

PROTOCOL ON AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

1 INTRODUCTION

- (a) The Council supports the principle of transparency and encourages filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) and micro-blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, either as the meeting is in progress or later. All of these activities are covered by the terms 'record' or 'recording' in this protocol.
- (b) This Protocol follows Regulation 4(6) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and DCLG guidance Open and Accountable Local Government, A guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government (August 2014).
- (c) The intention of this protocol is to enable the effective management of meetings where recording is taking place.

2 BEFORE THE MEETING

- (a) Recording at Council meetings is an unequivocal right but to ensure that proper arrangements can be put in place to facilitate recording, members of the public are requested to advise Democratic Services staff in advance of the meeting.
- (b) All advice on an intention to record a meeting, whether from a media organisation or a member of the public should be sent to Democratic Services:
 - by emailing democratic.services@blaby.gov.uk;
 - by calling the Democratic Services Team on 0116 272 7640.

3 DESIGNATED POSITION

- (a) Any recording must take place from designated positions in the meeting room approved by the Chairman of the meeting. These will be notified to the person intending to record before the start of the meeting.
- (b) If the Chair feels the recording is disrupting the meeting in any way the

operator of the equipment will be required to stop. Anyone undertaking recording must comply with such requests.

4 ADVICE TO OTHER ATTENDEES

- (a) Signs will be put in place before the meeting starts to remind attendees that recording may take place by a third party and that the Council has no control over where it may appear (for example posted on the Internet). It will also remind the public of their right not to be filmed, recorded or photographed.
- (b) Those intending to bring large equipment or wishing to discuss any special requirements are advised to contact the Council's Communications Team in advance of the meeting to seek advice and guidance. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings.
- (c) In particular, Planning Committee and other participatory sessions attract a range of people who may or may not wish to be recorded. As these are sessions designed to encourage public involvement, the Chairman may wish to ensure that any recording is not seen to be a barrier to creating the right environment for this to happen. The Chairman therefore has the right to prohibit the filming of any members of the public who object to being filmed and require the filming to stop where this is not complied with.

5 DURING THE MEETING

- (a) Where the Chairman knows filming is to be carried out, an announcement will be made at the start of the meeting. The Chairman will ask those members of the public present whether they agree to be recorded and at this point those present can choose to move to an area of the meeting room not covered by the recording equipment.
- (b) Any objections about filming can be raised with the Chairman at any point, before or during the meeting.
- (c) Anyone seated in the public area or anyone attending the meeting to speak will have the opportunity to express to the Chairman at any point in the proceedings his or her wish not to be recorded.
- (d) This does not apply to Councillors and Officers.
- (e) The Chairman can suspend filming when someone who wishes to speak does not wish to be recorded.

- (f) If the Chairman feels the recording is disrupting the meeting in any way the operator of the equipment will be required to stop.
- (g) If someone refuses to stop recording when requested to do so, the Chairman will ask the person to leave the meeting. If the person refuses to leave, then the Chair may adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption. These will be in line with the rules set out at Part 4 of the Constitution.
- (h) Any decision taken by the Chair on the interpretation of this protocol is final.

6 MEDIA AND PUBLIC EXCLUSION

With the exception of disruptive behaviour, the only other occasions when the media and public may be excluded from a meeting is if a resolution is passed under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable discussion of confidential business or exempt information. The media and public will be told about the nature of the exclusion relating to the business to be discussed. No recording will be permitted during this exclusion. All cameras, recording devices (including mobile phones) and sound equipment must be removed from the meeting room.

7 AFTER THE MEETING

Any member of the public who wishes to comment on any recording undertaken should contact the Democratic Services, Scrutiny & Governance Manager.