



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Protocol for Webcasting of Meetings of the Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council has agreed to create the facility for its meetings to be “webcast” (via live web transmission or recorded for subsequent transmission). Fixed cameras are located within the Council Chambers for this purpose.
- 1.2 This protocol does not affect existing restrictions in the Council’s Standing Orders, namely that:-

“No sound, film, video tape, digital or photographic recording of the proceedings of any meeting, other than webcasting of the proceedings by the Council itself, shall be made without the prior written approval of the Council. All phones should be switched off or on silent and Members should not correspond, whether by email, text, social media or any other electronic means with any other Member or other person during a Council meeting. Research through the internet is permitted providing it is done in a manner which respects the authority of the Provost and does not interfere with the business of the meeting.”

2. Main Provisions

- 2.1 This protocol is intended to assist the conduct of webcast meetings and help ensure compliance with the Council's obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 2.2 The following will apply to all meetings to be webcast by the Council:-
 - (i) The Provost (or Committee Chair) will confirm at the start of the meeting if the meeting or any part of it will be webcast. The Provost (or Committee Chair) has discretion to terminate or suspend the webcast if, in his/her opinion, continuing to webcast would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Circumstances that could lead to suspension or termination of webcasting include public disturbance, defamatory statements or the potential infringement of the rights of any individual.
 - (ii) No exempt or confidential agenda items shall be webcast, and no part of any meeting will be webcast after the Council has voted to exclude the press and public because of the likely disclosure of exempt or confidential information.
 - (iii) Subject to (iv) below, all archived webcasts will normally be available to view on the Council's website for a period of six months and, thereafter, will continue to be held in the Council's archives, in accordance with the Council's retention schedules.

- (iv) Archived webcasts or parts of webcasts shall only be removed from the Council's website prior to the end of the time period set out in (iii) above if the Monitoring Officer considers that it is necessary because all or part of the content of the webcast is, or is likely to be, in breach of law, e.g. Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information or defamation.
- (v) The Council owns the copyright in the webcasts.
- (vi) Any Elected Member who is concerned about any webcast should raise their concerns with the Head of Democratic Services.

3. Agendas and Signage

- 3.1 Included in each Agenda and on signs to be displayed inside and outside the meeting room, there will be the following notice:-

Webcasting

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site. At the start of the meeting, the Provost (or Committee Chair) will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy, including, but not limited to, for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available via the Council's internet site.

Generally, the press and public seating areas will not be filmed. However, by entering the Council Chambers and using the press or public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and consenting to the use and storage of those images and sound recordings and any information pertaining to you contained in them for webcasting or training purposes and for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available to the public.

If you have any queries regarding this and, in particular, if you believe that use and/or storage of any particular information would cause, or be likely to cause, substantial damage or distress to any individual, please contact committeeservices@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

4. Conduct of Meetings

- 4.1 At the start of each meeting to be filmed, an announcement will be made to the effect that the meeting is being or may be webcast, and that the Provost (or Committee Chair) may also terminate or suspend the webcasting of the meeting, in accordance with this protocol. This will be confirmed by the Provost (or Committee Chair) making the following statement:-

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet and will be capable of repeated viewing. I have discretion to terminate or suspend filming if, in my opinion, allowing filming to continue would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting.

Members are reminded that the cameras are activated by the sound system, and that they must switch on microphones when speaking and off again when finished speaking.”

5. Guidance for Elected Members and Officers

- 5.1 Information aimed at assisting Elected Members and Officers in contributing the effectiveness of webcast meetings, is set out in the appendix to this document.

Appendix

Guidance for Elected Members and Officers

Seating Plan

You should sit in the seat that has been designated to you. This is because the cameras are pre-set so that, when activated by a microphone, the relevant Member or Officer's profile is shown on the viewing screen. If you plan to sit in a different seat, please let Committee Services know as soon as possible in advance of the meeting date. Similarly, if there is a change in terms of which Officer will be attending to speak to a report, it is important that this information is provided to Committee Services as soon as possible. It would be helpful if changes were avoided on the date of the meeting itself.

Speaking at Meetings

Firstly and most importantly, turn your microphone on each time you speak.

The desk microphone will only pick up your voice within certain ranges, so try to stay reasonably close to it.

Looking up while speaking will help the microphone and camera to pick up your contribution in good quality.

When you are finished speaking, turn off your microphone. A live microphone may pick up conversation not intended for broadcast.

At all times, treat every microphone as if it were live.

Clothing

Very bright colour and strong patterns can affect the picture quality for viewers, so are best avoided.

Microphone Noise

As with radio, TV and videoconferencing, there is a risk of microphones picking up extra noises that reduce sound quality and affect a person's ability to hear what is being said. Microphones can be very sensitive and, although you and others in the room may not be aware of any interference, please avoid the following:-

- Tapping pencils or rings against the microphone, water glass or desk
- Putting your IT equipment, papers or other items directly in front of the microphone
- Rustling or shuffling papers in front of the microphone
- Tapping or bumping the table
- Leaving your mobile 'phone on the table, even if set to silent (as the vibrations will be picked up)

Issues to Consider

Even when there is no audience in the room, members of the public may be watching the meeting.

When entering any IT password, please be discreet, as you would when entering your PIN number in a cash machine.

Members of the public may not be familiar with the Declarations of Interest process so, each time you make a declaration, switch on your microphone and clearly indicate the item to which your declaration refers.

Avoid acronyms and, if possible, provide a context to the debate, as members of the public watching the webcast may not be as familiar with the subject as you are.

When other people near you are speaking, please bear in mind that you be still be on camera.

Please note that the Council is prohibited from producing political publicity. This is defined as any material which in whole or in part, appears to be designed to effect political support for a political party. This duty is more acute during pre-election periods, which run from publication of the notice of election to the election. While politics can be a normal part of Council meetings, proceedings which are inherently political may have to be removed from any broadcast to avoid breaching the rules on political publicity. During pre-election periods there may be a short delay in broadcasting to ensure that any political publicity is not accidentally published.

