

REVIEW B: BROADCASTING OF POLICY OVERVIEW, SCRUTINY & SELECT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee name	Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Mark Braddock, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A - Report to the previous Committee 1 February 2018
Ward	N/A

HEADLINES

Hillingdon has a proud record of directly engaging residents in the democratic process. This is not only through established ways, such as the petitions process, but increasingly through new digital means. Indeed, the broadcasting of council meetings live on YouTube has been a giant leap forward in bringing local democracy direct to residents in a more modern and immersive way. Since 2016, when the Council first started filming, over 280 meetings have been broadcast, with now over 95,000 views by people tuning in to watch them.

Last month, the Committee agreed to progress a review topic, referred from full Council, into whether the Council should expand broadcasting to Policy Overview, Scrutiny and Select Committee meetings, reporting back to Cabinet with its recommendation. This report sets out the following key considerations for Members to review:

1. Broadcasting the additional meetings
2. Viewer and practical factors
3. Technology and cost

This report also includes the latest YouTube viewer analytics for information. Additionally, a live broadcast demonstration will also be shown to Members during the meeting on how it operates.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

- 1. Considers the broadcasting of Policy Overview, Scrutiny and Select Committees;**
- 2. Notes the viewer, practical, technology and cost considerations with regard to this; and,**
- 3. Receives a YouTube demonstration on how the live broadcasting works.**

INFORMATION

In 2015, the Council decided to adapt its existing CCTV and WiFi infrastructure and integrate it with YouTube Live to provide a modern, viewer friendly and cost effective solution to broadcast the following council meetings for both democratic engagement and its own record of proceedings:

Classification: Public

Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee - 5 February 2019

<i>Full Council</i>	<i>Central and South Planning Committee</i>	<i>Major Applications Planning Committee</i>	<i>Licensing Sub-Committee</i>
<i>Cabinet</i>	<i>North Planning Committee</i>	<i>Major Applications Planning Sub-Committee (HS2)</i>	<i>Ad hoc wider public interest petition hearings</i>

More background to the Council's decision in 2015 to use YouTube can be found in the report to the previous Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee on 1 February 2018 shown as **Appendix A**.

Live broadcast capability is currently available in the following rooms:

Rooms	Capability	Broadcast Images
Council Chamber	<p>Three cameras integrated with in-room audio-setup, speakers and microphones.</p> <p>Of which two cameras provide automatic zoom to the person speaking when using the microphone.</p> <p>360 degree multi-camera views available watching on YouTube for greater viewer experience.</p>	
Committee Room 6	<p>Single Camera integrated with in-room audio-setup, speakers and microphones.</p> <p>Single stream on YouTube.</p>	

Committee
Room 5

Single Camera integrated
with in-room audio-setup,
speakers and microphones.

Single stream on YouTube.



This setup has not changed since 2015/16 when an initial capital cost was required to install new cameras and a much-needed upgrade of the audio package and microphones in the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms 5 & 6. As YouTube is free to use, there are no annual running costs of broadcasting council meetings.

YouTube is a global platform and videos, therefore, are watched based on an individual's own searches and preferences combined with algorithms that help find relevant content for individuals.

Whilst for most videos, the majority of people watching are from the UK compared to other countries, people still find and view Hillingdon council meetings from abroad. It is not possible to drill down viewers into UK sub-regional areas. What is clear is that more and more people are watching Hillingdon council meetings online. To assist in this, Democratic Services tag the videos in relation to the items on the agenda to improve their relevance to people when searching.

Meetings can be watched live or on demand after the meeting on the Council's YouTube channel: *Hillingdon London*, which is easily accessible on most laptops or mobile devices, or through links provided by the Council, e.g. on our website, on the agenda page and social media. The Council's YouTube channel contains a lot of interesting cultural content, however, it is council meetings that have become the primary content provider.

Viewer analytics: latest trends

Through YouTube analytics, officers are able to break down how people in real-time (and over time) have been watching council meetings. The data generally shows that people watch council meetings that are relevant to them. For example, the higher the public interest in certain planning applications, the higher the viewer rate for those planning committee meetings.

