



## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

## REPORT

2 June 2011

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	<b>WEBCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS</b>
<b>CMT Lead:</b>	Cynthia Griffin Group Director, Culture & Community 01708 432260
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Elizabeth Aelberry External Relations Manager, Strategy & Communications elizabeth.aelberry@havering.gov.uk 01708 432001
<b>Policy context:</b>	The Council continues to webcast as a means of making its decision-making procedures open and accessible to the wider public
<b>Financial summary:</b>	The contract and other costs will be met from existing budget provision

### The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## **SUMMARY**

Havering Council has been 'webcasting', full Council and Cabinet meetings since December 2009, in addition the new 'Ask The Cabinet' sessions are also webcast and available in the webcasting archive.

This report proposes that the Council continues to webcast as a means of making its decision-making procedures open and accessible to the wider public.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Committee approve the continued use of web casting as a tool in the Council's programme of community engagement.
2. That the Committee authorises the Head of Communications to continue broadcasting meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Ask the Cabinet over the internet, together with other sessions of interest where this has been agreed with the relevant Chairman or Cabinet Member.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

1. The committee first considered this issue at its meeting in July 2009 and again in October 2009. The latter report was approved and 'webcasting' of Cabinet and Council began in December 2009. 'Ask the Cabinet' has also been webcast since its introduction in February 2010.
2. The 'webcasting' contract is due to end in September. If members wish to end this contract there is a three month break clause, which would necessitate a decision at this meeting of the Governance Committee.
3. In total 26 meetings have been broadcast. There has been a total of 446 viewings of live meetings. Significantly more people, 4,441, have accessed the archive webcast. On average 18 people watch each meeting through the webcast and 171 access the archive material.
4. Since 'Ask the Cabinet' sessions were introduced, the number of viewings of Cabinet has increased by around two thirds. In January, for example, there were 12 viewings of Cabinet, compared to 36 in March and 30 in April.

5. The Council is committed to improving its engagement with the public, which is why the 'Ask the Cabinet' sessions were introduced. The webcasting will continue to help people understand how local democracy works, and allow them to view the process in action at a time and a place that is convenient for them.
6. Following the appropriate procurement procedures, discussions have continued with the current provider Public-i to renew the contract. The cost will be £33,554 for a two year contract – payable in two annual instalments. This will include the hire of equipment, technical support, provision for 120 hours of webcasting and unlimited downloading from the archive after the event. Given the time limitation, care will be needed to ensure that optimum use is made of the facility and therefore not every meeting can be webcast. The archive shelf life will be for six months after a given event.
7. As members will be aware, there has been a significant rise in the use of social media and there is now the technology to use 'Twitter' through webcasting as well as members being able to talk online to residents.. At its last meeting, the Committee considered advice from the Local Government Minister, Bob Neill MP suggesting that greater use be made of such social media – Members concluded, among other things, that the Council's use of webcasting obviated the need for people to use Twitter during Council meetings.
8. This additional functionality is not being recommended in this report as the Council is introducing new social media protocols and these need to be in first before a decision is made to change the webcasting contract.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and Risks**

There are no apparent direct implications and risks.

Some training in Communications and Democratic Services may be required but any costs will be met from existing budget provision.

### **Legal Implications and Risks,**

The contract between the Council and Public-i will conform to legal requirements.

### **Financial Implications and Risks**

The contract and other costs will be met from existing budget provision within the budget for Communications. This will include monitoring service use to ensure maximum value is derived from the contract.

## **Environmental Implications and Risks**

These appointments are administrative and have no direct legal, financial or environmental implications or risks. In some cases, membership of an organisation is dependent upon the Council paying a subscription: where relevant, the subscription will be met from within an appropriate budget provision.

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
--------------------------

There are none.