

Cambridge City Council protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings

The Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making.

Audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings¹ is allowed subject to certain restrictions and prior agreement from the chair of the meeting.

Before the meeting

Requests whether from a media organisation or a member of the public, must be made to the democratic services manager for each meeting, by 10am on the day before the meeting using the application form provided

The application form advises the applicant of the following :

1. Any audio/visual recording/ photography must take place from positions in the meeting room approved by the chair. Filming will be from a fixed camera position in normal view (ie. no zoom or panning the room is permitted). Setting up must be done before the meeting starts to ensure the view of members, officers, public and media representatives is not obstructed. The time at which the audio/visual recording/ photography takes place must also be approved by the chair;
2. The use of flash photography or additional lighting in connection with audio/visual recording will be permitted. The point at which

¹ Council (no application to record/photograph is needed for the ceremonial part of the Annual Council meeting), the Executive, scrutiny committees, Planning Committee, Licensing Committee/sub-committee, Civic Affairs Committee and Area Committees. By their nature, in Area Committees, the Open Forums and other participatory sessions attract a range of people who may or may not wish to be filmed, recorded or photographed. As these are sessions designed to encourage public involvement, the Chair may wish to prohibit recording if it is seen to be a barrier to creating the right environment for this to happen.

this happens during the meeting must be agreed with the chair as part of the permissions process;

3. If the chair feels the audio/visual recording/ photography is disrupting the meeting in any way the operator of the equipment will be required to stop. Anyone undertaking audio/visual recording/ photography must comply with any requests made by the chair of the meeting;
4. The applicant must agree to ensure the audio/visual record/ photographs will not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being filmed/ recorded/ photographed;
5. The applicant must agree to share the audio/visual recording/ photograph in its original and unedited form with the council's democratic services manager on request for up to four months from the date of recording.

The applicant will complete a form which will ask for

- a. The name, organisation and contact details of the applicant making the request;
- b. What the audio/visual recording/ photographs will be used for;
- c. When the applicant wishes to film/ record/ photograph during the meeting;
- d. How this information will be retained;
- e. Which meeting the request refers to

When the form has been received the democratic services manager will consult the chair of the meeting on the detail of the specific request. The chair will then decide whether to grant permission.

If permission is denied the reasons for refusal will be given and a note of the request will be made on the meeting agenda.

The democratic services team will ensure signs are put in place before the meeting starts to remind attendees that filming/ recording/ photography is by a third party and that the Council has no control over where it may appear (for example posted on the internet) and to remind

the public of their right not to be filmed, recorded or photographed. Meeting agendas will also carry this message.

During the meeting

The chair will announce at the beginning of the meeting that permission to film/ record/ photograph has been requested and permitted. The chair will ask those members of the public present whether they agree to be filmed/ recorded/ photographed and at this point those present can choose to move. Any objections about filming can be raised with the Chair at any point, before or during the meeting.

Anyone seated in the public area or anyone attending the meeting to speak will have the opportunity to express to the Chair at any point in the proceedings his or her wish not to be filmed/ recorded/ photographed. [Councillors are excluded from this provision]

The Chair can suspend filming when someone who wishes to speak does not wish to be filmed/recorded/photographed
If the chair feels the audio/visual recording/ photography is disrupting the meeting in any way or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached the operator of the equipment will be required to stop.

If someone refuses to stop when requested to do so, the chair will ask the person to leave the meeting. If the person refuses to leave then the chair may adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption. These will be in line with disorderly conduct procedures set out in the constitution.

Anyone asked to leave a meeting because they have refused to comply with the chair's requests may be refused permission to film, record, photograph at future council meetings.

The chair of the meeting has a right to withdraw consent to film/ record/ photograph at any time.

Any decision taken by the chair on the interpretation of this protocol is final.

Media and public exclusion

The media and public may only be excluded from a meeting in respect of business relating to confidential or exempt information if a resolution is passed under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972. The

media and public will be told about the nature of the exclusion relating to the business to be discussed. No filming/ recording/ photography will be permitted during this exclusion. All cameras, recording and sound equipment must be removed from the meeting room.

After the meeting

Any member of the public who wishes to comment on any recording undertaken should contact the Democratic Services Manager