The meetings currently broadcast are invariably those that make decisions, many of which also directly involve residents on a matter that is of interest to them, i.e. petitioners. For example, the Licensing Sub-Committee on 23 May 2017 considered the South Ruislip Cineworld application attracted 574 viewers within a short space of time (now over 800) with an average watch time of nine minutes. The Petition Hearing on Children's Centres on 1 February 2017 attracted over time 534 viewers with an average 'watchtime' of nine minutes.

As indicated above, 'watchtime' data is arguably more relevant to user engagement than viewer numbers, i.e. how long people watch a particular video for. In Hillingdon, as the number of viewers has continued to increase, there has been a corresponding decrease in the average 'watchtime'.

Classification: Public

Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee - 5 February 2019

However, some of this is to be expected as it reflects common viewers' habits with people browsing for the right content or instead watching only parts of the meeting relevant to them, e.g. certain planning applications.

People can also subscribe to the Council's YouTube channel to receive alerts of new videos added or live broadcasts. The number of subscribers to the channel after watching a council meeting has increased by 146 people since May 2018. Subscribing to the channel helps people stay up-to-date on the latest content added and maintains a core base of potential viewers.

People can also show their like or dislike (thumbs up/or down) on specific videos if they have a Google account. This shows they have actively taken the time to show their satisfaction with the video content. The good news is that 'thumbs up' overwhelmingly outweigh any 'thumbs down' for council meetings.

Viewers can share videos with friends further on social media. Trends in these are positive and on the rise. The Council currently disables the 'comments' and 'live chat' features for the potential of inappropriate use and moderation required during any broadcast. However, these features, if enabled, can provide added viewer engagement. A third of viewers watch council meetings on their mobile or tablet devices.

The top five meetings in terms of viewership, since May 2018, are shown below:

Meeting	Unique Views	Average "watchtime" in the UK (mins)	Shares on social media	New subscribers gained watching	Likes / dislikes
Cabinet 21 June 2018	5930	1:49	8	3	12/3
North Planning Committee - 19 June 2018 (Part A)	5302	6:43	16	9	31/2
North Planning Committee - 19 June 2018 (Part B)	4748	2:46	18	8	29/3
Cabinet - 25 October 2018	3847	1:17	0	3	9/4
Major Applications Planning Committee - 6pm, Tuesday 19 June 2018	3757	8:12	11	8	23/0

YouTube viewer analytics for the 2018/2019 municipal year to-date are shown below:

Viewer engagement	2018/19 (MY) - as of 26/1/19)	Trend from previous year
No. of meetings broadcast live on YouTube	89	
Unique Views	67,673	
Average "watchtime" in the UK (mins)	3:25 mins	
Shares on social media	336	
Likes / Dislikes	329/87	
New subscribers gained watching	146	

KEY CONSIDERATION 1 - Broadcasting the additional meetings

Members will recall that the full Council meeting on 22 November 2018 considered a motion submitted by Councillor Stuart Mathers. Following an amendment, resolved as:

'That this Council asks the Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy and Overview Committee to look at the issues pertaining to adding the Executive Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committees to those already streamed live on our YouTube channel and to report their recommendations in due course to Cabinet for a final decision.'

Based on the motion, the scope of this review would be for Members to consider whether or not (or in part or type of meeting) to broadcast the following:

<i>Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee</i>	<i>Social Care, Housing and Public Health</i>	<i>Residents, Education and Environmental Services</i>
<i>External Services Select Committee</i>	<i>Executive Scrutiny Committee</i>	<i>Any Committee Panels set up (currently a GP Pressures Select Panel is in existence)</i>

This principle is ultimately a matter for Members to decide and officers will put in place whatever recommendation is agreed by Cabinet. Initially, Members will wish to consider the benefits or otherwise of this, being the crux of the Council motion. Members may also wish to consult further with colleagues from these committees on their views before determining. To guide Members, the following factors may want to be considered in more detail:

