

Code of Practice
Audio and Visual Footage of Meetings

1. Context

- 1.1 Every principal Council and its committees and sub-committee meetings must be open to the public, except where the public is excluded in line with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 1.2 Public meetings can be recorded by any person present, and we respectfully ask for any recordings to be focused on the persons in public office and not any other public person attending the meeting.
- 1.3 Prior to May 2020 meetings of Council were live streamed to the Council's website and physical access was granted to all Council and Committee meetings for the press and public.

Context for the Pandemic Period

- 1.4 The Coronavirus Act 20 regulations permit virtual meetings to be held up to 7th May 2021.
- 1.5 Virtual meetings are only lawful where members can hear and be heard during proceedings and preferably see and been seen, although the latter is not unlawful.
- 1.6 The regulations also require for remote access to be given to the public and press to enable them to attend or participate in that meeting by electronic means – such as telephone or video conference, live webcasts and live interactive streaming.
- 1.7 Meetings of the Authority can be altered in terms of frequency, rescheduled or cancelled under provision 4 of the Regulations.
- 1.8 The Council's Council Procedure Rules have been amended for the duration of the regulations to allow virtual meeting standing orders.
- 1.9 After the expiry of the regulations or any subsequent extensions or legislation face to face meetings may be recorded or live streamed to the Council's website.

2. Application of the Law by this Authority During the Pandemic Period

- 2.1 This Authority holds its full timetable of meetings, where possible and necessary, via virtual meeting platforms up to 7th May 2021.
- 2.2 Officers will make arrangements to live stream every qualifying meeting to comply with the provision 6(c) of the Regulations.

- 2.3 An etiquette that applies the legislation, and the virtual meeting standing orders have been issued, and will continue to be issued on a regular basis, to Members.
- 2.4 Live Streaming the meeting, and allowing members of the public who are speaking to join the meeting has been deemed as the most practical way in which to comply with the legislation.

Application of the Law by this Authority After the Pandemic Period

- 2.5 Post May 21, or after the expiry of the regulations or any subsequent extensions or primary legislation, face to face, hybrid or virtual meetings may be recorded or live streamed to the Council's website. This code of practice applies also for this.
- 2.6 Standing Orders and the Members Code of Conduct apply after May 21, as they did prior to and during the pandemic period.

Code of Practice

- 3.1 There is no requirement to hold a back catalogue of audio or visual of these meetings. The Authority will leave the video footage up on YouTube to increase access to democracy and transparency of decision making.
- 3.2 Where the footage is exempt this will not be live streamed. Accordingly, where confidential information is accidentally shared, the meeting will be removed and edited and re-uploaded minus the confidential information only. Original footage will always be retained by Governance in these circumstances in accordance with the retention and disposal schedule (6 years).
- 3.3 Where the footage displays behaviour that the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of Standards deems to be offensive to the public in any way, this will be removed and edited and re-uploaded minus the offensive footage only. Where this can be an editing of sound rather than video this will be actioned. Original footage and audio will always be retained by Governance in these circumstances in accordance with the retention and disposal schedule (6 years). It is not in the best interests of the Authority and its reputation to promote it in a negative light. Political rough and tumble will not be deemed as offensive, this is part of local democracy, however swearing or behaviour that subsequently results in a Standards Complaint will be removed, if even on a temporary basis.
- 3.4 All Members are asked to behave in a manner in accordance with the virtual meeting standing orders and the etiquette or, after the Pandemic, the requirements of the Constitution.