

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghaidheal agus Bhoid

Customer Services
Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT
Tel: 01546 602127 Fax: 01546 604435
DX 599700 LOCHGILPHEAD

24 January 2013

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP - MEDIA PLATFORMS** will be held in the **COMMITTEE ROOM 1, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD** on **THURSDAY, 31 JANUARY 2013** at **2:00 PM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director – Customer Services

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)**
3. **MINUTES**
 - (a) **Short Life Working Group - Media Platforms held on 19 November 2012 (Pages 1 - 4)**
 - (b) **Short Life Working Group - Media Platforms: Report in the absence of a quorum from meeting held on 17 December 2012 (Pages 5 - 6)**
 - (c) **Short Life Working Group - Media Platforms: Report in the absence of a quorum from meeting held on 17 January 2013 (Pages 7 - 8)**
4. **SCOPE FOR URTV, WEBCASTING AND VIDEO CONFERENCING - OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN IT INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER AND UHI AND INITIAL BUSINESS CASE**
Report by IT Infrastructure Services Manager (Pages 9 - 22)
5. **WEBCASTING EXPERIENCES IN OTHER SCOTTISH COUNCILS**
Report by Customer Management Project Manager (Pages 23 - 26)

**6. RANGE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS POTENTIALLY SUITABLE FOR VIDEO
CONFERENCING**

Discussion

**7. USE OF GAELIC ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE AS PART OF THE GAELIC
LANGUAGE ACTION PLAN**

Resume consideration of report by Executive Support Officer in conjunction with the Gaelic Language Action Plan (Pages 27 - 36)

8. MULTIMEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

Resume consideration of report by Communications Officer (Pages 37 - 40)

**9. USE OF WEBCASTING - COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERS AND OTHER
LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Report by Communications Officer (Pages 41 - 42)

SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP

Councillor Gordon Blair

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee

Councillor Len Scoullar

Councillor Michael Breslin

Councillor Aileen Morton

Councillor John Semple

Contact: Hazel MacInnes Tel: 01546 604269

**MINUTES of MEETING of SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP - MEDIA PLATFORMS held in the
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2012**

Present: Councillor Louise Glen Lee (Chair)

Councillor Michael Breslin
Councillor Aileen Morton

Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor John Semple

Attending: Laura Cameron, Directorate Support Officer
Lorne MacBrayne, Website Manager
Robert Miller, IOD Project Officer
Aileen McNicol, Communications Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Short Life Working Group – Media Platforms held on 22 October 2012 were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Scoullar noted that he had not received papers for the meeting held on 22 October 2012 which was the reason that he did not attend or submit his apologies.

4. SCOPE FOR URTV, WEBCASTING AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

The Short Life Working Group considered a scoping paper which provided details of the Council's aspirations and requirements in respect of URTV, webcasting and video conferencing that they had requested at their meeting on 22 October 2012.

Decision

The Short Life Working Group –

1. Noted the report.
2. Requested that a paper be provided to the next meeting which detailed the outcome of discussions between the IT Infrastructure Services Manager and UHI.
3. Requested that an initial business case be prepared detailing whether UHI can meet the Council's needs and requirements.
4. Requested that the IT Infrastructure Services Manager attend the next meeting of the Short Life Working Group.

5. Requested that a discussion around the range of Council meetings potentially suitable for video conferencing be placed in the agenda for the next meeting.
6. Requested that a paper be provided to the next meeting on the experience of other Councils in the use of webcasting; specifically on how beneficial this approach has been in terms of democracy and efficiencies.

(Ref: Report by Executive Support Officer dated 1 November 2012, submitted)

5. LOOKING LOCAL SERVICE COVERAGE

The Short Life Working Group considered a report which provided clarification on access to the Looking Local service for customers and particularly access to the service through TV including cost implications.

Decision

The Short Life Working Group –

1. Noted the information contained within the report.
2. Agreed, in regard to the branding and promotional launch, to proceed with the use of the name ABC TV subject to –
 - a. Clarifying the use of the name in terms of copyright issues;
 - b. Clarifying with the Executive Director – Customer Services if there is a requirement to obtain approval from the full Council; and if so, request permission from the Provost to place this on the agenda for consideration at the November Council meeting.

(Ref: Report by Customer Management Project Officer dated October 2012, submitted)

6. LOOKING LOCAL AND EXISTING WEB PORTALS

The Short Life Working Group considered a report which explained the synergies between the interactive functionality of the Looking Local digital TV platform and of existing Council Web Portals.

Decision

Noted the report.

(Ref: Report by Customer Management Project Manager dated November 2012, submitted)

7. USE OF GAELIC ON THE COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Short Life Working Group considered a report which looked at the possibility of increasing the use of Gaelic on the Council's website including any associated financial implications.

Decision

The Short Life Working Group –

1. Noted the report.
2. Agreed that the use of Gaelic on the Council's website should be considered in wider context as part of the Gaelic Language Action Plan.
3. Agreed that the existing Gaelic Language Action Plan would be brought to the next meeting and the Short Life Working Group would resume consideration of this item.

(Ref: Report by Executive Support Officer dated 9 November 2012, submitted)

8. WEBCASTING - A SURVEY OF PUBLIC SECTOR ACTIVITY

The Short Life Working Group considered a report providing information on how web based broadcasting is used by other Councils with a view to informing the approach for the introduction of such services to the Council.

Decision

The Short Life Working Group –

1. Noted the report.
2. Requested that the Communications Team arrange discussions with Communications Teams across the Community Planning Partners to establish if they would be willing to engage with the Council in the use of webcasting in joint ventures and report back to the next meeting.

(Ref: Report by Customer Management Project Manager dated November 2012, submitted)

9. MULTIMEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

The Short Life Working Group considered a report providing initial views by the Communications Team on how the Council may use multimedia.

Decision

The Short Life Working Group –

1. Noted the report.
2. Requested that consideration of this report be resumed at the next meeting of the Group.
3. Requested that the Communications Team attend the next meeting

with their Manager.

(Ref: Report by Communications Officer dated 8 November 2012,
submitted)

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMER SERVICES IN THE ABSENCE OF A QUORUM for the MEETING of SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP - MEDIA PLATFORMS held in the EXECUTIVE FLOOR MEETING ROOM, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on MONDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2012

Present: (Chair)

Attending:

Advance notification had been given by the Executive Director of Customer Services that the meeting would be inquorate due to the number of apologies submitted by Members. There was therefore no attendance by Members or Officers.

The meeting was rescheduled for Thursday 17 January 2013 at 3.00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMER SERVICES IN THE ABSENCE OF A QUORUM for the MEETING of SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP - MEDIA PLATFORMS held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY 2013

Present: (Chair)

Attending:

Advance notification had been given by the Executive Director of Customer Services that the meeting would be inquorate due to the number of apologies submitted by Members. There was therefore no attendance by Members or Officers.

