

MICROSOFT TEAMS/HYBRID MEETINGS/LIVE STREAMING UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the project which has seen Microsoft Teams becoming the preferred platform for meetings and gives detail on the work which is ongoing to facilitate hybrid meetings and live streaming.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to:-

- (a) Note the progress made to date in relation to the rollout of Microsoft Teams as the preferred meeting platform, including the options relating to hybrid meetings and live streaming; and
- (b) Agree that the Council will, for the time being, continue to operate by way of remote on-line meetings with a further update report to be submitted to the November 2021 meeting of Council.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 All meetings of the Council and Committees have been held virtually since March 2020. Council agreed at the meeting held in June 2021 that all meetings would now be held using Microsoft Teams following the successful introduction of Teams at the Area Committees held in June.
- 3.2 Officers from Legal and Regulatory Support have continued to work closely with colleagues in ICT to take forward the various strands involved in the project:-
- 3.3 Microsoft Teams Roll Out
- 3.3.1 The Council now uses Microsoft Teams as the preferred platform with all meetings of Strategic Committees, PPSL, Area Committees and Council using Teams.
- 3.3.2 The move to Teams has been well received and has offered a greater degree of stability during meetings. This is in part due to the way that the setup for Teams is configured with it being routed through the user's broadband rather than the Council's VPN network. Members and officers should bear in mind that in a virtual

meeting environment they are still visible to third parties. There are corporate backgrounds that can be utilised to provide a degree of anonymity for users in regard to the appearance of their location and members are recommended to use that function. The Council's Constitution advises that there is an expectation that Councillors are dressed appropriately in all situations where they are acting in the role as Councillor, including representing the Council on official business.

3.3.3 The option in Teams to use the "hands up function" has also worked well with Members utilising this option when they wish to speak/ask questions. As previously agreed the chat function has been disabled during meetings. In response to queries from Members in relation to the options for raising a "Point of Order" it has been agreed that Members who wish to do this during a meeting should speak at the relevant point without using the "raise hand" function.

3.4 Hybrid Meeting Solution

3.4.1 The equipment which will facilitate Hybrid Meetings to take place in the Council Chambers is in course of being installed and it is expected that installation and testing will be complete by mid October 2021. Once testing is complete there will be a period of training for staff and familiarisation for members which is expected to be complete by end October 2021. This will allow participants at meetings which are held in the Council Chamber to choose to either attend in person or to join the meeting using Microsoft Teams, dependent on the Council's decision in relation to amendments to the Council constitution to accommodate arrangements for hybrid meetings. This will offer much greater flexibility for Members and Officers. It is proposed to carry out a number of "mock" meetings in advance of going live with any hybrid / livestreaming of formal meetings.

3.4.2 The work to identify options for hybrid meetings in area venues continues. The Committee Team are working closely with ICT colleagues on this part of the project. We are currently investigating the options for using the software which will be provided as part of the livestreaming phase of the project to enable Hybrid Meetings to take place in the 4 areas as well as in the future allow for livestreams of the Area Committees to take place. The solution for Area Committees will have an element of mobility that is not present in the solution being delivered in the Council chambers, which is more permanent in nature, and the scope and breadth of the service will naturally differ. A further update will be provided to Council at the November meeting on the progress of this part of the project.

3.5 Council Live Streaming (webcasting) and Recording

3.5.1 The equipment to allow meetings which are held in the Council Chamber to be live streamed and recorded is in the course of being installed and it is expected that installation and testing will be complete by end September 2021. A series of training sessions will be provided by the supplier for key staff across the Council. Once training is complete, then it is proposed to carry out a number of "mock" meetings in advance of going live with any livestreaming of the formal meetings.

3.5.2 New cameras have been installed and these link with the microphone system that is already familiar to Members. The cameras will be configured prior to meetings according to the setup of the room – for example in a boardroom style for Strategic

Committees or the theatre style for meetings of Council. The cameras will move to focus on the speaker and this will be reflected in the webcast.

- 3.5.3 The webcast itself is shown on a “microsite” which is hosted by the supplier “public-i” and which will be linked to the Council website. The webcast will also link to the Council’s Committee Management System (Mod.gov) which will allow bookmarking of agenda items for ease of access – this will enable users to immediately be taken to the item of interest without the need for scrolling through the entire webcast.
- 3.5.4 The options which may be available in terms of live streaming are, depending on circumstances, as follows:-

Live Stream with all participants in the room

In this scenario all of the meeting participants will be in the Council Chamber. The cameras will be configured in line with the table setup and will link to the microphones. The webcast will be managed by the Committee Team in liaison with the Chair who will ensure that all Members are aware when the webcast goes “live”. There will be no requirement for those in the room to use their laptops or to login to Teams – this meeting will operate like a traditional meeting and Members will use the microphones as was usual practice. It will be essential for all Members to use the microphones so that speech is relayed on the livestream.

