

GUIDANCE FOR THE RECORDING OF PUBLIC COUNCIL MEETINGS

Croydon Council welcomes you to this meeting and is grateful for your interest in its proceedings. This guide aims to assist you further in your engagement with the meeting.

1. Introduction

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

The Openness of Local Bodies Regulations 2014 allows any person attending a public local government meeting to report proceedings by:

- Taking photography
- Filming
- Audio-recording
- Using social media such as blogging, tweeting etc.

The aim of this guidance is to help any members of the press and public who wish to film, audio record, take photographs, and use social media such as tweeting and blogging, to report the proceedings of all Council meetings that are open to the public.

2. What are the responsibilities of the Council?

The Council will provide reasonable facilities for those wishing to report on proceeding:

- Free public WiFi in the Council Chamber and meeting rooms;
- Free access to public agendas, meetings and Councillor information, minutes, decision details, elections information and more via the Council's web pages;
- Reasonable assistance in providing adequate space for recording to take place; and
- The Council Chamber and meetings rooms are equipped with a hearing loop system.

At the beginning of each meeting, the Chair will make an announcement that the meeting may be filmed or recorded.

3. Do people need to ask permission to record Council meetings?

Any person wishing to carry out recording should let staff know in advance so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting.

4. Can anyone ask to not be recorded?

We ask that anyone recording the meeting does not record other people in the Public Gallery. Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. We ensure that agendas for, and signage at, Council meetings make it clear that recording can take

place - if anyone speaking at the meeting does not wish to be recorded they should let a member of staff know in advance.

Any children present at the meeting are not to be filmed unless their parents/guardians have given their consent.

5. Can people tweet or blog a Council meeting?

Yes, people may report meetings via social media of any kind. Therefore, bloggers, tweeters, Facebook and YouTube users, and individuals with their own website, are able to report meetings.

6. Commentary during the meeting

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 would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.

7. Can people be asked to leave a meeting and stop recording?

The majority of the Council's meetings are open to members of the public.

However, meetings cannot be recorded when it is agreed to formally exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

People will also be asked to leave a meeting if they act in a disruptive manner.

Examples can include:

- Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chair;
- Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion;
- Where it is considered that continued recording, photography, filming and/ or webcasting might infringe the rights or privacy of any individual (including Councillors and staff members) or intimidate them;
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography; and
- Asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

8. Are there any limits about recording a meeting or what people can say in a tweet or recording?

Without undermining the broader transparency of the meeting, the Council requests that the recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting), non-disruptive, that the public gallery is not filmed and that people respect the wishes of members of the public who have come to speak at a meeting but do not wish to be filmed.

More generally the law of the land applies – including the law of libel and defamation, the Human Rights Act, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the law on public order offences (see the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on social

media). For example please be aware that photographing a Ward of Court is usually regarded as an actionable Contempt of Court. Freedom of speech within the law should also be exercised with personal and social responsibility – showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.

Permission to record the proceedings of the meeting means the activity of the meeting specifically those who are speaking. Focusing on activity away from the proceedings of the meeting is where difficulties may arise with GDPR and data protection rights and may lead to a request for recording to stop.

The Council asks those recording proceedings not to edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards those being recorded.

Filming elsewhere in the building outside of the meeting room is not permitted without express permission which should be sought in advance.

9. Can people leave recording equipment in a public meeting room and record without being present?

No. All recording equipment must remain under your supervision.

10. Further questions

If you have any questions on the issue of filming/recording of meetings please contact Democratic Services by emailing: Democratic.Services@croydon.gov.uk