



MEMBERS HANDBOOK

MAY 2006

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to provide an overview of the administrative arrangements designed to help you fulfil your role as a Councillor. It cannot hope to give you the answer to every question you may have, but if you feel we have missed something important please let us know so that we can include it in the next edition of this booklet.

SECRETARIAL SUPPORT

The political Group Offices are located on the first floor of the Civic Centre. The Group offices provide the following support to Members:

- Typing, faxing and photocopying
- Receiving incoming telephone calls on behalf of Councillors
- Initiating correspondence on behalf of Councillors

There is also a photocopying machine in room 135 on the first floor for Members to use for Council business. This machine operates by keying in a code number. The respective party codes may be obtained from the group secretariats.

By law, secretarial services, photocopying, telephones and other resources must not be used for work of a party political nature. The service is not provided for any form of Ward, Party work or electioneering or on behalf of any other body.

GROUP OFFICE CONTACT NUMBERS:

Conservative Group Office, Room 107, Civic Centre

Tel: 020 8424 1236 (or x2236), 020 8424 1942 (or x2942), 020 8424 1852 (or x2852)

Labour Group Office, Room 102 Civic Centre

Tel: 020 8424 1897 (or x2897), 020 8424 1337 (or x2337)

Liberal Democrat Group Office, Room 112 Civic Centre

Tel: 020 8424 1998 (or x2998), 020 8424 1404 (or x2404)

MAIL BOXES

Democratic Services provide, for those Councillors who need it, a black secure mailbox for the delivery of Council mail. If you would like to use this facility please phone Linda Bradford/Angela Pedersen in Democratic Services on 020 8424 1263/1277 who will arrange for you to have a mailbox installed.

COUNCILLORS POST/GREEN POSTAL BAGS

Democratic Services will provide you with three Green Postal Bags for the delivery and return of any Council mail to and from your home address.

Council mail may also be posted through the letterbox at the **First Floor Reception** at any time. Please keep all three Green Bags in circulation, as using envelopes can be costly.

Delivery of Council mail will be by Council courier in the 'green bag' three times per week, on **Tuesday AM, Thursday AM and Friday PM**. All Council Committee papers and other correspondence to Members are sent through this system. Post is also distributed at Council/Committee meetings. The Green Bag may also be used by Members to return mail to the Council. Additional deliveries may be arranged where necessary (Your Group Office can provide a charge code for this service). The green bags are often very bulky and if as a result the mail cannot be posted a green slip will be posted indicating the mail will be returned to the Civic Centre and sent out on the next delivery day. On Fridays undelivered mail will be left at main reception for collection by the relevant Councillor.

CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS/RECYCLING WASTE

Democratic Services provide a collection service for all waste Agenda/Council papers and will issue you with white confidential waste bags as required. When the bag is full please inform Linda Bradford or Angela Pedersen in Democratic Services on 020 8424 1263/1277, who will arrange for its collection during a mail delivery.

Brown recycling sacks are also provided in all Group Offices for recycling non-confidential paper.

FEMALE MEMBERS CLOAKROOM FACILITIES

There is a Lady Members Cloakroom facility on the first floor with a digital keypad security lock. The code for the keypad is C1627. Twenty lockers can be found within the washroom and to obtain your locker key please contact Linda Bradford/Angela Pedersen at the First Floor Reception.

MEMBERS' LIBRARY

There is a small library for Members' use situated on the First Floor, Civic Centre, Room 114. Documents for **viewing only** are kept and must not be removed from the library. Democratic Services also have a range of monthly Journals. A desk and telephone (ext. 2931) are also provided for your use.

MEMBERS' PARTICULARS

Upon your election you will be given a yellow form headed **Members' Particulars**. This form is **Urgent** and should be completed and returned in full immediately to Linda Bradford/Angela Pedersen in Democratic Services (First floor reception). The information on this form is used to complete the Democratic Services database for

address labels and contact lists for Council officers and members of the public. Please remember to tell us if any of these details change.

You will also receive two forms that are urgently required by the Council Payroll Office so that you can be paid your allowances. The two forms are a request for your personal details, including banking details and a P46 form to be completed for the Tax Office. Please return both of these forms to Payroll Office (3rd Floor South Wing, Civic Centre) as soon as you can.

ID CARDS/CAR PARKING PASSES/ACCESS CONTROL CARDS

Two passes, one for access to the Civic Centre offices and one to gain entry to a Car Park, will be issued at the 'Members' Welcome Evening. Alternatively, they can be issued via your Group Office.

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Council adopts a Scheme for the payment of allowances to Councillors each year before 31st March. The Scheme may be changed at any time. (See the full Members' Allowances Scheme in Part 6 of the Constitution for current rates of allowances.)

