

Report of: Democratic Services Manager

Subject: Welsh Government Consultation on extending the duty on local authorities to broadcast meetings

Decision Required: Yes

Recommendation:

The Authority is recommended to endorse the suggested response to the consultation, subject to any comments agreed at the meeting.

1. Key Messages

The draft consultation response sets out the view that voluntary broadcasting of meetings would be preferable, rather than a legislative requirement to do so, and that a 12 month retention period for the resultant recordings was sufficient to allow public access. The report seeks Members' views on the response

2. Background

Section 46(1) and (2)(a) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 placed a duty on principal councils (county councils and county borough councils) to put in place arrangements for the broadcasting of full council meetings so that members of the public who are unable to attend in person at the meeting can see and hear proceedings as they happen. Section 46(8) and (9) of the Act gave Welsh Ministers the power to require Fire and Rescue Authorities and National Park Authorities to broadcast their meetings.

On 14 July 2025 Welsh Government published a [consultation](#) on whether the duty on a principal council to broadcast meetings should be extended to include meetings other than that of full council; whether there should be a duty imposed upon FRAs and/or NPAs to broadcast their meetings; and whether there should be a retention period for recordings of broadcast meetings. The consultation asks a number of questions and suggested responses are appended to the report. No view has been taken regarding extension of the duty on principal councils to broadcast meetings other than that of full council. The deadline for responses has been extended from 6 October 2025 to 28 November 2025.

Since May 2020, when Covid restrictions prevented face to face meetings, the National Park Authority has livestreamed meetings of the Authority and its Committees so that they could be viewed by members of the public via a link on its website. When restrictions were lifted in March 2022, the decision to continue to livestream and record meetings was re-confirmed and it was agreed that the recordings be retained on the Authority's YouTube channel in accordance with the

Authority's data retention policy. The current policy is that recordings should be deleted from YouTube 12 months from date of the Committee Meeting.

3. Consultation

The draft response has been shared with the IT team, Monitoring Officer and is brought before Members so that their views can be incorporated.

4. Strategic Policy Context

The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic policy context.

Principle 2 of the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance sets out its desire to engage fully with a diverse and comprehensive range of stakeholders to secure and demonstrate its commitment to acting in ways that are open, effective and seen to be so. One of the means of achieving this is through webcasting Authority and Committee meetings. Livestreaming of meetings is also supported under Principle 7 of the Code: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

5. Financial Considerations

- a. As the Authority already livestreams its meetings voluntarily, there are no resource or financial implications should Welsh Government require this through legislation.
- b. As there is currently no charge for storing recordings of meetings on YouTube, there would be no financial implications in retaining those recordings for longer than 12 months. However it is possible that charges may be levied in future.

6. Risk and Compliance Considerations

Should the Authority be legally required to livestream its meetings, there is a risk that if the technology failed, meetings would need to be delayed or possibly abandoned, meaning decisions would not be taken in a timely manner. However the Authority is currently working with a company which specialises in audio-visual systems to deliver an appropriate solution for holding hybrid meetings in the new meeting room and it is anticipated that this will bring additional expertise and support to strengthen livestreaming processes going forwards.

7. Impact on our Public Sector Duties

7.1 Integrated Assessment Completed: No

7.2 Equality, Socio-Economic, Health and Human Rights Impacts

Broadcasting of meetings allows them to be viewed by those who are unable to travel to meeting locations and, if the broadcasts are made available after the meeting has finished, allows those recordings to be viewed at a time convenient to those who have work or other commitments. However the consultation document also recognises that it is important not to disenfranchise individuals who do not have access to, or are unable to engage with, digital technology.

7.3 Welsh Language Impacts

There is currently no requirement to broadcast meetings bilingually, although the Authority has chosen to provide simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English at meetings of the Authority and Development Management Committee to allow those who wish to contribute in Welsh to do so. Where Welsh is spoken at meetings that are broadcast, there is an opportunity for listeners to hear proceedings in that language.

