

PROTOCOL ON CONDUCT AT MEETINGS AND USE OF MODERN MEDIA TOOLS

Introduction

1. Under the Council's Standing Orders (Meeting Procedure Rules) the Chairman of each meeting has powers to deal with issues relating to the conduct of those present to ensure the due and orderly despatch of business.
2. The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance on the conduct within meetings which is acceptable, particularly in the context of the use of modern media tools (eg blogging and tweeting) and filming and recording at meetings.

Background

3. The principle is that the proceedings of the meeting concerned should not be impaired or handicapped by the use of media tools and that it is a matter for the Chairman to determine on the day, in the particular circumstances, what he or she regards as not appropriate.
4. The protocol attempts to recognise the different obligations which rest on elected members, representatives of the media and members of the public respectively.

Members of the Public

5. No restrictions will be placed on members of the public attending meetings in relation to the use of Twitter, blogs, Facebook or still photography, provided that their actions do not affect the conduct of the meeting.

Filming and Recording

6. Filming and recording of meetings, normally by representatives of the media, shall be permitted provided that the detailed arrangements are agreed beforehand with the Chairman of the meeting by the Director of Communications and Strategy.

Elected Members and Other Participants

7. Members are in a different position to members of the public and their actions affect the reputation of the Council. Members have an obligation to pay close attention to the proceedings of meetings they attend and demonstrate that they are playing an active part. This is in addition to the general point of showing respect and courtesy to other participants. Any use of modern media tools by participants in meetings should be considered in this context.

Planning, Licensing and Similar Quasi Judicial Meetings

8. Filming and the taking of photographs may not generally be widely allowed at meetings of these bodies as they undertake matters of a quasi judicial nature which do not always make them suitable for filming.

With respect to Planning and City Development and Planning Applications Committee/Sub-Committee meetings it will generally be permitted provided that the detailed arrangements are agreed beforehand by the Chairman of the meeting in consultation with the Strategic Director Built Environment or Operational Director Development Planning and the Director of Communications and Strategy.

FOR ADVICE ABOUT THE OPERATION OF THIS PROTOCOL OR ANY OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OR ITS COMMITTEES PLEASE SPEAK TO MICK STEWARD, HEAD OF COUNCIL, CABINET AND COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT (3134) OR ONE OF THE COMMITTEE OFFICERS IN THE LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES SUPPORT UNIT. THEY WILL BE PLEASED TO ASSIST YOU.