All Councillors are paid a Basic Allowance, which includes an amount calculated to cover in-borough travel. Those Councillors with particular additional responsibilities (e.g. Chairs of Committees, Portfolio Holders) also receive a Special Responsibility Allowance. After you have completed the relevant forms, these allowances will be paid automatically without a claim being made. Councillors may forgo their allowances. If you wish to forgo your allowances, please contact Kate Boulter (Democratic Services, 020 8424 1269) for an 'opt out' form.

If you have to travel outside the borough on Council business, you can claim for travel and subsistence (see the full Members' Allowances Scheme in Part 6 of the Constitution for approved duties).

Councillors with dependent relatives may also claim for the costs of requiring a hired in alternative carer. The allowance is subject to a maximum level and is not payable if the alternative carer is a member of your family. (See the full Members' Allowances Scheme in Part 6 of the Constitution for approved duties for which allowances can be claimed) An example form and conditions are included at the end of this pack.

Claim forms for travel and subsistence and the Carers allowances are available from **Kate Boulter, Democratic Services Room 139 or Tel: 020 8424 1269 (or x2269).**

If you need to claim for one of these allowances, do so promptly and in any event within 2 months of the duty for which the allowance is being claimed. The timetable for submission of claims is as follows:

| CLAIMS PERIOD | CLAIM FORMS TO BE RETURNED TO CORPORATE SERVICES BY |
|----------------------|--|
| MAY | To be confirmed |
| JUNE | To be confirmed |
| JULY | To be confirmed |
| AUGUST | To be confirmed |
| SEPTEMBER | To be confirmed |
| OCTOBER | To be confirmed |
| NOVEMBER | To be confirmed |
| DECEMBER | To be confirmed |
| JANUARY | To be confirmed |
| FEBRUARY | To be confirmed |
| MARCH | To be confirmed |
| APRIL | To be confirmed |

Note: Basic and In-Borough Travel and Subsistence Allowances, together with any payment for a Special Responsibility Allowance is paid currently without any requirement to claim.

You will be paid your allowances by credit transfer direct to your bank account on 25th of each month or the preceding working day if this falls on a weekend or bank holiday. A payslip will be delivered to you via the Councillors' post system before payday.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER

As a Councillor you have many rights (for example, to information) and responsibilities (for example, to declare your interests). Information about these issues can be found as follows:

| Information about..... | Where can I find it? |
|---|--|
| Access to Information/Agendas and reports | Council Constitution Part 4 and special briefings/guidance notes (how to request a particular agenda is covered later in this guide) |
| Members' Interests/Register of Interests | Information pack issued with induction material |
| Code of Conduct | Constitution and guidance from the standards committee |
| Procedures at Meetings | Constitution Part 4 |
| Dispensations | Guidance from the Standards Committee |

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

The Council's Communications Unit deals with media queries relating to the Council. If an enquiry requires a comment/statement from a Member or Portfolio Holder a Communications Officer will contact the Member concerned. Any media queries that have political connotations will be referred directly to the relevant group office.

REFRESHMENTS

Tea and coffee is provided at approximately 9.00pm for Councillors at evening Council, Cabinet and Development Control meetings (but not generally at subsidiary body meetings e.g. Panels, etc). In addition, Councillors can order a cold meal if coming to a meeting straight from work (you will have to pay for this). Details of this service are available from the Catering Manager (020 8424 1062 or Ext. 2062).

IT EQUIPMENT AND TELEPHONES

A guide to the availability and rules relating to Councillors use of Council provided IT equipment and telephones will be provided to you separately.

WARD SURGERIES

Ward surgeries are arranged by your political party.

USE OF COUNCIL ROOMS

There are six Committee Rooms that can be booked by Councillors without charge, but **only** for meetings for business directly related to their work as a Councillor. Room bookings for party political meetings must be handled through the political group office. Room bookings for private purposes can be made and will be charged at the usual rate. Further details on room bookings and the associated costs are available

from Linda Bradford/Angela Pedersen in Democratic Services on 020 8424 1263/1277.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

All Departments operate their own complaints procedures. Whilst the procedures are similar the nature of the services being dealt with are very varied and some require slightly different arrangements. The relevant Director or Head of Service can provide further information.

THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES SECTION

The Democratic Services Section is part of the Legal Services Department. The section provides an effective system of administration to assist the making and implementation of decisions by the Council, Cabinet and other Committees and Panels through the preparation and despatch of agendas and the minuting of meetings. It is the section's responsibility to ensure that all decisions of the Council, Executive and associated bodies are accurately recorded and published and that the officers responsible are advised of the action required to be implemented.

The list of Democratic Services officers set out below shows who you should contact for further information about a particular Member level body. For assistance on any query about Council, Executive or Committee procedures, standing orders or the law relating to local authority meetings, please feel free to contact the relevant Democratic Services officer. An organisation chart for the Section is also attached (to follow).

