions have been investigated and a view of each is provided.

Proposal

It is proposed that Council meetings should be broadcastable from the Council Chamber, using updated, upgraded microphones and cameras. These meetings should be accessible via social media for residents to view live or via recordings.

Current status

The Civica ModGov Meet product initially expected to be implemented for the proposal is in significant delay and does not fully meet the webcasting brief.

As of this month, we have engaged a 3rd party that specialises in webcasting and who have worked with other authorities and institutions to implement this technology. The initial brief was that it had to be easy to use, have suitable audio visual equipment to allow use of follow me cameras, wireless microphones and ability to live broadcast as well as publish recordings to social media. There is a site visit book to allow them to assess and accurately quote for the provision of this service.

Expected outcome

Civica will not be in a position to deliver their offering for at least 6 to 8 months and although it is significantly cheaper, it will not fully meet the requirement as it does not take into account the use of centralised and improved audio visual equipment to provide true live webcasting into the Chamber. Instead, it relies on the use of Members' laptops and cameras built into these. This would give a less than ideal experience for both Members participating and residents viewing the meetings.

This leaves the only option to pursue webcasting through a dedicated supplier of this technology. To achieve this, the expected spend will need to be raised and approved from an initial £30,000 to between £60-£80,000. Attached is a summary slide of the project to date.

Given the current financial pressures and the rise in the potential costs, advice will need to be sought as to where the funding will come from for this project to continue forward.

WebCasting Council Meetings

Completed during reporting period

- Meetings held with Civica and offering discussed
- Meeting held with 3rd party vendor for alternate solution
- Site visit booked for 26th April

Milestones

Assess Previous Civica Offering	March 23
Engage 3rd party for Webcasting provision	April 23
Site visit and scoping Costs	May 23
Potential fit out / training Dates	6 – 8 weeks post procurement

Issues and Risks

- Civica offering does not fully fit the webcasting brief. Product is still in it's development stage having had a set back of over a year
- A webcasting solution for the Council chamber will be expensive – 60-80k. Benefit vs cost needs to be a consideration when moving forward to an agreed solution

Next Steps

- Third party to visit site and scope hardware requirements
- Costs provided for review
- Procurement cycle
- Fit out - incl Training – testing

Plan Variance?	• Dependent on solution cost could rise from 15k – to 80k	🟡
Next Milestone?	• Site visit from Webcasting company	🟢
Budget?	• initial Civica estimate was 10 – 15k. Webcasting solution will be Circa 60-80k	🟡