

FACILITIES FOR COUNCILLORS (Including use for Political or Personal Purposes)

1. The only basis on which the County Council can lawfully provide support services to members is to assist them in discharging their role as members of the County Council. Support Services provided must never be used for election or any other campaigning activity or for the purposes of a political party, or (except in the limited manner described below) for private purposes.

Undercover Car Park

2. This has a capacity of approximately 60 cars and is normally available for councillors' use. Some spaces are set aside for disabled employees and provision has also been made for employees to park motorcycles and bicycles in areas unsuitable for cars. Directors also park here.
3. Because of the limited capacity of this car park, on certain busy days it may be necessary to direct councillors to nearby external alternative parking spaces. The car park is locked at 6.30 pm. If a vehicle is to be left overnight or should you require access in the event of the car park being locked please contact County Hall Reception/Security on Ext. 6325.
4. Accommodation may be offered to County Councillors on the following basis:-
 - For the purposes of political group business meetings directly connected with County Council business – on any day, at any time – no charge. Out of hours arrangements must, however, be subject to previous hirings taking precedence and to the Council's officers being able to make effective arrangements for the safety of participants and of the buildings.
 - Primarily for social purposes involving members who are drawn from one political group (with or without guests) at a charge to be settled by the Director of Corporate Services to cover the cost of any direct expenditure by the Council.
 - For business meetings of a political group for purposes not directly connected with County Council business – a charge made if the hiring is by a private organisation.
 - For members on a personal basis. Treated on the same basis as employees i.e. decision normally made by the Director of Corporate Services having regard to all the circumstances; difficult/controversial cases referred to him/her in the first instance to Group Leaders.

Lounge and Political Group Rooms

5. A lounge located adjacent to the Member Support Unit is available on Level 2 for the use of all councillors. The following facilities are available:-
 - (a) Councillor's personalised pigeonholes for the retrieval of mail;
 - (b) all agendas issued by the Director of Corporate Services together with copies of the Infonet for reading in this room;
 - (c) agendas and similar material received from other public bodies;
 - (d) a selection of reference books;
 - (e) a selection of Local Government Magazines;
 - (f) information items on a general notice-board;
 - (g) secretarial services for councillors, such as typing and copying. Please ask staff in the Member Support Unit if you wish to utilise these services; and
 - (h) stationery for use by councillors for official Council business. Staff in the Member Support Unit will be pleased to arrange for the production of appropriate stationery.
6. Councillors are asked not to leave visitors or guests unaccompanied in the Members' Lounge.
7. There are a further four rooms each of which is currently allocated for the exclusive use of a particular political group.
8. The Chairman of the Council and Leader of the Council have offices located in this area and a room is available for Cabinet Members with responsibility.

Support in Performing the Councillor Role

9. The introduction of new Political Structures has brought about a number of changes to the roles and responsibilities of councillors. The Council has therefore approved a core support package for all councillors. In summary this package will consist of:-
 - Information and Communication Technology
 - Office supplies and secretarial support
 - Support in the Community
 - Training and Development

Information and Communication Technology

10. As part of the Information and Communication Technology package, members will be supplied with a laptop and printer, together with associated software and consumables. Additionally, an ISDN line will be installed at members homes at the Council's expense.
11. On receipt of the package, members will be asked to sign an agreement which sets out fully the basis on which the equipment has been supplied.

12. The package is supplied to members to assist them in fulfilling their duties as a County Councillor and may not be used for any other purposes.
13. Under no circumstances should unauthorised software be loaded onto the laptop. Requests for any additional hardware or software will be considered and determined by the Head of Member and Administrative Services.
14. The County Council reserves the right to periodically inspect and monitor the equipment supplied to Members.
15. An ISDN line will be installed at the County Council's expense. Line and rental costs will also be paid by the Council. The line is only to be used in conjunction with equipment supplied by the County Council and for no other purpose.
16. Upon ceasing to be a surviving Councillor, the County Council will cease responsibility for the upkeep of the ISDN line and the member will be given the option of taking over the line if required.
17. IT support will be provided for Members. Additionally training requirements will be dismissed and assessed at the Induction session and will be held on a one to one basis.
18. On ceasing to be a serving Councillor, all IT equipment provided by the County Council is to be returned in good condition.
19. A computer workstation, including printer will also be located in each of the political group rooms. This facility will provide e-mail links, electronic diary access, word processing, spreadsheet and other office applications.