Potential positives	Potential unknowns / issues	Possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could raise the profile of the work of policy overview, scrutiny and select committees. It could showcase the broader public engagement in the democratic process, such as witnesses attending to give evidence, similar to Select Committees that are broadcast in Parliament. Using YouTube is a tried and tested method in Hillingdon, and evidence shows there has been little impact upon how meetings operate 'in the room'. There have been no issues and little reaction from residents and petitioners attending. There are a number of interesting topics of broader public interest that are discussed at committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional meetings (up to approx. 50 a year) could lead to a saturation of meeting video content on the YouTube channel, increasing the complexity of what to watch. Currently only meetings that make decisions are filmed. Evidence (to-date) shows that people tend to tune in to watch specific videos on matters that are of direct relevance to them, e.g. a planning application. Policy Overview and Select Committees undertake interesting policy reviews spanning a number of meetings from start to finish. Keeping viewers engaged across a 'series' of meetings may prove a challenge, but it certainly would be something to positively promote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To broadcast all meetings irrespective of type. To not broadcast any meetings. To broadcast specific meetings only. To broadcast specific meetings on single issue scrutiny or policy topics of public interest (as agreed by the relevant Chairmen) To trial broadcasting with one Committee and review viewer engagement after 6-8 months, before recommending any further roll-out.

KEY CONSIDERATION 2 - Viewer and practical considerations

With the exception of full Council, which has a multi-stream view, all other meetings are broadcast with a single static camera in the ceiling facing the Committee Members (towards the Chairman). This is the view currently seen by those watching in Committee Room 5:



Where resident petitioners and other parties attend to speak, officers try to make sure they are as visible as possible, usually angled slightly to the side. Whilst not a perfect position, it is the best possible given the optimal room configuration and camera location.

Officers have considered pan-tilt-zoom cameras, like in the Council Chamber, but this may not be appropriate in the committee rooms, as the cameras are much larger, and seating plans can change from meeting to meeting. Pan-tilt-zoom works well in the Council Chamber as all desks and microphones are fixed points within the room, and the camera can be preset to each location

Often, Policy Overview and Select Committees invite a number of witnesses to attend who in some cases sit directly across opposite the Chairman and other Committee Members. Witnesses are also occasionally questioned, sometimes back and forth, by Members present. With a single static camera aimed at Members only, it may not be possible to fully view the exchanges taking place with witnesses, limiting the viewer experience.

To mitigate this, there are some possible solutions below:

Room configuration	Alternative room configurations could be tried out to enable better views, including those of witnesses.
Multi-view	Similar to multi-view in the Council Chamber, a second room camera angled towards the witnesses could be put in place, so viewers can manually switch during a broadcast to see both 'Member' and 'Witness' view. This would mean that some people in the public gallery could be filmed, but putting in place suitable additional notices about this would suffice.
Wireless encoding	Rather than the viewer manually switching views, using encoding software directly on the laptop computer in the room, Democratic Services staff could switch between the two camera views in real-time as witnesses speak, providing a seamless experience for the viewer. Whilst the current ICT setup does not provide for this and there may connectivity issues to overcome, it is an option to consider for the future.

KEY CONSIDERATION 3 - Technology and costs

If Members do recommend to Cabinet the broadcasting of additional meetings, they will wish to consider the technical and financial options for the delivery of this. In conjunction with ICT, Democratic Services has put forward the following options using YouTube:

	Viewing factors	New requirements	Estimated cost
Option 1 - hold all or specific meetings in CR5 or CR6 which are already set up with a single static camera, so no new camera or audio / microphone technology would be required.	This would provide a static view. It may not be suitable for all room configurations, yet would still ensure the meetings are broadcast professionally online.	N/A	None.
Option 2 * - hold meetings in CR5 or CR6 and provide a new second static ceiling camera	This could be positioned to accommodate a different angle to provide multi-view (e.g. Member and Witness cameras) outlined above.	As existing cameras are now 3 years old at a maximum 720p HD resolution, to ensure consistency between the different views, these may need to be upgraded.	Up to £1k per new camera (capital expenditure) and minor additional cabling costs.
Option 3 * - to install cameras in CR3 or CR4 should Members also wish to use these smaller rooms for meetings or smaller room layouts.	A static camera view or Members could combined this with Option 2 above to provide two cameras in a room.	There would be new costs associated with this, beyond any cameras, as these rooms currently do not have any audio / microphone setup.	Estimated at £10-15k per room. This is based on slimmed down quotes for the larger committee rooms back in 2016, along with new cabling.

