

ST HELENS COUNCIL COUNCIL CHAMBER AND EMERGENCY PLANNING ROOM

CASE STUDY

Clear sound and reliable recording at St Helens Council.

The Emergency planning room (Room 10), at St Helens Council in Merseyside is an important meeting resource for the Council. Purpose built, it accommodates up to 40 delegates, and is used for a range of different gatherings including both public and internal meetings.

The council needed an audio conferencing system to ensure that debates held within the room and the neighbouring Council Chamber could be clearly heard and also recorded.

Joanne Griffiths MBE, democratic services manager at St Helens Council explains. "Following the Localism Act 2011, members of the public can independently record public meetings without permission from the Chief Executive, so it is important that the Council maintain their own recordings in case of dispute. We also wanted a microphone solution that was robust, easy to manage and provided excellent sound quality".

A ROBUST ALTERNATIVE TO GOOSENECK MICROPHONES

Pure AV was one of three companies invited to present their solution to the council and following a successful presentation was selected to provide the audio conferencing solution for Room 10.

It was decided following discussion with the council to present the Beyerdynamic microphones with Revoluto technology. As Mike Molyneux, Pure AV account manager for the project explains, "We felt that the Revoluto microphone units offered an interesting alternative to the gooseneck microphones previously deployed within the Council meeting room".

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The quality of the audio was impressive and the rectangular design made the units more robust, removing the concerns we had around the handling of the microphones."

KAREN GILLIS, Customer Relationship Manager
St Helens Council



St. Helens Council

FOCUS ON THE DEBATE, FORGET THE MICROPHONE

With no microphone stem to worry about, the Quinta MU31 units offer the delegates a much wider range of movement, maintaining sound quality even when the person speaking changes position or moves their head from left to right. This creates a more natural experience for the person speaking, allowing them to focus on the content of the debate rather than on the position of the microphone. It also responds to concerns raised about the robustness of gooseneck style microphones. The Council had experienced problems with their previous audio conferencing system, as the tendency for delegates to pick the microphones up by the neck had caused damage and made the units unreliable.

Karen Gillis is the Customer Relationship Manager at St Helens Council and was responsible for the delivery of the upgrade to the audio facilities in the meeting room. She explains,

“As soon as we saw the ‘toblerone’ shaped microphone units we could see that the solution presented by Pure AV offered something extra. The quality of the audio was impressive and the rectangular design made the units more robust, removing the concerns we had around the handling of the microphones”.

It was the robust design of the Quinta MU31 units that led the Council to extend deployment of the microphones into the main Council Chamber. Karen Gillis continues,

“When the Chamber is not in use the microphones are cleared away and we felt that the rectangular design would make the management of the microphones much easier and less prone to damage as they are brought out and tidied away”.



The addition of the Council Chamber means that the deployment at the Council now includes 48 Quinta MU31 Revolutio delegate microphones with 2x Quinta MU33 chairman microphones and 2 x Quinta CU central control units.

RELIABLE AUDIO RECORDING

Meeting recording is available in both Meeting Room10 and the Council Chamber. The Council needed a simple, easy to use solution able to record meeting audio for audit purposes. Having examined a number of options, the Pure AV team returned to Beyerdynamic's own software solution. The straightforward interface and ease of use of the Steno-S4 Conference Recording Software making it a perfect fit for the Council's requirements. In both rooms the audio is recorded to a dedicated laptop and from there it is transferred to the Council network. This allows the Council to maintain an easily accessible record of all public meetings should the need to review the meeting content arise.

The adoption of the audio conferencing and recording system by meeting room users was quick and efficient as Karen Gillis explains,

“The installation of the audio conferencing system was completed on the Friday, training on the recording software was provided to the Democratic Services staff on the Monday morning and we were up and running on the same day. The Council Committee meeting held that same afternoon utilised the new system without issue and the Members were delighted with the improvement to the sound quality”.

Joanne Griffiths MBE, democratic services manager at St Helens Council concludes,

“The audio conferencing system installed by Pure AV plays a big part in supporting the work that we do. It enables debates to be heard clearly and satisfies our need to record public meetings. The voice amplification is natural and reliable and whether using Room 10 or the Chamber we can concentrate on the discussion in hand, confident that our voices will be heard”.

