

REPORT TO CABINET

12 MARCH 2026

**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 asks Cabinet to approve proposals for the livestreaming and recording of meetings following the Council motion to livestream all Council meetings and consideration of implementation details by Members' Advisory Panel.

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

- 1) That the proposals for the livestreaming and recording of meetings, and associated expenditure, set out in report and protocol be approved.
- 2) That meetings held outside of the Dunedin Council Chamber should not be livestreamed.
- 3) That officers look into the feasibility of holding Annual Council meetings in the Dunedin Council Chamber and consider bringing a further report to Members.
- 4) That photographs of past Mayors and Aldermen be displayed digitally on a television screen in the Civic Reception area and that this television to have the ability to display the livestreams of Council meetings as they are taking place.

Detail

1. 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 Solution

2. The Dicientis 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.
3. A technical solution has been developed by the equipment provider. The proposal provides the required additional hardware and services to implement the public streaming capability or the already installed Bosch Dicientis conferencing system in the Stockton Council Chamber.
4. While the Dicientis system allows for in-room and hybrid conferencing with voting capabilities for all participants, the current setup does not support streaming

conferences to a publicly accessible web link or Teams Town Hall session. It is also only possible to share a presentation laptop to the displays in the council chamber but not to the remote attendees currently, or to view the remote attendees in the council chamber.

5. Encoders and decoders are included in the technical solution and also an option for adding a dedicated Yealink Teams Room system for joining to a Teams Town Hall event which will generate a public streaming link. The live stream through Teams Town Hall will include a live, auto-captioned video feed which would be hosted via a Teams link shared on Modern.Gov/ SBC website.
6. The Dicontis server allows for configuring layouts for the output streams to show a multi-view window including laptop presentation, remote attendees, in-room camera views and voting results. The appropriate view will be configured for the hybrid meeting and public stream to show all required participant views and information.
7. Following the meeting, the video will be uploaded to Vimeo. Vimeo is the Council's chosen video hosting platform, due to the option to remove all adverts before and after video. This decision was made to avoid any inappropriate adverts showing before, during, or after any Council videos. The video will also be made available to watch on the Council's website and the Council's Vimeo page as soon as practicable, no later than three working days after the meeting.
8. To adhere to accessibility laws (WCAG.2.2), closed captions and a transcript will be automatically generated using Teams Town Hall or Vimeo and added to the video when uploaded. A disclaimer will be added alongside the videos to make it clear that the transcription is automatically generated, and that people can submit corrections if necessary.
9. It is recommended that we have, at most, 12 months of meetings listed on the SBC website, however, meetings will be retained on Vimeo for a longer period, to be advised by the Information Governance Team.
10. The Communications Team will make sure that all copyright security options are switched on for the videos (e.g. no "download" button), however, there is no way to ensure that people cannot clip the videos under fair use law using a screen recording or something similar.
11. The technical solution does not allow for broadcasting delay.
12. Where meetings are held in other venues such as Billingham Forum or the Baptist Tabernacle, an external company would need to be contracted to film the meeting. Initial investigation suggests that any recording done from another location would not meet the legal and technical requirements that are in place for the Council Chamber and may need to be via another platform such as You Tube. Costs would also be significant. Another option would be to film meetings in other venues and afterward place them on Vimeo on the Council's website but this would not be a live stream. Members' Advisory Panel felt that it would not be necessary for the small number of meetings that might be

held out the Dunedin Council Chamber to be filmed due the complexity and significant costs involved. Members also requested that officers look into the feasibility of hosting the Annual Council meeting in the Dunedin Council Chamber rather than at Billingham Forum and consider bringing a further report on this issue.

13. Members Advisory Panel were given a demonstration of the operation of the cameras which are linked to the microphones in the Chamber and have intelligent panning and tracking to different areas of the Chamber based on which microphones are active without the need for manual production by officers.

Consent and Confidentiality

14. Council and Committee agenda notifications, signage within the Chamber and reception and the Council's website will need to include notice that meetings will be filmed for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. This will need to state that the whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items and the length of time that the footage will be displayed on the Council's website with a copy of it retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.
15. A draft protocol for livestreaming of Council meetings is attached at Appendix A. Owing to the layout of the Council Chamber it is problematical for an area to be designated for attendees who do not wish to have their image captured. The protocol therefore states:

If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. By entering the body of the Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured, please contact Democratic Services.

The Council's Data Protection Officer has advised that this constraint should not present an issue provided there are other ways for people to engage in the democratic process and have their views heard. The website, agenda notifications and signage would need to clearly indicate that the meeting would be livestreamed and recorded, and attendees would be advised to contact democratic services if they did not wish to have their image captured. A pull up screen can be utilised if necessary. The Council has a stock of pull up screens that can be utilised for this purpose as they were issued to polling stations for use during elections.

16. A quote of £3,533.74 has been obtained to install a television in the civic reception area. As well as providing the ability for the live stream to be shown outside of the Council Chamber, other relevant information can be shown. For example, Members have enquired about plans for the display of past Mayors and Aldermen photographs. Historically these have been on display in the Town Hall and it seems appropriate that these historical photographs should remain in this setting. In keeping with the modern Dunedin Council Chamber, new photographs could be displayed digitally on the television screen in the civic reception. Members' Advisory Panel supported the display of photographs of past Mayors and Aldermen on a television screen in the civic reception area. It was also noted that an additional screen in the reception area outside

of the Council Chamber would allow the livestream of meetings to be viewed by attendees on occasions where too many public attended to be seated in the Chamber.

