

**MICROSOFT TEAMS/HYBRID MEETINGS/LIVE STREAMING UPDATE**

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**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;
- (b) Agree that the Council will, for the time being, continue to operate by way of remote on-line meetings with a view to the introduction of Hybrid meetings in early 2022 dependent on the guidance from Scottish Government;
- (c) Agree, subject to the satisfactory completion of testing that the Policy and Resources Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> December and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December will be livestreamed on a fully remote basis; and
- (d) Agree that all Strategic Committees and Council will be livestreamed from January 2022.

**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 continue 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.

### 3.4 Hybrid Meeting Solution

3.4.1 The equipment which will facilitate Hybrid Meetings to take place in the Council Chambers has been installed and is being tested. The equipment will offer the option for Members and Officers to participate in meetings without physically being in the Council Chamber. Initial issues with microphone sound were identified but these have now been resolved by the supplier. The equipment has been tested for a Hybrid meeting and works well. Training and familiarisation sessions have taken place during November with key staff. Some officer only meetings have taken place in the Chambers using the Hybrid solution and these have operated successfully. It is proposed to begin training and familiarisation sessions with Members in late November and early December.

3.4.2 It has now been identified that in order for the Hybrid meeting to make use of the cameras installed in the Council Chamber it requires a link to be established with the webcasting software. This is a more technical solution than was initially envisaged, and it is therefore suggested that training for individual service areas is carried out which will allow this equipment to be used as a corporate resource for meetings which are being held in the Council Chambers. These sessions will be facilitated by the Committee Team and will be held in early January 2022.

3.4.3 The work to identify options for hybrid meetings in area venues has also been progressing. Venues in each of the areas have been identified and ICT colleagues are now scoping out what equipment is required and preparing a business plan for this part of the project. It is hoped that there will be an option in place for the March round of Area Committee meetings.

### 3.5 Council Live Streaming (webcasting) and Recording

3.5.1 The equipment to allow meetings to be live streamed and recorded has been installed and a training session for key Committee Services staff took place with the supplier in early October. As previously advised new cameras have been installed which link with the existing microphone system. The Committee team have started the work on creating meeting layouts for webcasting that will ensure the camera pans to capture the image of the speaker in the chamber no matter what layout is being used for the particular meeting.

3.5.2 The work on the microsite which will host the webcasts is ongoing with the site layout and content being created in conjunction with the Council Communications team.

3.5.3 As a reminder for Members, the options which will be available in terms of live streaming depending on circumstances are 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”. 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 be required to use the microphones so that the sound is audible as part of the livestream.

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 are 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 Microsite which will be accessed via the Council website.

3.5.5 As previously advised 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 At the meeting of Council in September, Members agreed the amendments to the Constitution which will facilitate remote participation, Hybrid meetings and webcasting.

### **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	Complete

Installation of Livestream equipment	End September 2021	public-i / ICT	Complete
Testing of Hybrid and Livestream installations	End November 2021	Committee Team/ICT	ongoing
Completion of training requirements for staff and familiarisation for members	End November 2021	Committee Team	ongoing
Report on readiness for hybrid meeting solution and livestreaming / broadcasting	November Council meeting	Committee Team	Complete

### 3.7 Next Steps

- 3.7.1 It is proposed, subject to satisfactory completion of the final stages of testing, that officers move ahead with the trial of the webcasting capability with some of the Strategic Committees which are scheduled for December. In line with current guidance it is suggested that these meetings will continue to be held on a fully remote basis with all attendees joining using Microsoft Teams. It is intended that the following meetings will be livestreamed:-

Policy and Resources Committee – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Audit and Scrutiny Committee – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021

It is then proposed that all Strategic Committees will be livestreamed from January 2022.

### 4.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings and livestreaming has been installed in the Council Chambers with training and testing in progress.
- 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. Climate Change – will reduce the need for travel to meetings which will have a positive impact on emissions.
- 5.7 Risk – manage risk around the reliability of broadband connections which could cause difficulties in areas with limited capacity.
- 5.8 Customer Service – improving customer experience and engagement in the Council’s decision making processes.

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**APPENDICES**

**None**

