



## Protocol for Public Observation of Council Meetings held remotely (by video conferencing)

The Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way decisions are made and has always welcomed public attendance and contributions at its formal Council meetings. This protocol was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic but applies to any meetings where the public are participating via video platforms. A Council meeting is not a public meeting, it is a meeting conducted in public. There is no requirement in law to provide a public forum. However, to date the council has always facilitated that opportunity for members of the public to bring matters to the Council's attention and for the police and district or county councillors to present reports.

The Council wants to hear from the public and engage on agenda business. You may submit your comments via email to [admin@lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk) at least 24 hours before the meeting. Your comments will be noted as part of the meeting and you will duly receive an email acknowledgement. No question shall be repeated within a six month period. You may also join by webinar or observe the meeting on YouTube.

### Protocol for joining or observing council meetings

1. The links to join the webinar or observe the meeting will be published on the agenda, and on the Council's website
2. The meeting will be recorded and if you are visible or audible you will be part of the recording. In most cases visual and audible inputs will not be enabled for the public.
3. Please respect that this is a meeting to conduct council business. Where you are given an opportunity to speak in the public forum and where specifically invited to do so by the Chair, you should do so efficiently and politely. A maximum time limit of three minutes (subject to the Chair's discretion) applies when time permits. Unpermitted interjections will be classed as disruption and if you disrupt business in any way, including visually, you may be expelled from the meeting by the meeting host.
4. Any person observing a council (or committee) meeting can report on the proceedings of the meeting. 'Reporting' is defined as filming, photographing, audio recording, written reporting (e.g. blogging) or oral commentary (the latter is not permitted during the meeting).
5. No confidential items of business will be transacted in public.

The above protocol is intended to enable the Council to continue to conduct its business in a transparent way whilst ensuring that there is opportunity for the public to observe/participate. If you have any questions on the implementation of this protocol, please contact the Council by phoning 0330 053 6019 or email [admin@lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk)

Revisions	
Date	Amendment
July 2021	Amended to reflect that members of the public can now join the meeting remotely and participate in the public forum via webinar.
January 2022	3. Three minutes extended at Chair's discretion.