TIMETABLING OF MEETINGS

A function of the Corporate Governance section is to arrange the scheduling of Member level meetings. Before the beginning of each Municipal Year, Cabinet approves a calendar of meetings for the forthcoming Municipal Year. It is inevitable that dates of meetings will sometimes have to be changed. As there are often more meetings than dates available there are frequently two or more meetings taking place on the same evening. While efforts are made to avoid Councillors being "double booked", this does sometimes occur where memberships overlap. To help deal with this, reserve Councillors are appointed for all committee meetings, except Cabinet (see Procedure rules for Committees in Part 4 of the Constitution).

The timetable seeks to avoid meetings being held on a Friday and on days on which religious festivals may obviate a Member's attendance.

DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDAS

Agendas for Committees will automatically be sent to all the members of that Committee. A Councillor may receive agenda papers for meetings for which he or she is not a member. Soon after the membership of all Member level bodies has been determined by Council and Cabinet, a questionnaire will be given to all Councillors asking them to indicate which papers they would like to receive. Some restraint is requested not just because of cost but also because you may find you cannot read it all. The request can be changed at any time by telling a member of the Democratic

Services Section. All agendas and minutes will also be available on the Council's intranet and internet sites.

A weekly list of all meetings is sent to all Members at the end of the preceding week. This will be inclusive of all formal Member level meetings. It also enables Members to know of those meetings that meet on an ad hoc basis and for which there is no programme of dates.

Preparation of agendas and despatch of reports are co-ordinated by the Democratic Services Section. In accordance with statutory requirements, all agendas for meetings open to the public will be circulated at least 5 clear working days before a meeting. Supplemental agendas may be issued after that date.

MINUTES/DECISION NOTES

Officers in Democratic Services prepare minutes of all Member-level meetings. No transcript of the deliberations of meetings is taken. The primary purpose of the minutes is to record the decisions taken. A brief preamble is usually all that accompanies the recorded decision.

The results of votes taken are not recorded but any Councillor wishing to have a record in the formal minutes of his or her decision can request this. A request for such a record to be noted in the minutes must be made at the time that the decision is made.

Draft minutes are shown to the Chair for information. The Director of Legal Services retains responsibility for their accuracy.

Where the power to take the decision rests with the parent body, then the Committee or subsidiary body will make a recommendation to that body. This will normally be accompanied by a longer and more comprehensive preamble to assist the parent body to consider the recommendation. Recommendations to a parent body are always set out in the first part of the minutes and are followed by the minutes.

The Minutes of Council and Committees are published on a monthly basis in the 'Council, Cabinet and Committee Minutes Volume,' which is circulated to all Members.

Decisions made at Cabinet meetings and by individual portfolio holders will be published when appropriate, to allow the effective operation of the call-in procedure (see Part 4F of the Constitution).

A minor correction to the minutes, if not contentious, can be agreed by the committee/panel at the next meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

Your Standards Pack sets out your responsibilities in relation to your Standards of behaviour and when you must declare an interest. If you have to declare an interest at a meeting, you should first declare whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest and then declare the nature of that interest so that both can be recorded in the minutes.

This list is subject to change during May/June 2006

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| DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER CONTACT FOR THE COUNCIL'S MEMBER LEVEL COMMITTEES |
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|---|--|
| 1. COUNCIL | |
| | |
| 2. CABINET | |
| <p>Best Value Advisory Panel Better Government for Older People Panel Budget Review Working Group Education Admissions and Awards Advisory Panel Grants Advisory Panel Harrow Business Consultative Panel Housing Improvement Options Advisory Panel New Harrow Project Panel Publications Advisory Panel South Harrow Study Panel Strategic Planning Advisory Panel Supporting People Panel Town Centre Project Panel Traffic Advisory Panel Wealdstone Regeneration Panel</p> | |
| 3. CONSULTATIVE FORUMS | |
| <p>Community Consultative Forum Education Consultative Forum Employees' Consultative Forum Harrow Admissions Forum Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum</p> | |
| 4. AUDIT COMMITTEE | |
| | |
| 5. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE | |
| | |
| 6. LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE | |
| <p>Chief Officer Appointments Panel Early Retirement Sub-Committee Education Awards Appeals Panel Licensing Panel NNDR Discretionary Rate Relief Appeals Panel Pension Fund Investments Panel Personnel Appeals Panel Social Services Appeals Panel</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| 7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | |
| Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee Call-in Sub-Committee | |
| 8. SCHOOL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE | |
| | |
| 9. STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION | |
| | |
| 10. STANDARDS COMMITTEE | |
| Member Development Panel | |
| 11. MISCELLANEOUS | |
| Education Appeals Panel Harrow on the Hill Forum Harrow Strategic Partnership Board Harrow Strategic Partnership Executive Harrow Town Centre Steering Group Open Budget Steering Group Trading Standards Consortium Harrow Police and Community Consultative Group Independent Custody Visitors Panel | |

