



POLICY STATEMENT ON MEETING NOTES AND AUDIO RECORDING AT FORMAL HR MEETINGS

Introduction and scope: Surrey County Council is committed to fostering a culture of openness and transparency within its workforce, and seeks to resolve differences in employment in the most constructive and least formal manner possible. To that end, employees and managers have access to a comprehensive support network which has been designed to encourage open dialogue and restorative practice, in order to resolve differences and improve working relationships.

The Council recognises that there will be some cases which present the need for HR meetings or hearings to be conducted in a formal manner. When a formal meeting is organised, the Council will normally arrange for an impartial officer to take notes/minutes of the discussions. Employees participating in these meetings will be able to review the minutes before they are confirmed.

The Council accepts that there will be occasions on which a participant may want to obtain an audio recording of discussions at a HR meeting. This policy aims to provide staff with a clearly-defined process for requesting that a meeting be recorded. The policy covers all Council employees, with the exception of those employed in schools under the direction of a governing body. The policy does not cover meetings with customers or service users.

Submission of requests to record meetings: In the interests of maintaining a positive employment relations climate, any participants who wish to arrange for their meeting to be recorded may submit a written [or e-mailed] request to the meeting Chair. The facility to submit such requests will only apply to formal meetings where minutes are taken. Requests should be submitted with adequate notice before a meeting.

Meeting Chairs should not unreasonably refuse permission for a meeting to be recorded; however there may be instances in which they feel that the presence of a voice recording may undermine the purpose or success of the meeting may be undermine. Meeting Chairs should obtain detailed HR advice before making a decision to refuse permission for audio recording at a meeting. It is important to note that the acceptance of a request for a meeting to be recorded will not replace the requirement for minutes to be taken.

Data protection considerations: Meeting Chairs and participants need to remain mindful of the privacy and data protection implications around voice recordings at all times. The contents of audio recordings will often contain private information, potentially including sensitive personal details of staff and/or service users, and they should be treated with the utmost care.



Detailed advice on relevant issues is available from the Council's Information Governance department.

Process: In order to safeguard the transparency and fairness of the process, the Council has procured dedicated recording devices for the purpose of recording HR meetings. These are available from the HR Advisory Team and are the only devices that may be used for recording HR meetings. The use of mobile telephones or other personal devices is not permitted.

Commented [PM1]: Modification as outlined in para 14 of Ctte report.

Where a meeting Chair accepts a request from a participant who wishes to record the meeting, the Chair will obtain the relevant equipment from HR. Wherever possible, a copy of the relevant storage media (e.g. SD card) will be offered to employees at the conclusion of the meeting.

While Chairs and/or HR should attempt to ensure deliberations are effectively recorded, the Council will accept no liability in respect of equipment failure or poor audio quality.