

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th March 2017

1. Title of Item/Report

Recording of Council Meetings

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the recording of Council meetings.

Council at its meeting held on 19th November 2014 agreed to the Council recording / web-broadcasting meetings of Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee, these being meetings most likely to engage members of the public.

It was agreed also that a review of the filming and broadcasting of these meetings would take place after a period of time. The report contained recommendations from the Members Advisory Panel (MAP) who had undertaken a review of the extent to which this policy had enhanced engagement with the public and offered value for money.

MAP met on 7th December 2016 and noted that for the period January 2016 – June 2016 the number of ‘views’ of meetings recorded was extremely low, and therefore the level of engagement with the public that this had enabled had proven to be disappointing.

The number of ‘views’, as registered with YouTube upon which the recordings were posted and promoted via a link on the Council’s website, were as follows:-

Council – Highest recorded number of views 20th January 2016 – 173 views

– Lowest recorded number of views 6th April 2016 – 16 views.

Cabinet – Highest recorded number of views 19th May 2016 – 194 views

- Lowest recorded number of views 11th February 2016 – 18 views.

Planning – Highest recorded number of views 25th May 2016 – 209 views

- Lowest recorded number of views 5th June 2016 – 21 views.

The viewing figures since this time had remained modest averaging at 81 views for the period from September 2016 to present date.

This was considered to be a very small number of views considering the population within the Borough was 191,600 +ONS 2011 Census. The occasions on which the viewing figures had been at their highest relate to Council's consideration of public questions on Children's Homes, Cabinet's consideration for the North Shore Hotel and Planning Committee's consideration of a boutique hotel in Yarm.

Across the region only 5 other local authorities record and publish any of their public meetings and in each case, these meetings were restricted to full Council only.

The service to record the Council's Council, Cabinet and Planning Committees was contracted out at a cost of £10k per annum. The Council did not have the equipment or expertise to provide this service in house. The cost would therefore seem to be prohibitive given the level of demand for this service.

As there was no requirement for the Council to film and record public meetings and the Council was only required to make provision for those individuals who wish to, MAP were invited to consider whether it wished to continue with these arrangements given the level of engagement achieved to date and it subsequently agreed that:-

'The current practice of the Council recording meetings of Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee meetings cease with effect from the 2017/18 Municipal Year.'

It was noted that in the time since the introduction of the legislation affording members of the public the opportunity to report and comment on public meetings, there had been no occasions when members of the public had invoked the protocol and requested permission to make their own recording of the meeting.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The recommendation arising from the meeting of the Members Advisory Panel be noted as follows:-

'That the current practice of the Council recording meetings of Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee meetings cease with effect from the 2017/18 Municipal Year.'

2. The current practice of the Council recording meetings of Council,

Cabinet and Planning Committee meetings cease with effect from the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To fulfil the requirements to review the extent of engagement and value for money of the current policy to record and publish meetings of Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 24 March 2017

Proper Officer
20 March 2017