7.4 Section 6 Biodiversity Duty and Carbon Emission Impacts

Longer term storage of recordings, which are large in size, has implications for carbon emissions at the data storage centres where they are held.

7.5 Well-being Goals for Wales and 5 Ways of Working (Sustainable Development Principles) Impacts

Livestreaming meetings has the potential to achieve greater transparency, collaboration and accountability between National Park Authorities and the citizens of Wales and thereby supports the Well-being Goal of a more equal Wales. The Sustainable Development Principle of Involvement is supported through greater access to democracy.

8. Conclusion

While continued digital public access to Authority meetings is supported, officers consider that undertaking this voluntarily reduces the risks to the Authority of technological failure which could require meetings to be suspended or abandoned. Equally, specifying a longer retention period could have financial risks for the Authority if charges for storage are introduced in future. These conclusions are reflected in the draft response appended to the report for Members' consideration.

9. List Background Documentation:

[Consultation on extending the duty on local authorities to broadcast meetings \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

[14/22 NPA Meetings: Venue Options during Meeting Room Redevelopment](#)

(For further information please Caroline Llewellyn,
carolinel@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)

Consultation response form

Your name: Caroline Llewellyn

Organisation (if applicable): Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Email / telephone number: carolinel@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk

Your address: Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock, SA72 6DY

Q1. Do you agree the duty to broadcast meetings live should be extended to additional meetings of a principal council?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes which of the committees and meetings listed above should be broadcast live?:

Q2. Are there other committees' meetings of a principal council you think the duty should be extended?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, then please set out which meetings and the reason(s) you consider it should be broadcast live?:

Q3: Do you agree the requirement to broadcast meetings should be extended to NPAs and FRAs?

Yes ☐

No ☒

Please include any comments in support of your answer:

The National Park Authority currently broadcasts all meetings of the Authority and its Committees and makes these available on YouTube after the meeting. The preference would be to continue doing this on a voluntary basis. The Authority will continue to make every effort to broadcast its meetings, but as a small Authority with limited resources would prefer that this was not required by legislation so that if technical issues should arise, and broadcast was not possible, the meeting would still be able to proceed.

Q4: Should the broadcasting of NPA and FRA meetings be extended to meetings beyond that of the full authority, e.g standards committees?

Yes ☐

No ☒

If yes, which meetings?:

See answer to Q3

Q5: In relation to principal councils, NPAs and FRAs, do you agree that recordings of meetings required to be broadcast should be retained?

Yes ☒

No ☐

If yes, should this period be the same as the period for the official minutes i.e 6 years or for a different period of time? Please provide any comments to support your answer:

The Authority considers that the minutes of a meeting provide the official record of proceedings and currently retains recordings on its YouTube Channel for 12 months. The public are unlikely to access recordings beyond this time period.

What do you consider would be the implications of adopting a longer period of retention for recordings of meetings?:

There could be cost implications of retaining recordings for longer. While there is currently no cost to such storage that may not always be the case. In addition, storage of a large number of recordings at data centres will lead to increased carbon emissions.

Q6. What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of extending the duty to broadcast meetings on the Welsh language?

We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.

Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects?

Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

Comments:

There is currently no requirement to broadcast meetings bilingually. Where Welsh is spoken at meetings that are broadcast, there is an opportunity for listeners to hear proceedings in that language.

Q7. In your opinion, could extending the duty to broadcast meetings be formulated or changed so as to:

- have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or
- mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Comments:

Unless a requirement is introduced to broadcast meetings in both Welsh and English, the decision of an individual Authority to provide interpretation at its meetings has a more positive effect on using the Welsh language than extending the duty to broadcast.

Q8: Please explain how you think broadcasting of council meetings impacts different social, economic and cultural groups, both positively and negatively and what measures can be undertaken to ensure equitable access and representation:

Broadcasting of meetings allows them to be viewed by those who are unable to travel to meeting locations and, if the broadcasts are made available after the meeting has finished, allows those recordings to be viewed at a time convenient to those who have work or other commitments.

Q9: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here ☐