

PROTOCOL ON THE USE OF RESOURCES AND FACILITIES BY MEMBERS

Refreshments provided at Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings

Prior to full Council meetings a meal is provided for Council Members free of charge in the Reception room at Council House from 6pm before each meeting. Meals are available for Members' guests at a cost of £8 per head. Members wishing to order meals for their guests must notify the Head of Council, Cabinet and Committee Secretariat on extension 3134 no later than 48 hours before the meeting. No food is allowed in the Council Chamber.

A range of sandwiches (vegetarian and non-vegetarian) are provided at Cabinet/Committee meetings. Members who have specific dietary requirements should inform the Head of Council, Cabinet and Committee Secretariat at the earliest possible opportunity to enable appropriate catering arrangements to be made.

Guidelines on the Use of Council Resources

All the expenses of the Authority are met from public funds. Any facility provided, should not, therefore, be used without first considering whether the use to which it is to be put is legitimately a Council purpose as opposed to a private or political purpose. While it is not intended to prevent or hinder in any way Members from carrying out their duties, Members themselves must take account of the distinction between their official duties as Members of the Council and their wider party political role.

Although the Council does provide facilities for political groups to assist them in the discharge of their functions, e.g. the provision of accommodation for group and caucus meetings and the provision of support services for the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition, the provision of such administrative/clerical support is strictly limited to the internal work of the political group in relation to Council business. While there can be no objection to officers being involved in assisting with the organisation and distribution of material relevant to Council business (e.g. in connection with the organisation of group meetings) it would be inappropriate for officers to be asked to become involved in the distribution of any material which might be regarded as "inappropriate" (for example it would not be appropriate for officers to be asked to distribute material which is disparaging to other Members of the Council).

Council stationery and photocopying, despatch and postal facilities, wherever provided, are available to provide support to Members of the Council. These services are provided to assist Members in the performance of their official Council duties and with constituent's casework only. They must not be used by Members in connection with

party political matters or general ward publicity, including the publication of ward newsletters.

Please note: The production of papers and letters for circulation to Members of the public etc on a large scale will not normally be acceptable nor will services be provided on matters which are, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, of a political nature.

For further advice on the above, please contact the Head of Members' Services on extension 1864.

Where are services provided?

Accommodation

General

It is the policy of the Council that accommodation in administrative buildings should not be used for Members' Surgeries. Accommodation in other Council buildings can be used for surgeries upon payment of the normal hiring charges.

City Hall, 64 Victoria Street

Limited car parking facilities are available in the basement car park at City Hall for Members attending on official business. For further information on car parking please see the separate section on car parking below.

What is provided?

Cabinet Support Team

This team is part of the Members' Services Team. It is based on the 18th floor and provides support to:-

- Leader of the Council
- Cabinet Members
- Chairman of the Planning and City Development Committee

The team provides research and project support on Council-wide and operational issues, monitoring the progress and implementation of policy initiatives as well as providing a comprehensive administrative and support service.

Members' Support Team

Typing and secretarial Services are provided to all Members on a confidential basis for matters relevant to Council business and constituents' casework by the Members' Support Team. In addition to the above services, Members can of course contact departments direct with enquiries/complaints/requests for information.

Neighbourhood Team

The Neighbourhood team provide support in producing the annual Statement of Ward Members' Priorities for each ward. They also research, draft and submit recommendations for expenditure from the Ward Budgets as well as monitoring expenditure of the budgets.

The Neighbourhood Support Officers provide Members not supported elsewhere with a typing and meeting arrangement service. The post holders also act as the general contact point for Members enquires for the public. In addition to the above service, Members can of course contact departments directly with enquires /complaints/requests for information.

Scrutiny Team

This is a dedicated resource responsible for commissioning and undertaking research as part of an agreed programme of scrutiny investigations. They also provide support to the Chairmen of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees.

Members' Rooms for Majority and Minority Party Members are situated on the 19th and 17th floors respectively in City Hall. The facilities available are as follows:

- a telephone extension for official internal and external calls
- a television set
- fax machine
- photocopier
- a writing desk, supply of official Members' stationery, envelopes, headed note paper and reply paid envelopes
- a wordprocessor with links to the internet and intranet
- copies of some daily and local newspapers
- copies of periodicals eg, Local Government Chronicle, Municipal Journal
- other general information and reading of interest which is related to local government and public service
- City Map and Index to Streets
- Paper shredding machine
- a complete copy of the Electoral Register
- Coffee and tea making facilities, sandwiches and confectionery

Photocopier

The photocopier is not intended to be used for high volume printing and must only be used for a limited amount of copying (up to a maximum of 50 copies of any particular item).

Members IT Allowance

In the June following the City Council elections (or upon election if elected at a by election) each Member will receive an allowance of £1,000 to fund the costs relating to the provision of ICT (Information Computer Technology). If accepted, Members are required to make use of this and not ask for hard copies of any papers that are not provided for them as Members of a Committee.