****Note: for options 2 and 3, above***

The Council currently has the capability to stream three feeds at any one time (one per encoding computer). For full Council meetings, officers use all three computers to enable multi-view. For a meeting in CR5, just one computer for a single view. Officers can also live stream a meeting in CR5 and another in CR6 at the same time. This is deemed satisfactory given the current meeting calendar. However, with Options 2 and 3 above, if second cameras or new rooms are to be provided with cameras, then officers will need to increase the number of encoding computers from 3 to 5. This would be a minor cost from within existing ICT budgets.

Future innovation

These are largely restricted to the innovation and changes that YouTube rolls-out across the world. The Council can be more creative with the live display at its end by placing text overlays, e.g. names over those speaking or flashing a council question onto the screen etc. However, this would require additional live or post production editing. Whilst Democratic Services is testing some technology around this, it is more likely to be introduced when automation is available within YouTube itself for such optical enhancements.

Classification: Public

Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee - 5 February 2019

INDICATIVE STRUCTURE AND TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW

As set out in the multi-year work programme on this agenda, an indicative structure and timetable for the review is proposed for Members to consider.

Meeting	Review phase	Suggested committee activity
8 January 2019	Scoping	To consider this report and progression of the review and provide any initial feedback to officers.
5 February 2019	Witness / evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Witness: Senior Democratic Services Manager• Updated Analytics report (the view of the viewer)• Member presentation and live demonstration of how YouTube broadcasting works• Detailed Options Paper
5 February 2019	Findings	Subject to consideration of the Options report, Members may wish to agree their preferred option, thereby their proposed recommendation to the Cabinet. Alternatively, this could be discussed further at a subsequent meeting.
6 March 2019	Final report	The Committee to consider and agree the final report for referral to Cabinet.
TBC	Cabinet meeting	Cabinet will consider and make a decision based upon the Committee's report and recommendation.

Implications on related Council policies

Broadcasting on YouTube strengthens existing Council consultation and engagement policies.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Since 2016 the broadcasting of council meetings has secured a giant leap in the number of residents able to see how local decisions are made and how our democracy works. It increases transparency and can strengthen the connection between residents, the Council and local politicians. Broadcasting on the extremely versatile and resilient global YouTube platform, this enables people to view across nearly all devices they may have, anywhere and at any time.

Financial Implications

The estimated financial implications associated with broadcasting additional committee meetings is set out in this report.

ICT comments

The solution provided in-house is extremely cost effective, built from low cost hardware and freely available technology given the core requirements.

Legal Implications

There are no legal impediments to the Council broadcasting official meetings, except where they concern Part II or other confidential business. In respect of members of the public that may attend, speak or have their personal details broadcast during committee deliberations, this is covered under the “public task” requirement in the Data Protection Act 2018, which enables the Council to process personal data that supports and promotes the democratic process. Furthermore, members of the public attending to participate directly also made aware of this prior to meetings.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT IN DEMOCRACY: THE COUNCIL'S YOUTUBE LIVE BROADCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA

HEADLINES

Resident engagement with Hillingdon's democratic process is at an all-time high. This is evidenced not only through formal ways, such as by the number of petitions submitted and the continuing high satisfaction participating in meetings, but increasingly through digital and social channels such as watching council meetings on YouTube and social media.

All Members will be aware of the YouTube filming of council meetings. This report to the Committee presents a detailed analysis of the broadcasting outcomes for viewers since 2016. In short, it has enabled Hillingdon councillors and local decision-making to take a leap forward in engaging with thousands of Hillingdon residents and others watching in a modern, immersive and direct way.

