

Council Meetings - Future Live Viewing and Recording of ALL Council Meetings

Posted by RM64 - 08 Nov 2021 15:28

Freedom of Information(FOI) Request

Made On Line

01/11/2021

Freedom of Information(FOI) Request - ERC COVID-19 RECOVERY - UPDATE report - Para 101 regarding 'hybrid meetings'

This Freedom of Information Request concerns

Agenda Item 13, EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL, 27 October 2021, Report by Chief Executive, COVID-19 RECOVERY - UPDATE

and in particular only para 101 regarding 'hybrid meetings'

'Democratic Services

101. With the continuing relaxation of restrictions and to ensure the service is ready to respond to increasing numbers of Elected Members returning to the office more regularly, the vacant Leaders Secretary/Members Services Officer has now been filled.

In relation to hybrid meetings, the company carrying out the upgrade works have been inundated with orders leading to long delays in installation. Negotiations for as early an installation date as possible are ongoing'

as at present all Council Meetings/Committee Meetings are virtual meetings and recordings are made available for public viewing on Council youtube channel.

Please give all recorded details held only regarding

- Details of what 'hybrid meetings' will look like, how/where they will be held, who will attend and how they will attend(including Public Gallery)
- Details of Name of company carrying out the upgrade works
- Details of the preferred 'early installation date'
- Details regarding live showing of all these Council Meetings/Committee Meetings
- Details regarding recording of all these Council Meetings/Committee Meetings for later public viewing (as at present on Council youtube channel)
- Details of any consultation with Council Officials/Councillors/Residents/East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers regarding 'hybrid meetings'
- Cost of contract and any other additional work

Electronic copies are acceptable.

Your help is appreciated.

Thanks

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Re: Council Meetigs - Future Live Viewing and Recording of ALL Council Meetings

Posted by RM64 - 08 Nov 2021 15:34

----- Original Message -----

From: "Daly, Eamonn";

Sent: Monday, 8 Nov, 2021 At 12:36

Subject: Freedom of Information Request - hybrid meetings

I refer to your recent Freedom of Information request seeking all recorded details in relation to arrangements being made to enable hybrid meetings to be held in the Council Chamber.

Specifically you have asked for the following:

1. Details of what 'hybrid meetings' will look like, how/where they will be held, who will attend and how they will attend (including Public Gallery)
2. Details of Name of company carrying out the upgrade works
3. Details of the preferred 'early installation date'
4. Details regarding live showing of all these Council Meetings/Committee Meetings
5. Details regarding recording of all these Council Meetings/Committee Meetings for later public viewing (as at present on Council youtube channel)
6. Details of any consultation with/between Council Officials/Councillors/Residents/East Renfrewshire Council Tax Payers regarding 'hybrid meetings'
7. Cost of contract and any other additional work

I will respond to each part of your request below

1. There is no recorded information held in relation to this part of your request. However in order to assist you I am happy to outline arrangements.

Hybrid meetings are meetings where a number of people are in the meeting room whilst still giving the opportunity for those unable to attend the meeting in person to participate using the Teams platform, which links into the existing webcasting equipment in the Chamber.

This will enable those in the Chamber to view remote participants on the larger screens in the Chamber and for those participating remotely to see those in the Chamber.

This arrangement is different from the current system in use where all participants are taking part in meetings remotely via the Teams platform.

As with normal all in-person meetings, these meetings will be attended by members of the relevant body and appropriate supporting officers.

Attendance can be in person or remote depending on circumstances at the time.

In the event that hybrid meetings do take place and there are persons present in the Chamber the public gallery will be open to members of the public who wish to view proceedings.

You may wish to visit the Renfrewshire Council website to view an example of a hybrid meeting.

2. The company carrying out the upgrade works are public-i.

This is necessary as the upgrade needs to work with the existing webcasting system in the Chamber.

3. There is no recorded information held in relation to this part of your request.

However the Council is keen for the upgrade to be installed as soon as possible and the company has been advised of this.

4/5. There is no recorded information held in relation to this part of your request.

However the Council has an agreed policy in relation to which meetings held in the Chamber will be streamed live. For any meetings that fall outwith the agreed meetings these will be recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel.

6. There is no recorded information in relation to this part of your request.

However I have provided below details of the project description included in the Capital Request form that was submitted for consideration

Project Description

Upgrading of existing encoder to support a combination of multiple participants in one fixed location with remote participants using video conferencing

The Council currently has equipment installed in the Council Chamber to enable meetings to be webcast.

With a return to the office under ongoing social distancing measures in place in Council buildings the Council Chamber will not always be large enough to accommodate all meeting participants and so some will need to join remotely.

Even with the removal of social distancing, Elected Members have become used to participating in meetings remotely and so we need to look at being able to provide this as an option for those Members who would like to take part in meetings but cannot do so in person.

This will allow hybrid meetings to be webcast live as well as recorded for later viewing.

7. The cost of the works will be Â£9,567.95 (inc VAT) This will cover hardware, installation, and offsite training.

As I have stated that, in relation to part of your request, there is no information held, I am required to cite S17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

East Renfrewshire Council offers the opportunity to apply to the Council for a review of how we have dealt with your enquiry. If you wish to proceed to review, please apply in writing within 40 working days to:

Chief Officer - Legal and Procurement

Council Headquarters, Rouken Glen Road

Giffnock G46 6UG

Please mark your letter 'Freedom of Information, request for review', and state the exact nature of the matter you wish to be reviewed.

