

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	4th June 2013
SUBJECT	Web Casting And Remote Attendance
PURPOSE	To submit the latest information regarding the requirements of web casting, remote attendance and developments relating to the grant for Community Councils
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INTRODUCTION

1. A report was submitted to the Democratic Service Committee on 19 March noting that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 sought to promote local and inclusive democracy, and that the Minister at the time, Carl Sargeant, had noted his wish to act on this matter by means of:
 - Web casting
 - Enabling remote attendance for members
 - Working with town and community councils to ensure access to key information

2. It was also reported that the Council has signed an agreement to receive a grant of £72,000 available to Gwynedd Council, with the spending to be allocated as follows:
 - £40,000 for web casting Council meetings and allowing remote access by elected members
 - £32,000 for issuing grants of up to £500 each for community councils in Gwynedd to establish their own websites.

3. In receiving the grant, Gwynedd Council will commit to:

Do what?	By when?	Evidence
Broadcasting all or some Council meetings	31 March 2014	Broadcasts on the Council's website
Providing finance to community councils to support them to develop their websites	31 March 2014	Number of community councils with a website
Arranging remote attendance for members	31 March 2014	Written report noting number of meetings held and the success of the exercise

UPDATE

4. With regard to web casting, the developments at Siambr Dafydd Orwig have been completed, and work is continuing at Siambr Hywel Dda. The work completed thus far and that in hand will mean that we will be in a position to provide the materials to be broadcast but arrangements to arrange and support the broadcasting of those materials on the way are required.
5. At the last meeting, an initial report was submitted on the preliminary research work on the costs of bilingual broadcasts, and this research work is progressing, jointly with other North Wales authorities. The options will be in place by 15th July, and will involve buying a software package to broadcast on the pattern of other authorities (e.g. the Brecon Beacons National Park) but this does have revenue implications or, if it is possible, to develop a far more basic model that would have lower annual running costs.
6. One consideration the committee should be aware of is how we will deal with the requirements for translation. Clearly, at the moment, there is simultaneous translation at meetings when there are Non-Welsh speakers present but, if no Non-Welsh speakers are present, there is no simultaneous translation. Therefore, if there are no Non-Welsh speakers present at the meeting itself, there will be no translation and consequently no audio stream for Non-Welsh speakers wanting to watch and listen on-line. It is suggested that it would not be a good use of resources to provide a translation at every meeting “in case” a Non-Welsh speaker wanted to listen. Once the system is operational, it is proposed that we review the use of the Non-Welsh language stream to assess the demand before considering what provision if at all to make.
7. With regard to allowing remote member access to meetings, we are still awaiting the guidelines on this but, in the absence of the guidelines, it is suggested that the committee forms an initial opinion on the matter:-
 - a) To propose that the facility be available from the video conference rooms in the Council’s own offices at Dolgellau and Pwllheli (to safeguard the reliability of the provision)
 - b) Not to offer the provision for meetings where executive decisions are made (Cabinet and Council) for the time being in order to avoid and constitutional questions if the equipment failed to work and a member was therefore unable to exercise his / her right to vote (It is hoped that the guidelines, when published will resolve this)
8. Developing Community Council Websites. Work is ongoing on this element in order to facilitate the work for Community Councils and to ensure that they receive the best value for money. Unllais have agreed to the principle of

allowing Community Councils either a) to apply for some grant funding to develop their own website, or b) to develop joint websites for a more reasonable price. The procedure for applying and an outline schedule have been noted in Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee:-
 - a) Approve moving ahead the web-casting provision at the Dafydd Orwig Chamber and the Hywel Dda Chamber, and, subject to the scale of the costs, to provide for any establishment and running costs, over and above the value of the grant monies, from the Democratic Cost budget
 - b) With regard to simultaneous translation for web-casting, to accept the suggestion of not making provision beyond the Council's current provision at the meeting rooms themselves
 - c) Approve moving ahead with the provision for remote member Access to meetings, subject to the conditions in paragraphs 7a) and 7b) above
 - ch) To continue to support the work of facilitating the developments of web-sites for Community Councils

