

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Chief Governance Officer
to South Ayrshire Council
of 10 October 2024**

Subject: Live Webcasting of Meetings

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to reduce the number of Council meetings that are live webcast as a result of the re-establishment of in-person access to Council meetings, budget constraints and lower than expected viewing figures.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1.1 agrees to reduce the number of Council meetings that are live webcast to cover South Ayrshire Council, Cabinet, Regulatory Panel (Planning) and Audit and Governance Panel; and**
- 2.1.2 agrees to reduce the period that webcasts of Council meetings are made available for public viewing (archived) from 24 months to 12 months.**

3. Background

- 3.1 As a result of the Covid pandemic, a solution was sought to allow Council meetings to proceed where councillors, officers and members of the public could attend remotely whilst still observing the strict rules governing meetings. Following the successful implementation of the Public i platform, the Council took the decision at its meeting on 24 June 2021 to live stream remote meetings of the Council, the Leadership Panel (now Cabinet) and the Regulatory Panel (Planning) from 21 September 2021.
- 3.2 At the following Council meeting on 7 October 2021, a decision was taken to increase the live webcasting of meetings to include Regulatory Panel (Licensing), Service and Performance Panel, Partnerships Panel and the Local Review Body and to pursue hybrid meetings in line with the Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Act 2021. This would allow the return of some members to County Hall for Council meetings on a socially distanced basis. The South Ayrshire Licensing Board also subsequently decided at their meeting of 18 November 2021, to introduce live webcasting of meetings.

- 3.3 It was recognised that extending the live webcasting of hybrid Council meetings would ensure that the Council was able to meet its requirement to allow public access to Council meetings in terms of section 50A (i) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 during the Coronavirus pandemic when physical public access to meetings was not permitted.
- 3.4 As the initial contract for live webcasting of Council meetings ends early next year, a procurement process has been entered into. A framework option has been identified as the preferred route to market to appoint a supplier for this product and service. This framework is available to local authorities to procure directly from, is fully compliant with the Public Contracts Scotland Regulations 2015 and will avoid any breaks in service delivery.
- 3.5 Upon reviewing the procurement specification document, it was recognised that the situation regarding public access to meetings had fundamentally changed since June/October 2021 as in-person access to meetings had been re-instated. As a result, it was proposed that the number of meetings that are live webcast should be reviewed.
- 3.6 [Table A](#) below lists six authorities and the council meetings they record and make available online and the systems used to achieve this, three of those listed live webcast meetings. [Table B](#) below contains average viewing figures per Council meeting that have been live webcast over the period March 2022 to June 2024. It is not possible to identify those viewings attributable to officers, nor the number of repeated viewings by one individual. Having reviewed the figures, it is proposed that those meetings to be live webcast will be South Ayrshire Council, Cabinet, Regulatory Panel (Planning) and Audit and Governance Panel (chief scrutiny panel). It is expected that the combination of the reduction in live webcast hours(from 100 per annum to 78), and archive period (24 months to 12 months) would realise a small saving.
- 3.7 The intention is to renew the contract for a period of 12 months during which time officers will interrogate alternative solutions to drive out efficiencies and bring a report to Council at that time.
- 3.8 Any decision relating to live webcasting of South Ayrshire Licensing Board meetings would rest with the Board.

Table A

Meetings Recorded

Council	Method	Meetings
East Renfrewshire	Live Webcast	Council
East Ayrshire	Recorded and uploaded	Council; Cabinet; Governance and Scrutiny; and Planning
Moray	Live Webcast	Council; Corporate Committee; Planning and Regulatory Services; Local Review Body; and Police and Fire Rescue Services Committee

Council	Method	Meetings
Angus	Live Webcast	Council; Scrutiny and Audit Panel; IJB; Policy and Resources; and Council Development Standards Committee
West Dunbartonshire Council	Audio recorded and uploaded	Council; Corporate Services Committee; Educational Services Committee; Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee; Housing and Communities Committee; HSCP Board; and HSCP Audit and performance
Falkirk	Recorded and uploaded	Council; Audit Committee; Planning Review; Scrutiny Committee; IJB; Common Good Fund; and Education, Children and Young People Executive

