

Appendix 22 - Protocol for Webcasting, Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

1 Background

- 1.1 The main purpose of webcasting is to promote openness and accountability, and to support greater participation in local democracy by giving members of the public, elected members, officers and other interested parties the opportunity to view meetings without having to attend in person.
- 1.2 Live webcasting and the retention of recordings online for later viewing does not replace the formal record of the meeting and the decisions made. The only formal record of any meeting of a Local Authority is its minutes and agendas which are required to be maintained and retained for a number of years.

2 Operating Procedure for Filming/Webcasts

- 2.1 At the start of each meeting to be filmed, an announcement will be made to the effect that the meeting is being webcast, and that the Chair may also terminate or suspend the webcasting of the meeting, in accordance with this protocol. This will be confirmed by the Chair making the following statement: *“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet and will be capable of repeated viewing.”*
- 2.2 Webcasts will only commence at the beginning of a meeting when the Chair opens the meeting and will finish when the meeting is closed. During any adjournments or parts of the meeting where press and public are excluded video and audio will be switched off and a holding screen displayed for those viewing live.

- 2.3 The Chair of the meeting shall have the discretion to terminate or suspend the webcast if:
- a) The meeting is adjourned;
 - b) A resolution is lawfully passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting or a specific portion of the meeting;
 - c) There is a public disturbance;
 - d) Webcasting may lead to a potential infringement of the rights of any person or other breach of law, subject to legal advice; or
 - e) The Chair considers that continuing to webcast would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting, subject to agreement by the majority of Members attending the meeting.
- 2.4 Anything that is outside of the scope of the meeting will not be filmed. This includes reaction shots, walkouts etc. Where an operator is unsure on what to film or is in an unfamiliar situation, the operator should select a camera shot of the Chair of the meeting.
- 2.5 Webcasts or parts of webcasts may be removed if, in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer, it may prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.
- 2.6 Content may also be removed if the Monitoring Officer considers it necessary because all or part of the content of the webcast is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision or common law, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information. The reason for any decision to edit a webcast will be logged and published.

- 2.7 Council anticipates that the need to exercise this power will occur only on an exceptional basis.
- 2.8 Any elected Member who is concerned about any webcast should raise their concerns with the Head Civic, Democratic and Scrutiny Services.
- 2.9 Should the live webcast be halted for a technical reason the following procedure will be applied:
- a) The webcasting operator will inform the Democracy Officer and Chair as soon as practically possible
 - b) The Chair may agree a short adjournment to see if the problem can be resolved. *If after adjourning the problem still persists, the meeting should continue irrespective of it not being transmitted live. [**N.B. Not applicable under current legislation covering remote meetings. In this case the remainder of meeting would need to rescheduled*]
 - c) If the live webcast cannot be resumed a back-up recording will be published following the meeting
- 2.10 People under the age of 16 will not be filmed unless written parental/guardian permission has been provided.
- 2.11 Recordings of meetings will be made available to view online for a period of 6 years after which time they will be permanently deleted. Footage covering the meetings of Annual Council, which are mainly ceremonial, can be kept indefinitely for posterity.

3 Public Speakers and Audience Attendees

- 3.1 As part of the process for registering to speak at public council meetings, residents will be advised that the meeting will be streamed live on the internet made available to view later online.
- 3.2 If an attendee does not wish to be filmed whilst speaking to the committee, the webcast operator will:
- a) Give guidance to the best place to sit
 - b) Ensure no close-up images of the attendee will be taken
 - c) If the attendee is speaking, the webcast operator will focus the camera on the Chair or a camera view where the speaker will not be shown.
- 3.3 Guidance will be provided to people in the audience at public council meetings advising them to contact Democratic Services staff if they have concerns about being seen on camera.

4 Signage at Meetings

- 4.1 On signs to be displayed at the entrance to the meeting room and on the meeting agenda, there will be the following notice:

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live and /or subsequent viewing online - at the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

The council avoids filming public seating areas where possible. If you have concerns about being seen on camera during the meeting please contact a member of the council's Democratic Services Team.

5 Filming by members of the public and press

- 5.1 Members of the public and press are permitted to film or record, from the seating area assigned to members of the press and public, councillors and officers at any council meetings that are open to the public and press.
- 5.2 We may reasonably ask for the filming to be undertaken in such a way that it is not disruptive or distracting to the good order and conduct of the meeting. As a courtesy, attendees will be informed at the start of the meeting that it is being filmed; we recommend that those wanting to film liaise with council staff before the start of the meeting.

6 Tweeting or blogging by members of the public and press

- 6.1 The Council permits social media reporting of all its public meetings.

7 Photography

- 7.1 The Council permits photography at all of its public meetings.