

**REPORT TO CABINET
WEBCASTING**

Agenda Item 5f

Contact Details: - Cherie Root
Designation: - ICT Manager
Ext. No: - 2601
E Mail Address: - cherie.root@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:- www.public-i.info

Financial Implications: - Cost of system including project management - £16,000 per annum (leased) for mobile equipment and 5 hours broadcasting per month.

Equalities Implications: - This project will give the opportunity to engage with the public using the website interface regarding current issues affecting the council, broadcast council meetings to the public, and offer the opportunity to the public to engage with us using the same media. The aim of this is to improve social inclusion and community cohesion and to make the decision making process transparent.

Legal Implications: - There are no direct legal implications. PR will be involved with the project to ensure that any legal obligations are met with regard to broadcasting interviews and filming.

Options: For cabinet to support or not the bid for the web casting project.

Risks: There is a risk that there will not be sufficient trained and able resource within the organisation to facilitate and drive the system. This is being mitigated by 3 senior managers, with ICT as the lead role, taking responsibility for the system and its use during the life of the project. This will be reviewed at the end of the project, to ascertain the most effective and efficient method of managing and driving the system.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the transformational government agenda, different opportunities have been considered as to how to make the best use of technology for the customer and the organisation. Web casting gives an opportunity to deliver some of the key issues facing us currently. These include social inclusion and community cohesion, particularly from a youth angle. This will also include the opportunity to make the decision making process accessible to a large part of the population live. This report attempts to highlight some of those areas and proposes a year long project to implement and exploit the use of web casting to assist in delivery on these issues.

DECISION

For cabinet to support the bid for a year long project for Web casting, using the hybrid solution as outlined in the attached report and broadcasting 5 hours footage per month.

Overview

Following requests from the Chief Executive and Leader, the use of web casting has been investigated, in terms of demand, cost and potential uses.

The following briefing is a short summary of the information so far gathered. This has been gathered through contact with Epping Forest and Brentwood DC, and the leading market provider in this area, Public-I.

The Solution

Web casting gives the ability to broadcast live and archived footage via the Braintree DC website.

The solution (Public-I) that we have investigated is one of the market leaders and is currently used by Uttlesford, Epping Forest DC, and Brentwood, as well as a number of other authorities outside Essex, including Devon County Council, who have had national acclaim as a result of using this service.

Public-I is sold as a service, rather than just the product, but the functionality within the product gives the ability to broadcast video, add documents to the web cast, carry out surveys on the web cast topic, interactive agendas, profiles, segment video to allow for easier searching by user and brand the web cast.

Benefits Provided

There are a number of opportunities that the web casting software presents. Below is not an exhaustive list, but gives the essence of the broad range of uses for the software.

Events and Council Information

- Monthly Updates from Chief Executive and Leader to staff or public
- A documentary giving an overview of council services
- Community Safety consultation with public
- Coverage of Budget Consultation with public

Internal Training and Communication

- Member Induction
- Training on council wide adopted procedures
- Staff Briefings
- Staff Induction

Council Meetings

- Major Planning applications
- Budget Setting meetings

Public Accessibility and Community Engagement

- Vox Pops
- Interviews with public on local issues to prompt discussion
- Community provided, council facilitated videos

Options for Purchase

Option Bespoke Player		Description BDC would provide their own videos that have already been made to the provider, who would then host for a period of 6 months and provide a link that would be put on our website.	
Cost £400 set up £120 per video for 6 months	Resource Needed from BDC BDC would need to provide the staff for the video and the equipment, a production environment. Also we would need to produce the video and send through to the provider.		
Analysis This option is the most cost effective if there are a small number of videos required for the web casting. It would not provide a live service and there would be a time limit on the videos of 6 months, at which point they would be taken off or we would have to pay extra. The quality of the production would be limited to the skills and the equipment used.		Possible Uses Housing Transfer video Budget Consultation	
Option Event Coverage		Description A fully project managed service to cover an event, including live interviews, using 2 technicians and the director. This would be broadcast live and then for 6 months.	
Cost £4,500- £5,000 approx	Resource Needed from BDC A contact to discuss requirements and to be available at the event. An ADSL line to upload the web cast available at event venue.		
Analysis For major events this would be an ideal option. The team are fully trained and the videos produced in this format look very effective. This was the service used by Uttlesford for the Council Meetings discussing Stansted expansion.		Possible Uses Elections Conferences	
Option Documentaries		Description A directed and edited documentary service including a day's filming and several scenes	
Cost £7,500 approx	Resource Needed from BDC A contact available to commission and give direction for film.		
Analysis This is an expensive option, but does give the added advantage of professionals filming and editing the product.		Possible Uses Budget Consultation Community Engagement projects	

Option Fixed Camera Contract	Description An annual lease agreement including provision of hardware, training, project management, hosting of web casts and various other associated services. The cameras would be fixed in the council chamber. This includes 5 hours of web casting per month.	
Cost £13,000 per annum approx	Resource Needed from BDC An ongoing contract would require ownership and direction from BDC. Trained staff would need to record web casts and edit webcasts. Part of the ownership would require ensuring provision of resources for web casts, and ensure the best use of equipment and functionality.	
Analysis This would give limited benefits on an ongoing basis. If cameras were fixed this would enable use for council meetings but would not enable us to use the functionality possible with a mobile unit.		Possible Uses Coverage of council meetings and other events taking place in the council chamber.

Option Hybrid Camera Contract	Description Including fixed cameras in council chamber and a mobile unit for other requirements. An annual lease agreement including provision of hardware, training, project management, hosting of web casts and various other associated services. The cameras would be fixed in the council chamber. This includes 5 hours of web casting per month.	
Cost £16,000 per annum approx	Resource Needed from BDC An ongoing contract would require ownership and direction from BDC. Trained staff would need to record web casts and edit web casts. Part of the ownership would require ensuring provision of resources for web casts, and ensure the best use of equipment and functionality.	
Analysis For an ongoing option, this would give the most benefits. It allows the use of the static cameras in the council chamber, but also the ability to take the mobile kit wherever needed.		Possible Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events and Council Information Videos • Internal Training and communication • Public accessibility and community engagement • Council Meeting coverage

Issues to Consider

Demand

- There has been a small amount of investigation undertaken as to the demand for this type of service. Epping Forest has approximately 550-750 views per month, internally and externally.
- In the view of the provider, council meetings are not as popular as event coverage or community videos

The aim of the project will be to assess the demand for the product, to decide on the feasibility of proceeding

Internal Resources and ownership

- For this type of service to be effective it needs to be clearly owned and resourced within the organisation.
- It will need to be driven, and as with any tool ensured that it is used effectively and that it continues to offer a demand led service
- The resource for filming and editing would be significant. Typically 3-6 people are trained within the organisation.
- In other authorities the ownership has been from either ICT, Democratic Services, or the Communications team

The proposal for the length of the project is to jointly resource from the Policy team, Law and Governance and ICT. This will be reviewed as to the most effective management method at the end of the one year project.

Shared Ownership

- It is possible that to reduce costs, that this solution could be shared with other authorities. This would include the hardware and resources to film and edit the broadcasts.
- This software is already being used in other areas of the county, and Castlepoint is currently considering using it.

It is not proposed that shared ownership is entered into at this stage, but demand is gauged from other authorities, and this is brought into the review at the end of the one year project.

Potential consent issues for use of images would also need to be considered.

Moving Forward

A demonstration to managers and some members took place in February. This received significant interest from the organisation and uses were identified for the system during and after this demonstration.

Currently other providers are being sourced for comparative costs and services provided.