

REPORT TO CABINET

13 NOVEMBER 2025

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Transport
Councillor Paul Rowling**

Council Motion – Livestreaming Meetings

Summary

This report provides an update on the implementation of the Council's unanimously supported motion to livestream and record public meetings held in the Council Chamber. The motion reflects a cross-party commitment to openness, accessibility, and public engagement in local democracy.

To ensure effective delivery, it is proposed that Cabinet refer the matter to the Members Advisory Panel (MAP) to develop a comprehensive policy and implementation plan, addressing technical, financial, accessibility, and governance considerations.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

To implement the unanimously supported Council motion in a manner that is technically feasible, legally compliant, financially sustainable and consistent with accessibility standards.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to :

1. Refer the matter to the Members Advisory Panel (MAP) to develop a livestreaming and recording policy, covering:
 - a. Filming arrangements, copyright, retention, and consent;
 - b. Platform options for publication (e.g. Council website, YouTube);
 - c. Accessibility features including captions and transcripts;
 - d. Safeguards such as broadcast delay or editing capability.
2. Request MAP, supported by officers, to assess financial and staffing implications, including ongoing operational, accessibility, and moderation requirements.
3. Request MAP to advise on governance measures to ensure recordings are not misconstrued as formal Council decisions, with appropriate disclaimers applied.

4. Request MAP to bring forward a detailed, costed implementation plan for Cabinet approval, once practical, technical, and financial issues have been resolved.

Detail

5. At its meeting in September 2025, the Council approved a motion requesting that all public meetings held in the Council Chamber be recorded and, where possible, livestreamed to support openness and transparency. The motion was supported by all political groups. Specifically Council resolved that:

“Council notes that:

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, filming, photographing and making an audio recording of all public meetings is permitted.

Council meetings are public meetings. Elected representatives and council officers acting in the public sphere should expect to be held to account for their comments and votes in such meetings. The rules require councils to provide reasonable facilities for any member of the public to report on meetings. Councils should thus allow the filming of councillors and officers at meetings that are open to the public.

Stockton Council has spent £9000.86 of public money on the installation of 2 Cameras in the council chamber.

Council believes that:

In the interest of transparency and openness, the council should ensure that its public meetings, which includes Committee Meeting’s, Cabinet and Full Council should be fully recorded and where possible live streamed to allow our residents to fully engage in local democracy.

The cost associated with the installation of the cameras can only be justified, if they are there to aid residents in viewing proceedings. Furthermore, the recording of proceedings will ensure an accurate account to be taken of the meeting and assist with accurate minutes.

Council resolves:

That all Council meetings held in the Council Chamber that are open to the public, specifically Full Council, should be recorded and livestreamed;

That Cabinet be requested to ensure that Cabinet meetings held in the Council Chamber are both recorded and livestreamed;

on the Council’s website, to provide the greatest level of accessibility and inclusivity for residents.”

Technical Considerations

6. The Dicentis audio-visual system currently supports hybrid meetings. Livestreaming introduces additional requirements, including:
 - a) Camera control and speaker tracking;
 - b) Real-time moderation and technical oversight;

- c) Secure integration with a public-access platform;
 - d) Storage, captioning, and publication processes.
7. Initial assessments suggest manual camera operation and staffing support will be required. A technical solution is being explored with the equipment provider.

Accessibility Requirements

8. To ensure inclusivity and compliance with legal obligations, all videos published by the Council must meet accessibility standards. Adherence to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Level AA is not optional but a legal and ethical responsibility. Accessible videos empower users with visual, auditory, cognitive, or motor impairments to engage with content meaningfully. The Local Government Association supports the use of digital technologies to enhance democratic engagement and accessibility.
9. For videos that remain on the site after live streaming, the following criteria must be met: they must include a transcript detailing visuals, spoken dialogue, and contextual sounds; synchronised closed captions must be provided; any media that auto-plays for more than five seconds must offer a way to pause, stop, or hide it; audio that plays automatically for more than three seconds must allow users to stop, pause, mute, or adjust volume; and flashing content must not exceed three flashes per second. For live-streamed videos, the standards are more relaxed, captions should be provided to support accessibility.

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

10. Livestreaming of Council meetings will support the openness and transparency of Council business and open up meetings to those residents who might not otherwise have been able to attend. In addition, accessibility standards will allow residents with a range of impairments to engage more meaningfully. Transcripts also offer the added benefit of translation into other languages.

Corporate Parenting Implications

11. None

Financial Implications

12. Further work is required to determine capital and ongoing revenue costs. Initial hardware and labour costs are estimated at £3,500. However, this excludes integration, staffing, accessibility compliance, and data protection measures. A full costed proposal will be developed by officers working with MAP.

Legal Implications

13. Public recording and reporting of Council meetings is subject to UK law. Individuals undertaking recording or reporting must ensure compliance with relevant legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and laws relating to defamation and libel.

14. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) advises that public authorities must conduct a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) prior to implementing livestreaming or recording, to identify and mitigate risks to personal data. Attendees must be clearly informed that meetings are being recorded, and appropriate safeguards such as broadcast delay and editing capability should be considered to prevent inadvertent publication of sensitive or defamatory content.
15. The Local Government Association (LGA) supports the use of digital technologies to enhance democratic engagement, but emphasises that livestreaming must be inclusive and legally compliant. This includes meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Level AA for recorded content, and providing captions for live streams where feasible.
16. Filming must be suspended when the meeting formally excludes the public, and no recording of individuals under 16 or vulnerable adults may take place without explicit consent from those responsible for them. Freedom of expression must be exercised responsibly, with respect for the rights and views of others.

Risk Assessment

17. Legal and reputational risks associated with livestreaming include potential breaches of data protection, defamation, and accessibility non-compliance. The ICO advises that livestreaming should be subject to a DPIA and that safeguards such as broadcast delay and editing capability be considered to mitigate these risks.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/ Councillors

All wards.

Background Papers

Council motion of September 2025.

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