The meeting was rescheduled for Thursday 31 January 2013 at 2.00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank

Current Video Conferencing Use and a UHI Managed Service

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The current Video Conferencing service is available from seventeen corporate locations which can connect directly to each other on a one-to-one basis. Multi-point conferences or conferences involving third parties use the two Virtual Meeting Rooms (VMR) leased to the Council by Videonations.
- 1.2. The service is based on the most cost-effective delivery and support model available where local site administrators provide first line support to local users and additional second line technical support is provided by a member of the IT Service. Members have raised concerns about the overall quality of VC calls, how faults are handled, and how the service might cope with an extension to include a larger number of sites and a potential requirement to support political meetings over VC. With such an expansion in mind members requested an approach to UHI to determine if an alternative VC managed service was available as a shared service. Discussions have taken place between Council and UHI staff and an outline proposal has now been received which covers the basics of the services available and the potential revenue costs. The costs are considerably greater than current costs and this paper looks more closely at what makes up the current service and the associated costs, reports on the alternative service available from the UHI VC team in Shetland and on the possibility of adopting a new internally supported model to deliver similar levels of support to those available from UHI without incurring the additional costs.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Members note the contents of this report, the background to VC deployment across the Council area, and determine if a redesign of the current VC delivery model to involve more hands on support from the IT Service should be trialled as a priority or decide if we should move forward to develop a formal set of VC requirements which we can then take to the market as a formal procurement exercise.

3. DETAIL**Video Conferencing Background**

- 3.1. The Council was one of the early public sector adopters of Video Conferencing (VC) technology in 1997 and since then has worked within a variety of support models to help deliver an appropriate service. Previous models included the management of our own VC bridge which we stopped doing on economic grounds in 2004.
- 3.2. After years of working in a complex and unreliable ISDN based environment the current delivery model has been developed to provide the most reliable and cost effective service within the confines of the VC budget. HD equipment from Lifesize and desktop conferencing software from Mirial provide better video quality than previously available, while ISDN lines have been migrated to IP to ensure a more consistent and affordable level of service.
- 3.3. Videoconferencing was introduced in Argyll and Bute to support Social Work and Education users. This covered 10 corporate sites across Argyll including Helensburgh, Lochgilphead, Dunoon, Rothesay Oban, Campbeltown and Tiree. Service was subsequently expanded to include the Three Islands Partnership, Islay, Jura and Colonsay when the Council introduced Customer Service points at these locations.
- 3.4. The number of VC locations has varied over the years and some sites have been subject to office relocation projects or changed to accommodate new VC requirement. Some sites have been retired due to low usage or other local requirements.
- 3.5. VC usage has grown over the years with 3000 hours annual use across the sites. The introduction of MS Lync has meant more online conferencing and future VC room use is expected to decline. Annual VC usage has declined by about 25% since the introduction of Lync but the number of conference calls via Lync has increased significantly over the same period. Lync has introduced more dynamic, flexible and convenient ways of conferencing.
- 3.6. VC is used by all Council departments and by all levels of staff. Regular users of the VC systems include the Elected Members, CEO, Executive Directors, Heads of Service and Managers. Uses include team meetings, conferences, training, presentations and virtually any use that helps negate travel costs and time. Meetings are conducted directly between internal staff and often include external partner organisations in multipoint conferences, such as other Councils, Scottish Government, the NHS, Police and Fire services, and a range of community partnership organisations. Some organisations have a partnership agreement with Argyll and Bute which allow them to use our VC systems, such as NHS Highland and in return Argyll and Bute staff can use their systems. Other

organisations such as ACHA have a commercial agreement and are charged for VC use.

- 3.7. The issues with VC over the years have been wide ranging but overall the percentage of disrupted sessions is usually around the 5% mark. Typical issues arise over communication failures or local user issues and, on rare occasions, outright equipment failure.
- 3.8. The VC strategy has changed significantly over the years. Initially all VC systems operated over ISDN lines provided by BT and this was the only way to provide a reasonable quality standard video and audio conferencing experience. The Council operated an internal bridge which allowed multiple sites to conference together in one meeting, including any external organisations, but the bridge was a complex and unreliable piece of equipment.
- 3.9. In 2003 the Council moved from hosting our own internal multipoint conferencing bridge to an externally hosted bridging service provided by the Manchester based company Videonations. The service is referred to as the "Virtual Meeting Room" (VMR) and this partnership resolved many problems encountered at the time with the resource and technical demands of managing our own internal bridge.
- 3.10. Individual room based systems are targeted for renewal every 4 or 5 years from a capital budget and a revenue budget covers the cost of the VMR service from Videonations and also covers an equipment maintenance agreement. The total available from revenue for the supply and support of the VMR and the maintenance of equipment is £28,960.
- 3.11. Any new requests for room based VC systems are dealt with on an individual basis and departments are normally advised of the costs and asked to seek funding if a new VC system is required. The current VC budget is now limited to maintaining the existing units and the monthly VMR rentals. No plans exist to introduce any additional room based systems on the corporate network at present but Education colleagues are in the process of ordering a new system for each of the 10 secondary schools. Details of the current IT budgets and commitments are covered in Appendix 1.
- 3.12. As MS Lync usage grows the traditional room based use is expected to drop further. Lifesize have just announced a new software upgrade for the existing platform to be released in January 2013 which will allow integration between the Council's Lifesize room systems and Microsoft Lync. IT Services

will aim to trial this major upgrade as soon as it becomes available.

- 3.13. Following a competitive tender the Council now uses Lifesize systems at 12 of the corporate locations and all are covered by a maintenance contract with Videonations – who are a UK support agent for LifeSize.
- 3.14. LifeSize are one of the leading 4 room based system suppliers alongside Polycom, Cisco, and Aethra and were the first to introduce IP based High Definition units.
- 3.15. One Polycom VSX unit remains operational in the Council Chamber. The unit is 6 years old now and has no warranty support. It was introduced 4 years ago to the Chamber as a temporary measure. There was no budget available to introduce a full sized, theatre based system required for such a large room. The system has remained in operational use between the chamber and committee room 1 and is used infrequently.
- 3.16. As part of the 2011 ICT Service Review for Customer and Support Services, a proposal was accepted to remove all ISDN circuits used for VC and introduce IP based connectivity. The proposal identified savings in excess of £24k per annum for line charges with a further saving on maintenance charges for ISDN network units and delivered an improved VC experience using high definition across IP. The ISDN lines were inherently unreliable and very expensive.
- 3.17. The LifeSize units and Polycom unit at the chamber were IP enabled and ISDN removed. A number of remote sites previously used old Polycom equipment (Jura, Islay small room, Colonsay, Coll, Tarbert, and Gigha) which were no longer supported by the suppliers and would not connect to the VMR via IP. In addition, some of the sites were connected on insufficient bandwidth levels.
- 3.18. A PC software based solution was introduced successfully at each of the remote sites which offered comparable quality over IP and allowed the removal of ISDN with no additional revenue commitment. The sites are using the Mirial VC software and are revenue neutral to the VC budget.
- 3.19. The Coll site was removed after negotiation with the local community company and the introduction of a new system from UHI. Gigha Heritage trust was issued with a PC with the Mirial software installed and utilise a local broadband circuit to connect to the VMR whenever a VC is required with the Council.

