

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 27 NOVEMBER 2013

PROTOCOL FOR RECORDING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks Members to consider adopting a Protocol to regulate filming and recording of public meetings by members of the public.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In June 2013 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a guide: 'Your council's cabinet – going to its meetings, seeing how it works; a guide for local people', which refers to the public's right to film Council meetings. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has recently been championing the right of individuals to do so.
- 2.2 In response to this guidance Council on 15 October 2013 approved the removal of Standing Order no.30 so as to allow for the recording of the Council's meetings and for the constitution be amended accordingly. Executive on 1 October 2013 resolved to instruct officers to draw up the necessary protocols to protect the wishes of members of the public who do not want to be filmed during the recording/filming of meetings of the Council and its committees.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in the way it conducts its meetings. The Protocol adheres to these principles and provides clear guidance to members of the public in order to ensure that any recording is not disruptive, distracting or inhibiting the meeting in any way.
- 3.2 The Protocol asks those wishing to record a meeting to contact the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support or his representative as early as possible before the start of the meeting, and in no circumstances later than noon on the day of the meeting so that they can be made aware of the provisions of the Protocol. Given that most mobile phones allow audio recording, the taking of photographs and video recording, it is likely that someone will decide just before, or during the meeting to make a recording. Whilst it is very difficult to stop this happening, the Protocol sets out the implications for actions in breach of the Protocol, for example if someone fails to comply with the Protocol they will be refused permission to record future meetings.
- 3.3 The Lord Mayor/Chair will make an announcement at the beginning of each meeting advising whether any requests to record the meeting have been received and referring people to the Protocol, copies of which will be available at each meeting.
- 3.4 The Protocol also covers social media reporting of meetings.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That Members be asked to adopt the Protocol appended to the report.

CORPORATE MANAGER DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC SUPPORT

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None