



Title of Report:	Live Streaming and Audio Recording of Planning Committee Meetings
Committee Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	24 June 2026
For Decision/ For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Plan (2026-31)	
Strategic Themes	Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Outcome	Continuous improvement embedded in all services based on evidence, performance data, and customer feedback
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	TBC

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	YES/NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	YES/NO

Screening Requirements	<i>Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.</i>		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 24 March 2026, it was agreed that Officers would bring back a Report covering public accessibility of Council Meetings Online (live streaming).

The purpose of this report is twofold

- a) update Members on the changes to the meeting broadcast system and
- b) to ask Members to consider how live streaming and audio recording will be managed in respect of Planning Committee Meetings.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 23 February 2021, it was agreed to support the Notice of Motion:

“That this Council continue to record proceedings of the Council and Committee meetings, excluding Planning, when the Council goes into committee. These recordings should not be publicly available but held by Council for future reference. Many times we have required clarification from a meeting which had gone into committee and not had the information available and many times we have seen call-ins come back to say that the audio was not available and so limited consideration could be given or information on a members or officers contributions cannot be sought as the audio recording has stopped. In order to ensure good governance and ease of reference audio recording should continue, in a manner most suitable, to be held privately by the Council as a record of the meeting.”

- 2.2 At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 25 May 2021, it was recommended:

“that Council approve the draft Guidance for the management of audio recordings, including 'in committee' sessions, of Council and Standing Committees, excluding Planning Committee”

- 2.3 At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 28 June 2022, it was agreed:

“That Council approve the live streaming of Council and Committee meetings, in principle; that consultation take place with relevant stakeholders, as an integral part of the process.”

- 2.4 At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee of 24.03.26, the following AORB was discussed:

Public accessibility of Council Meetings Online (Councillor Wilson)

I wish to seek clarification from officers regarding the current arrangements for members of the public to view Council meetings online.

While Council meetings are available to view remotely, the current system requires members of the public to submit a request in advance in order to access the meeting. I believe this requirement creates an unnecessary barrier to public engagement and limits the transparency that residents should reasonably expect from their Council.

Openness and transparency are fundamental principles of good governance and are vital to the health of local democracy. Council meetings should be readily accessible to all members of the public without the need to apply or seek permission in advance. Providing unrestricted online access would allow residents who are unable to attend in person — due to work commitments, caring responsibilities, mobility issues, or other personal circumstances — to observe the decision-making process in real time.

Removing the requirement to request access would represent a simple but meaningful step toward improving transparency, strengthening accountability, and encouraging greater public engagement with the work of the Council.

In light of this, I ask:

Why is it currently necessary for members of the public to submit a request in advance in order to view Council meetings online?;

What barriers, if any, exist to making Council meetings openly accessible online without prior application?;

Will officers bring forward proposals to remove this requirement and ensure that all Council meetings can be accessed online by the public without restriction?;

Can a timeframe be provided for when unrestricted online access to Council meetings will be implemented?

It is important that we remove unnecessary obstacles to public participation and ensure that our residents can easily observe the democratic processes that affect their communities.

At this meeting, The Director of Corporate Services referred to a current project plan in respect of facilities for live streaming which required staff and trade union consultation, consideration of technical issues and DPIA and GDPR compliance. The Director of Corporate Services said that due to essential

repairs to the roof of the Council Chamber in Civic Headquarters the Council Chamber would be out of action for July and August 2026 and agreed to bring a report to the April Corporate Policy and Resources Committee covering the live streaming and contingency plans during essential repairs and hoped that following the repairs livestreaming could be initiated

3.0 Current Practice – Remote Access to Meetings

- 3.1 Remote access to Council and Committee Meetings for the public is currently via Microsoft Teams. Once the Notice of a Meeting has been given, anyone wishing to attend remotely can follow the instructions on the Council's website to request a link from Democratic Services.
- 3.2 Live streaming would allow members of the public to join at any time without requesting a link. It would also reduce the administrative work involved in issuing links.
- 3.3 The following meetings are Audio Recorded: -
- Audit Committee
 - Corporate Policy & Resources Committee
 - Environmental Services Committee
 - Finance Committee
 - Leisure & Development Committee and
 - Council Meeting

Planning Committee and sub-committee meetings are not currently audio recorded.

At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee of 26 May 2026, it was agreed:

“To recommend to Council that live streaming is implemented for meetings of full Council and all Committee meetings.”

It was noted at this meeting that the Planning Committee would need to make its own decision regarding live streaming. It was also queried at this meeting why meetings of the Planning Committee are not audio recorded.