Current Support Issues

- 3.20. Each of the 17 corporate VC sites has a local contact for VC support. The local site administrator is expected to be the first port of call for assistance with VC problems. All have been trained to deal with the most common issues but not all are readily available. If the local site administrators are unavailable or if the problem is beyond their capability it should be reported to the IT Service Desk for further assistance.
- 3.21. From 1st November 2011 to 31st Oct 2012 the VC Service accommodated 1320 bookings with 3091 hours use and an average of 2.3 hours per session (full details are available in Appendix 2).
- 3.22. During the same period there were 20 calls reported to the IT Service Desk and logged in the HEAT system about issues with VC Meetings. A few additional calls were also received but they related to bookings with external suppliers who asked how they could connect to a Council VC. These additional calls were not registered as faults. The following provides a summary of the 20 logged fault calls:
- VC Configuration Issues – 3 calls
 - Dialling Issues – 7 calls - Primarily due to users trying to dial old ISDN numbers.
 - Booking Issues – 1 call – Staff did not turn up at one site, other meeting attendees could not contact them and assumed it was a tech issue.
 - No Video/Audio components to a call – 2 – Occasionally, when connecting to another site or VM room, some calls experience a loss of Video or Audio.
 - Equipment Failure – 3 calls – 2 Islay calls and 1 Mull call relating to equipment failures. Either a camera failing or VC Codec unit failure. Islay in particular had local power issues.
 - Network Issues – 1 – During June this year a couple of VC sessions were cancelled due to network which affected the Housing Meeting Room in Kilmory.
 - Test Call Issues with partners – 2 Test issues (Strathclyde Fire & Rescue and Scottish Govt) reported. Once correct settings for VM connection were provided, tests proved successful. Scottish Govt regularly connect to our VMR for meetings such as the Pathfinder North Board.
 - ISDN – 1 call – Education VC unit at Dunoon used by corporate staff - tried to participate in a VM Call with other Corporate sites.

- 3.23. The above equates to less than one call every two weeks to the IT Service Desk but this does not take account of the additional calls for assistance made to local site administrators. There are also a number of users who call engineers directly when a problem arises. Local site administrators normally resolve dialling issues and other minor issues such as loss of picture (usually screens on incorrect channels) and these calls are not reported to the service desk. There may be a number of additional unreported calls where users have abandoned a VC session and not reported a fault to the service desk.
- 3.24. Local site administrators have estimated an additional 1 call per week on VC issues not reported to the service desk and therefore the service deals with a total of approximately 70 fault calls per annum. This equates to 5.3% of all bookings and the majority of these faults are resolved satisfactorily.

Alternative UHI Managed VC Service

- 3.25. The University of the Highlands and Islands operates one of the largest VC networks in the country. They have invested several million pounds in VC studios around the region and provide a centrally managed bridging service from their VC support team in Shetland. Following concerns about the quality of the VC service in use across the Council, Members requested the IT Infrastructure Manager approach IT contemporaries in UHI to determine if an alternative managed service could be provided by UHI to support the Council's VC infrastructure. UHI were provided with full details of our current VC use to help in their preparations but as they had not considered such a commercial offering previously they requested some additional time to provide a response. Discussions with UHI are on-going but an outline proposal was received on 12th December which covers a managed bridging service and is included in full in para 3.27 below.
- 3.26. UHI are hoping to develop a full shared IT service across the UHI partnership and would like to extend the service to other interested customers. Video Conferencing is only one of the services they would be interested in providing to other partners. They aim to establish a separate legal limited entity operating under the VAT Cost Sharing Exemption provisions introduced earlier this year and offer IT Services across the region.
- 3.27. UHI have yet to work up a detailed definition of the VC service but they provided a bullet point note to cover the basic principles of any agreement and an estimated annual cost to support the current 17 sites.

3.28. UHI also confirmed there is a team of three VC staff at the VC Network Operations Centre (VNOC) based in Shetland, together with business, development and technical support from senior managers in the LIS Department based in Inverness and Stornoway. The team employ a single IT Engineer for Argyll but site visits from the central team in Shetland can be arranged as required. Members should note that the proposed service covers standard business hours only. Out of hours support is available at additional cost.

3.29. The proposal includes a managed bridging support service available to all 17 Argyll and Bute sites for a cost of £45,100 per annum and has been compiled as follows:

This proposal is for a Managed VC Service for Argyll and Bute Council which would incorporate the following:

Video Conferencing:

- Bookings
- Call set-up
- Quality monitoring
- Conference management
- Virtual Room availability

VC Estate Management:

- End point monitoring and maintenance
- Software upgrades

Future provision:

- Consultancy and technical advice on future installations

Help and support:

- VC team available for support purposes 9-5, Monday-Friday, outside those hours at overtime costs
- On-site visits as required and agreed

Specifically excluded from the service would be:

- Studio/room access or booking at end-points at Argyll College or Argyll and Bute Council

- Streaming and recording of VCs (would need to be the subject of a separate discussion to determine exact requirements)
- ConferenceMe - if this is required then it would be subject to a separate support agreement.

The annual cost for such a service would be:

- Staffing - £15,000
- VC Equipment - £25,000
- Allowance for travel, etc. - £1,000
- Overhead - 10% - £4,100

Total: £45,100 + vat

It is assumed in the above that that the service would be managed on the same basis as for existing customers; that this would not be a bespoke service.

- 3.30. UHI also explained the way in which the costs were calculated to take the extent of the Council's VC 'estate' and to look at that as a proportion of the total UHI estate. The Council would make up about 10% of the total and they therefore proposed to make a charge equivalent to 10% of the cost of running the VC service. This provides some guidance on how the charges would increase if we added additional sites or reduce if we removed sites from our network.
- 3.31. The proposed service does not provide any additional equipment or any maintenance of existing equipment. These costs would continue to be met from existing budgets. Further clarification confirmed the reference to VC equipment in the costs section above related ONLY to the Council's share of the bridging equipment costs.
- 3.32. In summary the proposed service offers access to the dedicated UHI VC team in Shetland, a conference booking service (no room booking service), remote assistance for any VC unit to connect to a call, monitoring and management of the call and conference and access to a virtual meeting room for multi-point conferences. A consultancy service and technical advice will also be available to cover future installations.
- 3.33. Services to record and stream VC meetings on the Internet may be available at additional cost.

