

# APPENDIX V

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE – 2ND FEBRUARY 2010

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**Title:**

**WEBCASTING REVIEW**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Adam Taylor-Smith]  
[Wards Affected: All]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

This report reviews Waverley's existing webcasting arrangements and proposes that the service be brought in-house with effect from 1 April 2010 to deliver future years on-going revenue savings. The initial set-up costs to be contained within the remaining net revenue budget provision for webcasting in 2009/10 and the proposed revenue budget provision for 2010/11.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities**

Webcasting is a tool that contributes to the Council's priorities by in the following ways:

***Environment:*** People can watch meetings from their home or workplace without having to travel to Godalming thus reducing their carbon footprint.

***Improving lives:*** Webcasting allows all residents and businesses to see how decisions are made at a time and place convenient to them.

***Value for money:*** The availability of webcasting helps keep residents and businesses informed about the services for which they pay and see the value of the investment in council services. It also allows access to meetings for a much greater proportion of the community than can attend meetings and events that are webcast.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

Webcasting makes an important contribution to equality and diversity, making the council's decision making processes open and transparent at a time and place convenient to the viewer. There have been a number of occasions when the number of people attending Waverley meetings have exceeded the capacity of the Council Chamber. By webcasting these meetings, people have been able to follow the discussion in an overflow room. Others whose family or work commitments mean that they cannot attend the meeting can watch the meeting later at an appropriate time for them.

**Resource/Value for Money implications:**

It is estimated that residual funding of £10,000 arising from the European Union e-participate project when added to the proposed 2010/11 net revenue budget provision for webcasting of £12,500 would produce total funding of £22,500 which would be available for the one-off set-up costs to provide an internally managed and supported service (see [Annexe 1](#) for detailed costs).

It is estimated that from 2011/12 the existing net revenue budget provision for webcasting of £12,500 could be reduced by £5,000 to £7,500 per annum.

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### **What is webcasting?**

1. Webcasting (broadcasting over the Internet using the World-Wide-Web) is a transmission of audio and video over the internet. Video cameras in the public meeting rooms capture the live information and send it, via our technology partner Public-i, to anyone that would like to view the meeting. Through the use of an internet connection (either broadband or via a dial-up modem) and the free Realplayer media or Microsoft media player anyone can view meetings live or for up to six months afterwards at a time and place convenient to them.

### **Background**

2. Waverley started webcasting in 2003 with initial funding provided by the Countryside Agency as part of the Market Town Healthchecks since then, the Council has regularly webcast all Executive and full council meetings. Since 2008 all planning and Overview and Scrutiny meetings have been webcast along with the various training events for both councillors and staff. The joint meetings with Town and Parish Councils are also regularly webcast.

### **eParticipate – European Project**

3. Waverley was chosen as the UK partner in a market validation project under the European Commission's *eTen* programme and has played an active part as mentor and contributor to the project's success. The Project, called *eParticipate*, was designed to help Local Authorities use webcasting to re-engage citizens in their democratic processes and improve transparency in decision-making. The project ended in 2009.

### **Existing provision of webcasting services**

4. Waverley has been working with the leading UK supplier of webcasting technology, Public-i. Public-i specialises in creating effective and innovative technology products to help Local Government and other public sector organisations to communicate and engage with their citizens.
5. The webcasting service provided by Public-i is a hosted service i.e. the webcasted material is broadcast and delivered onto the internet by Public-i using their own software system and support. The contract with Public-i provides added value facilities such as index and document links that would be difficult to replicate on an internally managed service model. The current contract runs until March 2010.
6. Officers have met with Public-i and the annual cost of their service from 2010-11 would be £17,567 based on an upper limit of 180 hours webcasting per annum. To this figure must be added the cost of the Waverley webcast operator which is estimated at £2,500 per annum making a total cost of £20,067.
7. Using the additional one-off residual budget funding of £10,000 available for web-casting and adding this to the proposed 2010/11 net revenue budget

provision of £12,500 for webcasting would enable Waverley to continue with the service offered by Public-i for a further year i.e. 2010/11. However from 2011/12 onwards the cost of the service at £20,067 could not be contained within the current level of net revenue expenditure.

### **Proposed alternative solution for Webcasting**

8. It would be possible for webcasting to be brought in-house and for Waverley to provide an internally managed and supported service. An internally managed service, as is used by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, would not have all the added value facilities currently available through Public-i but after initial set-up costs could be provided at a significantly lower net cost of £7,500 per annum, as against the Public-i cost of £20,067. The in-house cost would produce an on-going saving of £5,000 per annum on the proposed net revenue budget provision for webcasting of £12,500. Details of the initial set-up and on-going costs are set out in the attached Annexes.
9. Operating an internally managed and supported service would mean that it would be possible to increase the number of webcast meetings without incurring additional direct costs.
10. To reduce costs, the proposed system would as far as possible be automated and include automatic camera follow software which would save the cost of a webcast operator at each meeting. The system proposed would be hosted and managed by the Council's IT service and its Office Services section. Webcast meetings would be accessed directly by the public either live or after a meeting from an archive which would be held on Waverley's website.

### **Conclusion**

11. It is proposed that the contract with Public-i should not be renewed after March 2010 but that officers provide an internally managed and operated webcasting service with effect from April 2010. The one-off cost of establishing and setting up the webcasting service to be contained within the net £22,500 available in the proposed net revenue budget.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive approve the provision of an internally managed webcasting service and that the one-off set-up costs be contained within the £22,500 available in the proposed revenue budget for webcasting in 2010/11.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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