

# Protocol for Services for Councillors and Political Groups

- 1 In the Group rooms the following are provided for Councillor's use only:
  - 1.1. Telephones
  - 1.2. Stationery
  - 1.3. relevant magazines/journals
  - 1.4. beverages
  - 1.5. photo-copying facilities (any private use is to be paid for)
  - 1.6. computer hardware and software.
- 2 Meetings with Officers should not normally take place in the Group rooms.
- 3 Council resources such as. stationery, photocopying and postage may only be used for Council business. They cannot be used for party political or campaigning activities.
- 4 Councillors will be provided with computer equipment and software to allow easy and convenient access to the Council in their homes. There are restrictions on the use of this equipment and Councillors are referred to the relevant undertaking that they are required to sign when they receive the equipment.
- 5 Any political group wishing to use a Council meeting room for purposes connected with the Council's functions may do so but must agree an advance booking through Room Bookings so that caretaking arrangements can be made. This facility will normally be available on Monday to Friday evenings inclusive. Meetings at weekends may be agreed by the Chief Executive in exceptional circumstances.
- 6 The Director of Governance and Corporate Services will consult with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition Group(s) on any request for the development of services for Councillors. If appropriate the matter will then be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.
- 7 There is dedicated support provided to Councillors through the Corporate and Governance Support Manager post. The post holder's role is to:

- 7.1. provide general advice and support to all Councillors, particularly those who are newly elected
  - 7.2. in consultation with other relevant Officers, lead on the identification, co-ordination and delivery of Councillor training and development
  - 7.3. to source and maintain general Councillor information contained in the Groups Offices as required
  - 7.4. to ensure that Councillors stationery and associated miscellaneous needs are addressed
  - 7.5. to ensure that Councillors are provided with approved equipment
  - 7.6. to act as personal assistant to the Chair of the Council in the fulfilment of their civic duties
  - 7.7. to provide support to the Leader of the Council in exercising their role.
- 8 The Corporate and Governance Support Manager will not undertake work nor provide advice or support which may jeopardise their political neutrality.
- 9 Councillors should not put pressure on staff to provide resources or support which Officers are not permitted to give. Examples are:
- 9.1. business which is solely to do with a political party
  - 9.2. work in connection with a ward or constituency party political meeting
  - 9.3. electioneering
  - 9.4. work associated with an event attended by a Councillor in a capacity other than as a Member of the Council
  - 9.5. private personal correspondence
  - 9.6. work in connection with another body or organisation where a Councillor's involvement is other than as a Member of the Council
  - 9.7. Support to a Councillor in their capacity as a Councillor of another local authority.
- 10 All Councillors will have full and open access to meet Officers in any Council building or office, except where access is generally restricted e.g. strong room, computer room or plant room.
- 11 In the interests of effective working relationships, when Councillors access Council buildings and offices they will ensure that:

- 11.1. they respect the working environment of Officers and do not unduly interrupt or hinder their work
- 11.2. where practical, they will book their visit in advance with the relevant Officer
- 11.3. the purpose of their visit is relevant and appropriate to enable the Councillor to fulfil their role and function as a Councillor
- 11.4. they are meeting with the appropriate Officer. Ordinarily, this will be an Officer at the level of Team Leader or above in the first instance
- 11.5. they adhere to legal obligations in relation to confidentiality and access to information and do not remove material or take photocopies without the consent of the relevant Officer.