
Governance Committee: Review of Webcasting

Background

- 1 Webcasting is important for open and transparent government and increasing access to democratic processes. The Council has been webcasting meetings since February 2008 and, since September 2021, there has been a presumption that all meetings of the County Council, Cabinet, scrutiny committees and the Planning and Rights of Way Committee are webcast. Other committees can be webcast at the request of their chairman and vice-chairmen where there is good reason, such as when matters of significant public interest are due to be discussed.
- 2 In May 2022, the Governance Committee agreed that Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) meetings should be webcast for a trial one-year period. This was at the request of the HWB Chairman to help raise the profile of the Board and its role as a forum for partners to discuss plans to improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of West Sussex.
- 3 The Governance Committee has reviewed the webcasting statistics at the end of the one-year pilot. The data shows relatively low numbers of live views (an average of 19 for three meetings), but significantly higher archive views (an average of 191), so a relatively high number of views with an even balance between viewers who were internal to the Council and external viewers.

Proposal

- 4 It is recommended that the HWB be added to the list of meetings where there is a presumption that they be webcast. This does not mean that all meetings must be webcast and would not preclude future HWB meetings being held at community-based venues which do not support webcasting. The addition to the list of meetings to be webcast can be met from within existing resources. This requires a minor amendment to Standing Orders as set out below:

4.06 Meetings of the County Council and some committees are webcast and the following provisions will apply. There is a presumption that all meetings of the Cabinet, scrutiny committees, *the* and Planning and Rights of Way Committee *and the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board* will be webcast. Other committees can be webcast at the request of their chairman and vice-chairmen.'

Recommended

That Health and Wellbeing Board meetings be added to the list of meetings in Standing Orders where there is a presumption that they will be webcast.

Pete Bradbury

Chairman of the County Council

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Background papers: None