

Julie James AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/06318/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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19 August 2019

Dear Janet ,

Thank you for your letter of 30th July about a current petition focussing on the filming and recording of council meetings.

Local authorities are obliged to allow the public entry to council meetings, unless the issues being discussed are deemed to be exempt (in the main this will involve discussion of confidential or commercial matters). It is a matter for each local authority to determine the detailed arrangements for these meetings and what arrangements they put in place to facilitate requests to record proceedings, as they will need to consider the security of those present.

On the wider issue of access to council proceedings, the Welsh Government has encouraged principal councils to promote broadcasting of meetings in the interests of transparency in decision making. People's lives are increasingly complex, with many calls on their time. This can often result in them being unable to attend council meetings despite their interest in their local communities.

In recent years many principal councils have taken steps to broadcast some of their meetings enabling individuals who would not ordinarily be to attend to see for themselves the level of debate and discussion about specific issues. This also enables those individuals to better understand the basis upon which decisions, which impact on them personally and as a member of a community, have been taken.

Progress has been made, but I want to ensure that all principal councils maximise the opportunities technology offers for greater accessibility to the work it undertakes on behalf of citizens.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which will be introduced later this year will place a duty on principal councils to put arrangements in place to broadcast meetings so that members of the public who are not in attendance are able to view and also hear the proceedings as they occur. Councils will also be expected to make the broadcast available electronically after the meeting.

The more detailed arrangements will be considered as we work with our local government partners in the coming months to inform guidance in this area.

I look forward to seeing the level of support this petition attracts between now and the 5 September when it is due to close.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AC/AM

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