



# WALTHAM ABBEY TOWN COUNCIL

## FILMING AND RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS POLICY

<b>Adopted/Reviewed</b>	<b>Date for Review</b>	<b>Minute Reference</b>
February 2022	February 2023	504/22

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The right to record, film and to broadcast meetings of Waltham Abbey Town Council, its committees, sub committees and any joint committees is established under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.
- 1.2 Waltham Abbey Town Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making. For the purpose of this policy the term “record” means any form of audio, visual or electronic recording. Such recording is permitted under the lawful direction of the council.

## **2. Consent**

- 2.1 The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be recorded and the Chairman of the meeting will facilitate this by ensuring that any such request will be respected by those making a recording. Any member of the public who does not wish to be recorded should make this known to the Clerk or the Chairman prior to the commencement of the meeting.

## **3. Wi-fi**

- 3.1 The Council’s wi-fi is available to members of the public as guest users. However, the layout of the building and the current capability of the broadband provision may cause intermittent connection issues.

## **4. Council Policy**

- 4.1 The rules that the council will apply are:
- The Council will display requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting at its meeting venues and on its website or on notice boards and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not.
  - A copy of these rules will be circulated to members of the public in attendance at a meeting of the council, whether they wish to film or not at the meeting. The Chairman may also verbally remind the meeting and all present of the freedom to record.
  - Where the press and public are excluded from a meeting or part of a meeting owing to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, recording of that meeting or that part of the meeting will not be permitted.
  - It is assumed that members of the public will be recording on hand-held devices. Any member of the public wishing to use more sophisticated equipment (e.g. tripod, video camera etc) should notify the Town Clerk by 3pm on the day before the meeting at the latest. This may also be dependent on the location and layout of the meeting. The member of public recording will need to ensure that set-up and dismantling of equipment does not delay the business of the meeting and any additional time required for this may incur a charge.
  - Any children or young people under the age of 18 who are present at the meeting are not to be filmed unless their parents / guardians have given their written consent. This provision also applies to vulnerable adults, whereby the consent of a responsible adult is required for recording, i.e. a medical professional, carer or legal guardian.

- All those recording a meeting are requested to only record;
  - Councillors
  - Officers
  - Members of the public who have not requested anonymity
  - Members of the public who have been identified as under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult and where written consent has not been given.
- The Council may, at its own discretion, require members of the public who do not consent to being recorded to sit separately from those who are content to be recorded.
- All film recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting).
- Members of the public are permitted to film or record meetings to which they are permitted access in a non-disruptive manner. The use of digital and social media recording tools, for example Twitter, blogging or audio recording are allowed provided this type of recording is carried out in a non-disruptive way and only to the extent that it does not interfere with any person's ability to follow the debate.
- Flash photography is deemed as disruptive; therefore, the use of flash photography is not permitted during Council meetings.
- A person or persons making a recording has no right to interrupt the Council by asking questions or making comments. The person recording has no right to ask Councillors, officers or any members of the public who have been given permission to contribute orally to the meeting to repeat a statement for the purposes of the recording. The process for public participation is outlined in Standing Orders.
- The Chairman 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 recording and reporting on meetings of the council, its committees and sub-committees 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.
- The Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies. Should the council record all of its own meetings it will be bound by this policy.
- As part of the Retention Policy, the Council will resolve how long such recordings will be kept and how members of the public may obtain copies. The Council will include such recordings within its Publication Scheme.
- The Council is not liable for the actions of any person making a recording at a Council meeting which identifies a member of the public or for any publication of that recording.

- Any Councillor wishing to record the meeting must ensure that they are not distracted from the business in hand. The business of the meeting must always take precedent over any recording issues.
- The minutes of a Council meeting remain the statutory and legally binding formal record of Council decisions.