

## **Report to Customer Services and ICT Panel**

**Date of meeting: 14 August 2006**

**Portfolio:**

**Subject: Webcasting Pilot**

**Officer contact for further information: S G Hill**

**Committee Secretary: S G Hill (ext 4249)**



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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To receive a progress report on the Webcasting Pilot;
- (2) To consider the proposed protocol on the Webcasting system and recommend its adoption with amendments as considered necessary;
- (3) To consider measures to be introduced for planning meetings; and
- (4) To receive an evaluation of the pilot at the Panel meeting on 12 December 2006 with view to considering options for any continuation of the webcasting contract for further periods.

### **Report:**

1. The Council decided that in order to increase public access to its democratic process and agreed to implement a webcasting pilot, as part of its 2005/6 e-Government Strategy, for a period of one year by entering into a service contract with a specialist webcasting company. The value of this leasing contract was also agreed at the time and set at £17,000.
2. Since that decision officers have progressed the pilot by:
  - (i) negotiating and completing a contract for the pilot;
  - (ii) overseeing the technical installation of the webcasting system including its fixed installation in the Council Chamber;
  - (iii) implementing officer training for webcast operators;
3. The system is now live and ready to use. It is the intention that "soft" testing will commence in August with a publicised launch in September at a Full Council meeting.
4. Simon Hill, Senior Democratic Services Officer, will be present at the meeting to explain the system to members and to talk through some of the implications for the council in introducing this technology.

### **Protocol and Advice to the Public**

5. A draft protocol (attached) has been developed to set out the main provisions including suspension of webcasts. In essence, the Research and Democratic Services will agree with the Chairman that a meeting will be webcast. This is then "booked" with the service provider Public-i. the webcast will then proceed with suitable warning notices placed on the agenda for that meeting and inside and outside the meeting room and the Chairman will make an announcement at the start of the proceedings.

6. The Chairman will have the discretion to terminate the webcast as set out in the protocol. Additionally, the Monitoring Officer will have a role in determining whether webcasts are subsequently removed from the archive of available meetings.

7. Members are asked to comment on the proposed protocol.

8. As part of the pilot will include Planning Subcommitte(s) a revised advice sheet has been developed particularly aimed at avoiding defamation at meetings. This also attached for members comments..