KEY

| <u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICERS</u> | |
|---|---|
| Claire Vincent Democratic and Practice Manager Room 115a | Tel: 020 8424 1637 Email: claire.vincent@harrow.gov.uk |
| Alison Brooker Room 147 | Tel: 020 8424 1266 Email: alison.brooker@harrow.gov.uk |
| Michelle Fernandes Room 143 | Tel: 020 8424 1542 Email: michelle.fernandes@harrow.gov.uk |
| Daksha Ghelani Room 145 | Tel: 020 8424 1881 Email: daksha.ghelani@harrow.gov.uk |
| Kate Boulter Room 139 | Tel: 020 8424 1269 Email: kate.boulter@harrow.gov.uk |
| Laura Kell Room 143 | Tel: 020 8424 1265 Email: laura.kell@harrow.gov.uk |
| Zoe Crane Room 139 | Tel: 020 8424 1883 Email: zoe.crane@harrow.gov.uk |
| Nick Wale Room 143 | Tel: 020 8424 1323 Email: nick.wale@harrow.gov.uk |
| Sam Challis Room 145 | Tel: 020 8424 1785 Email: sam.challis@harrow.gov.uk |
| James Chamberlain Room 139 | Tel: 020 8424 1264 Email: james.chamberlain@harrow.gov.uk |
| <u>Administration</u> (Education Appeals/Members' Post Dispatch) | |
| Linda Bradford First floor reception | Tel: 020 8424 1263 Email: linda.bradford@harrow.gov.uk |
| Angela Pedersen First floor reception | Tel: 020 8424 1277 Email: angela.pederson@harrow.gov.uk |

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

APPLICATION FOR CARERS' ALLOWANCE

COUNCILLOR.....

Name of Dependent(s)

Relationship to Dependent(s)

| Duty | Approved | Date | Length of Duty (To nearest ½ hour) | Meeting of Unpredictable Length <i>(If note 3 overleaf applies, please state carer's contracted hours; for daytime quasi-judicial meeting state officer's estimate of length)</i> | Number of Hours Claimed | Amount Claimed £ | Is Claim for Specialist/ Professional Care Yes/No | Signature of Carer Confirming Details of Care Provided & Receipt of Payment Indicated |
|------|----------|------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |

Declaration: I have read the Conditions of the Scheme printed on the reverse of this form and declare that to enable me to perform the above Approved Duty/Duties it was necessary to provide care for the dependent relative(s) named.

Signed

Date

[An invoice is also needed to claim for specialist, professional care.]

This form, duly signed should be sent to Lorna Pitt, Corporate & IT Services, Room L28.

CONDITIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE CARERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

1. The allowance shall be payable only for the following approved duties.
 - A meeting of the executive.
 - A meeting of the committee of the executive.
 - A meeting of the authority.
 - A meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the authority.
 - A meeting of some other body to which the authority make appointments or nominations, or
 - A meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a body to which the authority make appointments or nominations.
 - A meeting which has both been authorised by the authority, a committee, or sub-committee of the authority or a joint committee of the authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee and to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited (if the authority is divided into several political groups) or to which two or more councillors have been invited (if the authority is not divided into political groups).
 - A meeting of a local authority association of which the authority is a member.
 - Duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in pursuance of any standing order requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened.
 - Duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
 - Duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at a school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996.
2. (i) The maximum basic rate of payment to be £2.50 per half hour for the duration of the approved duty being the duration of the meeting and the Members' reasonable travelling time, together with the carers' reasonable travelling time [except where the employment of a professional carer is required for a specialist need in which case (ii) below applies].

(ii) Where a professional carer is required to meet a specialist need (e.g., a nurse for an elderly person) then actual costs will be paid **on receipt of an invoice.**

3. Where the length of a meeting cannot be predicted and payment to the carer is necessarily contractually committed, payment of up to four hours will be made. (For small quasi-judicial bodies, payment of up to eight hours for daytime meetings, based upon the lead officer's estimation of the time required for the meeting, will be made).
4. In addition, the reasonable travelling expenses of the person taking care of the dependent shall be reimbursed either at the appropriate public transport rate or, in cases of urgency or where no public transport is available, the amount of any taxi fare actually paid.
5. The allowance is not to be paid where the carer is a member of the Member's household.
6. Members are required to specify the name of and their relationship to the dependent and **a receipt** confirming that the carer has received the payment **must be submitted.**

(Incorporated into Members' Allowance Scheme 10.5.2001).