

Bolsover, Derbyshire Dales and East Derbyshire District Councils

Joint ICT Committee

1 June 2020

<p>Video and Audio Conferencing Tools</p>
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Report of the Joint ICT Service Delivery Manager

Purpose of the Report

- To update Councillors on and background for issuing 'Members protocol for the use of video and audio conferencing' to join official council related meetings.
- To request Councillors support the guidance and acknowledge the risks associated with video conferencing.

Report Details

- 1.1. Since the outbreak of corona virus and the Government decision to invoke social distancing and lock-down, there became an urgent requirement for conferencing tools to enable groups of people to collaborate whilst geographically separated.
- 1.2. Numerous conferencing tools are available with no one tool being used consistently throughout partner organisations or the wider business community.
- 1.3. ICT are receiving numerous requests to JOIN meetings hosted by third parties using various collaboration technologies. The main ones being GoToMeeting, Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams and Cisco WebEx.
- 1.4. It is often essential that members and officers collaborate in these meetings and ICT want to assist and not to be a barrier to the use of essential collaboration technologies during this time.
- 1.5. However, each technology is different. They offer different functionalities such as file sharing, which pose different security risks with regards to loss of data and potential harm to the council's network. They can be recorded which could infringe on peoples data protection rights. They use different levels of encryption, and have differing privacy statements and are hosted in different countries.
- 1.6. The installation and use of these tools is not standard either, some will work via a web browser on a laptop, whilst iPads are required to be brought into the office for applications to be installed.
- 1.7. Being cloud based technologies, once access to these tools are provided we have very little technical controls that we can put in place to restrict how they are used or

by who. For example, we cannot restrict file sharing, or prevent users from signing up with their corporate email addresses.

- 1.8. The practical ways we can mitigate the risks whilst enabling virtual conferencing to support official council related business is to either prohibit their use or ask councillors and staff to agree to a protocol of usage which determines what they should and should not do whilst using the different collaboration tools.
- 1.9. The unmitigated cyber and data security risks are significant. See **Appendix 5 – Audio and Video Conferencing risk Register 28.04.20**
- 1.10. 'Members Protocols for the use of Video and audio conferencing have therefore been produced and distributed to all Members, in order to mitigate some of the risks associated with the use of these tools. Similar ones have been sent to staff.
- 1.11. If access to JOIN (NOT HOST) a meeting using GoToMeeting, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Cisco WebEx is necessary for official Council business/meetings and the application is not available on corporately provided equipment, a call to the Member Support Officer (BDC&NEDDC) or Servicedesk (ALL) will be required so that the iPad can be updated.
- 1.12. The protocol also specifies that HOSTING of video conferencing on behalf of the Council should only be done via corporately purchased accounts, currently Governance and Democratic services have these.
- 1.13. Although not fully addressing all risks, through the Member and staff acceptance of the protocol, the authority can help to mitigate some of the risks associated with the use of the most commonly used video and audio tools where technical constraints are not available.
- 1.14. Video and audio conferencing technology is improving/maturing at a fast pace. The protocol should be reviewed regularly and is subject to change as new technologies and information becomes available and as requirements change.
- 1.15. It is envisaged that parts of the protocol will eventually be incorporated into the corporate ICT security policy once future corporate video and audio tools are reviewed and confirmed.

2. Internet Bandwidth and Video /audio conferencing

- 2.1. Video and audio conferencing is directly impacted by the network / internet connection being utilised. This could be wired or over Wi-Fi, via people's home broadband / 4G or 3G, over the corporately shared internet connection or over the OpenVPN which uses one of three fibre connections.
- 2.2. The quality of the connection will impact the successfulness of the meetings, regardless of what audio/video conferencing tool is used and is out of the control of ICT.
- 2.3. For information, ICT have completed a tendering process for a new shared internet connection which has been awarded to Virgin Media Ltd to provide a 200mb uncontended internet connection, this will eventually replace the existing shared 40mb uncontended internet connection. Once installed and configured

this should alleviate many connection issues into and out of the authority network. We are awaiting an installation date from Virgin.

- 2.4. We are also in the process of reviewing the most appropriate audio/video conferencing tool which will determine the most appropriate tool for the medium term.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The use of audio and video conferencing tools are essential to effective day-to-day businesses of the council. This is certainly true whilst ever social distancing restrictions are in place but the likelihood is that it will become a fundamental business tool of the future.

The measures outlined in this report strike the balance between effective day-to-day business and mitigating risks as far as practicably possible.

Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 Consultation has been previously sought with Senior Management and the Data Protection Officers at each authority.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Do not accept the Risks and ICT do not allow the use of video conferencing tools to join meetings only allowing access to the current corporate software.
- 4.2 Make alternative recommendations to the protocol as deemed necessary.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 See **Appendix 5** – Audio and Video Conferencing risk Register 28.04.20
- 5.1.2 Risks of not participating in Official council meetings organised by third party organisations.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 The Data Protection Officer supports the issuing of protocols as an effective organisational measure to inform employees and Members on the use of audio and video conferencing tools and to reduce the risks noted on the specific risk assessment.
- 5.2.2 The Data Protection Officer has reviewed the protocols and given advice which has been incorporated into the documentation.
- 5.2.3 The Data Protection Officer has reviewed the risk assessment and considers that it accurately reflects the risks from a data protection perspective.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 Protocols are distributed to all Members and require acceptance before using Video and Audio conferencing tools.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1. That Joint ICT Committee support the adoption and acceptance of the Members Protocol for the use of Video and Audio Conferencing Tools to mitigate the risks with using Video and Audio Conferencing Tools.
- 6.2 That Joint ICT Committee acknowledge details of the report including associated risks and mitigation.

7 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 5	Appendix 5 – Audio and Video Conferencing risk Register 28.04.20 *
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Appendix 5 – Audio and Video Conferencing risk Register 28.04.20 * *The Members protocols are different for DDDC, BDC and NEDDC. Therefore the ‘Members Protocol for the use of Video and Audio Conferencing Tool’ for each authority has previously been sent separately via email to all members of that authority.	
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