

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	10 September 2013
SUBJECT	Web Casting And Remote Attendance
PURPOSE	To submit the latest development regarding the requirements of web casting, remote attendance and developments relating to the grant for Town and Community Councils
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Democratic Services Committee meeting on 4 June 2013, the latest information was submitted in response to the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011 in the context of:
- remote attendance of meetings
 - webcasting; and
 - working with town and community councils to develop websites.

- 1.2 It was also reported that the Council has signed an agreement to receive a grant of £72,000 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 town and community councils in the County to establish their own websites.

- 1.3 In receiving the grant, Gwynedd Council will commit to:

Delivering	By when	Evidence
Provision to enable remote attendance for members	31 March 2014	Written report noting how many meetings were held and the success of the exercise
Broadcasting all or some of the Council's meetings	31 March 2014	Broadcast presence on the Council's website
Providing finance to town and community councils to support them to develop their own websites	31 March 2014	Number of town and community councils with their own website

2. UPDATE

2.1 Remote attendance of meetings

- 2.2.1 At the last meeting, in the absence of any guidelines, the Committee formed an initial opinion on remote attendance, namely:
- a) Propose that the provision be made available in the Council's video conferencing rooms in Dolgellau and Pwllheli only (in order to seek assurance on the reliability of the provision).

b) Not to offer the provision for meetings where operational decisions are made (Cabinet, Council, Planning Committee and Licensing Committee) initially in order to avoid any constitutional questions should the equipment fail and as a result a member would not be able to exercise his/her voting rights (It is hoped that this matter will be resolved by the guidelines, when available).

2.2.2 On 29 May 2013, the Welsh Government published the consultation document *Remote attendance* : Statutory guidelines issued under Section 4 of the Local Government (Wales) Bill 2011. The closing date for the consultation was 21 August 2013. A copy of the consultation document is included as Appendix 1.

2.2.3 An invitation was extended to the Council's elected members through Rhaeadr to submit observations on the consultation document by 31 July 2013. On the grounds of the observations received, a response was compiled on behalf of Gwynedd Council to be sent in the name of Ioan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Customer Care. A copy of this response is included as Appendix 2.

2.2.4 It is believed that there is nothing within the contents of the Remote Attendance consultation document that would change the initial opinion of this Committee on Gwynedd's conditions for the remote attendance of meetings.

2.2.5 In terms of the Council's arrangements to enable remote attendance, the latest situation is that we are awaiting confirmation from the Information Technology Unit on the capacity of the video conferencing equipment in Dolgellau and Pwllheli to connect with Siambr Dafydd Orwig and Siambr Hywel Dda.
Auditel - how far are we from implementing remote attendance?

2.3 Web casting.

2.3.1 The developments at Siambr Dafydd Orwig are already completed, and the work is nearly completed in Siambr Hywel Dda.

2.3.2 The work soon to be completed in both Chambers means that we will be in a situation where we are able to produce material to be broadcasted. However, there is a need to arrange support for broadcasting material on the web.

2.3.3 We are now in the process of inviting and meeting with companies who are able to 'host' our broadcasts live on the web. We are also seeking specifications from Authorities who already provide web casting such as Carmarthenshire Council and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

2.3.4 As noted at the last meeting, there will be revenue costs associated with the costs of maintaining the service annually following the initial

set-up costs. In discussions with providers, there will be a need to carefully consider the most effective and efficient method of providing web casting.

2.4 Website development for town and community councils

2.4.1 Cist Gwynedd is administrating the grant process for developing town and community council websites in Gwynedd.

2.4.2 In July, town and community councils received an offer to:

- a) apply for a portion of grant funding to develop their own website
- b) develop joint websites for a more reasonable price.

They were asked to express an interest before the end of October 2013.

2.4.3 There has been slippage in the timetable compared to the brief timetable that was submitted at the last meeting. This is mainly due to the fact that the town and community councils do not convene during August, and a number of them convene every month or every other month. Consequently, there was a need to provide a sufficient window for all of the town and community councils to convene before the closing date for the expressions of interest.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee:-

- a) Approves proceeding with the provision for remote attendance, subject to clauses 2.2.1a) and b) above.
- b) Approves proceeding with the webcasting provision from Dafydd Orwig and Hywel Dda Chambers and, subject to the costs of providing for any set-up requirements and maintenance costs that exceed the grant funding from the Democratic Costs budget.
- c) Continue to support the work of facilitating the development of websites for Community Councils and to receive and update on the numbers who have expressed an interest in establishing a website at the next meeting.