

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

ARRANGEMENTS FOR HYBRID COUNCIL MEETINGS

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on progress of arrangements for implementation of hybrid council and committee meetings in the council chamber and to advise of a delay in implementation of the replacement audio visual system due to global shortages of IT equipment.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive note the terms of the report, agree an interim continuation of meetings by remote access until 31 January 2022, and agree that a further report be brought to Council Executive on 18 January 2022 to determine when hybrid meetings will commence.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973; Standing Orders; Local Code of Corporate Governance
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Effective planning and prioritisation of resources is essential to support the delivery of outcomes
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Capital resources are available to fund the required investment. Funding is available in the Modernisation Fund to meet revenue costs

VII Consideration at PDSP None

VIII Other consultations

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

On 17 August Council Executive agreed that remote committee meetings should continue until 30 November, recognising the council's continuing duty to ensure that staff and customers are safe, the Scottish Government guidance in relation to continued homeworking and the current level of COVID infections in West Lothian and also agreed that the current audio system in the Council Chamber should be replaced with an audio visual system to facilitate hybrid meetings.

Council Executive also agreed that officers were to provide a demonstration to all councillors on how the electronic voting function would work on the hybrid platform before a final decision was made on purchasing this functionality.

D.2 Progress on implementation of Audio Visual System

Officers have completed the procurement exercise to deliver the Televic Confidea Flex audio visual system which will replace the current audio only system in the council chamber and the suppliers have conducted a full site survey in the council chamber.

However, as a result of global shortages of IT equipment, the supplier has been unable to confirm delivery of the digital conference equipment and devices which will be required to implement the audio visual system in the Council Chambers within a timescale which would facilitate implementation of the system by end November 2021.

It is currently estimated that the devices will not be available until January 2022, in which case the system will be implemented and tested by end of January 2022. That will require an interim continuation of meetings by remote access until the end of January 2022.

D.3 Demonstration of evoting

Although it was proposed that elected members would receive a live demonstration of the evoting system, as a result of the delays in delivery of the equipment and devices which are required for the implementation of the new audio visual system, it will not be possible to deliver a live demonstration until around December. As a result, a demonstration will take place for all elected members which will provide information on the functionality included within the evoting system and will also present video representations of evoting in action in other authorities, in order that elected members can obtain an understanding of the functionality available and the ease of use of the system.

D.4 Standing Orders

At its meeting on 28 September 2021 the Council approved the changes to Standing Orders which will support the move to hybrid meetings in the Council Chamber. It agreed that the changes should take effect from the date agreed by Council Executive for the commencement of hybrid meeting arrangements when the installation, commissioning and testing of the system to be installed in the council chamber is complete.

E. CONCLUSION

Officers are progressing the implementation of the audio visual system which will support hybrid meetings in the Council Chamber but as a result of global shortages in IT equipment this will not be completed by the end of November 2021 and will require an interim continuation of meetings by remote access until the equipment and devices become available which is currently anticipated to be in January 2021.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Council Executive report dated 17 August 2021

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=e%97%9Di%90l%80%8C>

West Lothian Council, 28 September 2021

Appendices/Attachments: none

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