Use of the above facilities

Please note that use of all the above are restricted to official council business and casework papers and must not be used by Members in connection with party political matters.

Additional Meeting Room Facilities at City Hall

There are a number of rooms on the 17th floor which can be used by Members for official Council business. The rooms seat between 12-18 and 20-40 people depending on the required room layout. Rooms 3 and 4 and 5, 6 and 7 can be opened up to make larger rooms.

These rooms are heavily used and must be reserved in advance through the Helpdesk on extension 2755. Certain outside organisations may use the rooms at City Hall although a charge will be made. The City Council may waive the charge in respect of certain specific organisations.

These meeting rooms may not be used for Members' private business or for Members' Surgeries.

Westminster Council House, Marylebone Road

All meetings of the full Council are held at Council House. No car parking facilities are available.

A room adjacent to the Council Chamber is available for use by all Members during normal office hours. The room contains:-

- a word processor with links to the intranet and internet
- photocopying machine
- facilities for writing
- Members' stationary
- television set

Members are reminded that the Licensing Sub-Committee sometimes use the Members' Room (generally on Thursday) at the Council House when they retire to determine applications in closed session. Other Members should avoid using the room at this time.

Additional Meeting Room Facilities at Council House

There are a number of rooms available which can be used by Members for official purposes connected with Council business. These rooms can be booked subject to availability in advance through the Helpdesk on extension 2755.

Disabled Access

There is a stairlift for wheelchairs through a side entrance at Council House but this is not large enough to take the larger powered wheelchairs. The porter on duty can be called upon to help people to gain entry to the building.

Disabled toilets are provided at City Hall in One Stop Services, 17th, 18th and 19th floors at City Hall and on the first floor of the Council House.

Car Parking

(i) at City Hall

There is limited car parking available in the basement car park of City Hall for Members attending on official business. All Members are asked, when they are elected, whether they wish to use this facility and to give details of the vehicle(s) they intend to use for security and control reasons.

Any general queries concerning car parking for Members should be addressed to the Helpdesk on extension 2755.

(ii) at Council House

There are no parking facilities at Council House.

(iii) Assistance with Parking whilst on Official Duties

All zone ResPark permits are available to all Members of the Council to assist them with parking whilst carrying out official Council duties only.

The permits are renewed annually on 31 May subject to completion of the necessary application form. Any vehicle changes should also be reported to that officer as soon as they occur, as the permit covers the actual vehicle being used. In the event of a change of vehicle please remember that you are required to return the old permit.

Catering

(i) City Hall

Members may make use of the restaurant, which is situated on the first floor of City Hall. The restaurant is open daily between 8am and 4pm (but closed between 11.30am and 11.45am for cleaning/restocking).

Coffee, tea and a selection of sandwiches are provided at the majority of evening Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

Coffee and tea making facilities and a selection of light refreshments are provided in the Members' room.

(ii) Council House

There is a vending machine available at the Council House which stocks tea and coffee.

A full meal is provided to Councillors free of charge before Council Meetings in the Reception Room. Councillors may invite guests to Council Meetings but a charge will be made if the guest requires a meal. If an additional meal for a guest (£10) is required, the Head of Council, Cabinet and Committee Secretariat (extension 3134) should be notified in advance of this request.

Council Diary and Handbook

Every Member is issued with a Diary and Handbook. Both are regularly updated by the Members Services Team, and distributed to Members. However, the accuracy of the information contained in the handbook in particular can only reflect the information given by individual Members to the team. Members should, therefore advise at the earliest opportunity of any changes to their address/telephone/fax numbers/email address specifying whether they are for release to members of the public.

Postal and Despatch Arrangements at City Hall

The Post/Despatch room is situated at Council House and handles all internal and external postal arrangements.

Members can use this office for the despatch of mail relating to official Council business and casework mail (the Chief Executive can require envelopes to be left open so that the use of the postal and despatch facilities may be monitored). This facility must not be used for mass circulation of individual items nor for party political material.

All post from Members will be despatched on the day of receipt and posted second class unless otherwise specified. Members may leave their post for collection (appropriately addressed) at:-

- ground floor reception
- libraries
- any main administrative building

The post and despatch office also organises the despatch of Council post to Members – all Members receive a delivery by courier on **Wednesdays and Fridays** (and on other days only when urgent papers are required).

Collection of Mail

It is possible for Members to arrange to have mail collected from their homes as part of the multi-drop service on either Wednesday or Friday evenings.

Green Promise Campaign – Recycling Services for Members

Members can make their own “green promise” and actively participate in the Campaign to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (the 3R’s) by using the specialist recycling service. A canvas bag service is available for the recycling of committee or other papers and envelopes for reuse. The bag, once filled, will be collected from Members’ homes for return to City Hall.