



Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Democratic Services Committee - 16 April 2018

Webcasting & eVoting - Update

Purpose:	To provide an update on progress with the implementation of Webcasting and eVoting.
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
For Information Only	
Report Author:	Huw Evans
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Sherill Hopkins

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The “City and County of Swansea - Policy Commitments Statement” report was adopted by Council at its meeting on 27 July 2017. The “Standing Up for Council Democracy” section of that report contains a paragraph on webcasting. The relevant part of that paragraph is replicated below:

“Swansea Council will introduce web broadcasting of key Council meetings, and introduce electronic voting. It will publish a full list of elected member votes and decisions and make this freely available online.”

- 1.2 “The First 100 Days and Beyond” report was submitted for information to Council on 28 September 2017. The “Council Democracy” section of that report referred to webcasting and eVoting. The relevant paragraph is replicated below:

“Web broadcasting of key Council meetings and electronic voting. The requirement has been scoped and meetings are scheduled with suppliers to agree costs and implementation plan.”

- 1.3 The Leader of the Council has worked closely with the Head of Democratic Services in progressing Webcasting and eVoting.

1.4 This report sets out the progress to date for the implementation of Webcasting and eVoting.

2. Webcasting

2.1 In October / November 2013, the Authority trialled webcasting by webcasting two meetings of Council and two meetings of Cabinet. Following this successful trial, the Authority sought quotations for Webcasting from the Council Chamber, Civic Centre; however, these were ultimately shelved with the Council Chamber, Guildhall becoming the preferred venue for Council meetings.

2.2 On 12 December 2017, the Authority sought quotations via the National Procurement Website "Sell2Wales" for the "Supply, Installation and Maintenance for a Webcasting solution from the Council Chamber, Guildhall" with a closing date of 31 January 2018.

2.3 Three quotations were received and the tender was awarded to Civico on 9 April 2018. The contract is for one year with the option to extend for up to a further 60 months.

2.4 Discussions are ongoing on a Webcasting go live date but it is likely to be during the summer of 2018.

2.5 The Welsh Government is currently working on a Democracy Act and it is widely expected that it will legislate all Councils to webcast certain meetings. As such, the Authorities current work is likely to comply with that future requirement and also allows the Authority to be more open and transparent with regards its decision making process.

3. eVoting

3.1 The Authority's delegate mic system within the Council Chamber, Guildhall includes the capability to conduct eVoting. This was part of the refurbishment of the Council Chamber, Guildhall cost.

3.2 The Leader of the Council and Head of Democratic Services anticipate that the eVoting system will be trialled shortly for Cabinet meetings and then rolled out further for Planning Committee a little later, other Committees and ultimately Council.

3.3 Council Procedure Rule 30 "Voting" has been amended in readiness for this roll out of eVoting and the relevant sections are outlined below:

"30.1 Every question shall be determined by a show of hands unless there is an Electronic Voting system available, in which case that system shall be used.

30.2 On the requisition of any Member supported by ten other Members who promptly and together signify their support by rising in their places, the voting on any question shall be recorded in the minutes to show how each Member present and voting gave their vote or abstained as the case may be.

30.5 All results of e-votes taken at Council and any other Council Bodies will be published online but not as part of the minutes.”

- 3.4 Further discussions will be needed in order to establish what will be displayed on the screen following each vote at a meeting. It may simply be the result showing the numbers of those that voted “For”, “Against” and “Abstained” or it may show how each individual Councillor and Co-opted Member voted. The latter is a little trickier to deliver for Council as the size of the writing may be too small to view.
- 3.5 The minutes of the meeting will only include how those eligible to vote, voted if a named vote was called as outlined in Council Procedure Rule 30.2. However, the breakdown of how each individual voted, will be published online in line with the “City and County of Swansea - Policy Commitments Statement” report adopted by Council on 27 July 2017.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 There are no equality or engagement implications associated with this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. All spend relating to Webcasting has come via a Welsh Government grant of £40,000.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: None.