

Audio Recording of Meetings Policy

Durrington Town Council

1. Definition of a Recording

For the purposes of this policy, a *recording* means any audio recording made by the Clerk (or Deputy Clerk) using electronic equipment for the purpose of assisting with the accurate preparation of minutes. This policy does not relate to video recording or recording by members of the public.

2. Purpose

The Clerk (or Deputy Clerk) may make audio recordings of Council and committee meetings solely to assist with the accurate preparation of minutes. The written minutes remain the formal and legal record of the meeting.

3. Use of Recordings

Recordings are made **for minute-taking purposes only** and will not be used for any other purpose unless required for legal reasons or Code of Conduct matters.

4. Retention and Storage

Audio recordings will be retained only until the minutes of the meeting have been approved and will then be deleted.

Where there is a legal requirement or a Code of Conduct matter that requires a recording to be retained, the reason for retention will be reported to Councillors. In such cases, the recording will be saved securely on a memory stick and stored in the Council safe. When the legal basis for retention no longer applies, the memory stick will be wiped.

5. Disclosure for Investigations

Where necessary, recordings may be provided to the Police or the Monitoring Officer for the purposes of investigation. Only the relevant part of the recording will be disclosed.

6. Access to Recordings by Councillors

Recordings are not public records and will not normally be shared.

If a Councillor queries the accuracy of the minutes, this should be raised at the Council meeting where the minutes are to be approved. With the agreement of the Council, individual Councillors may listen to the relevant part of the recording in the Council office and in the presence of an officer.

7. Disputes About Minutes

If an objection to the minutes remains after the Councillor has listened to the recording, the Council will either:

- vote on the correctness of the minutes at the next meeting; or
- request a written transcript (redacted as necessary) of the specific point in dispute after which the council will vote on the minutes at the next meeting.

8. Confidential Business

No audio recordings will be made during confidential or exempt items of business.

9. Chair's Discretion

The Chair may suspend or stop recording at any time if it is considered to be disruptive, prejudicial to the conduct of the meeting, or otherwise contrary to the proper business of the Council. This aligns with the Chair's authority under the Council's Standing Orders.

10. Members of the Public at Meetings

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings and observe proceedings. Public participation is permitted only at the discretion of the Chair and in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Recording by members of the public is permitted in line with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, provided it is overt and does not disrupt the meeting. The Chair may require that recording is stopped or restricted if it becomes disruptive or prejudicial to the conduct of the meeting.

Members of the public do not have the right to take part in debate or require the Council to amend minutes. Any recording by members of the public does not form part of the Council's official records and is not covered by this policy.

11. Data Protection

All recordings will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

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