

Dacorum Borough Council Protocol on filming, photography, recording and social media at Council meetings

This protocol provides guidance on the use of filming, photography, audio recording and social media at Council meetings. This includes meetings of full Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and the Cabinet.

For the purposes of this protocol, social media refers to all forms of reporting via social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube or a member of the public's own website. If a member of the public wishes to live stream a meeting on social media, this will be classed as filming.

The Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making and welcomes all those wishing to film, photograph, record and report on any aspect of a meeting open to the public and press. The Council will provide all reasonable facilities to accommodate this.

The Council may film, photograph, record or report on certain meetings, e.g. items with a high degree of public interest.

To ensure that filming, photography, recording and reporting of meetings does not cause disruption to the running of meetings the following rules apply:

Prior to the meeting

1. Whilst no prior permission is required, the Council asks that anyone proposing to film, photograph or record a meeting inform the Council's Member Support team in advance of the meeting. This allows the Council to make the necessary practical arrangements on the day.
2. Anyone wishing to film or record a meeting should be aware that, due to the risk of accidents, the use of electric plug sockets is not permitted.
3. The Council will put signs up at any meeting where notice has been given that filming, photography or recording is taking place.
4. The Council will ensure that website information for public participation, agendas for, and signage at, Council meetings make it clear that filming/photography/recording can take place.
5. Members of the public who have requested to speak at the meeting should be aware that they could be considered to be part of the public meeting and therefore may be filmed, photographed or recorded. If a member of the public who wishes to speak at a meeting does not want to be filmed/photographed/recorded they should say so when they register their interest to speak and the Council will try to facilitate their request.

During and after the meeting

1. The filming, photography or recording must be clearly visible to anyone at the meeting and must not disrupt proceedings. Live commentary, flash photography and the use of equipment which causes significant noise is not permitted.
2. The Chair of the meeting will include the following in their opening remarks:
 - a. Attendees to please be reminded that filming/photography/recording of this meeting may take place as set out on your agenda.
3. The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend filming, photography, recording and reporting if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person doing the filming/photography/recording/reporting is in breach of these rules. The circumstances in which termination or suspension might occur could include:
 - public disturbance or suspension of the meeting
 - the meeting agreeing to formally exclude the public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business being discussed
 - where it is considered that continued filming, photography, recording or reporting might infringe the rights of any individual
 - when the Chairman considers that a defamatory statement has been made
4. Filming, photography, recording and reporting is not permitted for Part II (confidential) items, as all members of the public are instructed to leave the room.
5. Members of the public viewing the meeting have the right not to be filmed, photographed or recorded.
6. The film/photographs/recording must not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any film, photography or recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view.
7. Any member of the public exercising this right should be reminded that the ordinary law of defamation applies to anything they may publish and it is the responsibility of those doing the filming, photography, recording and reporting to ensure compliance.

The Council may film or record meetings in their entirety so that a full un-edited version of proceedings is available.

Contact information for Member Support

Email: member.support@dacorum.gov.uk or call 01442 22800 and ask for 'Member Support'.

Reference: The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.