Table B

Viewing Figures

Meeting	Average Viewings	
	Live	Archive
South Ayrshire Council	51	91
Cabinet	23	39
Regulatory Panel – Planning	20	36
Regulatory Panel – Licensing	18	29
Service and Partnerships Performance Panel	9	19
Audit and Governance	8	21
Licensing Board	8	21
Local Review Body	8	16

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the Council:

- 4.1.1 notes the progress made in the implementation of the webcasting functionality for hybrid meetings since October 2021 set out in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 above;
- 4.1.2 notes that members of the public have for some time been able to access Council meetings in person, as before;
- 4.1.3 agrees that, in view of the position as set out in 4.1.2 above, the contents of [Table B](#) in paragraph 3.3 above, and the imperative to identify savings in the current climate:

- (i) the number of live – webcast Council meetings be confined to South Ayrshire Council, Cabinet, Regulatory (Planning) and Audit and Governance Panel; and
- (ii) the archive period for webcast meetings be reduced from 24 months to 12 months.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with legal requirements .Members should also note that as the Licensing Board is a separate entity from the Council, any proposal to cease live webcasting of these meetings would require to be considered by the Licensing Board itself.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this report are consistent with procurement requirements and reflect appropriate advice

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 It is anticipated that approval of the report recommendations will result in a small one off saving of £915, when compared to the previous contract, over the 12 month contract duration commencing 22 February 2025

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

- 8.2.1 Rejecting the recommendations will increase the financial burden on the Council.

9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services.

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report

13.2 There has been limited consultation with other Councils on the methods pursued to provide online access to council meetings to members of the public, and on the number of meetings to which this applies. The information is contained within [Table A](#) at paragraph 3.6 above.

13.3 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and ICT, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Chief Governance Officer will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Restrict live webcasting of meetings to those outlined at paragraph 2.1.1 of the report	21 February 2025	Service Lead – Democratic Governance
Reduce archiving of webcast meetings from 24 months to 12 months	21 February 2025	Service Lead – Democratic Governance

Background Papers **Report to South Ayrshire Council of 24 June 2021 – [Arrangements for Webcasting Meetings](#)**

Report to South Ayrshire Council of 7 October 2021 – [Live Webcasting of Meetings](#)

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Date: 3 October 2024

**South Ayrshire Council
Equality Impact Assessment
Scoping Template**

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement under the Public Sector Duty to promote equality of the Equality Act 2010. Separate guidance has been developed on Equality Impact Assessment's which will guide you through the process and is available to view here: <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/impact-assessment.aspx>

Further guidance is available here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities/>

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from 1 April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on Councils to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. [FSD Guidance for Public Bodies](#) in respect of the Duty, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2018 and revised in October 2021. See information here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/>

1. Policy details

Policy Title	Live Webcasting of Meetings
Lead Officer (Name/Position/Email)	Catrina Caves; Chief Governance Officer

2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Age – men and women, girls & boys	-	-
Disability	-	-
Gender Reassignment (Trans/Transgender Identity)	-	-
Marriage or Civil Partnership	-	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	-	-
Race – people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities and Gypsy/Travellers	-	-
Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)	-	-
Sex – (issues specific to women & men or girls & boys) α	-	-
Sexual Orientation – person's sexual orientation i.e. LGBT+, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual/straight	-	-
α Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights & Children's Rights	-	-

3. What likely impact will this policy have on people experiencing different kinds of social disadvantage i.e. The Fairer Scotland Duty (This section to be completed for any Strategic Decisions). Consideration must be given particularly to children and families.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	-	-
Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet Basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	-	-
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies	-	-
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	-	-
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parent’s education, employment and income	-	-

4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes Consider the ‘Three Key Needs’ of the Equality Duty	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (High, Medium or Low)
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Low
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Low
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues?)	Low
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low

5. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as Medium and/or High)	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rationale for decision: This report asks members to approve a reduction in the number of meetings that are live webcast. The numbers involved are low and as such unlikely to have specific equality implications.	
Signed : ...Wynne Carlaw..... Service Lead Date: ...17/09/24.....	