

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 April 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Live Streaming of Committee and Council Meetings
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- ◆ Provide an update of the live streaming pilot carried out at the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee on 17 March 2021 and advise on proposals to live stream future Standing Committee and Council meetings.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Council is asked to approve the following recommendation(s): -

- (1) that the update on the pilot to live stream the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee meeting on 17 March 2021 be noted.
- (2) that the proposals to live stream to the South Lanarkshire Council YouTube channel the non-restricted element of business of the meetings of the Council and Standing Committees listed on Appendix 1 up to the commencement of the Council's summer recess period be approved;
- (3) that the proposal to continue to record up to the commencement of the summer recess the non-restricted element of business at all Forum meetings and publish to the council website be approved; and
- (4) that the proposal to commence live streaming of the non-restricted element of business at all Forum meetings from 17 August 2021 be approved.

3. Background

- 3.1. South Lanarkshire Council's Committee and Council Meetings have been impacted due to the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of public health concerns, some Elected Members, and a large number of SLC Officers are currently undertaking their duties from home and members of the public are not permitted to enter public buildings.
- 3.2. During June 2020, a pilot was undertaken to hold certain committee meetings via Microsoft Teams. Following the summer recess, the full programme of meetings resumed, and a blended approach was adopted, whereby members could choose to participate in person within the committee rooms, while observing physical distancing measures, or by virtual means.
- 3.3. Since the beginning of 2021 due to public health restrictions, all committee meetings have been held via MS Teams only.

4. Recording of Committee and Council Meetings

- 4.1. Elected members are familiar with Teams and have had access to training, either through the use of guidance/training materials or via IT/the Digital Champions. Further training, however, can be offered to elected members on request. There have also been some small improvements in the software, e.g., up to 49 meeting attendees can now be viewed on screen at the same time if large gallery view is selected and it is possible to 'pin' a person so that they will always appear on screen.
- 4.2. Prior to consideration of the formal business at committee meetings, as a reminder, the clerk runs through some general protocols and asks that members make them aware of any technical issues so that the Chair and Digital Champions/IT colleagues, as appropriate, can be alerted. It should be noted, however, that, while advice can be provided on reconnecting or user/training issues, if the problem lies with home broadband connectivity, then it is out with the control of the support mechanisms put in place by the Council.
- 4.3. Currently, for those meetings which would, in normal circumstances, be held in public, a Teams meeting invite is extended to the Local Democracy Reporter as well as the Council's Corporate Communications officers to allow Council business matters to be reported in the press. Where a member of the public is required by legislation to attend a Committee meeting for example Licensing or Planning Committee hearings, Education Appeal or Employee Appeal Committee, Teams invites are issued to allow them to participate.
- 4.4. Since January 2021, Council and Committee meetings have been recorded and once subtitled are uploaded to the Council website. Subtitling of pre-recorded meetings is required by the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. An outside contractor has been engaged to provide the subtitling service as an interim arrangement which is being kept under review. As there is a time lapse between the date of the meeting and publication of the subtitled recording, the original recordings are being published to the website and replaced with the subtitled version as soon as they are available.

5. Live Streaming

- 5.1. Elected Members agreed at the Council meeting held on 16 December 2020 that the Council work toward the live broadcasting of all committee and Council meetings for the non-restricted element of business as soon as possible; and that in order to facilitate live broadcasting and to allow for potential teething challenges, a trial of live meeting broadcasts be aimed for the March 2021 Finance and Corporate Resources Committee, pending no major technical glitches.
- 5.2. Suitable software was identified, and initial training carried out to allow live streaming tests of MS Teams meetings to take place in advance of the formal pilot at the Finance and Corporate Committee on 17 March 2021. While the majority of the streaming of the Finance and Corporate committee went well, a technical problem was experienced which meant that there was a short delay in the live streaming commencing. A solution to this issue has been identified and put in place.
- 5.3. There is additional workload involved in the live streaming process for Committee Services, IT Services and Communications and Strategy Services and we are currently working to address how this is accommodated within our working practices. As a result, it is proposed that up to the commencement of the summer recess only the meetings of the Council and the standing Committees listed on Appendix 1 to the report be live streamed in this initial period to allow time for solutions to be put in place

and expertise to be developed. It is proposed that Forum meetings be live streamed from 17 August 2020.

- 5.4 Currently, the Council does not have the technology or equipment in place which would afford the public a good viewing experience of a live streamed blended committee meeting. The Council does not have a camera system installed in either the council chamber or committee rooms that would automatically focus in on a particular speaker. The systems that we do have available at present (e.g., Microsoft Surface Hub or external audio-visual supplier) only show a wider view of the room where members are present and so it is difficult for a member of the public to see who is talking as the speaker is not identified or pinned on the screen. The fixed microphone system in the council chamber and the wireless microphones in committee room 1 are not digital and cannot be connected directly into a livestream broadcast. The sound quality in previous blended meetings was sometimes poor for other participants and may be considered unacceptable for public broadcast. Officers are currently investigating options available to live stream blended meetings and will bring proposals back to a future meeting of the Executive Committee.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. An additional Committee administration team member will require to attend each live-streamed meeting and assistance from IT Services and the Communication and Strategy team would be required to support the publishing and streaming of the recordings of the Council meetings. This will be achieved within existing staffing resources.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. The costs of streaming and recording meetings are being met from existing budgets. Additional expenditure may have to be incurred in re-establishing a capability to hold blended meetings and that will be reported to Committee when further detail of options and costs are available.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. There are no climate change, sustainability, or environmental implications in terms of this report.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1. There may be a reputational risk to the Council should its meetings not be publicly accessible.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. There was no requirement for an equality impact assessment in terms of the information in this report.
- 10.2. IT, members' services, and committee services will continue to work with elected members to meet any specific requirements, particularly in terms of training.

Paul Manning

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

31 March 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Visions/Objectives

- ◆ All council objectives

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: -

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Appendix 1

Meeting Date	Start Time	Meeting Name
28 April 2021	1000hrs	Executive Committee
28 April 2021	11.30hrs	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
4 May 2021	1400hrs	Community and Enterprise Committee
5 May 2021	1000hrs	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
11 May 2021	1000hrs	Planning Committee
11 May 2021	1400hrs	Cambuslang and Rutherglen Area Committee
12 May 2021	1400hrs	East Kilbride Area Committee
26 May 2021	1000hrs	Executive Committee
26 May 2021	11.30hrs	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
1 June 2021	1000hrs	Education Resources Committee
2 June 2021	1000hrs	Social Work Resources Committee
2 June 2021	1400hrs	Finance and Corporate Resources Committee
8 June 2021	1000hrs	Planning Committee
8 June 2021	1400hrs	Clydesdale Area Committee
9 June 2021	1400hrs	Hamilton Area Committee
22 June 2021	1400hrs	Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee
23 June 2021	1000hrs	Executive Committee
23 June 2021	1130hrs	South Lanarkshire Council
29 June 2021	1400hrs	Community and Enterprise Committee
30 June 2021	1000hrs	Housing and Technical Resources Committee