
PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC/PRESS RECORDING OF PUBLIC COUNCIL MEETINGS

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This protocol provides guidance on acceptable conduct for audio and visual recording and the use of social media tools at public Council meetings.
- 1.2 Adur and Worthing Councils support the principle of transparency in the decision-making process and therefore will allow, subject to the control of the Person Presiding of the relevant meeting, the recording of the public section of Full Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings by members of the press and public.
- 1.3 The Councils audio record Full Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings and retain a copy of the recording along with the written minutes of the meeting. More detail on this procedure can be found within the Council Procedure Rules at Part 4 of the Constitution.

2.0 WHAT IS 'REPORTING'?

- 2.1 Reporting means:
 - a) Filming, photographing or making an audio recording;
 - b) Using social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, blogging or similar;
 - c) Using any other means for enabling a person not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting, as it takes place or later.

3.0 WHEN IS REPORTING PERMITTED?

- 3.1 Subject to the following rules, the public and press are permitted to record in any meetings of the Councils that are held in public, except where the public have been excluded as permitted by law.
- 3.2 Where meetings are held in private, due to confidential or exempt information being included, no recording by the press or public is permitted.
- 3.3 No recording equipment may be left in the meeting room during any part of a meeting which is conducted in private.

4.0 RULES ON REPORTING

- 4.1 Anyone wishing to undertake recording should notify Democratic Services, by email at democratic.services@adur-worthing.gov.uk or by telephone on 01903 239999, 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting and comply with any requests made by the Person Presiding.
- 4.2 All recording must take place from a fixed position in the meeting room (i.e. public gallery) approved by the Person Presiding.
- 4.3 Recording should be directed at Members of the Council. Members of the public seated in the public gallery should not be recorded, unless they have expressly given consent, to the Chairman of the meeting. This also applies to a member of the public asking a question, presenting a petition or making a representation.
- 4.4 No recording of anyone under the age of 18 is permitted.
- 4.5 If a member of the public is concerned about being recorded at a Council meeting, please inform the Democratic Services Officer present at the meeting. No image or recording of a member of the public should be made unless the member of the public has expressly given their consent to the Chairman of that meeting.
- 4.6 The Democratic Services Team will ensure signs are prominently displayed at meetings to remind attendees that recording may be undertaken and that the Council has no control over where a recording might appear (for example posted on the internet). Meeting agendas will also carry this message and at the commencement of a meeting, the Person Presiding will announce if any requests to record have been made by the public.
- 4.7 Persons recording meetings are not permitted to carry out an oral commentary or report whilst the meeting is in session.
- 4.8 The use of flash or additional lighting in connection with recording at meetings will not be permitted without the prior notification and agreement of the Person Presiding.
- 4.9 Where any part of a meeting is held in private, no recording by the press or public will be permitted. All recording equipment must be removed from the meeting room during the exclusion.
- 4.10 Where the Person Presiding considers any recording is disrupting the meeting, the operator of the equipment will be required to stop and may be asked to leave the meeting room, removing their equipment at the same time.
- 4.11 Anyone who has been asked to leave a meeting because they have refused to comply with the Person Presiding's request with regard to recording may be prohibited from recording at future meetings.

- 4.12 Members of the public and press must ensure the recording will not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings of a meeting. This includes refraining from editing the views being expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being filmed/recorded.
- 4.13 Persons recording meetings are advised that the law of the land still applies when publishing recordings, for example 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. Anyone recording any meeting of the Council, or part of it, must comply with their statutory obligations relating to the recording, use and retention of any personal data they may capture.
- 4.14 Recognised media organisations and educational institutions may be given greater flexibility to record meetings for the purposes of news bulletins, programmes and education. These requests must be directed through the Democratic Services Manager and approved by the Mayor or Chairperson of the relevant Council in the case of meetings of the Full Council, or the Person Presiding in the case of Committees and Sub-Committees.
- 4.15 Any decision taken by the Person Presiding on the interpretation of this protocol is final.