

**Meeting of the Full Council
Meeting to be held on Thursday 18 December 2014**

Report submitted by: The County Secretary and Solicitor

Part A

Electoral Division affected:
None

Protocol for the recording and reporting on meetings of the Council
(Appendix A refers)

Contact for further information:
Josh Mynott, (01772) 534580, Office of the Chief Executive,
josh.mynott@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

The government has recently introduced legislation and guidance for Local Authorities on the rights of the public and the media to record and report on meetings of the County Council.

Whilst Lancashire County Council has never restricted reporting or recording (other than where it would be disruptive to the meeting itself), it is considered appropriate to use the opportunity presented by the guidance to develop a clear set of rules in this area.

The draft protocol is attached as Appendix A.

It is intended that this protocol will form Appendix P to the County Council's constitution.

Recommendation

That the Full Council approves the Protocol on reporting on and recording meetings of the County Council as Appendix P to the Constitution.

Background and Advice

Section 40 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 gave the Secretary of State power, by regulations, to make provision for allowing persons to film, photograph or make sound recordings of proceedings of meetings of certain local

government bodies; for allowing those not present at meetings to see and hear the proceedings; and for allowing reporting and commentating on the proceedings.

These provision were introduced through the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

In short, these regulations required that Local Authorities make appropriate arrangements to allow meetings of the authority to be recorded (either video or sound) and for members of the press and public to be able to use social media to report on meetings.

Lancashire County Council has never placed any restrictions on either of these things, other than where such activities would disrupt the meeting, and indeed most of the Council's meetings are already webcast. However, it was felt that the regulations presented the opportunity for the County Council to produce clear guidance on the issue. A draft protocol, intended to form part of the Constitution, is attached at Appendix A.

In producing a Protocol on reporting on and recording meetings of the County Council, a number of issues have been taken into account.

The regulations do not require that confidential meetings or parts of meetings are open to filming or reporting.

The right to record or report on a meeting does not override any existing constitutional requirements in relation to the smooth running of meetings. The Chair of a meeting is still empowered to deal with any disruption to a meeting and, if necessary require that recording or reporting is stopped where it is causing the disruption.

Whilst the regulations do not allow the County Council to insist on notice being given, the protocol sets out that anyone intending to record or report on a meeting should notify the Council in advance, and in any case that the Chair should be made aware. To this end, a "script" for Chairs will be developed to firstly request that anyone intending to record or report on a meeting makes the meeting aware, and secondly that the rules pertaining to that activity are set out by the Chair.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Legal

The County Council is required to abide by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

As the County Council has not previously placed any restriction on the recording or reporting on meetings, it is not considered that there would be any significant further implications.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
-------	------	-------------------------

N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A