

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROTOCOL FOR WEBCASTING

Introduction

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (the Council) agreed on 18th June 2014 that some Council and Committee meetings would be broadcast through the authority's website.

It was recognised that because budgets are such an emotive issue at the moment, the Council would be unable to continue 'live' webcasting meetings beyond the grant funding money due to there being no ongoing budget. A decision was made, therefore, not to 'live' webcast but to rather purchase the new equipment through the grant money for the Council Chamber, enabling the authority to introduce 'live' webcasting in future if the need arises.

Following installation of the cameras in the Council Chamber, Full Council and the Planning, Regulatory and Licensing Committee are to be recorded with effect from September 2014 and uploaded following the meetings on the authority's website.

This protocol has been produced to assist the conduct of broadcasting of meetings and to ensure that in doing so the authority is compliant with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Accordingly the following will apply to all meetings to be recorded and broadcast by the Authority:

Main Provisions

The Chair of the meeting has the discretion to request the termination or suspension of the recording if continuing to record would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. This would include:

- Public disturbance;

- Decision to exclude public and press for one of the usual legal reasons;
- Any other reason decided and supported by the Council.

Cessation of Webcasting for Private Sessions

No part of any meeting held will be webcast after Members have passed a resolution excluding the public and the press because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information, and the Chair of the meeting will be advised of this prior to any discussion of exempt or confidential matters.

Please note:

Archived broadcasts or parts of broadcasts shall only be removed from the authority's website if the Monitoring Officer considers that it is necessary because all or part of the content of the broadcast is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision or common law doctrine, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to privacy, defamation, 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.

What is a webcast?

Webcasting is the **live or recorded** transmission of video over the Web. Everyone should be aware that the transmission will not be edited in any way before transmission and will be a permanent record of what is said and done at the meeting.

Video cameras have been set up in the Council Chamber and will capture the information. Therefore, the authority should aspire to the highest standards of conduct for both Members and officers.

What is the Legal position?

Members are governed by the Code of Conduct and the proceedings of meetings are governed by the Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders).

The recording/broadcasting of meetings is also governed by these standards and rules.

Members should participate in meetings which are broadcast, as they would in meetings which are not being broadcast, with due regard to the Constitutional requirements of the Authority and the Law.

Members should pay particular attention to the law in respect of defamation, equalities, human rights and the possible disclosure of any personal information in respect of other people (Data Protection Act).

Once you have spoken it cannot be undone!

DOS AND DON'TS WHEN ATTENDING A MEETING THAT IS BEING WEBCAST

An Induction Loop is available within the Council Chamber. If you use a hearing aid, please switch it to the T position when you arrive.

If you have difficulties before or during the meeting then please draw it to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer in attendance so that it can be rectified rather than bringing it to the attention of the Chair during the meeting.

Speaking

Firstly and most importantly remember that the cameras are automatic and will become active when you press your 'speak' button on your microphone.

The digital microphone system has a queuing mechanism so if you wish to speak you need to press your 'speak' button. If the light on your microphone is green you will then be in a queue which will turn red automatically when you are able to speak.

It is imperative that before you speak, allow a couple of seconds for the camera to focus in on you and then commence your speech. If you do not follow this practice, some or all of what you say will not be included in the recording. When using the

microphone, try to speak directly towards it. When you have finished speaking, switch your microphone off.

Moving when speaking

Try to avoid moving unduly whilst speaking and using expansive hand gestures.

BE AWARE when colleagues are speaking

Please be advised that conversations or comments you make may be picked up even if your personal microphone is not switched on. The equipment is extremely sensitive and you should **be aware of the possibility** of your voice, expressions and gestures being picked up elsewhere, particularly when other people near you are speaking. Any comments you make or actions that you may make could be picked up by their microphone and also by the cameras.

Bear in mind also that even when there are no members of the public and press present in the public gallery, they will nonetheless be able to view the meeting once it has been uploaded onto the Authority's website. It is therefore important to ensure that you give the meeting your full attention at all times.

Sound Interference - microphones

Please ensure that all mobile phones are switched off during the meetings as these will cause interference through the microphones.

Declarations at Meetings

All Members are aware of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in agendas in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members' Code of Conduct.

If members wish to make a declaration at a meeting, please ensure, when your microphone becomes active, that you follow the procedure outlined:

- Identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to
- Signify the nature of the personal interest

Electronic Voting

Electronic voting is now available as a result of the new wide range of facilities installed within the Council Chamber and it is important that full potential is achieved through maximum use.

When a vote is requested, the Monitoring Officer/Democratic Services Officer will commence the start of voting. At this point three green lights will flash on your microphone.

On your microphone you will see:

+	For the recommendation
0	Abstain
-	Against the recommendation



When prompted you need to cast your vote.

During the voting process, you are able to change your vote.

The voting will be closed by the Monitoring Officer/Democratic Services Officer and the votes will be listed on the screen showing how each individual voted, who has yet to vote, and the overall result.

Please note that when the voting process has ended you will be unable to change your vote.

I, the undersigned, have read and agree with the contents of the attached protocol for Webcasting and will act in accordance with the Authority's Members' Code of Conduct.

..... (print name)

..... (Signature)

..... (Date)

Conduct of Meetings

At the start of each meeting to be recorded, an announcement will be made as follows:

CHAIR:

Before proceeding today, I have to remind everyone that the proceedings of today's meeting are being recorded for subsequent broadcast via the authority's internet site and in the archive record of the meeting.

The images and sound recording may also be used for training purposes within the authority.

I should also explain that the public seating areas will be in view of the camera and by entering the Chamber and using the public seating area, members of the public are consenting to being filmed and those images appearing on the authority's internet site and in the archive record of the meeting.

I should also remind all present that the Chair has the discretion to terminate or suspend filming if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice the proceedings, or that continued filming might infringe the rights of any individual.

Agenda Front Sheets

On the front of each relevant agenda and on signs inside and outside the Council Chamber, the following notice will appear:

PLEASE NOTE: THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED FOR SUBSEQUENT BROADCAST VIA THE AUTHORITY'S INTERNET SITE.

THE IMAGES AND SOUND RECORDING MAY ALSO BE USED FOR TRAINING PURPOSES WITHIN THE AUTHORITY.

AT THE START OF THE MEETING THE CHAIR WILL CONFIRM IF ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING IS BEING RECORDED.

THE PUBLIC SEATING AREAS WILL BE IN VIEW OF THE CAMERA, AND BY ENTERING THE CHAMBER AND USING THE PUBLIC SEATING AREA, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE CONSENTING TO BEING FILMED AND TO THE POSSIBLE USE OF THOSE IMAGES AND SOUND RECORDINGS AS OUTLINED ABOVE.

IF YOU SHOULD HAVE ANY QUERIES REGARDING THIS, PLEASE CONTACT THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES