



Protocol for the Press and Public on Attending and Reporting Meetings of South Tyneside Council

1. South Tyneside Council supports the principles of openness and transparency.
2. The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to the Mayor and chairs of committees, elected Members and to members of the press or public on the taking of photographs, audio/visual recording or reporting of any of the Council's public meetings.
3. In providing for recording, the Council requires those recording proceedings not to edit the film/recording/photographs in any way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council.
4. The use of social media can be undertaken at public meetings provided that the Mayor or the Chairman does not consider its use as disrupting the proceedings of the meeting or inhibiting the participation of those present.
5. Anyone intending to record or report meetings using equipment is asked to make the Democratic Services Officer aware in advance of the meeting starting, so that arrangements can be confirmed.
6. Recording of any public meeting must take place from a designated fixed position in the meeting room approved prior to the start of the meeting by the Mayor, Chairman, or Democratic Services Officer.
7. The use of flash photography or additional lighting is not permitted.
8. If the Mayor or Chairman feels that the recording or reporting is disrupting the meeting in any way, or if the person conducting it does not abide by the protocol, the operator of the equipment will be required to stop recording/reporting the meeting for the remainder of the session.



9. Filming must not include the public gallery/public seating area to avoid members of the public being filmed or photographed without their consent. No person under the age of 16 can be filmed without written permissions given by parent or guardian in advance.
10. Anything that is outside the scope of the meeting itself cannot be filmed.
11. If a request has been received to take photographs or audio/visually record a meeting, the Mayor or Chairman will make an announcement to that effect at the start of the meeting. They will also advise members of the public that they will not be recorded unless they have a role in the meeting, such as presenting a petition or making a representation, in which case they will be deemed to have given their consent.
12. Any equipment must be set up in the designated area before the meeting starts and must not block access routes. No trailing cables are allowed and equipment cannot be plugged into mains sockets.
13. Recording equipment cannot be left in any room where a private meeting is held. Audible commentary cannot be made during the meetings.
14. Recording may not take place on 'exempt' agenda items, where that section of the meeting would not normally be open to the public or press.
15. If someone refuses to stop recording the meeting's proceedings when requested to do so by the Mayor or Chairman, they will be asked to leave the meeting in accordance with Council Procedure Rules. If the person refuses to leave, the Mayor or Chairman may adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption.
16. The Council is required to conduct its meetings in English.
17. The law of the land applies in all cases, including the law of defamation and the law on public order. (Please refer to the Crown Prosecution Service guidance for social media)