

Protocol for members of the public reporting at Council meetings

The London Borough of Hounslow ('the Council') recognises that in a modern world communication methods such as filming, tweeting and blogging should be embraced to enhance openness and transparency.

This Protocol sets out the way in which the changes to the reporting rules¹ apply to the way in which the Council conducts its business and what you need to do if you want to report on meetings of the Council.

From 6 August 2014, except where the public has been excluded as permitted by law², you are entitled to report on meetings of Council, Cabinet and their committees and subcommittees. The Council will provide reasonable facilities to enable you to do so.

Reporting in this context means:

- Filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting;
- Using any other means for enabling those who are not present to see or hear the proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later: or
- Reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later if the person is not present.

The above allows you to provide a written commentary during a meeting as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting but you are not permitted to carry out an oral commentary during a meeting, as that would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.

If you are attending a meeting and want to report you should let the Committee Clerk know how you want to report on the proceedings. The Committee Clerk will then be able to consider what facilities may reasonably be required and provide further guidance to you as to where to sit and to enable you to report effectively.

You should be mindful of those members of the public who are there to observe rather than being participants in the business being conducted at the meeting and who may not wish to be recorded. You should ensure that your recording is of the meeting rather than the audience.

Members of the public who are present at meetings will need to be aware that reporting is allowed and that this includes filming, photographing and audio recording

¹ The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

² Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972

of the proceedings. The Council will, where it is reasonable and practicable to do so, accommodate the public in different seating areas so that those who wish to record are aware that anyone in a prescribed seating area should not be captured on any film, photograph or audio recording. Generally however anyone attending a public meeting does so in the knowledge that recording may take place as outlined above.

Please note that the Council is not able to intervene should any member of the public not wish to be filmed, photographed or audio recorded.

All members of the public attending meetings, including those who wish to report are required to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand.

For reasons of health and safety the Council is unable to facilitate your use of electric plug sockets in meetings for your equipment.

For meetings held at the Civic Centre, you are welcome to use the Council's Wi-Fi. To do so you will need to:

1. Search for Wi-Fi connections on your device
2. Select LBH-PUBLIC-WEB
3. Depending on your device you may be asked to enter the PPSK or enter the password. Please enter **2311882327**
4. Open your browser and then try to navigate to your home page. You will be directed to our terms and conditions page on our website. If you want to use the guest access you must tick the agree button. If you are accessing from your phone you will need to make sure you press any "done" buttons or tabs that come up on the terms and conditions page.

Occasionally meetings will take place at other venues and in such circumstances you are advised to check with the Democratic Services team whether Wi-Fi is available.

For more information as to attending and reporting on meetings generally please see DCLG Open and accountable local government: A guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government³.

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³ Draft published June 2014 (www.gov.uk/dclg)