- 3.34. Members should be aware the costs at £45,100 per annum or £135,300 over three years are at a level where the Council will be expected to pursue a competitive tendering option for this service should members decide the service should be delivered externally.

Redesigned Internal VC Service

- 3.35. Notwithstanding the likelihood that the quality of the VC service from UHI would reach very high standards, Members are asked to consider if an alternative approach to the management of the service internally should be trialled before further decisions are made? The costs of the UHI service are considerably higher than expected and an alternative local model which could deliver equivalent services has been explored and could be implemented without increasing the costs.
- 3.36. Until now the Council has relied more on the local site administrators to provide the required support for those attending a video conference. At some sites such as Dalriada House or The Helensburgh Marriage Rooms, local admin support is not always available and the overall support service has proven to be unreliable. Further work has been completed to ensure all Lifesize installations have been upgraded to the latest firmware and the IT Service is now in a position to introduce the remote management of all Lifesize systems via the It Service Desk. Appropriate procedures have been put in place to provide a similar level of support from the existing IT teams to that offered by the UHI support team in Shetland. This includes an ability to remotely manage each device and offer the same remote assistance for any VC unit to connect to a call, monitoring and management of the conference. In addition, agreement has been reached with the front-line support team to provide access to the 16 local engineers based around Argyll and Bute to supplement the support offered by the local site administrators. The service will integrate with the new room booking system to provide a fully supported VC environment.
- 3.37. Proposals and procedures have been created and agreed internally to introduce this revised service on a trial basis from the start of January until the end of March 2013. There would be no additional costs to the Council to implement this significant change in support. At the same time every effort will be made to introduce the new Lifesize firmware upgrade which is expected to allow Lync integration with the Council's room based systems.

Additional Equipment

- 3.38. Members also raised concerns about the overall quality of the VC equipment the Council currently uses when compared with the equipment

used in more advanced installations. UHI were kind enough to provide an outline of the equipment they use in their VC sites. They categorise sites as compact studios, mid-size studios and lecture theatres with the suggestion that the lecture theatre style implementation is close to what we would need for the Council Chamber in Kilmory.

- Each category is equipped with an appropriate level of equipment as follows:
Compact studio: Cisco C20 codec, 4x zoom camera, two 46" LCD screens (the odd room only has one as two isn't necessary depending on the size of the room) PC, VGA auto switcher, VGA input plate for a laptop.
- Mid-size Studio: Cisco C90 codec, 12x zoom camera, two 47" LCD screens, PC, VGA input plate for a laptop, Blu-ray player, Smart Podium, Crestron touch-panel control, induction loop, controllable power switch.
- Lecture Theatre: Cisco C90 codec, two 12x zoom cameras, electric projection screen, high definition projector, 22" ceiling mounted confidence monitor, lectern, Smart Podium, PC, Blu-ray player, VGA input plate for a laptop, Crestron touch-panel control, induction loop, lectern microphone, lapel microphone, hand-held microphone, ceiling mounted microphones, 7.1 surround sound for Blu-ray local viewing, ceiling and wall mounted speakers, controllable power switch.

3.39. Discussions are underway with suppliers to establish outline costs for the above and a budgetary quotation was provided by one of the four APOC approved suppliers of VC equipment to the University sector. The Lecture Theatre installation for the Council chamber would need additional cameras and could cost in excess of £90,000. The mid-size studio installation could cost £33,000 and the smallest compact-studio would cost £15,000. The Council currently spends approximately £6,000 per room installation.

4. IMPLICATIONS

- | | | |
|-----|--------|---|
| 4.1 | Policy | Council policy is to use Video Conferencing in support of the Council's business and to minimise the time and costs associated with travel to meetings. The Council are considering extending use to include formal committee meetings. |
|-----|--------|---|

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|---|
| 4.2 | Financial | The current 2 room bridging service costs £13,200 per annum against a proposed UHI cost of £45,100 per annum |
| 4.3 | Legal | With outline costs set at £135,300 for a 3 year managed VC bridge service, the Council would be obliged to consider a formal tender for this service |
| 4.4 | HR | Possible overtime requirement for additional out of hours VC support from the Council's IT Desktop and IT Communications Teams |
| 4.5 | Equalities | None |
| 4.6 | Risk | The current risk for the Council concerns our ability to manage an extended VC service to include internal committee and/or public meetings. Local support levels would need to improve to provide sufficient confidence that such meetings could progress incident free. |
| 4.7 | Customer Service | Potential for improved customer service if a more accomplished level of remote and local engineering support is available. |

Gerry Wilson
IT Infrastructure Service Manager
Customer Services
14 December 2012

For further information please contact:
Gerry Wilson, IT Infrastructure Manager, Tel 01436 658936

Appendix 1 – Current Budgets

Capital Budget 2013/14 - £24,000

VC Revenue Budget 2012/13

25213 VC Maintenance Commitments – Budget Total £28,960	
Remaining Legacy ISDN Charges & Sundries(not required after 2012/13)	£10,920
Virtual Meeting Room Rental (2 Rooms) - £1100 per month	£13,300
VC Equipment Maintenance	£4,740
Total	£28,960

Appendix 2 - VC Usage Across Sites Nov 2011 to Oct 2012

Location	Equipment	No Of Bookings Nov2011-Oct2012	Total Hours Used Nov2011-Oct2012	Comment
Dunoon - Hill St	LifeSize Express	151	352	
Oban - Corran Halls	LifeSize Express	102	239	
Campbeltown - Burnet Building	LifeSize Express	87	179	
Rothsay - Union St	LifeSize Express	81	182	
Lochgilphead - Dalriada House	LifeSize Express	139	383	
Lochgilphead - Kilmory housing Meeting Room	LifeSize Express	212	474	
Lochgilphead - Kilmory Council Chamber/Committee Room 1	Polycom VX5000	25	50	Estimate, occasional use of system between rooms.
Jura - Servicepoint, Craighouse	Mirial PC Based VC Software	31	70	
Tarbert - Argyll House	Mirial PC Based VC Software	18	37	
Tiree - Business Centre, Crossapol	LifeSize Express	34	77	
Mull - Servicepoint, Tobermory - 2 systems	LifeSize Express & LifeSize Passport	30	62	2 Systems on Mull, one LifeSize Passport system is used for disabled access needs in downstairs meeting room
Colonsay - Servicepoint, Scalasaig	Mirial PC Based VC Software	23	55	
Helensburgh - Marriage Room, West King St.	LifeSize Express	205	537	
Islay - Conference Room, Servicepoint, Bowmore	LifeSize Express	113	254	
Islay - Small Meeting Room, Servicepoint, Bowmore	Mirial PC Based VC Software	57	116	
Gigha	Mirial PC Based VC Software	12	24	Estimated usage, system provided by ABC but not on ABC Network. Gigha Heritage Trust average monthly use
Total VC Booking hours to Service Desk			1813 hours	
Total Across Sites		1320 bookings	3091 hours use	When multiple sites are extracted and counted

				individually
Total Virtual Meeting Room (Multipoint Conference Bridge)		305	750	VM usage included in above total number of hours figure - reflects 23% of conferences made use of VM Room. 305 individual VM room instances totalling 750 hours use.

