

To be appended to the Constitution as Annex 3 – Codes of Practice and Protocols under a new Annex 3.13.

Filming, Photographing and Audio Recording of Committee meetings

The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 gives rights to members of the press and public to record and report on Committee meetings using a variety of modern technologies.

The Council wants democracy to be open and to engage with the community so broadcasts committee meetings online, so the public can view the discussion and decision making process.

The purpose of this annex is to set out the Council's approach to managing the recording and reporting of Committee meetings.

1. Subject to paragraph 4, without prejudice to any power of exclusion to suppress or prevent disorderly conduct or the power to deal with other misbehaviour or interference with proceedings at a meeting, any person shall be permitted to film, photograph, record and/or stream the proceedings at Committee meetings.
2. Subject to paragraphs 1 and 4, any person attending a meeting of the Council or of a Committee or Sub-Committee may use any communication device or method to record or transmit Council proceedings, and reasonable facilities will be made available to facilitate this, provided that:-
 - (i) Any mobile communications device are kept in silent mode throughout the meeting; and
 - (ii) There is no use of any voice facility to provide oral commentary (this must be conducted outside or after the meeting), make calls, receive calls or check voice messages and only text or non-voice uses are made of mobile phones.
3. Subject to paragraph 4, the recording of proceedings by authorised personnel for the purposes of live streaming and recording shall be permitted, providing that the Mayor or Chair presiding at the meeting may withdraw such authorisation if they consider it is not conducive to the efficient despatch of business. The recorded videos will be uploaded to the Council's website and retained for twelve months.
4. There shall be no recording, video-recording or transmission:
 - (i) of any part of a meeting from which the public is excluded pursuant to a resolution passed in accordance with Section 100A(2) or (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended;
 - (ii) if exempt or confidential business is discussed;
 - (iii) if the Mayor or Chair presiding at the meeting orders that all mobile phones and/or video recording devices be switched off and any audio/video recording cease;
 - (iv) if the meeting is adjourned by the Mayor or Chair then all audio/video reporting should stop at the point at which the meeting is adjourned.

5. In order to assist preparations, anyone wishing to attend and report on a meeting is asked where possible to advise the Committee Services Team at least two working days before the meeting on 01474 33 73 14 or email committee.section@gravesham.gov.uk. This is to enable Council staff member to guide anyone choosing to report on proceedings to an appropriate place from which to be able to report effectively.

The request should include the following information:

- which meeting this request refers to;
 - the name, organisation (if applicable) and contact details of the person making the request; and
 - what equipment it is intended will be used (e.g. camera/audio recorder/video camera/laptop).
6. Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand. If members of the public do need to stand or to enter/leave the room they are asked to do so quietly and discreetly with respect to the meeting and those observing it.
 7. Members of the public may be asked to leave a meeting by the Mayor or Chair if they act in a disruptive manner. Repeated disruptions at Council meetings could lead to further action being taken under the Council's unacceptable behaviour policy.

Disruptive behaviour would include:

- Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Mayor or Chair;
 - Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion;
 - Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography;
 - Asking for people to repeat statements for the purpose of recording; and/or.
 - Any other behaviour considered by the Mayor or Chair to be disruptive.
8. Where possible, it is asked that recording equipment be set up before the meeting starts.
 9. Anyone filming a meeting is asked to only focus on those actively participating.
 10. Members of the public may be filmed or recorded whilst attending a Committee meeting and attendance at the meeting signifies a member of the public's agreement to this. If as a member of the public, you do not wish to be photographed, filmed or recorded please inform a Council staff member in attendance at the meeting and we will try to assist, where reasonably possible.
 11. Any request made by the Mayor or Chair presiding at the meeting regarding respecting the public's right to privacy should be complied with.
 12. Members of the public should abide by any instruction given to them by the Mayor or Chair in the event of the fire alarm sounding.
 13. Photographs, audio, and visual recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

14. If a Member participates in a formal meeting of the Council via a virtual media platform, that Member's attendance would not be recognised by the Local Government Act 1972, therefore their attendance would not be formally recorded via the minutes for that meeting and/or the Council's committee management software. As such, that Member would also be unable to formally vote on any matter being considered. However, if a Member attends a Committee meeting remotely, the Committee Services Team will note that Members virtual attendance within the minutes of the meeting as well as in the overall attendance figures.
15. Any Member participating via a virtual media platform, must when they are speaking, be able to be heard (and ideally seen) by all in attendance, and the remote participant must, in turn, be able to hear (and ideally see) those other Members participating.
16. Any Member participating via a virtual media platform, who declares an interest that would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting. Their departure will be confirmed by the Council staff member who will then invite the relevant Member to re-join the meeting at the appropriate time.
17. Any Member participating via a virtual media platform, must ensure and verbally declare that, when of any part of a meeting from which the public is excluded, that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be (either hearing or seeing) and/or recording the proceedings. Any Member who fails to disclose that there were in fact persons present will be in breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.