



MERSEYSIDE WASTE DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

PROTOCOL ON REPORTING AT MEETINGS

Introduction

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority is committed to openness and transparency in how it conducts its business. This Protocol sets out its approach to certain types of reporting at Authority meetings. It outlines some basic principles and practical points aimed at balancing the requirements of those wishing to report the meeting and those attending and taking part.

This Protocol supports the Authority's Information Procedural Rules which governs access to information and the Authority Procedural Rules which sets out how meetings are conducted. Members of the public who wish submit questions to Authority meetings should follow the process set out in those documents.

Reporting

The Local Government Act 1972 provides that individuals may carry out reporting at meetings of local government bodies. This Protocol is primarily concerned with reporting that involves filming, photographing, and/or audio-recording of meetings.

Before the meeting:

There is no requirement to obtain permission or to make a prior arrangement to attend a meeting for the purpose of reporting upon it. However, if you are intending to film, photograph and/or audio-record, it would be helpful to contact the Clerk and Monitoring Officer (see contacts below) to ensure that suitable arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

There will be a designated area in the meeting room for you to observe the meeting and to allow you to film, photograph and/or audio-record it. Wherever possible you will have access to a seat (although this may depend on how much space is available).

The Chair of the meeting will be informed if the reporting includes filming, photographing and/or audio-recording. Those attending the meeting who are not Members or officers will be made aware that they have the right to object to being filmed, photographed and/or audio-recorded by you.

You must not start filming, photographing and/or audio-recording until the Chair opens the meeting.

During the Meeting:

The Chair will announce at the beginning of the meeting that the meeting is being filmed, photographed and/or audio-recorded. He or she will then ask attendees whether they agree to be filmed, photographed and/or audio-recorded to allow them to register a personal objection. If anyone has a personal objection then the Chair can temporarily suspend filming, photographing and/or audio-recording to allow attendees to have their say. *Note: this does not apply to Members and officers.*

If the Chair considers that the filming, photographing and/or audio-recording is disrupting the meeting he/she can instruct you to stop doing so. Therefore, it is worth noting that your equipment should not be noisy or otherwise distracting (e.g. flash and spotlights can be problematic).

You will not normally be allowed to give a spoken commentary during proceedings as this is highly likely to be disruptive.

If you refuse to stop filming, photographing and/or audio-recording when requested to do so, the Chair may ask you to leave the meeting. If you refuse to do so then the Chair may adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption. There are provisions in the Authority Procedural Rules that allow this.

When the meeting is officially closed by the Chair you must stop filming, photographing and/or audio-recording.

Exclusion from Meetings:

The majority of the Authority's decision-making takes place in meetings open to the public and press. You may only be excluded from a meeting when issues are being considered that involve confidential or exempt information (as defined in Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972).

Even if you are excluded you will know the nature of the business to be dealt with while you are excluded from the meeting and the decision will be made known after the meeting.

No filming, photographing and/or audio-recording is permitted during any exclusion. All equipment for filming, photographing and/or audio-recording must be removed from the meeting room.

Contact Officer:

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