Members should take note of the analytics section later on in this report which shows some interesting statistics on viewership for broader consideration, along with some ideas for smarter approaches to such digital engagement in the future.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee note the report and provide any comments, suggestions or improvements to Democratic Services to take forward as appropriate.

INFORMATION

Background

In early 2016, the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services agreed a project to broadcast our main council meetings to increase resident interest and engagement in local democracy. Partly, this was also in response to the need for a definitive record of proceedings given that the public have the legal right to undertake their own filming and recording of meetings.

A Joint Project Team reviewed the options for this and different to most other local authorities who had experimented with webcasting, the Council decided to adapt its existing CCTV and WiFi infrastructure and integrate it with Google technology (YouTube Live) to provide a modern, viewer friendly and cost effective solution. The only one-off expense related to new cameras and a much-needed upgrade of the audio package and microphones in the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms 5 & 6. As YouTube is free to use, there are no annual running costs of broadcasting our council meetings.

The broadcast studio is located in the Democratic Services Office by the Council Chamber, which controls the live feed(s) coming in and the output via encoding software. To be fully mobile, a laptop can then be used by Democratic Services Officers to control the output feed into YouTube during a meeting, thereby creating the live broadcast. Resilience is very good and technical issues with the broadcasts are rare and out of the one or two that we have experienced it has primarily been down to internal WiFi or audio issues.

Meetings agreed to be broadcast are Full Council meetings, Planning Committees, Licensing Sub-Committees, Cabinet and we have also filmed one Petition Hearing, with the principles behind these being those meetings that involve residents and/or are of major interest to them.

We have the ability to stream three feeds in the Council chamber and individual feeds in each of Committee Rooms 5 & 6 (5 in total). However, currently only three different feeds can be broadcast on YouTube simultaneously, which is deemed satisfactory given the official meeting calendar. We currently stream Council meetings using multiple feeds, where viewers can switch between different views to get a 360 degree experience.

The main chamber feed and Mayor feed in the Council Chamber are the only feeds where we have linked up an automatic zoom facility of the camera with the microphones so the camera closes in on those speaking. Below are example feeds:

Council Chamber - main chamber feed



Council Chamber - Mayor feed view



Council Chamber - Rear View



Planning Committee - CR5



Cabinet - CR6



Licensing Sub-Committee - CR5



Optics, promotion & searchability

Meetings are extremely simple for Democratic Services staff to set-up to broadcast and they are, by default, promoted one week before the meeting on the Council's YouTube channel. Attractive, news-style and clean promotional thumbnails (see below) are inserted into YouTube to be used primarily as adverts for each meeting on the different digital platforms/devices residents may interface with. Large backdrops are used in the Committee Rooms to reinforce the professional look of the meeting and promote the Council.



Broadcasts of Full Council and Cabinet meetings are shared via twitter and facebook leading up to the meeting and sometimes during the live broadcast which Democratic Services co-ordinate. This has led to meetings being shared to friends and followers on social media.



The YouTube video page for each meeting has a standard direct link to the agenda for viewers to find out more and also a link to an online version of our feedback form. The live chat and comments facilities available via YouTube during broadcasts have been disabled due to the potential for inappropriate use. Suitable short intro music and 'stings' have been added at the start of the videos to engage viewers and add yet a more professional feel.

Democratic Services Officers also insert Youtube Video Tagging or "key words" into videos. According to YouTube, tagging is one of the most important ways to rank videos in YouTube and other search engine results. Tags help users find videos when they search the site and it has shown to increase overall viewership of our council meetings. Tagging is impartial and relevant to the agenda for the meeting.

For further viewer engagement, Democratic Services sometimes add suitable “cards” and “end screen” promotional material during and at the end of the broadcast. This can sign-post viewers to related content or help promote other council events as shown below.



Cabinet - 27 July 2017

Broadcasts are then archived afterwards on the Council’s YouTube channel in a dedicated playlists for each municipal year for ease of chronological reference. As a safeguard, videos are also stored on Google Drive periodically in the event our YouTube channel goes down.

