

Protocol for recording and reporting public meetings

You are allowed to record and report on all public meetings at Spelthorne Borough Council in line with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

Recording and reporting includes:

- filming
- audio recording
- photography
- social media updates
- blogging

Equipment

You don't need to get permission for recording or reporting public meetings, but we request that you let us know at least 24 hours before the meeting if you wish to bring large equipment, so that we may make suitable arrangements to accommodate your request. Requests should be sent to committeeservices@spelthorne.gov.uk

Recording and reporting are allowed only from public seating areas. Recording equipment must not be left unattended at meetings. We accept no liability for any equipment that is lost, stolen or damaged at public meetings.

The following rules should be observed

- Filming of children under the age of 18 who are taking part or attending Council meetings is not permitted without the consent of their parent/guardian.
- Phones, tablet computers and other electronic devices must be set to 'silent' mode throughout public meetings. This includes all ringtones and web applications.
- Flash photography and use of additional lighting is not allowed.
- Adding real-time commentary to recordings – such as voiceovers when filming – is not allowed whilst meetings are taking place.
- The Chair of the meeting will ask for recording to be stopped if it is disrupting the meeting.

When recording and reporting is not allowed

There are times when matters must be discussed that, by law, are considered exempt or confidential. During these times:

- members of the press and public will be asked to leave
- no recording or reporting is allowed

Recording and reporting of private meetings is not allowed – for example, political group meetings and officer working groups. These meetings do not make formal council decisions.

Your privacy

Notices on committee meeting room screens state: "You are welcome to film, make sound recordings or take photos at public meetings, and to share online". Members of the public who do not wish to be filmed or photographed cannot be guaranteed that they will not be within camera shot of others.