

Constitutional Changes

Part 1 – Page 6

10.8 ~~Local p~~ People's rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Procedure Rules. (Appendix A - Access to Information Procedure Rules)

10.9 Any member of the press or public has the right to film, blog, tweet or use any other type of social media to report any public meeting of the authority including committees, sub-committees and joint committees. Reference Appendix Z of the Constitution entitled "Protocol on Reporting Meetings"

Local Peoples' Responsibilities

10.910 ~~Local p~~ People must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Members or Officers and must not wilfully damage things owned by the Council, Members or Officers.

10.1011 ~~Local p~~ People are asked that:

- they treat Council Officers and Members with respect;
- that they provide all the relevant information to help the Council deal with their request efficiently
- they do not verbally or physically abuse Council Officers and Members.
- they do not attend the Council offices under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Part 2 – Pages 17 and 18

29. Disturbance by Public

29.1 Removal of Member of the Public - If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room.

29.2 Clearance of Part of Meeting Room - If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.

29.3 Photography and Recording of Meetings - ~~The consent of Members present at any meeting shall be required before any person may record, broadcast or photograph proceedings at the meeting. Any recording, broadcasting or photography shall be conducted in a manner to be directed by the Chairman and shall cease immediately if either:~~
~~Members so resolve; or~~

~~the chairman so directs.~~

The Council will provide reasonable facilities to facilitate the audio/visual reporting of meetings. The public is welcome to record, by any means, meetings of the Council and its Committees using suitable non-disruptive methods.

29.4 The Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording if the recording causes disruption to the meeting.

29.5 Oral reporting or commentary at the meeting is prohibited. More information is contained within the Protocol entitled "Reporting Meetings" set out at Appendix Z.

Appendix A: Access to Information Procedure Rules

25. Decisions by Officers

25.1 Certain decisions made by officers must be captured in a written record. These are decisions that have been delegated to an officer of the Council under a specific express authorisation, or under a general authorisation where the effect of the decision is to:

- grant permissions or licences,
- affect the rights of individuals,
- award contracts or incur expenditure which materially affects the body's financial position.

25.2 The written record is made available to the public at the Council Officers, on the Council's website, by post if requested and on receipt of payment for copying and postage.

25.3 The written record will be available for public inspection as soon as reasonably practicable for at least six years, and any supporting documentation for at least four years. These can be kept in electronic format.

APPENDIX Z: Protocol on Reporting Meetings

1. Members of the press and public are entitled to report on any public meeting of Sevenoaks District Council including Council, Committees, sub-committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law. Reference Appendix A of the Constitution entitled "Access to Information Procedure Rules" in relation to exclusion to Access by the Public to Meetings.

2. Reporting means:-

Filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting;

Using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later such as tweeting and blogging or other means of social media.

3. Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting. Oral commentary cannot be provided during a meeting as this would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.
4. In order to assist preparations, anyone attending a meeting is asked where possible to advise Democratic Services staff at least two working days before the meeting on 01732 227247 or email democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk if they wish to report on the meeting and how they wish to do so. This is to enable employees to guide anyone choosing to report on proceedings to an appropriate place from which to be able to report effectively. The request should include the following information:
 - which meeting this request refers to;
 - the name, organisation (if applicable) and contact details of the person making the request;
 - what equipment it is intended will be used (e.g. camera/audio recorder/video camera/ laptop)
5. Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand. If members of the public do need to stand or to enter/leave the room they are asked to do so quietly and discreetly with respect to the meeting and those observing it.
6. You may be excluded from a meeting by the Chairman if you act in a disruptive manner. Disruptive behaviour would include:
 - Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chairman,
 - Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion,
 - Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography; and
 - Asking for people to repeat statements for the purpose of recording
 - Or any other behaviour considered by the Chairman to be disruptive.
7. For meetings held in the Council Offices, the public are welcome to use the Council's Wi-Fi facilities which can be accessed by selecting "SDC-GUEST"
8. In order to avoid accidents, the Council regrets that it is unable to facilitate members of the public using electric plug sockets in meetings for their equipment.

9. Where possible, it is asked that recording equipment be set up before the meeting starts.
10. If during the meeting a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to report the meeting are removed.
11. If the meeting for which agreement is given to report is adjourned by the Chairman then any reporting should stop at the point at which the meeting is adjourned.
12. Anyone filming a meeting is asked to only focus on those actively participating.
13. Members of the public may be filmed or recorded whilst attending a council meeting and attendance at the meeting signifies a member of the public's agreement to this.
14. Any request made by the Chairman of the meeting regarding respecting the public's right to privacy should be complied with.
15. Members of the public should abide by any instruction given to them by a Council staff member in the event of the fire alarm sounding
16. Photographs, audio, and visual recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

If as a member of the public you do not wish to be photographed, filmed or recorded please inform the Democratic Services Officer in attendance at the meeting or the Chairman of the relevant committee when notice that a request to photograph, record or film has been received is given and we will try to assist, where reasonably possible.