



Webcasting and Audiocasting Council Meetings in Midlothian Council

Protocol

March 2016

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Background

A key strand of the Democratic Service strategy for Midlothian Council, is the development and use of technology to further enhance communities' participation in the democratic process of the Council.

Currently most of the Council meetings are audiocast which acts as a verbatim account of the meeting.

At its meeting of 15 December 2015, Midlothian Council agreed to introduce webcasting to all meetings of the Council and Cabinet.

Webcasting and audiocasting Council meetings provides an opportunity for communities to access and view the meetings that they have an interest in. Webcasting in particular provides members of the public the opportunity to view meetings as they happen without having to necessarily attend in person.

It should be noted that webcasting and audiocasting Council meetings does not replace the formal record of the meeting and the decisions made. The only formal record of any Council meeting within Midlothian Council is its minutes and agendas which are required to be retained in line with Council's document retention schedule and will be the official method of recording decisions of the Council. Equally so the Council retains the right not to make public any recording (whether via webcast or audiocast).

Protocol

Operating Procedure for Webcasting and Audiocasting

At the start of each meeting an announcement will be made to the effect that the meeting is being recorded either via webcast or audiocast. Also it will be confirmed that the Chair retains the right to terminate or suspend the webcast or audiocast of the meeting in accordance with this protocol. This will be confirmed by the Chair making one of the following statements depending on the recording method.

For webcast,

*"Welcome to this meeting of the ***** Committee which will be broadcast live to the internet.*

I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet, will be stored as part of the Council's webcast archive and will be capable of repeated viewing. I have the discretion to terminate or suspend filming if, in my opinion, allowing filming to continue would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Equally so, items that are heard in private or items whereby the public publication of the webcast may interfere with the debate, then these areas of the webcast will not be made available to the public. Members are reminded that the cameras are activated by the sound system and that they must switch on microphones when speaking and off when finished speaking."

For audiocast,

*Welcome to this meeting of the ***** Committee which will be audio recorded. I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be audio recorded and may be available to the public via the internet, will be stored as part of the Council's audiocast archive and will be capable of repeated listening. I have the discretion to terminate or suspend the recording if, in my opinion, allowing recording to continue would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Equally so, items that are heard in private or items whereby the public publication of the audiocast may interfere with the debate, then these areas of the audiocast will not be made available to the public. Members are reminded that they must switch on microphones when speaking and off when finished speaking."*

Webcasts and audiocasts will only commence at the beginning of a meeting when the Chair opens the meeting and will finish when the meeting is closed.

The Chair has the discretion to terminate or suspend the webcast or audiocast if in their opinion continuing to webcast or audiocast would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Circumstances that could lead to the suspension or termination of the webcast or audiocast include public disturbance or other suspension of the meeting or the potential infringement of the rights of any individual.

No exempt or confidential agenda items shall be webcast and if audiocast, will only be available to authorised Council Officers and Elected Members. Equally no part of any meeting will be webcast and if audiocast, will only be available to authorised Council Officers and Elected Members, after the Council or committee has voted to exclude the press and public because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information.

At all times the Council retains the right not to publish part or the whole of any webcast or audiocast where doing so may interfere with the normal business of the Council or committee.

Anything that is outside of the scope of the meeting will not be webcast or audiocast. This will include reaction shots, walkouts etc. In such situations the webcast operator will change the recording view to the Chair and in the case of audiocast, this may be removed from the recording.

Editing of content of either a webcast or audiocast may also be undertaken if there is a legal reason e.g. confidential information inadvertently being disclosed or in exceptional circumstances e.g. where an attendee is taken ill.

In the event of obscenities being shouted, the sound will be muted either in live or during post production.

Children under the age of 16 will not be filmed.

Guidance will be issued to attendees at a meeting confirming this protocol and further setting the expectations of anyone who will be addressing the meeting.

Guidance will also be issued and available confirming the protocol to any members of the public who might be in attendance at a public meeting.

The Council owns the copyright to webcast and audiocast content.

Anyone who is concerned about any webcast or audiocast should raise their concerns with the Director, Resources.

Signage

The following signage should be displayed outside and inside the Council Chamber and on each agenda:

WEBCASTING/AUDIOCASTING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed and/or audio recorded for live and/or subsequent broadcast/ review via the Council's internet site. At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Generally the public seating areas will not be filmed. However, by entering the Council Chamber and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting, audiocasting or training purposes.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services on 0131 270 7500 or Democratic.Services@midlothian.gov.uk