**TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PROTOCOL**

# Filming, Videoing, Photography and

# Audio Recording at Council Meetings

Tamworth Borough Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its business. The Council will normally record and live broadcast formal meetings which are open to the public and make the link available for the public to view such meetings on its website.

The press and members of the public are therefore welcome to film, photograph or record decision making in action at any meeting that is open to the public.

This Protocol provides rules, practical information and guidelines to assist anyone considering filming, videoing, photographing or making audio recordings of meetings or indeed, anyone attending such a meeting.

## **Before the meeting**

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

Flash photography, additional lighting or large equipment will not be permitted, unless agreed in advance and it can be accommodated without causing disruption to the proceedings. Requests to use equipment of this nature will be subject to consideration of the constraints of the meeting rooms.

**General**

The Chair of the meeting must be informed of any intention to film and s/he will make an announcement (see attachment) to attendees before the start of the meeting informing attendees that the meeting may be filmed.

Notice of the filming/recording/broadcasting of meetings will be displayed in and outside the place of meeting and meeting agendas will include the notice. A copy of the Notice is attached.

The Council will publish the guidance on the filming, recording and broadcasting of meetings on its website and its Infozone.

Filming or recording must be non-intrusive and the Council’s Rules of Procedure Rule 4.22.1 provides for the removal of a member of the public from a meeting should that person, having been warned, continue to interrupt proceedings. The Chair of a meeting may also call any part of the meeting room to be cleared in the event of a general disturbance.

It should be noted that the Chair of a meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of the above activities if, in his/her opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice the running of the meeting. The circumstances in which termination or suspension might occur could include:

* public disturbance, disruption or suspension of the meeting (Rules of Procedure Rule 4.2.22 refers).
* the meeting agreeing to formally exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the exempt/confidential nature of the business being discussed, in accordance with statutory procedures.
* where it is considered that continued recording/ photography/ filming/ webcasting might infringe the rights or privacy of any individual (including staff members), or intimidate them.
* for any other reason which the Chair considers reasonable in the circumstances.

**During the meeting**

Filming or recording of meetings should:

* Not interfere with the effective conduct of the meeting, nor should it be disruptive or distracting. The Chair has discretion to suspend or stop filming or recording at any time if, and to take appropriate action if anyone is, in their opinion, doing so in a disruptive manner.
* Not seek to ‘overview’ sensitive information such as close ups of confidential papers or private notes.
* Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting. It is not permitted for oral commentary to be provided during a meeting as this will be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.
* Usually take place from a specified location(s) within the room.
* Not obstruct others from observing and participating in the proceedings.
* Cease immediately if and when the meeting agrees to formally exclude the Press and public due to business of an Exempt or Confidential nature (see 'Exempt or confidential business' below).
* Not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings or the comments made, or that ridicules those being filmed.
* When published or broadcast, recordings should be accompanied by information including when and where the recording was made and the context in which the discussion took place.
* Be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting).
* Cease, unless continued filming has been explicitly agreed in advance with the Democratic Services, when the meeting is formally concluded.

**Exempt or Confidential Business**

All meetings of the Cabinet, Committee, Sub Committee and Panel meetings are open to the public except in limited circumstances where the Council is legally required, or allowed, to close the meeting to the public. The circumstances where business is ‘exempt’ or ‘confidential’ are set out in Schedule 2 of Part 4 Paragraph 9 of the Council’s Constitution.

**Further Questions**

If you have any questions on filming/recording of meetings please contact Democratic Services on 01827 709709 or email Democratic-Services@tamworth.gov.uk

***NOTICE TO ALL ATTENDEES AT COUNCIL MEETINGS***

***Filming, Videoing, Photography and Audio Recording at Council Meetings***

*The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast any public part of this meeting.*

*If any member of the public does not wish to be recorded they should advise the Democratic Services (in advance, where possible) who will try to locate a seat (if possible) where they would not be captured in the recording.*

***Recording and reporting of 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 or broadcast 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 film, record or broadcast proceedings they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.*

*The Chair of the meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of the above activities if, in his/her opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice the running of the meeting.*

*The Council will display the requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting at its meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not.*

***Further information is available on the Council’s website and InfoZone entitled Filming, videoing, photography and audio recording at council meetings.***