

POLICY ON THE RECORDING OF MEETINGS AT CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL

Definitions

In this Policy,

“meeting(s)” means:

- a) meeting(s) of Chelmsford City Council, its Cabinet and any sub-committees of the Cabinet, the committees and joint committees appointed by the Council and any sub-committees of those committees.
- b) It does not include, for example, advisory panels, working groups and task and finish groups, where the recording of meetings is prohibited.

the terms “record”, “recording” and “recorded” relate to and should be regarded as meaning:

- a) filming, photographing or making an audio recording of proceedings at a meeting;
- b) the use of any other means, such as social media or blogging, to enable persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or
- c) reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.

1. RIGHT TO RECORD

1.1 When a meeting is open to the public anyone attending may record it, subject to the principles set out in this policy and particularly the rules set out in section 5 below.

1.2 Anyone wishing to record a meeting must inform the Chairman or the Democratic Services Officer (DSO) for the meeting before it begins. The Chairman will also ask at the start of the meeting whether anyone present intends to record the meeting.

2. FACILITIES

2.1 The Council will make reasonable facilities available to assist anyone wishing to record proceedings of its meetings. This will include:

- a) providing a table at each meeting for use by the press to assist with taking their reports; and
- b) designating an area in the public gallery, normally in or near the front row, for use by anyone wishing to record, film, photograph or broadcast proceedings.

2.2 The Council will not:

- a) provide any additional equipment to enable the recording beyond the normal microphone systems (if any) employed at the meeting; or

- b) facilitate additional internet access.
- 2.3 If and to the extent that Wi-Fi is available in the meeting room, the Council will not be liable for any disconnection, suspension, interruption or termination to the Wi-Fi service.

3. **NOTICE OF RECORDING**

- 3.1 Those attending the meeting will be made aware of the possibility that it will be recorded by:
- a) a note to that effect on the agenda for the meeting;
 - b) the chairman making an announcement to that effect at the beginning of the meeting; and
 - c) the display of a notice to that effect at the entrance to the room in which the meeting is taking place

3.2 Councillors, officers and those attending a meeting in an official capacity should expect to be recorded during meetings open to the public.

4. **DISRUPTION TO MEETING**

4.1 If the recording of a meeting causes disruption to the orderly conduct of the meeting the person doing the recording, after a warning from the chairman, may be required to stop and leave the meeting.

4.2 Examples of disruption include, but are not limited to:

- a) moving to areas outside of the designated recording area for the purpose of recording the meeting, without the permission of the chairman;
- b) generating excessive noise in making a recording or during the setting up or re-siting of equipment during the meeting;
- c) intrusive lighting or use of flash photography;
- d) attempting to address the meeting without permission or asking for statements to be repeated for the purpose of recording; and
- e) seeking to record members of the public against their wishes.

5. **RULES FOR RECORDING**

5.1 Those making or wishing to make recordings must observe the following rules:

- a) Filming of children under the age of 18 who are taking part in or attending meetings is prohibited unless the consent of their parent/guardian is obtained and a written copy supplied to the DSO in advance of the meeting.
- b) Only those participating in the meeting can be recorded. This includes members of the body, officers of the Council, those that

have been asked to speak at the meeting, and members of the public that have officially asked to speak at the meeting. However, members of the public speaking officially at a meeting who have informed the Chairman that they do not wish to be recorded by another member of the public must have that wish respected.

- c) Oral reporting or commentary is not permitted during a meeting but may be provided outside of or after the meeting.
- d) Recording of the public gallery is generally not permitted, unless it is of those referred to in 5.1 b) above who have no objection to being recorded.
- e) A person taking reports must be courteous and respectful to others present at all times.
- f) Those recording proceedings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards, anyone being recorded.
- g) Electronic devices used for taking reports such as laptops, tablets, cameras or mobile phones must not be audible during proceedings and should be placed on 'silent' settings.
- h) A person must remain silent whilst making a recording unless he or she is asked to comment.
- i) A person wishing to film, take sound recordings or photograph a Council meeting which involves using large equipment (i.e. that which cannot be hand held or is floor mounted), the making of special arrangements, or the use of flash photography must obtain approval from the Council's Democratic Services. Approval in these circumstances will be subject to practical considerations and the constraints of specific meeting rooms. The decision of Democratic Services is final and any attempt to record the meeting using such equipment will be prohibited. The person seeking to do so will only be allowed to remain in the meeting if the equipment is left outside the meeting room and switched off. At least 48 hours' notice should be given of a request to use large equipment or to make special arrangements.
- j) The Council reserves the right to prescribe the location and arrangements for setting up and dismantling of any film or sound recording equipment.
- k) Filming using video cameras, mobile phones, tablets, laptops or other devices must be carried out in such a way as to ensure the viewing of proceedings by others present is not obscured at any time. Those using such equipment may not move around the room to record proceedings.

6. **RECORDINGS BY COUNCILLORS**

- 6.1 A councillor attending a meeting either as a member of the meeting or as a member of the public shall have the same rights to record a meeting and will be subject to the same requirements and restrictions, as set out in this policy, as any member of the public.

7. **CLAIMS AND LIABILITIES**

- 7.1 Any person or organisation choosing to film, photograph, record or broadcast any meeting is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from their activities.

- 7.2 By choosing to record or broadcast proceedings, they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.

8. **RECORDING OF MEETINGS BY THE COUNCIL**

- 8.1 The Council has facilities to record meetings. Where it chooses to do so the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

- 8.2 The minutes of the meeting, and no recording of it, will constitute the formal record of that meeting.

- 8.3 Recordings made by the Council of meetings will be retained for three months after the date of the meeting unless the Monitoring Officer is of the opinion that an individual recording should be kept for longer.