

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 19 March 2015
Title: Meeting Broadcasting
Portfolio Holders: Councillor Ranger

Agenda Item

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Item for decision

Summary

1. The Council has been working with a local business Audiominutes to develop a system to broadcast meetings as they happen and also to present recordings of the meetings on an easily accessible website.
2. The system development has taken place over the last 12 months and is now at a stage where it is fully operational and ready for the Council to formally adopt.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Formally adopts the use of the Audiominutes broadcasting system for meetings of Full Council, Cabinet, Planning and the Uttlesford Planning Policy Working Group.
 - b) Agrees to the use of the system at other key meetings as set out in paragraph 11.
 - c) Agrees, subject to proof of concept design and testing, to the additional enhancements as set out in paragraphs 18 and 19.

Financial Implications

4. The enhancements as set out in paragraphs 18 and 19 can be met from existing budgets.

Background Papers

None.

Impact

Communication/ Consultation	An announcement is made before each meeting informing of the use of the equipment. If adopted this will be built into the standard wording on the meeting agendas
Community Safety	No specific implications
Equalities	No specific implications
Health and Safety	No specific implications
Human Rights	No specific implications
Legal implications	No specific implications

Sustainability	No specific implications
Ward-specific impacts	No specific implications
Workforce/Workplace	No specific implications

Background

5. As part of the drive by the council to make meetings more accessible it was agreed to look at implementing a system of recording council meetings.
6. Officers were approached by a local business keen to develop a system that met this requirement but that also enabled the meeting to be broadcast live.
7. Over the previous 12 months the system has been developed in partnership with Audiominutes.com and is now at a stage where it is ready to be formally adopted by the council and for the Cabinet to agree the meetings that should be broadcast.
8. Audiominutes is a registered trade mark of Confabulate Ltd. The sole Director of Confabulate Ltd and 28% shareholder is married to one of the Cabinet Members. The Cabinet member has had no involvement in the development of the system and no payment has been made to either Confabulate Ltd or Audiominutes.
9. Previous meetings can be heard by going to www.audiominutes.com/udc. By clicking on the relevant meeting you are presented with a toolbar to play the meeting. It is possible to move to specific agenda items from the drop down list.
10. Live meetings are also broadcast and can be listened to from the above webpage.
11. The trials have been conducted on the following meetings and it is recommended that these are now formally adopted as meetings to be broadcast.
 - a) Full Council
 - b) Cabinet
 - c) Planning
 - d) Uttlesford Planning Policy Working Group
12. In addition it is proposed that additional key meetings are broadcast. These would include:
 - a) Performance and Audit for both the draft accounts meeting and the final accounts meeting.
 - b) Scrutiny for specific items such as the final feedback on the independent review of the Local Plan process.
13. Each meeting has a 'listened to' count. Since it was introduced the average listeners for each meeting is as follows:
 - a) Full Council 102 (4 meetings)

- b) Cabinet 62 (6 meetings)
- c) Planning 85 (7 meetings)
- d) Uttlesford Planning Policy Working Group 61 (2 meetings)

14. The system broadcasts via the in-house microphones and therefore meetings to be broadcast must use the microphones.
15. A recent Cabinet meeting was held in Great Dunmow and the meeting was successfully broadcast using the portable element of the microphone system.
16. As a contingency in case of broadband failure the meeting also records to the tablet device that operates as the console. This ensures that there will always be a copy of the meeting available.
17. The console has an easy start/stop function which ensures that in the event of a Part II discussion the broadcasting and local recording can be easily terminated.
18. The system is dynamically linked to the council committee management system (CMIS). The council is currently exploring the option of embedding the voice files directly into the CMIS product. This work would be undertaken by a third party not related to Confabulate Ltd or to any of its directors. This would have a cost in the region of £500.
19. The final enhancement that is currently being explored is linking the microphone system dynamically to the audio broadcast and recording so that prior to speaking the system will announce the name of the Member about to speak. Again this has a cost in the region of £500 and the work would be undertaken by a third party not related to Confabulate Ltd or to any of its directors.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The company ceases to exist and support is no longer available	1 (the product is already being marketed and a number of clients signed up)	3 (the system is straightforward and could be developed and supported by council ICT staff)	Confabulate Limited have agreed to place all the source code and supporting documentation in 'escrow' such that, if necessary, UDC could potentially engage with an alternative IT provider to take over the operation of the system