

CABINET

Livestreaming of Cabinet Meetings 24 October 2023

Report of Senior Manager, Elections and Democratic Support

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To enable Cabinet to consider livestreaming meetings during the municipal year 2024/2025.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR JASON WOOD

- (1) That Cabinet meetings be livestreamed during the municipal year 2024/25.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Dates, venues and start times of meetings are now being considered for the municipal year 2024/25 to enable a committee timetable to be compiled and agreed. At time of drafting this report the dates, time and venues for meetings in 2024/25 were due to go to Council Business Committee on 12 October 2023 for consideration. Council Business Committee has authority to approve the committee timetable.

1.2 As Cabinet Members are aware, professional livestreaming equipment with the facility for e-voting was installed in the Council Chamber at Morecambe Town Hall earlier this year for use for full Council meetings. This report is brought to Cabinet to allow members to consider extending the Council's livestreaming offer to include formal Cabinet meetings.

2.0 Proposal Details

Currently, meetings of Cabinet alternate between the two Town Halls in Lancaster and Morecambe and have done so for many years. This allows members of the public to attend a Cabinet meeting at a venue closest to them. However, it should be noted that the equipment for livestreaming is not portable. It is fixed in the Council Chamber at Morecambe Town Hall. Should Cabinet take the decision to livestream their meetings, the venue for future meetings will have to be Morecambe Town Hall. If there is a wish to continue

alternating meetings between Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls, only the meetings held at Morecambe Town Hall would be livestreamed (see Option 3, below).

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To livestream meetings of Cabinet from May 2024.	Option 2: Not to livestream meetings of Cabinet.	Option 3: To livestream meetings of Cabinet held at Morecambe Town Hall only.
Advantages	<p>Fits with the modernising local government agenda, allowing people to watch meetings as they happen without having to attend in person.</p> <p>Reduces the need for the public to travel to meetings.</p> <p>Increased transparency, accountability, and openness.</p>	<p>Continuation of alternating venues would allow people to attend in person at venues in and Lancaster Town Hall as well as Morecambe.</p>	<p>Would allow the public to continue to attend Cabinet meetings in Lancaster Town Hall in person.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>All meetings would have to be held at Morecambe Town Hall.</p>	<p>Would not take advantage of the livestreaming equipment.</p> <p>The public would have to attend in person to be able to watch/listen to the meeting as it happens.</p>	<p>Would not take full advantage of the livestreaming equipment.</p>
Risks	<p>None identified. Livestreaming of meetings is now used by many local authorities and has been for some time.</p>	<p>May attract criticism if the equipment is in place but not used for Cabinet meetings where the Council's key decisions are taken.</p>	<p>Could confuse the public – they are likely to expect all meetings to be livestreamed and it may attract criticism if only half the formal meetings are livestreamed.</p>

4.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 4.1 The officer preferred option is Option 1, to allow the public to access a livestream of Cabinet meetings and make full use of the equipment in the Council Chamber. The public will still be able to attend at Morecambe Town Hall if they do not have access to the software to watch the livestream.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the merits of livestreaming its formal meetings from May 2024.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Improves accessibility and transparency of decision making in line with the focus on serving residents.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

A livestreaming facility has a very positive effect during a pandemic, when attending meetings in person can create health and safety concerns.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources: None identified.

Information Services: None identified.

Property: None identified.

Open Spaces: None identified.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

In accordance with Rule 6 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules the Cabinet will usually meet monthly on dates and at times to be agreed by the Leader. The Leader may agree to hold additional meetings as required. In determining the time for the meeting, regard should be had to maximising the accessibility of the public. The Monitoring Officer is of the opinion that, by implication, this also extends to the venue and the use of technology to facilitate public viewing.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Contact Officer: Debbie Chambers

Telephone: 01524 582057

E-mail: dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk

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