

Protocol on Audio Recording of Council Meetings

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The formal record of any meeting of a local authority is its minutes and agendas which are required to be maintained and retained for a number of years.
- 1.2 The town council wants to provide a supplementary source of information for preparing and reviewing minutes of meetings.
- 1.3 The town council also seeks to promote open and transparent governance.
- 1.4 Audio recordings will be made available to the public if required.
- 1.5 To achieve these objectives, the town council has installed audio recording equipment in the council chamber and will record its Full Council and Committee meetings.
- 1.6 The protocol takes into account the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

2. Protocol

- 2.1 Audio recording will commence when the chairman opens the meeting and will end when the meeting is formally closed. If there is an adjournment during the meeting, the audio equipment will be switched off for the duration of that adjournment.
- 2.2 Where it is resolved to exclude the press and public, all rights to audio record the meeting are rescinded and recording equipment will be required to be turned off.
- 2.3 At the start of Full Council and committee meetings, the chairman will draw attention to the notices in the Guildhall that detail the council's policy on audio recordings of council meetings.
- 2.4 The whole of the meeting, excluding exempt business, will be audio recorded.
- 2.5 The chairman has the discretion to terminate or suspend audio recording if, in their opinion, continued audio recording would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Circumstances that could lead to suspension or termination of audio recording include public disturbance or the potential infringement of the rights of any individual.
- 2.6 If audio recording is halted for a technical reason, the committee and members of the public will be notified.

3. Agenda Front Sheets and Signage

- 3.1 The following will be included on the front sheet of agenda and displayed on signs in the council chamber:

'The open and transparent proceedings of Full Council and Committee meetings will be audio recorded and recordings will be held for one year by the town council'.

'If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded'.

'If members of the public have any queries regarding audio recording of meetings, please contact the town clerk.'

4. Editing

- 4.1 An unedited copy of the audio recording will be held by the council for one year.
- 4.2 Editing of content will only be undertaken if there is a legal reason to do so.
- 4.3 In the event of spoken obscenities, the audio recording will be muted in an edited version.
- 4.4 Where content is edited, details will be recorded in a log. The chairman of the Full Council or relevant committee will be notified, as will the subsequent meeting of the council or relevant committee.

5. Sharing Audio Recordings

- 5.1 A copy of the audio recordings will be held at the council's offices and will be available on request. Copies made available to the public will exclude anything that is edited from the audio recording.
- 5.2 The council cannot load audio recordings onto its website at this point in time. However, when the council introduces its new website later in 2019, and when possible, recordings will be made available on the website.

6. Review

- 6.1 This protocol will be reviewed annually.

Implementation date: 15 May 2019

Review Date: May 2020

John Wright
Town Clerk
May 2019