Webcasting Experiences in other Scottish Councils

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) meeting of 19th November the Group requested a paper exploring the experience of other Scottish Councils in the use of webcasting; specifically on how beneficial this approach has been in terms of democracy and efficiencies.
- 1.2 This paper provides the explanation requested.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Short Life Working Group Members:

1. Note the information provided below in response to the action from the meeting of 19th November 2012.

3. DETAIL.

- 3.1 Three Scottish Councils currently have a regular webcasting service aimed at increasing the transparency of decision making and improving engagement and communication with citizens:

- [Moray Council](#)
- [City of Edinburgh Council](#)
- [Highland Council](#).

Telephone interviews were conducted with the officers in each council responsible for the management of the webcasting service. This obtained information on the implementation, support, technical arrangements and outcomes of their webcasting service. A number of live and historic webcasts were also viewed for each council. A summary of findings is provided for each below.

MORAY COUNCIL

- 3.2 Moray was the first council in Scotland to introduce webcasting and has a static webcasting service comprising three cameras in their council chambers. Initially these were controlled from a console by an officer but they are now directed automatically depending on whose microphone is active; with the camera defaulted to the chair when no microphone is active. They provide a simple service with no captions, no linking to agenda documents or presentations, no transcript service or feedback/poll service. This is largely due to cost as these features tend to be add-ons.

- 3.3 Moray broadcasts a range of council and committee meetings that are held in the council chambers, but does not undertake VC in to meetings. Prior to each meeting signs are erected to the doors of the meeting alerting attendees that it is being webcast and that by entering the meeting they are consenting for their presence to be webcast. An announcement is also made from the Chair that the meeting is about to be broadcast live. The facility has also been used for training e.g. their lawyers use it to provide webcast training sessions on new legislation that affects the council.
- 3.4 They have introduced a protocol for when the chair can suspend the meeting and discontinue the webcast e.g. if there was a protester. Members did not receive any media training but have adapted quickly to the technology and now largely forget it is there, so it has had minimal impact on behaviours.
- 3.5 The basic nature of the service means that the impact on council officer support is light. Officers from democratic services have to be in a position to fully test the service and the links to Public-i 45 minutes before a meeting is held and they undertake the work to ensure the archive recording is available to the public after the live webcast is complete. The service is robust with main issues being the web network link to Public-i sometimes being dropped.
- 3.6 Moray believe some unexpected benefits have arisen:
- The quality of minute taking has improved as officers can replay the meeting to clarify any issues. Similarly there are far fewer disputes about who said what.
 - The broadcasts are recorded to DVD and this satisfies the Standards Commissions requirements to keep a record of all decision making meetings for at least two years.
 - Officers required to attend for specific agenda items keep an eye on the live feed and so only attend on a 'just in time' basis. Hence they don't spend long times waiting around for their item to come up and are therefore more productive.

Highland Council

- 3.7 Highland Council has recently introduced a mobile webcasting service in addition to the dual camera fixed facility in their council chamber. The mobile service is used to webcast Area Committees and has three cameras. It has required broadband to each of the area venues to be upgraded to 8Mb via ADSL lines that are separate from the main council network for security reasons.
- 3.8 The mobile equipment is being leased from Public-i and in addition to the cameras and lighting it requires a laptop console, encoding device and sound amplifier, plus many cables and a van to transport it. The set up has to be done the day before to allow full testing; hence Monday meetings are generally avoided where possible.
- 3.9 Seven council officers have been trained (1 day course), to operate the webcasting service equipment and during live webcasts one officer works the control console and one liaises with Public-i to manage the broadcast. Highland do show presentations at relevant agenda items during live webcasts and so they preload the presentations to Public-i. This is particularly important for planning meetings when maps and visualisations are displayed. In addition officers undertake the captioning, indexing and editing duties.
- 3.10 The meetings in the council chamber have electronic voting and so councillors log in to their combined microphone and voting assembly with a smartcard. The smartcard also contains their caption profile, so that when they activate their microphone the camera focuses on them and their details are shown on screen. It means councillors can sit

where they like in the chamber providing they log in. This is not done for the mobile service where voting is by roll call.

- 3.11 The council only publicises the service on its own website and for the first two mobile broadcasts the service had 19 and 22 live viewers and 151 and 173 archive viewers respectively. The service is felt to be important for ensuring remoter areas are demonstrably included in the business of the council. The feeling is that attendees are now more respectful in manner at meetings and the council has a preset message displayed for those agenda items that are not open to the public.

City of Edinburgh Council

- 3.12 Edinburgh are undertaking a one year trial of webcasting using Public-i and were initially confining this to full council meetings, but have recently decided to extend this to Petition Meetings. They have a static webcasting venue of four cameras in their main council chamber and have established a webcasting project board (Chaired by the head of Communication), to manage the trial.
- 3.13 Pre launch preparations included holding briefing sessions for councillors, and a test broadcast of a council meeting so members could see how the system would look to citizens. A webcasting protocol was agreed and the service was publicised via twitter, prominently on their website and articles in newspapers. They also offer text and email alert reminders as to when the next webcast is occurring.
- 3.14 In addition to the usual webcasting preparations and live meeting monitoring, council officers also manage the real time feedback (poll and freetext), generated by the webcasts and emails from watchers of archive footage. Edinburgh also preloads presentations so that these can be triggered at the relevant point in the meeting to display for webcast watchers. Edinburgh also places signs outside the Chamber to make attendees aware a webcast is in progress and the Provost reminds attendees that they are being webcast. A standard message is shown on screen when a voting division takes place.
- 3.15 The main benefit has been that for the first webcast 623 citizens watched live and over 1,000 caught the archived edition. The main complaint has been the silence that occurs to watchers when no microphone has been played, so Edinburgh are investigating playing some form of ambient noise when nothing is being said. There is also less formality about proceedings now in terms of both dress (many male councillors now forgo wearing ties) and delivery in a conscious effort to break down barriers to inclusion.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 All three councils use the Public-i service but with a wide range of technological sophistication. Moray and Highland feel that the gains in democracy and openness justify the investment and Edinburgh are still evaluating their service but have extended the original scope.
- 4.2 There is additional support overhead (increasing with technological sophistication of delivery), but this is offset by having better recorded outcomes, generally more orderly meetings and less time waiting around for attending officers. Further offset benefits can be gained if the service is used for a wider range of activities; such as training. Each council has also provided useful lessons how to implement and run the service should Argyll and Bute Council decide to proceed with the implementation of webcasting.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	The paper informs future decisions on the council's multimedia communication strategy.
5.2	Financial	None.
5.3	Personnel	None.
5.4	Equalities Impact Assessment	None.
5.5	Legal	None.
5.6	Risk	None.
5.7	Customer Service	None.

