

PROTOCOL ON WEBCASTING AND ELECTRONIC VOTING

1. Other than by this protocol, the Council's Constitution makes no provision for webcasting. It however sets out that there are two methods for taking a vote, being a show of hands or (if demanded) a recorded vote. These are set out in rules 24.3 and 24.4, which will remain the default notwithstanding the terms of this protocol.

2. On 14 November 2023, the Council resolved that as soon as possible:

All public meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees will be recorded on video, this record will be made immediately available, and will be saved on a publicly available website.

A system of electronic voting will be installed to make it straightforward and efficient to record the votes of individual Councillors.

The governance committee consider a Protocol for the recording of public meetings and the use of the electronic voting system to recommend to Council for inclusion within the council's constitution.

3. This protocol is intended to form a new Appendix Z2 to the Constitution, with the existing Protocol on Reporting Meetings being renamed as Appendix Z1.

Webcasting and recordings

4. Where possible, Council, Cabinet or Committee meetings will be livestreamed on our YouTube channel.
5. Any audio and video recordings of these broadcasts will be made available to watch free of charge for six months from the date of the meeting. After this they will be deleted.
6. Such recordings may be edited to remove parts of the meeting which did not form part of the public meeting. If the Monitoring Officer deems it required by law or the Constitution, further editing may take place.
7. Recordings are not for commercial or political use and furthermore the Council does not give permission for them to be copied, broadcast by other means, edited by Members or third parties, altered, or in any way reused. It reserves the right to take legal action against any party who contravenes this provision and for the avoidance of doubt it will be a breach of the Code of Conduct for any Member to directly or indirectly do so.
8. For further information please email democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Electronic voting

9. The Council will as soon as practicable install an electronic voting system which will allow Members to vote electronically when a meeting takes place in the Council Chamber.
10. For any item where the system is available, the vote will usually take place electronically.
11. The Chairman is responsible for calling for a vote. He will confirm the motion to be voted upon and declare the outcome of the vote.
12. The vote will be open for 20 seconds and Members must cast their vote in this time.
13. Members can change their vote while the vote is open, however, their vote cannot be altered once the vote has been closed.
14. The Chairman will announce that the vote is closing and confirm the vote is closed after 20 seconds have passed. The outcome of the vote will be displayed on television screens in the Chamber. The Chairman will declare this outcome.
15. Should the electronic voting system be unavailable at any point during a meeting, or electronic voting become impracticable, or should Members so resolve, voting will to a show of hands or recorded vote as set out in rules 24.3 and 24.4.
16. Any Chairman's second or casting vote shall be made verbally.

Review

17. This Protocol may be reviewed by the Governance Committee by being placed on its Work Plan and will be deemed readopted at Annual Council unless otherwise resolved.