- 3.4 It was further agreed at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee of 26 May 2026:

“that Council approves the award of the Council Chamber AV tender to the preferred supplier identified through the procurement process and authorises Officers to proceed with contract award and implementation.”

It is planned to update the Council Chamber AV infrastructure, which was damaged by Storm Eowyn on 24 January 2025, after repair work to the Chamber’s roof is completed. It is anticipated that all work will be completed by September 2026.

- 3.5 A Live Streaming Working Group has been established to progress the implementation of the live streaming of Council and Committee meetings. This will involve the completion of: Screening Exercise, Rural Proofing Exercise, Policy Development, Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and Staff and Trade Union Consultation. The Live Streaming Working Group last met on 14 May 2026 to discuss the above and consider priority areas going forwards. Regular meetings have been scheduled to take forward this project.

4.0 Current Practice – Remote Access to Meetings

- 4.1 Remote access to Planning Meetings for the public is currently via Microsoft Teams. Once the Notice of a Meeting has been issued, anyone wishing to attend remotely can follow the instructions on the Council’s website to request a link from Democratic Services.

5.0 Proposed approach – Remote Access to Meetings

- 5.1 When the new AV infrastructure is in place, meetings will be hosted on the new software. Therefore, the Democratic Services team will no longer be able to issue Microsoft Teams links.
- 5.2 In respect of Planning Committee meetings, agents or applicants who are required to participate in the meeting will access the meeting via the same software as Elected Members. Members of the public cannot access the meeting in this way as there will be a limited number of virtual “seats” available at each meeting on the new software. It will not be possible to increase this number.
- 5.3 Until Democratic Services has completed the staff and trade union consultation and the DPIA, unrestricted live streaming of any meetings cannot be undertaken. Therefore, provision needs to be made to allow public access to Council and Committee meetings, as per Council’s Remote Meetings Protocol.

5.4 Data Protection

The processing of personal data arising from the live streaming of meetings (including video and audio of Members, officers, and participants) is carried out under the Council's public task, in accordance with Article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR. The Council is required to conduct its business in an open and transparent manner and to facilitate public access to meetings where appropriate.

The live stream will be limited to public sessions of meetings only, and no recording or retention of personal data will be undertaken as part of this interim arrangement. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be completed prior to implementation of any permanent live streaming solution.

- 5.5 An interim solution has been identified which involves the use of a private YouTube channel to facilitate live streaming. Access to the live stream will be restricted via a meeting-specific link issued by Democratic Services upon request, in line with the current process for remote attendance.

The live stream will only be available during the duration of the meeting and only while the meeting is in public session. No recording, archiving, or retention of the stream will take place on the platform, and the video will be removed immediately following the conclusion of the public session. The platform is used solely to enable controlled, real-time viewing and not for ongoing publication or storage of meeting content.

- 5.6 It should be noted that the new AV system will be configured in such a way that only Elected Members and applicants/agents who are participating in the meeting will be visible on screen. This is to avoid pre-empting the outcome of the staff and trade union consultation and to ensure GDPR compliance. When Officers are briefing Committee, the view on screen will be a wide view of the top table of the Chamber.

5.7 Control of Public and In Committee Sessions

The live stream will be actively managed to ensure that only public session proceedings are broadcast. Where a meeting moves into private or exempt business, the live stream will be paused or terminated at that point. Streaming will only resume once the meeting returns to public session. Responsibility for managing the transition between public and in committee sessions will rest with the Democratic Services team in conjunction with ICT support.

- 5.8 As noted at paragraph 2.5 above, at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee of 26 May 2026, it was agreed to recommend to Council that live streaming is implemented for meetings of full Council and all Committee

meetings, but it was noted that the Planning Committee must make its own decision in respect of this matter.

5.9 In order to ensure compliance with Council’s Remote Meeting Protocol, it is recommended that the Planning Committee agree to allow the interim solution of a private YouTube channel broadcasting Planning Committee meetings, with the live stream only available to watch throughout the duration of the meeting and when it is in Public session. The Council will not record, retain, or publish any video or audio from the live stream as part of this interim arrangement. Any unauthorised recording or distribution of the live stream by viewers is not permitted. The video will be removed from YouTube immediately following the meeting.

