

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO POLICE &
CRIME PANEL**

14TH SEPTEMBER 2021

**REPORT OF
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
OF ADMINISTRATION,
DEMOCRATIC &
ELECTORAL SERVICES**

RECORDING OF POLICE & CRIME PANEL MEETINGS - OPTIONS APPRAISAL

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to consider a request received from the Police & Crime Commissioner Council for all future public meetings of the Police & Crime Panel to be streamed live to the public and includes an options appraisal evaluating this proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended that the Panel consider the proposal to live stream all future meetings of the PCP in the context of the options appraisal provided.

DETAIL

1. At the last meeting of the Police & Crime Panel (6th July 2021) Members were advised that the Police & Crime Commissioner had requested that all public meetings of the Police & Crime Panel be live streamed so that members of the public could follow proceedings remotely. The Commissioner considered that Live streaming future meetings would not only allow more people to watch proceedings in real time but it would also increase the accountability of the panel and the Police & Crime Commissioner – and by association Cleveland Police – to the communities, which they all serve.
2. Stockton Borough Council's policy at present is to not stream its own public meetings; and therefore there are no current arrangements in place to facilitate this proposal.
3. This policy was last reviewed in detail by full Council in March 2017 when up until that time, meetings of its Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee were recorded and later hosted on the Council's website via YouTube. A decision was taken at that time to cease continuation of this practice as a consequence of the viewing figures for such

meetings being extremely modest, particularly when taking into account the costs involved of doing so which equated to approximately £10k per annum.

4. The policy was again addressed as most recently as January 2021 at a time when the Remote Meeting regulations were in place which allowed remote attendance by all parties. Members will be aware that these Regulations expired on the 7th May 2021 and that currently there is no timescale set for the Government to consider whether it wished to approve legislation that would re-introduce remote access for all parties.
5. Members will be aware that the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 introduced rights for the public to report and commentate on public meetings of local government bodies when attending in person.
6. It should be 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 have been no occasions when members of the public have invoked the protocol and requested permission to make their own recording of the meeting. Notwithstanding that, it remains open to both the PCC and the OPCC to make their own recording should they wish to do so.
7. Should the PCP however determine that it would now wish to live stream its future meetings, it should be mindful that the technology in place within venues hosting meetings of the PCP, eg SBC Municipal Buildings, Police HQ or other local authority buildings, may differ significantly, therefore making a 'one size fits' solution harder to achieve.
8. Meetings of the Panel have most recently been held at Stockton within the Jim Cooke Conference Room and at the Baptist Tabernacle, the latter being an external facility for which a hire charge of £350-£500 applies for half day use subject to extent of IT/audio required.
9. Within the Jim Cooke Conference Room, the location has a (portable, Bosch) microphone system so sound can be covered by utilising this, and a feed taken from the microphones into a computer. Currently, that facility has 11 speakers available to use which cost £12k a number of years ago. Additional speakers may be required to facilitate attendance by all members of the Panel and officers in attendance to provide one device per person present.
10. A camera can be connected and pointed at the room which will provide a single camera input, so a wide shot of the room. A suitable streaming camera and tripod would be needed which would cost in the region of £500. A member of staff would also be required to operate the live stream computer. The recording could be shared on whichever social media platform was preferred by the PCP.
11. Should other local authority or HQ venues be used to host the meetings, it would not be possible to use the 11 current devices used within the Jim Cooke facility as their usage policy is confined to use within their own building as it is also commercially let. However, provided the venue had the same IT setup as the Jim Cooke facility, the devices purchased by the PCP could be used along with the camera.

12. Should the facilities provided by the Baptist Tabernacle be preferred, this facility has all the necessary equipment in house to live stream an event, including audio, multi angle video, mixing desks, and staff with experience and the necessary expertise for live streaming meetings, including in the recent past those of the PCP, and Stockton's Planning and Licensing Committees. The only requirement would be the PCC providing a login to the streaming platform they wish to stream to (e.g. their YouTube channel or Facebook page).

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

13. The financial implications to facilitate this proposal are referred to in paragraphs 9-12 and are dependent upon the choice of meeting venue and whether that remains fixed or alternates.
14. The cost of implementation of the proposal would need to be met.

Legal

15. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allow the public to report and commentate on public meetings of local government bodies.

Contact Officer: Margaret Waggott
Job Title: Assistant Director of Administration, Democratic and Electoral Services
Tel: 01642 527064
Email: margaret.waggott@stockton.gov.uk