Live Stream with participants in the room and also from remote location (Hybrid option)

This option will allow for some participants to be in the Council Chamber for the meeting and for others to join the meeting from a remote location (home, other Council office or other venue). Microsoft Teams will be used by those who are participating remotely with the live stream being facilitated using the same technology as if everyone was in the room. Members who are in the Chamber will not require to login to Teams as the meeting will operate as a traditional Committee meeting with microphones being used.

The meeting will again be managed by the Committee Team in liaison with the Chair of the meeting – guidance for Chairing and participating in meetings will be issued to Members beforehand.

Live Stream with all participants in a remote location

This option would be utilised when all participants were joining the meeting from remote locations. The Committee Team would manage the meeting remotely and as with the hybrid scenario, Microsoft Teams will be used to facilitate this option with the live stream operating in a similar fashion. This option will mirror the current arrangements for meetings but with the addition of the content being livestreamed on the Council website.

- 3.5.5 Although the meeting will be available to view on the website as it is happening, the webcast recording of the meeting will only be available to view once the minutes have been uploaded to the website, this is in line with the current practice for meeting recordings.
- 3.5.6 An infographic which provides detail on the various options is attached as Appendix 1.

3.6 Timescales

3.6.1 Indicative timescales for the project so far:-

Project Element	Date	Responsibility	Status
Microsoft Teams Rollout – Area Committees	June 2021	Committee Team	Complete
Microsoft Teams Rollout – Strategic Committees	Aug/Sep 2021	Committee Team	Complete
Hybrid Equipment installation in Chambers	End September 2021	Mediascape/ICT	ongoing
Installation of Livestream equipment	End September 2021	public-i / ICT	ongoing
Testing of Hybrid and Livestream installations	Mid October 2021	Committee Team/ICT	ongoing
Completion of training requirements for staff and familiarisation for members	End October 2021		ongoing
Report on readiness for hybrid meeting solution and livestreaming / broadcasting	November Council meeting	Committee Team	Ongoing

3.7 Council Constitution

3.7.1 The Council Constitution is being updated to incorporate requirements for moving to allow remote participation in meetings and webcasting and is the subject of a separate report to Council.

3.8 Accessibility

3.8.1 As part of the Council's commitment to making meetings more accessible we have added some additional information to the Committee Management pages of the website which details how we can support people with disabilities to participate in and/or observe meetings. Developments such as subtitling and providing meeting papers in different formats are some examples of the measures that can be put in place. The move to livestreaming meetings will only enhance this offering.

4.0 **CONCLUSION**

4.1 All meetings have now moved over to Microsoft Teams as the preferred meeting platform with all meetings now being held using Teams.

- 4.2 Equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings and livestreaming is in course of being installed and it is expected that installation and testing will be complete by end September 2021.
- 4.3 Guidance on the use of the various options has been updated and will be provided to Members in advance of any move to live stream meetings. This will include the necessary permissions in terms of data sharing.
- 4.4 The delivery of the Hybrid solution and the live streaming of meetings will provide the ability for enhanced public accessibility and choice in how people attend, interact and participate in meetings of the Council.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – in line with ICT guidance that Microsoft Teams is the preferred option for the future.
- 5.2 Financial – budget has been identified and the project for the initial costs of equipment with ongoing revenue costs built into future years.
- 5.3 Legal – prior to live streaming of meetings, all necessary permissions in terms of data protection and privacy will be highlighted.
- 5.4 HR - none
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – options for subtitling of meetings will be available.
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - none
 - 5.5.3 Islands – will offer greater flexibility for access to meetings.
- 5.6 Risk – manage risk around the reliability of broadband connections which could cause difficulties in areas with limited capacity.
- 5.7 Customer Service – improving customer experience and engagement in the Council's decision making processes.

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24 August 2021

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Infographic of webcasting

Chamber Webcast – everyone in room

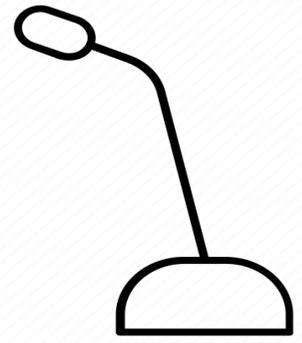
Hybrid Meeting Webcast – some in the Chamber and some in other locations

Fully Remote Webcast – everyone joining remotely

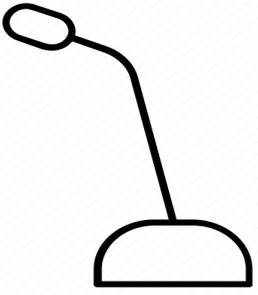
All participants

Chamber participants

All participants



Use Chamber Microphones



Use Chamber Microphones

Remote participants



Log on using Teams



Log on using Teams