

## **Protocol on Filming, Recording and use of Social Media at Council Meetings**

### **General**

Oxfordshire County council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its business. The press and members of the public are therefore welcome to film, photograph or record any Council meetings that are open to the public.

The Council will, so far as reasonably practicable, make available reasonable facilities for those wishing to attend at and report upon meetings, this will be from a static point in:

- the public seating area; or
- a designated area, specified by the Chairman of the meeting.

Anyone intending to film or record a meeting is advised to contact the Communications Team for advice and guidance. Reasonable advance notice will enable practical arrangements to be made and any special requirements to be discussed.

Flash photography, intrusive lighting or large equipment will not be permitted; unless it is agreed in advance with the Chairman and s/he is satisfied it can be accommodated without causing disruption to the proceedings. Requests to use equipment of this nature will be subject to the constraints of the meeting rooms.

Depending on the number of people wishing to attend and report it may not be possible to make the same facilities available for each attendee.

### **Protocol**

The Chairman of the meeting or the relevant Cabinet Member will be informed of any intention to film and s/he will make an announcement to attendees before the start of the meeting informing attendees that the meeting may be filmed. Anyone who remains at the meeting after the Chairman's announcement will be deemed to have consented to the broadcast of their image.

A notice will also be posted on the door of the meeting room advising everyone who attends that the meeting may be filmed and that by attending the meeting; members of the public are consenting to the filming, recording and broadcasting of their image.

Filming or recording must be non-intrusive and the County Council's Constitution Part 3.1 Rule 21 provides for the removal of a member of the

public from a meeting should that person, having been warned, continue to interrupt proceedings. The Chairman of a meeting or an individual Cabinet Member may also call any part of the meeting room to be cleared in the event of a general disturbance.

**The Chairman of the meeting, or any such Council representative as designated by the Chairman, has the capacity to stop a meeting and take appropriate action if any person contravenes this protocol or is deemed to be filming or recording in a disruptive manner.**

In allowing recording, filming or photography to take place, the Council requires those participating not to edit the recordings, film or photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation 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 those being photographed, filmed or recorded. Doing so may lead to restrictions on access to record, film or photograph future meetings. Any restrictions would be decided by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Council or Chairman of the meeting.

Recording and reporting the council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.

Any person or organisation choosing to film, record, broadcast or otherwise report upon any meeting of the Council, its Cabinet or committees is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them so doing and by choosing to report proceedings they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its Members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.

### **Elected Members**

Members are requested not to record, photograph or film other Members, staff or members of the public during a meeting. The full attention of Members who are part of the meeting is required at all times.

If a member wishes to record or film a meeting they are requested to withdraw from the meeting and locate themselves either in the public section or the designated area (see paragraph 2 above).

No Member in attendance, whether a decision-maker or observer, is permitted to use social media or mobile devices for filming or recording during a private session (when the press and the public are excluded), or to disclose in any way the content of the items under discussion.

**Responsible Officer:** County Solicitor/Monitoring Officer

**Date:** November 2014

**Review Date:** November 2016