5.10 Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Processing of personal data during live streaming	Limited to public sessions only; no recording or retention; DPIA to be completed prior to permanent solution
Use of third-party platform (YouTube)	Platform used solely for live streaming; restricted access via issued links; no storage or publication of content
Unauthorised access or link sharing	Access managed through Democratic Services; links issued for specific meetings only
Reputational risk arising from misuse or misinterpretation of content	Clear governance controls; no retained recordings; streaming limited to official proceedings only
Transition between public and In Committee sessions	Live stream actively managed and paused/terminated for exempt business

5.11 It is further recommended that the Planning Committee considers aligning its live streaming arrangements with those for full Council and all other Committees. Live streaming would allow members of the public to join at any time without requesting a link, thereby making meetings more accessible to the public. It would also reduce the administrative work involved in issuing links. This would be subject to the outcome of the DPIA and the staff and trade union consultation.

6.0 Audio Recording

6.1 The following meetings are currently Audio Recorded: -

- Audit Committee
- Corporate Policy & Resources Committee
- Environmental Services Committee
- Finance Committee
- Leisure & Development Committee and
- Council Meeting

Planning Committee and sub-committee meetings are not currently audio recorded.

6.2 The Audio Recordings of the public sessions of meetings are made available on the Council website within 2 days of the Council or Committee meeting. The audio recordings of In Committee sessions of meetings are stored securely by Democratic Services, with a strict policy in place regarding access to these meetings, as detailed in the Council's Guidance on Audio Recordings (Appendix A).

6.3 As noted at paragraph 2.5 above, during discussion of live streaming at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee of 26 May 2026, it was queried why meetings of the Planning Committee are not audio recorded.

6.4 Currently, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is the only Council that does not take an audio recording of its Planning Committee for internal use. Out of the other 10 Councils, only one does not publish either an audio recording or live stream recording of its meeting, but it does record the meeting for internal use.

6.5 Given the significance of Planning decisions, the lack of an audio recording to support the recording of decisions in the form of Minutes could be regarded as an organisational risk. Providing an audio recording in the same manner as for other Council and Committee meetings would also enhance transparency and accessibility.

6.6 It is recommended that the Planning Committee consider the implementation of audio recording of Planning Committee meetings with immediate effect, with public sessions to be published on the Council website within two days of the meeting, and with In Committee sessions to be held confidentially, in line with the Council's Guidance on Audio Recordings.

7.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Planning Committee agrees to allow the live streaming of public sessions of Planning Committee meetings via a private YouTube channel that is accessible via a link from Democratic Services, with the live stream only available to watch throughout the duration of the meeting, and with recording of these meetings strictly prohibited.

It is further recommended that the Planning Committee considers aligning its live streaming arrangements with those for full Council and all other Committees, when the necessary arrangements have been put in place. This would be subject to the outcome of the DPIA and the staff and trade union consultation.

It is further recommended that the Planning Committee agrees to the audio recording of Planning Committee meetings with immediate effect, with public sessions to be published on the Council website within two days of the meeting, and with In Committee sessions to be held confidentially, in line with the Council's Guidance on Audio Recordings.

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Council and Committee Meetings Audio Recording Guidelines

1. Statement

- 1.1 These guidelines provide for the transparent management of the audio recordings, including 'in committee' sessions of Council and Standing Committees, excluding the Planning Committee.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 An 'audio recording' or 'recording' for the purpose of these guidelines refers to a digital audio file.
- 2.2 The 'Council' means Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.
- 2.3 'Author' means the author of a report to Council who is currently employed by Council.
- 2.4 'Meetings' means the Council meeting, Standing Committees, excluding Planning Committee meeting and Special Meetings.

3. Objective

- 3.1 The objective of these guidelines is to enable greater transparency, accountability and efficiency in relation to meetings of Council.
- 3.2 Audio recording of meetings is another tool which can facilitate community access and involvement in Council meetings and enable greater public awareness of the decision making processes.
- 3.3 Audio recording of meetings can be used to assist in the preparation of complete and accurate minutes, authorised investigations and decisions called in.

4. Scope

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Author: Democratic and Central Services Manager

Date Adopted by Council 2021_06_01

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- 4.1 In accordance with the resolution of Council, this policy applies to all full Council and Standing Committee meetings (including special meetings and excluding the Planning Committee) held in the Council Chamber or remotely.
- 4.2 In February 2021 Council resolved to *'continue to record proceedings of the Council when Council goes into committee. These recordings should not be publicly available but held by Council for future reference. Many times we have required clarification from a meeting which had gone into committee and not had the information available and many times we have seen call-ins come back to say that the audio was not available and so limited consideration could be given or information on a member's or officer's contributions cannot be sought as the audio recording has stopped. In order to ensure good governance and ease of reference the audio recording should continue, in a manner most suitable, to be held privately by the Council as a record of the meeting.'* The motion was amended to include *'the audio recording including in committee sessions of all committee meetings with the exception of the Planning Committee.'*
- 4.3 This policy does not apply to any other meetings of Council.