Background Documents:

N/A

For further information contact Bob Miller, ext.4026

Bob Miller
Customer Management Project Manager
December 2012

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL**Short Life Working Group
Media Platforms****CUSTOMER SERVICES****19th November 2012**

Use of Gaelic on Council Website

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) meeting held on 22nd October 2012 it was agreed that a report be prepared which looks at the possibility of increasing the use of Gaelic on the Councils website, and any associated financial implications.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the SLWG Members:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report and the options that are available to the Council in terms of increasing the use of Gaelic on the Councils website.

3.0 DETAIL**3.1 Current Set Up/Website Capabilities**

- 3.1.1 The Website Content Management System, Drupal, has a number of add-on modules that allow multilingual sites to be created. These modules do not offer any automated language translation but rather a simple way for users to switch the language on pages that have been manually translated. All additional modules for Drupal are open source and there is therefore no cost for software. The modules have been successfully tested on a development version of the website.
- 3.1.2 The creation of basic, text based pages on the website (regardless of language) is very simple and can be done by anyone with appropriate permissions. Training would be provided by the Web team. However, the council's Web Team do not speak or write Gaelic and are therefore unable to provide any translation of content or any quality control over content translated by third parties. The web team would continue to have the ability to provide support in all other aspects of maintaining the pages. Once content has been translated into Gaelic for the website, the same information can be sent to the Looking Local system for display on televisions and via mobile phone.

3.2 Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund

- 3.2.1 Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established under the powers of The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, which also outlines its key statutory functions, including the publication of a National Gaelic Language Plan and granting authority for the Bòrd to require relevant public authorities to produce a Gaelic Language Plan.

3.2.2 The Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) was established to help public authorities in the delivery of commitments in their Gaelic Plans, and in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan. Approximately £1.4M has been made available by the Scottish Government for the fund.

3.2.3 A working group was set up by the Council to develop the next Gaelic Plan for Argyll and Bute. A draft copy of the Plan was discussed at the Chief Executive’s DMT on 5 November, and is scheduled to go to the Community Services DMT and the SMT on 12 and 26 November respectively.

3.2.4 In line with the discussions held at the SLWG, where it was suggested that the use of Gaelic language on the website be increased, there is specific reference to this within the new Gaelic Plan as follows;

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale
Gaelic is audible and visible in our communities	Website and multi media platforms will have an increasing amount of Gaelic material	As platforms come on stream – at least 30 per cent in Gaelic

3.2.5 The Council could apply for funding through the GLAIF to help achieve this action. The GLAIF provides 80% of costs up to £25K, and supports a range of initiatives, including *“support for the enhanced visibility and status of Gaelic in the dissemination of public information”*.

3.2.6 The funding round for 2012/13 is almost complete, with limited funds available. On this basis, it would be beneficial to wait until the new financial year when funding for 2013/14 becomes available. No formal announcement has been made in regard to the funding programme for next year, but would expect further information to become available in March 2013.

3.2.7 Funding is typically provided on an annual basis, and there is no guarantee that projects successful in a particular funding round will automatically receive support beyond that financial year, and there is the potential that Council’s would be expected to pick up costs in future years from existing budgets.

3.3 Translation Services

3.3.1 In order for the Council to increase the use of Gaelic on the Website, translation services require to be used due to the absence of any in house resource. The Council currently utilise the services of a Gaelic translator based on Skye, which is arranged through Ionad Chaluim Chille Ìle (The Columba Centre, Islay). The rate is £105 per 1000 words and there is currently no corporate budget for translation requests.

3.3.2 To reduce the costs associated with using external translation services, it is proposed as part of the Gaelic Action Plan to undertake a skills audit to identify any employees who are fluent in Gaelic and have the ability to translate/proof read.

3.3.3 Highland Council has a Gaelic Translation Unit and there is the potential for the Council to use this service, but would have financial implications. Costs for this service have been requested from the relevant Officer at Highland Council but to date these have not been received.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Council website has the functionality to allow for multilingual sites to be created, however there is currently no internal resource available to provide translation/proof reading services. The main options available to the council in the short term to increase the use of Gaelic on the website is to apply for funding through the GLAIF, which is likely to be one off for a year, or to continue buying in translation services. In the longer term, there may be the opportunity to utilise the skills of Council employees who are fluent in Gaelic. This will be dependent on the results of any skills audit undertaken and the willingness of current employees to undertake this role.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	Compliance with Council's Gaelic Action Plan
5.2	Financial	£105 per 1000 words if translation service continues to be utilised
5.3	HR	None at present
5.4	Equalities Impact Assessment	None at present
5.5	Legal	None at present
5.6	Risk	None at present
5.7	Customer Service	Potential to increase visibility of Gaelic language in dissemination of public information

9 November 2012

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services

For further information please contact;

Laura Cameron
Executive Support Officer
Customer Services
Tel: 01546 604325

This page is intentionally left blank

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale	Budget	Lead
Gaelic in the Community				
Gaelic is audible and visible in our communities	Delivery of 2 locally sourced Gaelic awareness sessions in identified localities	4 localities per annum 50 participants per annum	£2,500 per annum	Adult Learning Manager
	Number of groups accessing Gaelic centre in Oban	10 groups (by 2014)		Education Support Officer - Gaelic
	All internal and external signage replaced bilingually when required	100% within lifetime of the plan		Property Manager
	Increase Gaelic materials available through the library service	Target tbc once baseline is known 2014	£5,000	Library Operations Manager
	Website and multimedia platforms will have an increasing amount of Gaelic material	As platforms come on stream – at least 30 per cent in Gaelic		Web Team
	Monthly press releases in Gaelic	Average of 2		Communications team/Translator
People have high quality opportunities for the use of Gaelic as a choice in a range of community initiatives	Improve monitoring framework for partners delivering activities	Agreed feedback protocols by 2013		IOD Programme Manager
	Commission research to identify baseline Gaelic activities delivered	Report produced 2013	£10,000	IOD Programme Manager
	Assess impact of community initiatives	Baseline study 2013 Annually from 2014 (analysis of the impact on local communities)	£10,000	IOD Programme Manager
	Increase number of local Gaelic partnerships	Increase to 9 by 2015 (baseline = 7)	£5,000	Education Support Officer - Gaelic

