

Protocol for filming and audio recording of public council meetings

Dorset Council fully supports the principle of openness and transparency, and has no objection to filming and reporting by means of social media at its Full Council, Executive and Committee meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking websites – such as Twitter and Facebook – to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

There is no requirement to notify the Council in advance, but it should be noted that the Chairman of the meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of these activities if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting. The circumstances in which termination or suspension might occur could include:

- Public disturbance or suspension of the meeting.
- The meeting agreeing to formally exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of the business being discussed.
- Where it is considered that continued recording/filming might infringe the rights of any individual.
- When requests are received from other members of the public to cease recording when they speak, for example when presenting a deputation or petition or asking a question.

In allowing this, the Council asks that those recording proceedings do not edit the film/record in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards those being filmed/recorded.

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. It should be noted that all filming will be carried out from the public seating area (or as advised by democratic services) and will not be allowed to impinge on the meeting or have a detrimental impact of other members of the public.

At the beginning of each meeting, the Chair will make an announcement that the meeting may be filmed or recorded. Meeting agendas will also carry this message.