

## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE PENSIONS AUTHORITY**

**14 June 2012**

### **Report of the Clerk and Treasurer**

## **WEBCASTING**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

*To seek approval for a renewal of the webcasting contract for a further year.*

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### **2. Recommendations**

**Members are recommended to:**

**Approve a further year of webcasting**

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### **3. Background Information**

The Authority has been part of a contract by all four South Yorkshire Joint Authorities for a webcasting service from the Public-i Group Ltd. It expires on 29 June 2012, unless the Authority chooses to extend it for a further year. All the authorities are discussing the extension at their meetings this month.

### **4. Cost**

The cost of the third year of the webcasting contract for all the Joint Authorities is due to fall to £19,763.90. Whilst this is a fall of 10% for the optional year, the Pensions Authority share will rise by £600 reflecting small falls in use by the other authorities.

The contract now includes the cost of the Citizenscape platform. This has given viewers of the webcast player a number of integrated features. These are live chat (moderated) about what is being webcast; as well as news feeds, geographic and other information from the social web, polls and surveys, tag clouds (visually representing the most popular topics). The proportion paid by each Authority is based on the previous year's usage which for 2011/12 was:

South Yorkshire	Hours (%)	Projected 2012/13 (2011/12)
Pensions Authority	7 (10)	1,976 (1,362)
Police Authority	28.5 (40)	7,905 (10,934)
Fire Authority	16.25 (23)	4,524 (4,914)
Integrated Transport Authority	18.25 (27)	5,336 (5,572)

Additionally, the Authorities share the cost, pro-rata, of the broadband connection which in 2012/13 is expected to be £1,118 (a reduction of £200 on 2011/12).

## **5. Viewings**

Since the Authority started webcasting its meetings there have been 5,893 viewings, mainly of the archive webcast, which is available 48 hours after the meeting. Across the Joint Authorities, 2007 (part) – to present, the viewings have been: Fire (20,224); Police (22,385); Transport (11,976).

There has been a step change in interest. Baroness Henig, president of the Association of Police Authorities, in a House of Lords debate last year said South Yorkshire Police Authority was using “best practice” with its webcasting service, and Police and Crime Commissioners would do well to do the same to meet their requirement for public meetings.

The Pensions Authority has had live viewings of 70 and archive viewings of more than 300. There has been positive feedback from members of the public, the press, partners and companies. There’s evidence now that the local press are viewing webcasts providing members with direct access to media.

There is still plenty of scope to promote the webcasts to scheme members, as the experience of the other Joint Authorities suggests. The first debate on the South Yorkshire Police Helicopter attracted viewings of more than 2,000 with even Force helicopter pilots around the country commending member debate. There were 138 live viewings of the debate on the role of PCSOs in April. In the Fire Service, the debate on service delivery proposals has attracted similar numbers.

## **6. Transparency**

The Government has a programme which is aimed at increasing transparency in public decision-making. Webcasting was encouraged by the last, and current, governments, including a specific request to local authorities by CLG to allow videoing of meetings.

The Authority’s Code of Corporate Governance commits to engaging with customers and other stakeholders to ensure robust accountability. There is lots of potential to increase viewings via the social web. Webcasting is now supported by a pre and post production communications plan which ensures prospective viewers are made aware of the opportunity to watch and engage with the webcast.

Email alerts (see below) can be sent to scheme members with email addresses. Periodic use of the newsletters and pay slips will be employed to promote the webcasts.



**LIVE WEBCAST**  
**13 OCTOBER**  
**10.00AM**

[click here for webcast player](#)

**Dear Pensions Authority Stakeholder**

The next meeting of the South Yorkshire Pensions Authority will be webcast **LIVE** this Thursday morning

**Items to be discussed include:**

**Changes to the Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy - [Report](#)**

**Corporate Planning and Governance Board – Audit Committee  
Annual Report 2010/11 - [Report](#)**

**Freedom of Information Requests – 2010/11 - [Report](#)**

**OUR WEBCAST SERVICE IS INTERACTIVE,  
YOU CAN DEBATE THE MEETING WITH  
OTHER VIEWERS LIVE**



[Click here](#) for the full agenda and all reports

Follow South Yorkshire Pensions Authority on



**To join the debate during live meetings include #SYPensions in your tweet**

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 Webcasting is a useful adjunct to engaging scheme members in the business of the Authority. Their involvement can be increased at a marginal cost. Likewise the value for money of the physical meeting is increased by its availability online for 6 months after it has taken place.
- 7.2 Video, in particular, is direct, compelling and easy to use. It transcends problems of literacy and brings a directness and authenticity to communication which is essential to building trust in

the democratic process and engaging people in democracy.

- 7.3 Webcasting and the social technologies with which it can be associated do not present a “magic bullet” to solve the difficult issues of democratic engagement. However together they offer a cost effective process for authorities to make more inclusive decisions.
- 7.4 An ageing society and prolonged economic turbulence require an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to help shape the Authority’s views and understand their preferences. This dialogue needs to be carried out openly and in places where it is possible for as many people as possible to participate.
- 7.5 The Joint Authorities have pioneered webcasting in South Yorkshire. The members of this Authority have supported its introduction at BMBC. Doncaster MBC has made provision for webcasting in their tender for a new council chamber. The Welsh Audit Office is using webcasting at the Joint Authorities as a case study in public engagement. Although numbers accessing webcasts are still small they represent increases of several hundred, sometimes thousand, percent over the numbers attending meetings in the past.
- 7.6 Webcasting represents a significant component of accessibility, accountability and transparency allowing citizens, at a time and a place that suits them, to watch members make decisions that affect South Yorkshire.

## **8. Implications and risks**

- 8.1 The report has set out the possible financial and diversity implications.
- 8.2 There are no crime and disorder implications.
- 8.3 There is a low risk of legal action. This relates to the potential of defamatory statements by members of the Authority which are subsequently transmitted by webcast. However, the Authority has a policy to remove potentially defamatory statements from the archive copy of the webcast. The Authority’s insurers have also stated the current liability policies will provide an indemnity in respect of any claims arising out of the webcast transmissions of Authority meetings.

**W J Wilkinson**  
**Clerk and Treasurer**

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**Background papers** used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at the offices of the Authority in Barnsley.