



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01731

Name of petitioner

Tom Taylor

Petition title

Permit audio recording of local government public meetings

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to permit audio recording of all public council meetings by members of the public.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I contacted my local councillors and MSP. Three of my local Councillors supported my view, whilst one was against. Thirteen elected members did not respond. My MSP encouraged me to submit a Public Petition.

Petition background information

Following a search of the web sites of all Scottish Councils, I have discovered that there is a disparity amongst Councils on how meetings are recorded. A limited number 'Webcast' full council and all committee meetings, whilst a number web cast full council only and a number do not record full council or committees

The legislation is such that a member of the public requires to submit a request in writing at least 24 hours prior to the meeting in question to audio record council meetings. This request is conveyed by the chair of the meeting to the councillors present, who will decide if they will permit recording or not at the commencement of the meeting.

My local council 'webcast' their full council meetings, but not the committee meetings. There seems to be a disparity between committees, I have been provided with permission to audio record 'full council meetings', Audit & Scrutiny and Planning committee meetings, but not 'Cabinet' meetings.

Reasons for request

The reason for wishing to Audio record is that I feel it is important for the public to be aware of elected members comments and how they vote with regards to matters on important matters.

The seating arrangement of my local council chamber is such that all elected members sit with their backs to the public gallery, making it somewhat difficult to hear their comments.

In addition, a number occasionally fail to operate their microphones, meaning that when on web cast their comments are not recorded and not minuted. Minutes are not verbatim records and on occasions, in my opinion, they also appear to be at a variant to the views expressed in the meeting.

I will quote the opening paragraph from a document published by the UK Government's Department for Communities and Local Government titled "Open and accountable local government; A guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government which fully encompasses my opinion:

"As we now live in a modern, digital world where the use of modern communication methods such as filming, tweeting and blogging should be embraced for enhancing the openness and transparency of local government bodies. This would ensure we have strong, 21st century, local democracy where local government bodies are genuinely accountable to the local people whom they serve and to the local taxpayers who help fund them".

Source:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_d

If the legislation was amended I am of the opinion that it would benefit the residents.

I also feel that it would help if these rules were applied and that would greatly assist any members of the press and public who want to know about, view or report the work of local government bodies.

During my research I found that similar legislation was implemented in England during 2004.

I would respectfully request that consideration be given to requesting an alteration to the relevant legislation (Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973)

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01731>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion

