

## **Burnley Borough Council**

### **Policy on Recording and use of Social Media at Council and other meetings open to the Public**

#### **Introduction**

1. This protocol provides guidance to members of the public, press and Councillors on the use of mobile phones, social media and filming and recording at formal meetings of Burnley Council, Executive and Committees.
2. Social media refers to the use of web-based technologies to share information and to interact with online communities, e.g. blogs, Twitter, Facebook.

#### **Filming or Recording meetings**

3. The filming, videoing, photographing or recording of Council meetings or other meetings which are open to the public is allowed provided it does not disrupt the meeting. The Council will provide reasonable facilities to enable this to happen, so far as it practicable
4. Individuals or organisations who wish to record by any means are advised to contact the Council's Democracy team at least one day before a meeting to discuss and agree arrangements for recording. (e-mail [democracy@burnley.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@burnley.gov.uk)) or at the very least inform the Democracy Officer and/or Chair before the start of the meeting that they intend to record.
5. The Chair of the meeting will have absolute discretion to stop or prevent any filming, videoing; photographing or recording of meetings if, in the opinion of the Chair, it is disruptive or otherwise disturbs the conduct of the meeting or is likely to do so.
6. At the beginning of any meeting, where it is known that filming, recording or photography will be taking place the Chair will make an announcement to that effect.
7. Anyone filming or photographing meetings should only focus on recording councillors, officers and any speakers i.e. those directly involved in the conduct of the meeting.
8. Any person can provide oral commentary outside or after the meeting. Oral commentary on a meeting as it takes place is not allowed as this would be disruptive to the meeting.

9. If a meeting passes a motion to exclude the press and public then, in conjunction with this, all previous rights to record the meeting by any means are immediately cancelled. Filming or recording equipment must not be left in the meeting room during private sessions.
10. Those intending to bring large equipment, or wishing to discuss any special requirements are advised to contact the Council's Communications Team (e-mail [communications@burnley.gov.uk](mailto:communications@burnley.gov.uk)) or the Democracy Team (email [democracy@burnley.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@burnley.gov.uk)) in advance of the meeting to agree arrangements. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings.
11. Unless otherwise agreed in advance of the meeting, recording and reporting must take place from the public seating area or press desk and should be overt. If a person with known learning difficulties or mental health issues is expected to be speaking at the meeting then there will be a need to ensure they have given informed consent to be filmed. If a young person under 18 years of age is expected to be speaking at the meeting then parental consent should be sought for them to be filmed. The Chair will decide if this has been achieved and if not satisfied that it has been achieved will request that recording does not take place while they are speaking.
12. Those recording proceedings should not edit the film, recording or photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes not editing an image or views expressed in a way that may misrepresent, ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards those being photographed, filmed or recorded.
13. The use of images or recordings that arise from recording is not under the Council's control. The Council only allows such reporting and recording to take place in accordance with its legal obligations and takes no responsibility for, nor will accept any liabilities for, any filmed, recorded or photographed material made by any person or its subsequent use or publication.

### **Use of Mobile Devices**

14. During meetings all phones or other mobile devices must be set to silent mode whether or not they are being used to record, or switched off.
15. No Councillor or Officer in attendance, whether as a member of the meeting or as an observer, is permitted to use social media or mobile devices during a

private session (when the press and the public are excluded), or to disclose in any way the content of the items under discussion.

16. The Members' Code of Conduct will apply when using social media. Inappropriate comments made during a meeting could open Councillors to potential complaints or investigation under the Code of Conduct.

### **Disturbance by Recording etc.**

17. If recording is considered to be disruptive or otherwise disturbs the conduct of the meeting the Chair will apply the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 21 set out below:

#### **21. DISTURBANCE BY PUBLIC**

##### **21.1 Removal of member of the public**

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the chair will order their removal from the meeting room. The Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow the member of the public to be removed, either by officers or the police.

##### **21.2 Clearance of part of meeting room**

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chair may call for that part to be cleared.