



PROTOCOL FOR WEBCASTING OF FORMAL COUNCIL MEETINGS AND FOR PUBLIC FILMING AND REPORTING OF MEETINGS

This protocol is provided to assist the conduct of webcasting and other filming/recording of meetings and to ensure compliance with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Webcasting of public council and committee meetings

Introduction

Islington Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its business. However some residents may not be able to attend the meetings they are interested in. To ensure that those residents can still engage in the democratic process, the Council films and streams, live, many of its meetings ('webcasting'). These can then be watched online as the meeting happens or up to 12 months after the meeting. In addition to the webcasting service provided by the Council, there are additional legal rights for the public to attend all of our formal public meetings and film, photograph, audio record or report from the meeting using social media or any other means (subject to it not being disruptive). These rights are explained below.

Which meetings are webcast?

The Council will webcast a number of meetings held in the Council Chamber, including meetings of Council, Executive, Planning Committee and other committees. Decisions on which meetings will be webcast may be led by the anticipated demand and public interest in the proceedings.

How do we webcast and how long will the recording be available?

Fixed cameras are located in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall to provide the webcasting facility. The Council may also hold hybrid meetings, where some participants join the meeting remotely through video link. The webcast of meetings will be available on the Council's website for a period of 12 months and, after that, copies of recordings may be available upon request.

Are there any meetings or parts of meetings which the Council may not webcast?

Islington Council wants to make sure meetings are webcast as far as possible to ensure full engagement with the public. However there are instances where it may not be appropriate to webcast a meeting or parts thereof, for example:

- **When an individual, who is presenting at a public meeting, specifically requests not to appear on the public webcast, and we agree with the request.** We will always seek to accommodate such requests and work with that individual to agree an approach that is satisfactory to all parties. Any such part of a meeting that has not been broadcast will not appear online or be available following the meeting. If you are watching from home you will see a notice appearing on the screen to let viewers know what is happening. If you object to appearing in the webcast, you should make this known in writing prior to the meeting by emailing democracy@islington.gov.uk and we will contact you to discuss further.

- **In considering whether or not to record contributions by children at meetings** the Council will, for those aged 13 or over check with the young people themselves that they are content to be filmed and, subject to that, record and broadcast them. For children younger than 13, or those who are otherwise thought vulnerable, we will record only with the consent of the appropriate parent or guardian. If we are in any doubt we will stop the webcast whilst children are speaking.
- **When Councillors at a meeting pass a resolution to exclude the press and public because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information.** The Council will always try to conduct its business in public, however from time to time the press and public may be excluded from meetings in accordance with the rules set out in legislation and the Council's Constitution. You will be notified if watching from home that the webcasting has ceased for this part of the meeting and why.

Rights of the public to film, record and photograph at any meeting

In addition to the webcasting of meetings hosted by the Council, by law the public also has a right to (subject to it not being disruptive):

- Film, photograph or audio record a meeting or any part thereof
- Use any other means (e.g. tweeting, blogging etc.) to enable those not present to see or hear proceedings as they happen or later
- Report or provide commentary of the proceedings so that the reporting or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later

Why does the Council allow the public and press to film, record and photograph its meetings?

In 2014, the Openness of Local Government Regulations came into force. This enabled the public to report from all local authority public meetings, in a bid to increase transparency and openness in local decision making.

The provisions only apply to meetings of the Council held in public. You may not film, record or use social media to report from any of the Council's meetings which are private or not open to the public.

Full details of the right of the public to film, record and use social media to report from a meeting, including the exemptions mentioned above, can be found in the [guide](#) issued to accompany these regulations.

Are there any other restrictions if I want to report from a meeting?

You do not have to ask us permission in advance to film, record, photograph or report from the meeting using social media. However, we do ask that you respect the following when recording and otherwise reporting from a meeting of the Council:

- Please do not film, photograph or report the views of children, young people, vulnerable people and other members of the public who actively object to being filmed or photographed
- Beware that the common law applies – for example laws on public order offences and defamation
- Please exercise your right to freedom of speech with responsibility – this means respecting the views of others when reporting from a meeting
- Please do not edit your filming or recording of the proceedings in a way which may lead to misinterpretation
- Please show respect for those that you are filming or reporting on

Signage of webcasting and other filming and recording at meetings

Agendas relating to meetings that may be webcast will include a statement to alert the public to the webcast as well as the rights of the public generally to film, record, photograph and use social media to report from the proceedings, as follows:

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 12 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

If you participate in the meeting you will be deemed by the Council to have consented to being filmed. By entering the Council Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured you should sit in the public gallery area, overlooking the Chamber.

In addition, the Council is obliged by law to allow members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record, and report on the proceedings at public meetings. The Council will only seek to prevent this should it be undertaken in a disruptive or otherwise inappropriate manner.

If you have any queries regarding webcasting or the recording of meetings by the public, please contact Democratic Services on democracy@islington.gov.uk

The Chair of the meeting will also make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting to make sure everyone understands that the meeting will be webcast and that they may also be filmed by others in the Chamber.

Other provisions

Webcasting

The Chair of the meeting has the discretion to request the termination or suspension of the webcast if continuing to webcast would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting.

This would include:

- (i) Public disturbance or other suspension of the meeting;
- (ii) Exclusion of public and press being moved and supported;
- (iii) Any other reason supported by the Council/Committee.

Archived webcasts or parts of webcasts shall only be removed from the Council's website 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 any statutory provision or common law rule, for example Data Protection and/or Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information. It is anticipated, however, that meetings will be conducted lawfully and that the need to exercise this power will occur only on an exceptional basis.

Any elected Member who is concerned about any webcast should raise their concerns with the Head of Democratic Services and Governance.

Other filming, recording, photographing or the use of social media for reporting from the meeting

The Chair of the meeting has the absolute discretion to terminate or suspend filming, recording and use of social media by members of the public during a meeting if, in their opinion, the activity:

- is disrupting the meeting and impeding good decision making;
- is infringing the rights of any members of the public;
- is in danger of repeating a defamatory statement that has been made.