5. Legislation

- 5.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Part 8 Section 47 (1) *'so far as is reasonably practicable a Council must make an audio recording of so much of any meeting of the council as is open to the public and the recording must be available to the public at the offices of the council until the expiration of the period of six years from the date of the meeting and published on the council website until the expiration of the period of two years from the date of the meeting.'* Section 47 (2) states *'This section does not apply in relation to meetings of any committees or sub-committees of the Council.'*

Exempt information and power to vary Schedule 6

51.—(1) The descriptions of information which are, for the purposes of this Part, exempt information are those specified in Part 1 of Schedule 6, but subject to any qualifications contained in Part 2 of that Schedule; and Part 3 has effect for the interpretation of Parts 1 to 3 of that Schedule.

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(2) The Department may by order vary Schedule 6 by adding to it any description or other provision or by deleting from it or varying any description or other provision for the time being specified or contained in it.

(3) The Department may exercise the power conferred by subsection (2) by amending any Part of Schedule 6, with or without amendment of any other Part.

SCHEDULE 6 ACCESS TO INFORMATION: EXEMPT INFORMATION

PART 1 DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

1. *Information relating to any individual.*
2. *Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.*
3. *Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).*
4. *Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the council.*
5. *Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.*
6. *Information which reveals that the council proposes—*
 - (a) to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or*
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any statutory provision.*
7. *Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.*

6. Procedure

- 6.1 To facilitate effective security and management of the audio recordings, the open and 'in committee' sessions of council and committee meetings will be separately recorded.

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- 6.2 At the commencement of each open meeting of Council, the Mayor/Chair shall notify those present, including members of the public and press, that an audio recording of the open session of the meeting will be made.
- 6.3 At the commencement of each closed 'in committee' session of each meeting the Mayor/Chair shall notify those present that an audio recording of the closed 'in committee' session of the meeting will be made. Prior notification of the recording will be communicated to any external person(s) attending a closed 'in committee' session, for example, legal advisers.
- 6.4 A Council Officer (delegated by the Director of Corporate Services) will be responsible for the operation of the audio recording equipment including the commencement and termination of the recording or as directed by the Mayor/Chair.
- 6.5 In the event of technical failure the Mayor/Chair shall inform the meeting that an audio recording will not be made of the meeting or part of the meeting.
- 6.6 The audio file of the open session meeting of council and committee meetings will be made available on Council's website within 2 days of the meeting. Elected Members will be advised to access the audio recording of the open session via Council's website.
- 6.7 The audio recording of a meeting may be used by Democratic Services staff in the preparation of minutes.
- 6.8 The audio recording of a meeting does not supersede the written minutes therefore a direct transcript will not be prepared.
- 6.9 Other than for the purpose of preparing minutes any request to access the recording of a closed 'in committee' session of Council must be provided in writing to Committee and Member Services Officers detailing the basis for the request. Requests will be authorised by the Director of Corporate Services or her delegate.
- 6.10 Access to recordings of closed 'in committee' session of meetings may be granted for the following reasons:

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- Where an Elected Member wishes to review a recording of a closed session of Council for which they were absent.

Access to a recording under 6.10 is not permitted where the absence from the meeting was due to a declaration of interest at that meeting or where absence due to a declaration of interest would have occurred at that meeting if the Elected Member was not absent for other reasons.

- Where an Elected Member wishes to review a recording of a closed session of a meeting for which they were present.
 - Where Council Officers are requested to provide information in relation to a request from an appropriate authority, for example, investigation of Code of Conduct complaints by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman or to legal advisers in respect of decisions called in.
 - The Director of Corporate Services may direct Democratic Services staff to access the recordings of closed session for any other purpose deemed necessary in the performance of their duties.
- 6.11 Access to a recording by the Director of Corporate Services or her delegate is not permitted where a recording is about a matter where the Director or her delegate was excluded from a closed session or was absent to a declared interest.
- 6.12 The Director of Corporate Services must ensure that arrangements are in place for Democratic Services Officers to record requests in a register of requests.
- 6.13 The register of requests must contain the following details; Name of the person requesting access to closed session recordings, position, reason for access, the recording/meeting date, item under discussion, name of authorising officer, date recording accessed, officers present when recording reviewed.
- 6.14 The recordings of closed 'in committee' sessions are to remain confidential and not be released to the public unless the Council resolves to do so.

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6.15 Access to recordings of closed 'in committee' sessions of meetings by authorised persons will be either by appointment at Civic Headquarters or by means of secure electronic access.

7.0 Review

7.1 The Guidance will be kept under review by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

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