

SOUTH YORKSHIRE PENSIONS AUTHORITY

11 June 2015

Report of the Clerk

WEBCASTING

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval from renewing the contract to webcast meetings of the Authority

2. Recommendations

Members are recommended:

- a) **That the Authority approves a short term extension to the webcasting contract to align with Barnsley MBC's webcasting contract renewal date (7th August 2015), (at a cost of c£490), to enable consideration of joint contracting and cost saving options**
 - b) **That the responsibility to agree a further 1 year contract renewal be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair (noting the Authority is not due to next meet until 1st October)**
 - c) **That Members note the commencement of a study to consider the longer term aspirations for webcasting and online communications for the webcasting partners and South Yorkshire districts.**
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3. Background Information

- 3.1 Webcasting is the live broadcast of meetings over the internet with access via computer, tablet and smartphone. Members' contributions are time stamped so that the viewer can browse all contributions by a specified member or scroll to a particular debate. Individual items can be shared and commented upon via social media.
- 3.2 The hardware and software are leased from Public-i Ltd which also provide a helpdesk during the webcast and host an archive of the webcast for six months after the meeting.
- 3.3 The Authority has webcast its meetings since 2006, along with the other South Yorkshire Joint Authorities. In 2010, Public-i was awarded a three year contract which was extended for 2013/14.

4. Reasons why the contract extension is being sought

- 4.1 The integration of the Authority's administrative support with Barnsley MBC provides an opportunity to include the facilities at Regent Street with those at the Town Hall in a single contract. The short term extension aligns the separate contracts renewal dates and provides a basis for exploring further financial and joint contracting options.
- 4.2 The Joint Authority officers are also keen to ensure they have appropriately considered the webcasting partners' expectations and aspirations for online engagements. This study will also recognise how over the last year there has been an increase in the number of Local Authorities now webcasting meetings, partly as a response to the introduction of the 2014 Audit and Inspections Act and the new expectations regarding openness and transparency of meeting proceedings. Such moves at district level may have helped inform Joint Authority Members' ideas around other uses of the webcasting system and any such ideas can be captured through this process.

5. Transparency

- 5.1 The webcasting of the Authority supports transparency and engagement with stakeholders including employers and scheme members. The increased avenues for openness and accountability, which web technologies provide are important to gain public trust in the Authority's decision making.
- 5.2 Broadcasting meetings in this way encourages engagement and feedback, and overcomes exclusion: the hard of hearing can read a transcription, minority groups can read a translation, and citizens with reading difficulties can see and hear a streamed video.
- 5.3 There have been a total of 2093 live and archived viewings of Pensions Authority meetings over the last 12 months.

6. Implications

- 6.1 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 can 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.

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