The review will be carried out within 20 working days of receipt.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, you have the right to then appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner who has extensive powers to investigate such matters. His address is:

Scottish Information Commissioner

Kinburn Castle

St. Andrews

Fife KY16 9DS

Yours faithfully

Eamonn Daly

Democratic Services Manager

Department of Corporate and Community Services

phone 07584 116619

email:-

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Re: Council Meetings - Future Live Viewing and Recording of ALL Council Meetings

Posted by RM64 - 08 Nov 2021 15:40

----- Original Message -----

To: "Daly, Eamonn"

Sent: Monday, 8 Nov, 2021 At 15:03

Subject: Re: Freedom of Information Request - hybrid meetings

Hi Eamonn

Thanks for this.

Would appreciate if you can give clarification on this part of your response -

'4/5. There is no recorded information held in relation to this part of your request. However the Council has an agreed policy in relation to which meetings held in the Chamber will be streamed live. For any meetings that fall outwith the agreed meetings these will be recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel.'

Pre Lockdown only Full Council meetings held in the Chamber were shown Live/Recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel?

During Lockdown and at present, all Full Council and Council Committee meetings are recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel?

What Council meetings does this policy cover(Full/Committee/Other)? -

'However the Council has an agreed policy in relation to which meetings held in the Chamber will be streamed live'.

What Council meetings does this cover(Full/Committee/Other)? -

'For any meetings that fall outwith the agreed meetings these will be recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel.'

Your help will be appreciated.

Thanks

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Re: Council Meetings - Future Live Viewing and Recording of ALL Council Meetings

Posted by RM64 - 15 Nov 2021 15:49

----- Original Message -----

From: "Daly, Eamonn";

Sent: Wednesday, 10 Nov, 2021 At 14:41

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Request - hybrid meetings

The meetings which are webcast are meetings of the full Council, and meetings of the Planning Applications Committee when the committee comprises all 18 members of the Council and is sitting to consider a planning application that is a major development and a departure from the development plan, and in respect of which a hearing is taking place.

Yours faithfully

Eamonn Daly

Democratic Services Manager

Department of Corporate and Community Services

phone 07584 116619

email:-

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Re: Council Meetings - Future Live Viewing and Recording of ALL Council Meetings

Posted by RM64 - 15 Nov 2021 15:53

Sent: 10 November 2021 19:14

To: Daly, Eamonn

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Request - hybrid meetings

Hi Eamonn

Thanks for this.

However, you did not clarify all of my points regarding Live viewing/recording Committee Meetings etc.

Can you confirm -

- 'However the Council has an agreed policy in relation to which meetings held in the Chamber will be streamed live'.

This is in fact a continuation of the status quo under this new 'hybrid' system and means Full Council Meetings and Planning Application meetings (as described) will be shown live, recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel.

- 'For any meetings that fall outwith the agreed meetings these will be recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel.'

This is new to be included under the 'hybrid' system and means all Council Committee Meetings and Joint Boards etc will not be shown live but will be recorded and published on the Council's Youtube channel.

Your help will be appreciated.

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Re: Council Meetings - Future Live Viewing and Recording of ALL Council

Meetings

Posted by RM64 - 15 Nov 2021 16:03

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'For any other meetings in the Chamber where all the participants are present in the Chamber, the meetings will not be recorded. The public gallery will be open.'

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We would appear to be returning to pre lockdown arrangements.

This is just plain bonkers and a major backward step in that Committee Meetings will not be recorded if all the participants are present in the Chamber.

The equipment will be available and In the interests of openness and transparency, there is no reason why Committee meetings should not be recorded and made available to Residents?

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The public gallery will be open.

Use car to get there - So much for Climate Emergency and all that !

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----- Original Message -----

From: "Daly, Eamonn"

Sent: Monday, 15 Nov, 2021 At 15:01

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Request - hybrid meetings

Please accept my apologies – on re-reading I recognise my initial response was not completely accurate.

In the event that meetings are restarted in the Council Chamber, the only meetings that will be streamed live (hybrid or with all participants physically present) will be the full Council meeting and the Planning Applications Committee when it comprises all 18 councillors.

This is in accordance with the decisions taken by the Council.

In addition to the meetings being streamed live, the recordings of these meetings will be made available on the webcast microsite and also on the Council's YouTube channel.

This live streaming of hybrid meetings (of the Council or 18 member Planning Applications Committee) will only be possible once the necessary equipment has been installed in the Chamber.

Any other meetings in the Chamber where some of the participants are taking part remotely will not be streamed live but will be recorded and the recording made available on the YouTube channel. The public gallery will also be open for these meetings.

For any other meetings in the Chamber where all the participants are present in the Chamber, the meetings will not be recorded. The public gallery will be open.

In the event that a meeting is held completely remotely using Microsoft Teams as at present, the meeting will be recorded and a copy of the recording made available on the YouTube channel.

Again please accept my apologies and I hope I have now clarified the position.

Yours faithfully

Eamonn Daly

Democratic Services Manager

Department of Corporate and Community Services

phone 07584 116619

email:-

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