

Protocol on the recording and filming of Council and Committee Meetings

The right to record, film and report meetings of the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees via social media is established after the Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.

The Council ...

- 1) Supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision-making and will assist members of the public to exercise their rights. To this end, whilst no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or audio-record a public meeting let the Council staff know so that all necessary arrangements could be made for the public meeting.
- 2) Expects that films or audio recordings will not be edited before transmission in a way that misrepresents what occurred or ridicules those being filmed or recorded.
- 3) Will protect the rights of members of the public attending the meeting. At the beginning of a meeting the Chairman will ask if any present object to being filmed, photographed or recorded. Those filming, photographing or recording the meeting are expected to comply with such wishes.
- 4) Will exercise its right to take action against those disrupting the meeting or behaving in an intrusive manner.
- 5) May itself photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings and will retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The Public:

- 1) Are allowed to film or record meetings to which they are permitted in a non-disruptive manner. Meetings or parts of meeting from which the press and public are excluded may not be filmed or recorded.
- 2) All recording must be overt i.e. visible to anyone at the meeting. Filming or recording equipment cannot be left running in meeting rooms when the public is excluded. The right to film, record, etc. is limited to the duration of the meeting. Recording must not start until the meeting is called to order and must cease when the Chairman closed the meeting.
- 3) Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the Council open to the public is responsible for any claims or other liability from them so doing.

The law of the land applies – including the law of defamation and the law on public order offences. Freedom of speech within the law should also be exercised with personal and social responsibility – showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.

4) Filming, recording, etc. will not be permitted if the effect would be to interrupt or disturb the smooth running of the meeting. This means, for example:

- Commentary is not permitted
- Speakers must not be asked to repeat statements for the purpose of recording
- Equipment which needs setting up must be in place when the meeting starts
- Excessive noise, intrusive lighting and flash photography are not permitted
- 'Roaming' whilst filming or recording is not permitted - those operating equipment must stay in the designated area

The list above is not exhaustive and if in the Chairman's opinion, a person filming, recording, photographing or broadcasting a meeting is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, that person can be ordered to stop their activity or to leave the meeting

These requirements will be displayed at meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether or not they have read them.

Only the official signed minutes of the meetings will be recognised as the formal, statutory and legally binding record of the meeting.

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