

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET – 8 AUGUST 2017  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE)

WEBCASTING AND RECORDING OF MEETINGS

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that its democratic decision-making process is open and transparent and that meetings are accessible.
- 1.2 Webcasting is a method of removing barriers to accessibility and improving engagement by providing members of the public with the opportunity to watch meetings on their laptops, mobile phones or other devices.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Cabinet agrees to waive Contract Procedure Rules to allow the award of a three year contract to Nuway Ltd to provide a webcasting and recording service for meetings in the Council Chamber based on 100 hours per annum with effect from 1 September 2017.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 On May 19 2016 the Council Chamber was opened and almost all meetings of the Council are now held in this venue.
- 3.2 When the work on the Council Chamber was commissioned, it was intended that arrangements would be made for the webcasting and recording of meetings and to “future proof” the new Chamber as far as possible live streaming facilities were considered at the construction stage rather than at a later date. Some provision was made for this as part of the project so that the small amount of additional equipment needed could easily be added, but was not included and subscription to a streaming service is also required to enable implementation.
- 3.3 Webcasting and recording of meetings will enhance the service provided to customers and the public. The system will be operated within existing staff resources.
- 3.4 Webcasting of meetings may result in greater community engagement by encouraging interest in the decision making process and highlighting opportunities for the community to speak and make their feelings known.
- 3.5 There has been media and resident interest on several occasions about the introduction of webcasting of meetings.

- 3.6 At the Council meeting on 21 November 2016, there was a question from a member of the public asking when webcasting and recording of meetings would take place and the Leader advised that quotes were being obtained and the service would be introduced once a preferred supplier was chosen (Minute 26.2 refers).

### **Implications**

#### **4 Legal Implication(s)**

- 4.1 The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 were introduced to make decision making more open, accountable and transparent to the public and webcasting and recording meetings will meet this aim.
- 4.2 Webcasting and recording of meetings would be in addition to the publication of Minutes.
- 4.3 The Minutes of the meeting would still form the Council's statutory record of the meeting.

#### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 Nuway Ltd, the company which the Council selected for the supply and maintenance of the audio visual equipment already in use in the Council Chamber have provided a quote to now also supply the webcasting and recording service. Following market research and discussion with colleagues in other authorities, it is considered to be favourable and cost-effective and in the best business interests of the Council for them to supply this service, so avoiding any integration problems between two different systems and the frustrations of identifying respective responsibilities between the two.
- 5.2 In accordance with the quote received if accepted, the revenue budget cost in 2017/18 will be £10,810, this being £7, 980 for the annual cost of webcasting and recording meetings based on 100 hours per annum for hosting and supporting the service, plus a one-off initial mobilisation cost of £2, 860 for installation, set up and training and an ongoing revenue cost of £7, 980 in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 5.3 No new budget has been allocated for this proposal. It is proposed that the cost of starting and providing the webcasting and recording of meetings in the Council Chamber will be met from within existing budgets.

#### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:
- 6.2 To not webcast and record meetings may result in a reputational risk to the Council. High Risk.

#### **7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications arising from this proposal.

**8 Procurement Implication(s)**

8.1 This matter is referred to the Cabinet for a decision to waive Contract Procedure Rules in order to allow the award of a contract to Nuway Ltd to provide a webcasting and recording of meetings service without the requirement to obtain quotations through the e procurement portal.

**9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

9.1 There are no climate change Implications arising from this proposal.

**10 Link to Corporate Priorities**

10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority to Engage with the Community and provide Value for Money and specifically to the achievement of providing open and transparent decision making.

**11 Equality and Diversity**

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report.

11.2 It is believed that there are positive impacts in providing greater opportunities for residents to view live Council meetings and no negative impacts associated with the proposals.

Name of author	Graham Seal (01707 3574444)
Title	<i>Governance Services Manager</i>
Date	14 July 2017