As a public organisation, monetization and external advertisements on YouTube videos have been disabled for obvious reasons. However, this does not prohibit the Council linking videos to other suitable content.

Resident feedback

We have not had any negative feedback from residents who attend to speak during live broadcasts. This may be in part because our letters/emails to petitioners, agents etc... sent prior to the meeting provide a range of useful information, including how we broadcast and what it will look like in the room so they can get a good feel for it before they arrive.

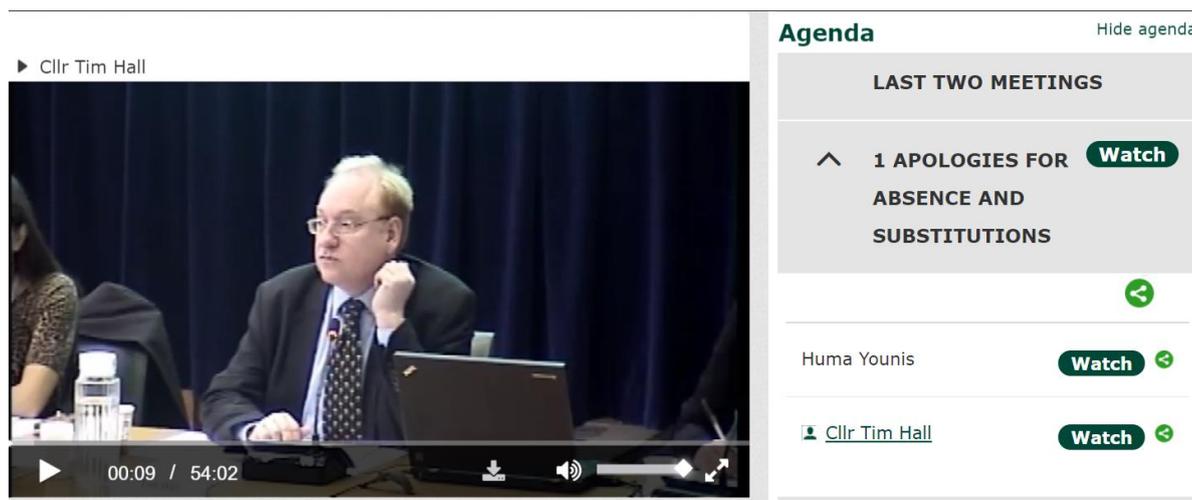
Member views

Whilst Members may have their own individual experiences, it seems generally they have taken to live broadcasting extremely well when attending and speaking in meetings. Chairmen have also ably taken the time to involve online viewers watching at the start of the meeting (along with those in the room attending), by clearly setting out the procedures and indicating where the Councillors and officers are sitting etc... Sometimes, Councillors “wave” at the camera to indicate who they are. All this adds to an engaging and positive viewer experience.

Local government comparisons

Ongoing research into other local authorities using webcasting show that around 100 UK councils use another bespoke solution called Public-I (see screenshot below). Hillingdon did review this

option, and whilst it has the benefit of directly linking the webcast to specific agenda items on the website and councillors speaking, the running costs are high and it could potentially require additional staff resource for each meeting.



In terms of the smaller (yet increasing) number of local authorities using YouTube, Hillingdon is successfully broadcasting on this platform and we have had visits and interest by other local authorities who plan to follow our initiative. To get some idea of how other councils broadcast their meetings on YouTube, visit [Wokingham Borough Council](#), [York City Council](#) and [Monmouthshire County Council](#). Outside the entertainment and music world, the YouTube live broadcast platform is predominantly used in Canada and the United States for live broadcasting of government meetings, from The White House to States and City Councils. Visit [Toronto City Council](#) on YouTube for a interesting international comparison.

