

PE1731/Q

Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning submission of 29 October 2019

I am replying as minister responsible for local government matters.

This petition specifically asks to allow recording of meetings open to the public, it does not ask to record all meetings. Sensitive matters, such as specific staffing issues, should not be discussed in public session. We therefore see no contradiction between this petition allowing transparency and the need to keep some matters private.

I understand the only potential concern officials have would be for a member of the public to edit a recording of a meeting in order to falsely present what was actually said. However, we are unaware of this occurring in England, where recording of public meeting has been allowed since restrictions were lifted in 2014. This risk is therefore considered minor.

We are completely in favour of openness and transparency and have no objections to this petition in principle. However, I understand that some councils may have concerns regarding this which will hopefully be addressed in any submission you receive from COSLA.