

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

Report prepared by Janet Barnes
Date Issued: 25 February 2010

1. WEBCASTING

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider enhancing the webcasting service as set out in this report.

1.2 Recommendation of the Democratic Services Manager

1.2.1 That the proposed enhancements to the webcasting service as detailed in the report be agreed.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 At the Council meeting on 25 July 2007, it was resolved:-

(i) That agreement be given in principle to the public proceedings of meetings of the Council and its Committees being web-cast with the exception of the Planning Committee, Planning Referrals Committee, Licensing Committee, Licensing Act 2003 Committee and Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee; this decision to be formally reviewed in six months; and

(ii) That Overview and Scrutiny Committees may decide that a particular meeting, or part of a meeting, shall not be web-cast and that, where this is agreed, the reason should be minuted but no member of the public should be identified in the Minute.

Planning Committee have since decided to webcast their meetings.

1.3.2 Since the introduction of webcasting, the number of people viewing the webcasts has increased. Attached at Appendix A is a table setting out the 'hit' rate for various meetings for the period 1 October to 31 December 2009.

1.3.3 Following initial separate discussions with Media On Demand, our webcasting provider, and Modern.Gov, our Committee Administration software provider, a meeting was initiated between the two providers

to consider the possibility of integrating the two together so that anyone viewing the Agenda of a past meeting could click on an icon next to the Agenda Item which would take them directly to the beginning of that particular item on the webcast recording. They have confirmed that this is possible.

1.3.4 Media On Demand were also requested to look at enhancing the current webcast in the following ways:-

- Allow Agendas to be displayed within the graphics player window prior to and during live events
- In addition, content within the Modern.gov Management System will be available for displaying such as committee members names, maps, images and PowerPoint slides (this will be particularly useful for Planning Committee)
- To create index points after the event
- To show speaker names
- To increase the size of the video window

1.3.5 Media On Demand have put forward a proposal for the above enhancements at a one-off cost of £3,000 to cover the cost of the work required to make the changes to the system configuration to link with Modern.Gov. The current monthly fee will remain the same and we will be limited to 15 hours of video content per month. Over the past 18 months, we have gone over this limit on only 4 occasions.

1.3.6 To help ensure that the limit of 15 hours per month is not exceeded, the hours being used during each month will be monitored and, if necessary, meetings that have a low hit rate will not be webcast. This will ensure the most popular meetings will always be webcast. Please note that Council, Planning and Cabinet meetings will always be webcast.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Cabinet Member could decide not to enhance the webcasting service but this is not recommended as the enhancements will provide a much better service for the public and members alike and will help to increase the number of hits received.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Council seeks to ensure that its meetings are inclusive to all and this enhanced service provides a better product for the public with the service focused on the most popular meetings.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no risks involved with this report.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

X

1.7.2 Financial Implications

The one-off cost of £3,000 can be met through existing budgets and there is no increase to the current monthly payment.

1.8 Background Documents

1.8.1 None

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes No

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? _____

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes No

Reason for Urgency

N/A

How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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