

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

Members of the public are entitled to take photographs, film and audio-record live proceedings and report on meetings of Council, Committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law.

The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be recorded. The Chair of the meeting will facilitate this by ensuring that any such request not to be recorded is respected by those doing the recording.

The rules which the Council will apply are:

1. Anyone wishing to record must let the Chair of the meeting know prior to, or at the start of, the meeting and the recording must be overt (ie clearly visible to anyone at the meeting), but non-disruptive.
2. All those visually recording a meeting are requested to only focus on recording councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting. Any children present at the meeting are not to be filmed unless their parents/guardians have given their consent.
3. Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. We ensure that agendas for, and information supplied at, council meetings make it clear that recording can take place – if anyone speaking at the meeting does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chair of the meeting know.
4. It is not permitted to carry out an oral commentary or report during the filming of any meeting as this may be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.
5. The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if in their opinion continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules. The circumstances in which this might occur include:-
 - recording is disrupting the proceedings of the meeting;
 - there is public disturbance or a suspension of the meeting;
 - the meeting has resolved to exclude the public for reasons which are permitted by law;
 - a member of the public participating in a meeting objects to being recorded;
 - visual recording is being undertaken in a manner which could capture personal information.
6. No restrictions will be placed upon anyone at the meeting using social media such as Twitter, blogs, Facebook etc., provided that the Chair of the meeting does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

7. 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. The recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or infringement of the Council's values or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view. The Council will have no liability for material published by any other person unless it is itself undertaking the publication through its offices.

Please contact Democratic Services in advance of the meeting if the recording you wish to do involves large equipment or special requirements. We require this so we can ensure the meeting will not be unduly disrupted and there is a safe environment to transact the business.