Accessibility Requirements

17. 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.
18. 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 Assessment

19. 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

20. None

Financial Implications

21. Further work is required to determine capital and ongoing revenue costs. A quotation has been received for initial hardware and labour costs totalling £10,772.64. There will also be staffing implications. Additional support from IT is anticipated at meetings in particular when live streaming is first introduced. The Communications Team will also be responsible for putting the recording of the meeting on the Council's Vimeo page.
22. The installation costs of a television in the Civic Reception area to show the live stream of meetings and Mayor/ Alderman photographs is £3,533.74.

Legal Implications

23. 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.

24. 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.
25. 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.
26. 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

27. 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

28. Not ward specific

Background Papers

29. None

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Protocol for Live Streaming, Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

1 Background

1.1 The main purpose of live streaming is to promote openness and accountability, and to support greater participation in local democracy by giving members of the public, elected members, officers and other interested parties the opportunity to view meetings without having to attend in person.

1.2 Live streaming and the retention of recordings online for later viewing does not replace the formal record of the meeting and the decisions made. The only formal record of any meeting of a Local Authority is its minutes and agendas which are required to be maintained and retained for a number of years.

2 Operating Procedure for Filming/Webcasts

2.1 At the start of each meeting to be filmed, an announcement will be made to the effect that the meeting is being live streamed, and that the Chair may also terminate or suspend the webcasting of the meeting, in accordance with this protocol. This will be confirmed by the Chair making the following statement: "I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet and will be capable of repeated viewing."

2.2 Live streams will only commence at the beginning of a meeting when the Chair opens the meeting and will finish when the meeting is closed. During any adjournments or parts of the meeting where press and public are excluded, video and audio will be switched off and a holding screen displayed for those viewing live.

2.3 The Chair of the meeting shall have the discretion to terminate or suspend the livestream if:

- a) The meeting is adjourned;
- b) A resolution is lawfully passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting or a specific portion of the meeting;
- c) There is a public disturbance;
- d) Live streaming may lead to a potential infringement of the rights of any person or other breach of law, subject to legal advice; or
- e) The Chair considers that continuing to livestream would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting, subject to agreement by the majority of Members attending the meeting.

2.4 Recordings of live streams or parts of them may be removed if, in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer, it may prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.

2.5 Content may also be removed if the Monitoring Officer considers it necessary because all or part of the content of the recording is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision or common law, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information. The reason for any decision to edit a recording will be logged and published.

2.7 Council anticipates that the need to exercise this power will occur only on an exceptional basis.

2.8 Any elected Member who is concerned about any recording should raise their concerns with the Monitoring Officer.

2.9 Should the live stream be halted for a technical reason the following procedure will be applied:

- a) The Chair will be informed as soon as practically possible
- b) The Chair may agree a short adjournment to see if the problem can be resolved. *If after adjourning the problem still persists, the meeting should continue irrespective of it not being transmitted live.

2.10 People under the age of 16 will not be filmed unless written parental/guardian permission has been provided.

2.11 Following the meeting, recordings of meetings will be made available to view on the Council's website as soon as practicable and not later than three working days after the meeting and will remain on the Council's website for a period of 12 months.

2.12 Closed captions and a transcript will be automatically generated and added to the video when uploaded. A disclaimer will be added alongside the videos to make it clear that the transcription is automatically generated, and that people can submit corrections if necessary.

3 Notification of Live Streaming

Agenda Packs

3.1 Included with each Council and Committee agenda notification the following notice will be attached for meetings that are being live steamed:

LIVESTREAMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

This meeting will be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 12 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

[Members of the public may also film or record this meeting]

If you make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. By entering the body of the Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for live streaming and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured, please contact Democratic Services.

Public Speakers

3.2 In any correspondence notifying public speakers of the meeting date at which permission to speak has been granted, the following advice will be included if the particular meeting is to be webcast:

Please note that this meeting will be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. If you do not wish your public question/statement and subsequent discussion to be filmed/recorded, please contact Democratic Services to discuss your concerns.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, we require the consent of parents or guardians before filming children or young people.

Signage at meetings

3.3 The following signage will be displayed inside and outside of the meeting room:

WEBCASTING

PLEASE NOTE THAT STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL BROADCAST THIS MEETING LIVE ON ITS WEBSITE AND THE RECORD WILL BE ARCHIVED FOR FUTURE VIEWING

[MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ALSO FILM OR RECORD THIS MEETING]

AS YOUR IMAGE MAY BE INCLUDED IN THE BROADCAST, BY ENTERING THE CHAMBER YOU ARE CONSENTING TO BE FILMED AND TO THE POSSIBLE USE OF THOSE IMAGES AND ANY SOUND RECORDINGS

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO HAVE YOUR IMAGE CAPTURED, PLEASE CONTACT DEMOCRATIC SERVICES.

4 Tweeting or blogging by members of the public and press

4.1 The Council permits social media reporting of all its public meetings.

5 Photography

5.1 The Council permits photography at all of its public meetings.