

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

7 DECEMBER 2016

**REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE HELD ON
16 NOVEMBER 2016**

WEBCASTING SERVICE

Issue for Decision

To approve use of the webcasting voting system to ensure transparency and accuracy at meetings, and that the Constitution be amended to reflect this decision.

Recommendation Made

That the use of the webcasting voting system to ensure transparency and accuracy at meetings be approved, and that the Constitution be amended to reflect this decision.

Reason for Recommendation

On 16 November 2016 the Democracy Committee considered a report updating Members on the installation of the new webcasting service provided by Public-i.

The Committee was advised that a key feature requiring consideration was the ability to vote electronically at meetings using the conferencing functionality of the new microphone units. The vote would be shown as a visual display in the Council Chamber and on the webcast.

The Maidstone Borough Council Constitution states that 'Unless a recorded vote is demanded under Rule 21.4, the Mayor will take the vote by a show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting' (Part 3.1, 21.3). The Constitution also states that 'If five Councillors present at a Council meeting, three Councillors present at a Committee or two Councillors present at a Sub-Committee meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes' (Part 3.1, 21.4). Rule 21 of Part 3.1 of the Constitution applies to Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

As such the Constitution would need to be amended to include electronic voting if Council approves its use.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

The alternative would be to continue the existing arrangements, but this is not recommended to ensure transparency and accuracy at meetings.

Background Documents

None

Note: In this connection, the following wording could be included in sections 21.3 and 21.4 of Part 3.1 of the Constitution (applicable to Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings):

Part 3.1, Rule 21.3 Means of Voting

Unless a recorded vote is demanded under Rule 21.4, the Mayor will take the vote by electronic vote, show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting.

Part 3.1, Rule 21.4 Recorded Vote

If five Councillors present at a Council meeting, three Councillors present at a Committee or two Councillors present at a Sub-Committee meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be recorded using electronic voting or taken down in writing and entered into the minutes.