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale	Budget	Lead
People have access to Gaelic learning and usage opportunities	Number of students attending Gaelic language learning classes/courses	400 - 2013 (baseline = 358)		IOD Programme Manager (Argyll College, ICCI)
	Offer free Council venues for local provincial mods	Implement from 2013	£1,500	Leisure Manager
	Continued financial support for local Gaelic partnerships	Annually on receipt of progress reports	£5,000 per annum	Education Support Officer - Gaelic
	Promotion of Gaelic learning opportunities through the wider learning community and in collaboration with Bòrd na Gàidhlig	Working with CLD, advertising on website; distribution of fliers 2013		Adult Learning Manager
GAELIC IN EDUCATION				
Continue to strengthen Gaelic activities for families with children aged 0-3	Gaelic Bookbug and other parent and toddler Gaelic activities, delivered in areas with Gaelic Medium Education(GME)	All areas with GME plus 5 additional areas (baseline = 6)	Within existing budgets	Early Years Development Officer
	Promote the benefits of bilingualism and Gaelic Education	All areas with GME plus 2 additional areas (baseline = 6)	Within existing budgets	Education Support Officer - Gaelic
	Expand the Parental Advocacy Scheme in partnership with Comunn nam Pàrant.	All areas with GME (baseline = 6)	Existing partnership funding	Education Support Officer - Gaelic
Provide a high quality 3-18 experience for young people	Increase the number of curricular areas delivered through Gaelic in secondary school curriculum	4 by 2017	Within existing budgets	Quality Improvement Manager - Secondary
	Access to new qualifications through the medium of Gaelic	3 by 2017	Within existing budgets	Quality Standards Manager

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale	Budget	Lead
accessing Gaelic Education	Number of schools offering Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS)	Increase by 5 per year	Within existing budgets	Education Support Officer - Gaelic
	Provide CPD opportunities for all Gaelic Education staff	2 courses per year	Within existing budgets	Education CPD Co-ordinator
	Local and national policies are reviewed and implemented	Ongoing consultation		Education Support Officer - Gaelic
Ensure Lifelong Learning opportunities meet the needs of communities	Families, with young people in GME, accessing out of school activities for learning and using Gaelic	1 event per school term per area	Within existing budgets	Education Support Officer – Gaelic (in partnership with national Gaelic organisations)
	Young people with Gaelic engaging with the wider Gaelic community in a variety of settings	10 opportunities by 2017 per area	£5,000 per annum	Education Support Officer – Gaelic (in partnership with national Gaelic organisations)
Maintain strong partnerships and networks to ensure breadth and depth of experiences in learning	Access to national/partnership specialist school support staff	2014	Within existing budgets	Principal Educational Psychologist
GAELIC IN THE HOME				
People are aware of the importance of Gaelic in the home	High quality promotion, marketing and literature that informs people of the benefits of creating a bilingual environment in the home setting	All areas with GME by 2014	Within existing budgets	Communications Manager

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale	Budget	Lead
People have opportunities for the natural use of Gaelic in the home setting supported by other key partner organisations.	Materials, resources and the language skills provided to empower families to create a Gaelic environment in the home.	All areas with GME by 2014	Within existing budgets	Educational Support Officer – Gaelic/Adult Learning Manager
GAELIC IN THE WORKPLACE				
Gaelic is audible and visible in the workplace and in Council processes	Increase Council vacancies where Gaelic is desirable	100% by 2014		HR Manager
	Increase Gaelic content on 'The Hub' and website	Quarterly feature		
	Promotion of good news stories in and relating to Gaelic	Ongoing – news stories available on the Council website, 'The Hub', Cascade, Noticeboards		All Heads of Service
Staff have opportunities to improve their Gaelic language skills and this supports the use of Gaelic in a range of situations, in the workplace and in the community	Carry out a staff language skills audit	Audit carried out in 2013 Findings published in 2014		IOD Programme Manager
	Council staff and Community planning partners' staff accessing language learning classes	50 new employees by 2014		IOD Programme Manager
	Number of staff accessing Gaelic Toolkit	100 per annum		Website Manager
	Committee meetings opened with a Gaelic greeting	100% of full Council meetings opened with Gaelic greeting 2013		Council Provost
	Automated messages on contact with the council to have a Gaelic greeting	Bilingual welcome on switchboard 2013		Customer Service Centre Manager

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale	Budget	Lead
	Increase Gaelic content on plasma screens at customer service points	Welcome greeting, date to appear bilingually by 2013		Customer Service Centre Manager
	Promotion of Gaelic activities in Argyll and Bute on website, plasma screen and customer service points	Links to national and local organisations, promotion of events, courses etc.		Adult Learning Manager
GAELIC IN THE ARTS, MEDIA, CULTURE AND HERITAGE				
Gaelic is used in arts, media and culture	Host a successful Royal National Mod	Every 3 years	Within existing Service Level Agreement	Argyll and Bute Council and local organising committees
	Gaelic media organisations included in distribution of all council press releases	100%		Communications Manager
	Increase number of Fèisean events held in Argyll and Bute	(baseline tbc) Increase of 10 per annum	£5,000 per annum	Community Development Officer and Feisean nan Gaidheal
People participate in Gaelic arts, media heritage events	Increase participants in Royal National Mod	Greater number participating when Mod returns to a previous venue (An Comunn Gàidhealach)		Argyll and Bute Council in partnership with An Comunn Gàidhealach
	Increase visitors attending Royal National Mod	Greater number attendees when Mod returns to a previous venue		An Comunn Gàidhealach
	Increase number participating in Fèisean events	Increase by 5% per year (408 in 2011/12)	Within existing Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Feisean nan Gàidheal

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale	Budget	Lead
	Increase number attending Fèisean events	Increase by 5% per year (987 in 11/12)	Within existing Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Feisean nan Gàidheal
GAELIC IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
Gaelic related activities bring economic benefits	Increase economic impact of hosting Royal National Mod	£2.2m (baseline from 2009 Mod)	Within existing Service Level Agreement	An Comunn Gàidhealach
	Increase tutors in feisean activities	100 by 2016		Feisean nan Gaidheal
	Support HIE Research – “Economic and Social Impact of Gaelic Language as an Asset”	Financial contribution to HIE Research	£5,000	IOD Programme Manager

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**MEDIA PLATFORMS SHORT
LIFE WORKING GROUP****COMMUNICATIONS TEAM****19 NOVEMBER 2012**

MULTIMEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the meeting of the Media Platforms Short Life Working Group on 22 October 2012, the Communications team was asked to provide initial views on how Argyll and Bute Council might use multimedia.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The group is asked to note the report.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Media Platforms Short Life Working Group is currently considering a variety of multimedia options:

- Looking Local
- Proposals on council television channels, including schools
- Webcasts

Views on each of these are outlined below.

