

## **DATA CAPTIONING (SUBTITLING) IN THE PARLIAMENT**

### **Executive summary**

1. The purpose of this paper is to advise the Corporate Body of a proposal to extend the captioning ('subtitling') of Parliamentary proceedings beyond First Minister's Question Time that was approved by the SPCB as a pilot project in November 2013.

### **Issues and Options**

#### **Background Information**

2. In November 2013, the SPCB was invited to consider the addition of captioning ('subtitling') the video of Parliamentary proceedings using the Scottish Parliament's YouTube site. It had been identified that a subtitling provision was possible through the synchronising of the Official Report transcript and video of the proceedings of Parliament. The SPCB agreed to a pilot phase of this service using First Minister's Question Time.

3. This process for captioning has worked well for First Minister's Questions. With the Official Report available from 2.30pm, the captioned ("subtitled") video can be available from around 3pm on the same day. In addition, testing has been carried out on the level of accuracy which shows that the synchronising of the Official Report with the video is virtually 100% accurate.

4. Following the success of this pilot, it is proposed that this captioning service is continued as business as usual and extended to include more Parliamentary proceedings. The pilot phase was managed through the Broadcasting Office; it is proposed that the future provision will be managed by the Chamber Office with the required inputs from Broadcasting Office and Official Report. It should be highlighted that the YouTube functionality could be removed or changed at any point, which would be out-with the control of the Scottish Parliament. However we do not envisage this happening; YouTube is more likely to enhance its provision rather than remove what already exists. There is also software that could be purchased should there ever be a decision taken for YouTube to remove its captioning of video.

#### **Future Captioning Service in the Parliament**

5. The service will be provided by Chamber Office with input from Broadcasting Office and Official Report. The Parliamentary business to be captioned ('subtitled') will be: First Minister's Question Time, General Questions, statements, and debates on issues which are likely to be of interest to the deaf community and for which a British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter has been provided. The Official Report of meetings of the Parliament is available on line within three and a half hours of the end of the meeting. Official Report will make Broadcasting and Chamber Office

aware of the availability of the Official Report to allow them to synchronize the Official Report to the video of proceedings as soon as possible. Captioned ('subtitled') proceedings would be available by the end of the following day as a minimum level of service.

6. We do not currently intend to provide captioning for committee business due to the longer timescale for the Official Report to be published for committee business. However there may be occasions where we might consider subtitling for particularly high profile committee business. Any additional service that we decide to provide will however be subject to the availability of staff resources.

7. An instruction document will be written and made available to explain the provision to users and provide trouble-shooting advice.

8. The provision of the service and instructional document will be signposted at a number of areas throughout the Scottish Parliament website. This will be implemented through the Web and Social Media team to ensure a consistency of delivery of the message.

9. Finally, a communication plan will be produced to publicise the new service to Members and groups whom it will benefit most such as deaf and hard of hearing communities; older people; and people who don't speak English as their first language. The launch of the service will take place in September targeting all deaf and hard of hearing groups across Scotland.

### **Resource Implications**

10. In order to implement the service, the requirement is for staffing resource to be provided to upload the transcript to YouTube and check the accuracy. For First Minister's Questions, this will take approximately 30 - 60 minutes per week, General Questions will take approximately 30 – 60 minutes per week and this timescale will also apply to statements. In 2014 up to 3 June there have been 8 statements made and 2 debates on deaf issues. The areas of business chosen for captioning ('subtitling') has confirmed the resource that can be made available on an ongoing basis. This has been endorsed by the Head of Chamber and Reporting.

11. There will be more than one staff member in Chamber Office who has been provided with the training to synchronise the transcript to the video and comprehensive guidance. This level of resourcing will provide cover for when a staff member is on leave, sick or leaves employment.

### **Publication Scheme**

12. This paper can be published under the SPCB Publication Scheme.

### **Next steps**

13. The next steps are to:

- Produce a communication plan to publicise the extended service to Members and groups whom it will benefit most such as deaf and hard of hearing communities; older people; and people who don't speak English as their first language;
- Launch the extended service for First Minister's Questions; General Questions; Statements; and debates on deaf issues in September 2014 after the second Summer recess; and
- Evaluate and review the service in September 2015 emailing SPCB Members with an update.

### **Decision**

14. The SPCB is invited to agree the proposed arrangements for extending the provision of captioning ('subtitling') into the Parliament.

**Broadcasting/Human Resources Office  
June 2014**