

## POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE



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**Agenda Item:** Broadcasting of Council Meetings

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 22 September 2025

**Contact Officer:** Committee Clerk

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The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Council's ability to live stream Council meetings.

### Background

At meeting of the Committee on 21 July 2025 it was resolved that 'officers prepare a report on broadcasting Council meetings to be presented to this Committee on 22 September 2025'. (minute no. F425 refers).

The decision was made in response to feedback received through the Council's Annual Residents' Survey, with the aim of demonstrating Member cohesion and transparency, while also enhancing the professional profile of the Council and the work being carried out on behalf of residents.

### Current Situation

#### Technical Capabilities

The Town Council held a successful hybrid meeting of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee in March 2025 utilising new technology in the Gallery Room of the Corn Exchange, which it hopes to again repeat on 23 September 2025.

While the technology to hold hybrid meetings is in place, legislation permitting this format has not yet been approved. As such, it can currently only be used for livestreaming meetings.

Following discussions with the Venue & Events Officer and Communications & Community Engagement Officer, the Council can confirm that it is in the position to offer the livestreaming of Council meeting via the YouTube platform.

Initially meetings would be broadcast only with any participation of individuals outside of the meeting room disabled.

#### Democratic Management of Meetings

Many Councils have a livestreaming meeting protocol or guidance which sets out rules for respectful and professional behaviour, often covering topics like personal attacks,

interruptions, confidentiality, electronic devices, and appropriate language, ensuring that meetings are productive and fair for everyone, including members and the public.

These codes aim to uphold the principles of public life like honesty and integrity as set out in the Councillor Code of Conduct to maintain the professionalism and reputation of the Council.

If Members are supportive of livestreaming meetings, consideration should be given to the above protocol, with a request for officers to draft a version and plan to begin livestreaming from the first meeting cycle in January 2026.

A link to the upcoming meeting would be created and published along with the meeting agenda and any associated social media post relating to the meeting. Alternatively, it could be found via the Council YouTube channel page.

<https://www.youtube.com/@witneytowncouncil4676>

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – Streaming of meetings would ensure fully transparency of the working of the Council and bring the meeting to a wider audience in an accessible format.
- b) Biodiversity – None
- c) Crime & Disorder – None
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Would reduce the emission of attendees travelling to attend meetings.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Consideration must be given to the issue of Code of Conduct highlighted earlier in the report as viewers would be at liberty to republish the meeting in whole or part.

The Council should be aware that incidents may occur outside of their control in relation to the broadcasting of meetings such as failure of power or internet reliability issues.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

The Council has seen greater engagement from members of the public in recent month through the promotion of its meetings, it's hoped that the broadcasting of meetings would help to further this engagement.

## **Financial Implications**

- The Council has an existing YouTube account. There are currently no additional costs for the livestreaming of Council Meetings.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider,

1. The approval of livestreaming of Council meetings commencing from the meeting of Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 13 January 2026.