

I – SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL RECORDING PROTOCOL: THIRD PARTY RECORDING OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND PANELS:

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 recording is allowed at all formal meetings of the authority to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings.

In this Protocol references to:

- 'Recording' covers any means used to record the proceedings including filming, auto-recording and the use of photography.
- 'Reporting' covers the reporting of the business of the meeting via any social media.
- 'Council meetings' covers all formal Full Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings which are open to the press and public to attend and other meetings as agreed at the time by the Council.

Accordingly:

1. Recording and reporting of Council meetings is permitted subject to the requirements set out below.
2. Those wishing to record proceedings (including elected members) should, as a courtesy, inform the chair (or clerk) of the committee of their intentions prior to the beginning of the meeting.
3. Where the Council is notified in advance of an intention to record, the Chairman at the start of the meeting will announce that the meeting or part of it may be recorded by a third party and will ask if any member of the public objects to being recorded. If objections are raised by members of the public, then the person responsible for the recording must take all reasonable steps to ensure that an individual request not to be recorded is complied with. Elected members and officers attending a formal public meeting and in an official capacity cannot object to being recorded or filmed.
4. Recordings may be taken by press representatives, members of the public and elected members only be taken from the area designated for the public and:
 - Recording devices must be in silent mode
 - No flash or additional lighting is permitted

Recordings must be taken from one fixed position and must not obstruct others from observing proceedings. Other than in accordance with this provision, members must not record, photograph or film other elected members, staff or members of the public during a meeting.

5. If a meeting includes the consideration of exempt or confidential business then recording must cease prior to the consideration of such business and the recording equipment must be removed from the meeting room for the duration of the consideration of such business. If the person doing the recording is not present then the clerk shall remove the equipment from the meeting room for the consideration of confidential or exempt business.

6. Any person can provide a written commentary during the course of a meeting that falls under this Protocol. Oral commentaries are not permitted within the meeting room during the course of the meeting.

7. The Chairman can require recording to be stopped where:

- The requirements of section 3 above are not met by the person doing the recording
- The press and public are excluded from the meeting due to the nature of (exempt or confidential) business being discussed
- There is public disturbance or a suspension/adjournment of a meeting
- The recording has become disruptive or distracting to the good order and conduct of the meeting
- Where it is considered that continuing the recording might infringe the rights of an individual or intimidate them.

Application of this Protocol to Members

The Council's Code of Conduct for Members states that Members must:

- not conduct themselves in a manner which is contrary to the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of Members and
- must act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements.

Members must therefore have regard to the requirements of this protocol in carrying out their duties.

Rules for use of Recordings by Third Parties

A The law applies to any information recorded and transmitted including the laws on defamation, public order, Human Rights and Data Protection and intellectual property rights. Freedom of speech within the law should also be exercised with personal and social responsibility.

B. Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.

C. Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.

D Those making recordings will be responsible for any breaches of the law resulting from their use of recorded material. The Council takes no responsibility for any recording carried out by a third party or its subsequent use.