3.2 Looking Local

Work on Argyll and Bute Council's Looking Local service is well underway with the launch scheduled for Monday 12 November 2012. A detailed communications plan for this has been prepared by the Customer Management Project team. The Communications team can assist with the implementation of this and officers have already assisted with creation of flyers and posters ahead of the Looking Local launch.

3.3 Proposals on council television channels, including schools

The SLWG has received proposals on how external providers may be able to deliver council television channels. The communications team has a number of questions about this, namely around editorial control and how suitable content would be sourced and delivered. If such a service is delivered by a provider

which is already involved with the council in its local media role, there is potential for conflict of interest in terms of news coverage. There is also a risk that significant expenditure on communication/PR could, in itself, result in adverse publicity for the council. The involvement of journalists or employees who are not directly employed by the council would need to be carefully considered, especially in light of the work already carried out by the communications team and in terms of consistency of the council's communications approach.

The idea of a council television channel is, though, an exciting one and it would be interesting to examine in more detail if and how we could deliver this in-house. There is lots of potential especially from school television channels and some of our schools have already created their own resources with great success (for example, DGSTV).

Whether a council television channel was delivered by an external supplier or created in-house, the communications team feels it would be essential to have a clear procedure and guidelines in place regarding editorial content and control, to ensure a good fit with the team's action plan and the council's agreed communications strategy, and to maintain consistency in the messages and information we are sending out.

3.4 Webcasts

There is potential for the council to make much more use of webcam and webcast technology.

Straightforward, essentially unedited webcam broadcasts of council meetings made available on the council's website using YouTube or similar would be cost-effective, open and transparent. There would be cost implications in terms of suitable equipment and it would be important to be able to provide a quality broadcast.

Another possibility is more active and creative use of YouTube/similar technology to provide video features or interviews for upload to the council's website – for example, interviews with lead councillors following major meetings and decisions; budget/other updates; positive video features about council services and projects. The communications/web team already have a small video camera which (along with some basic operation training that could be sourced locally) could reasonably achieve this. This approach would be cost-effective and a good introduction to use of multimedia, as well as being relatively low-risk in terms of cost, publicity or impact on existing workloads.

YouTube is very cheap and the council's use of this has been limited. It might be a reasonable practical approach to start off at this level before incurring significant expenditure. Customer surveys carried out in autumn 2011 indicated that 89 per cent of customers preferred to find out news and information about the

council through local newspapers. While it is important to make the best use of rapidly changing modern technology and social media, it is equally vital to recognise how our customers prefer to hear from and about us, and consider any significant investment accordingly.

Video-conferencing is to be explored in more depth, including examining the UHI model, and it is suggested that we investigate multimedia in the same way.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Looking Local is under way and is the subject of a separate, detailed report.
- 4.2 Using multimedia has potential but it would be helpful to investigate further how we might start to make more use of this in-house before significantly involving external suppliers.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - none
- 5.2 Financial - none
- 5.3 Legal - none
- 5.4 HR - none
- 5.5 Equalities - none
- 5.6 Risk - none
- 5.7 Customer Service - none

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services
8 November 2012

For further information contact: Aileen McNicol, Communications Officer –
01546 604103 or email aileen.mcnicol@argyll-bute.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**MEDIA PLATFORMS SHORT
LIFE WORKING GROUP****COMMUNICATIONS TEAM****17 DECEMBER 2012**

**USE OF WEBCASTING – COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERS AND
OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the meeting of the Media Platforms Short Life Working Group on 19 November 2012, the Communications team was asked to provide a short report on how community planning partners and other local authorities make use of webcasting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The group is asked to note the report.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 We spoke with communications officers at a number of the council's community planning partners, including Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Strathclyde Police and the NHS.

Perhaps surprisingly, use of webcasting is somewhat limited. Strathclyde Police, for example, do have a YouTube channel but there are restrictions placed on how videos can be viewed and how they are used. They advised that there was no definite policy on use of webcasts and the reasons for the restrictions in place arose from the fact that many of the videos were produced by community policing staff outwith the corporate communications department. The Scottish Police Services Authority tends to use webcasts more, for example board meetings. NHS Highland provides some webcasts, for example its annual review and certain board meetings. Strathclyde Fire and Rescue's use is very limited.

We then carried out some internet research, looking at how other Scottish local authorities use webcasts.

YouTube channels are fairly similar in terms of content for most councils. There is a mix of councillor speeches on a variety of topics; how-to guides, for example filling in a ballot paper; spotlights on initiatives like recycling; promotional films for the area and, in some cases, coverage of local events. Quality ranges from simple stills/slideshows with voiceover to high quality promotional

filming with soundtrack and commentary. Highland and East Renfrewshire councils have particularly eye-catching promotional videos aimed at tourists. The latter authority has a wide selection of films on local events and there are several examples of local residents and council staff taking part in webcasts. Upload of film seems to be sporadic and infrequent with gaps of several months between new films.

It is clear that films with local colour and interest are more frequently viewed than the public information broadcasts. For example, on Argyll and Bute Council's own YouTube channel, a webcam compilation 'Seven Days in Dunoon' has attracted 2,879 views. Coverage of the 2011 Holyrood election has only 29 views. A video guide to the Core Path Plan has been selected 196 times.

Some councils provide webcasts of meetings using the Public-I service, including Edinburgh, Moray and Highland. These webcasts are hosted on an external website with the council's logo and branding. Highland Council's Public-I website has a range of meetings from full council to smaller committees. There are links to agenda documents, the facility to view only specific agenda items of interest and a share facility. The Public-I pilot costs around £30,000 and is to be evaluated after a year.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 There is potential for Argyll and Bute Council to expand its use of YouTube with limited impact on resources. Provision of webcasting for council meetings would require to be examined in more detail.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - none
- 5.2 Financial - none
- 5.3 Legal - none
- 5.4 HR - none
- 5.5 Equalities - none
- 5.6 Risk - none
- 5.7 Customer Service - none

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services
8 November 2012

For further information contact: Aileen McNicol, Communications Officer –
01546 604103 or email aileen.mcnicol@argyll-bute.gov.uk