Viewer Analytics

Worldwide, YouTube is the second most visited website in the World (after Google and above Facebook). Data from 2018 indicates it has almost 5 billion videos, with over 30 million visitors per day and in an average month, 8 out of 10 18-49 year-olds watch YouTube. Gender-wise, while YouTube's total user base might be closer to 50/50, studies have found that men make up the majority of viewers in most of YouTube's content categories. More than half of YouTube views come from mobile devices. 'Watchtime' statistics are more relevant to actual "viewers" in that they better indicate user engagement in the content. People can subscribe to particular channels to be made alert of new videos, show their "thumbs up/or down" on specific videos or share them with colleagues and friends further on social media.

Locally, the Council's YouTube channel ([Hillingdon London](#)) features a broad range of video content from 2007 including resident, council and events, such as Advent Calendar videos and performances by the Hillingdon Music Service. Since 2016, the broadcasting of council meetings has been the main content provider for our YouTube channel. YouTube offers the ability to pull detailed analytic reports about viewership of any video or group of videos. It is not possible to drill-down data to a Hillingdon level, only UK and abroad. Detailed viewing reports for each municipal year attached as appendices. They are summarised below:

Period: 25 February 2016 - 19 January 2018	
25,444	people have tuned in to watch council meetings on YouTube
12%	watch live on the night/day, 88% watch at a later time (on demand)
169	is the total number of meetings on video (includes multiple feeds for Full Council)
60	minutes is the average length per meeting video
6	minutes is the average viewer engagement time watching videos
205	viewers have shared a council meeting with other friends or followers on social media or by email.
64%	viewing via a computer, 34% on mobile or tablet devices.
1,718	people watched Cabinet on 27 July 2017, being our most watched broadcast, followed by Budget Council on 25 February 2016 (1,255 views)
54% to 79%	are male viewers *
40	being the average age of viewers *

**Note: gender and age statistics may not be fully representative as they are captured only from those who have logged into YouTube via a Google account.*

The Council's YouTube channel has just over 300 subscribers, which is relatively low, but recent growth in it has primarily been gained by people watching council meetings. The vast majority of viewers are from UK, but with some watching from abroad. It is clear that the topics being considered influence viewer engagement. For example, the Licensing Sub-Committee on 23 May 2017 considered the South Ruislip Cineworld application and attracted 574 viewers. The Petition Hearing on Children's Centres on 1 February 2017 attracted 447 viewers. Generally speaking, the more significant the planning application the higher viewer rate. Trends in viewing during the year show no correlations, other than an increased viewership for Budget Council meetings each year, which can be easily attributed to greater local interest and social media.

Possibilities for increasing viewer engagement

Live broadcasting has demonstrated a giant leap in the number of residents able to see how decisions are made in Hillingdon - and also in a way that is directly accessible to them through their phones, computers, TVs and even X-boxes.

Democratic Services have been in discussion with Whips previously about enhancements to the viewer experience. For example, for Council meetings we now include a link directly to each Question/Motion etc. as a shortcut for viewers.

Like in mainstream news broadcasts, from the user perspective, understandably it would be helpful for the names of councillors speaking, the title of questions being put etc... to be displayed during

the active part of the live broadcast. And for planning committee meetings, the plans and maps shown to Members in the room, to also be displayed in the video to benefit viewers.

Members should be aware that enhancements are largely restricted to the upgrades and changes that YouTube rolls-out across the world. We can be more creative with the live display via the encoding computer directly (not YouTube). However, this would require additional live and post production editing by staff. Therefore, it is advised that such optical improvements are explored when more automation is available to introduce such features.

Other enhancements that could be explored are increasing the promotion to residents of our channel so they can “subscribe” to it. Furthermore, a more targeted promotion of upcoming videos to key stakeholders, e.g. planning agents, residents groups, schools or interest groups depending on topic being discussed would be more relevant and increase viewers. We already seek to do this where possible, for example, if residents submit an electronic petition in relation to a planning application, we can automatically email all signatories with details of the meeting and a link to the broadcast where their petition will be heard.

It should be recognised that all of the above is part of the Council’s wider digital efforts to engage with residents about public services, information and events in a more personalised way. Daily, the council communicates with residents online and through social media. There is, therefore, a wider theatre of opportunity to engage yet more residents in local democracy.

Financial Implications

None directly from this report.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.