Telephone/Faxes

20. The County Hall telephone system (can be used by Councillors to discharge their official duties and responsibilities. There are telephones located in the Councillors Lounge and in each of the Political Group Rooms. A fax machine is located in the Member Support Unit.
21. Telephones should not be used for personal or business purposes except by initiating the call via the switchboard and declaring it to be for private purposes. A charge will then subsequently be levied on the Councillor concerned. Similarly, fax machines should not be used for personal purposes. Any Councillor wishing to send a personal fax should first speak to a member of the Member Support Team in order that an appropriate charge may be levied.

? Home/mobile phones

? Fax machines at home

Offices Supplies and Secretarial Support

22. An administrative support service for Councillors is provided by staff in the Member Support Unit. In addition to a typing and secretarial support service, staff in the

Unit also co-ordinate Councillors attendance at conferences and seminars and deal with Councillors expenses claim forms.

23. Stationery and other office supplies (including ICT consumables) required by Councillors in the performance of their duties and responsibilities can also be ordered from the Unit.

Copying/Postal Facilities

24. Subject to periodic review in the light of use, the Council will copy, free of charge, for any Councillor any material relating to the bona fide discharge of that Councillor's duties and responsibilities as a County Councillor and (for a Group Leader, Group Secretary or other notified Group Office holder only) any material relating to the conduct and business of a group which is directly connected with County Council business. A Councillor may use the copying facilities for personal but not business purposes on payment of the same standard charge per copy that is paid by employees in similar circumstances.

Printing

25. Subject to periodic review in the light of demand, the Council will provide printed material for a Councillor which is required for the efficient discharge of that Councillor's duties (including notepaper, business cards, etc.) printing required for political group purposes directly connected with County Council business should be paid for at cost. No printing can be undertaken for personal purposes.

Use of Council Purchasing Arrangements

26. No objection will be raised to any County Councillor making use of any purchasing arrangements established either by West Mercia Supplies or the County Council on a cash only basis and provided that such supplies are required to assist the Councillor in carrying out his or her duties as such. Any goods will be delivered to County Hall or other Council premises for collection by the Councillor.

Access Control System

27. An Access Control System operates within County Hall. All councillors have been issued with an access card, which permits them entry to parts of the building.
28. When at County Hall you should carry your access control card with you at all times. You will require this card to gain access to the building from the undercover car park and once inside the building to the Member area, your political group room and any other parts of County Hall to which you have been granted access.
29. You must report any loss of your card to Audrey Sidwell (01905 766308) at the earliest opportunity. Similarly you should contact Audrey if you forget to bring your card with you or you experience any difficulty with its use.

Security

30. There is also an intruder alarm system installed in County Hall. Please seek advice especially if you wish to be at County Hall outside normal working hours.

Catering

31. All catering services are provided by a contractor.

Restaurant (Level 1)

This is self-service. The Restaurant provides a selection of hot food and sandwiches. It is open between the hours of 9.30 am and 1.45 pm. Lunch is served between 12 noon and 1.45 pm. The Restaurant is open to councillors, employees and visitors.

Shop

There is a kiosk shop in the corridor on Level 1 located between the restaurant and the Lecture Suite. Confectionery, newspapers and sundry items can be purchased. The shop is open from 8.00 am to 4.15 pm.

Beverages

Coffee, tea and soft drinks are available in the Councillors' Lounge. Drinking water is also available in the Councillor's Lounge and in the Council Chamber on the left-hand side.

32. Unless arranged through the Member Support Unit, all catering ordered or arranged by a Councillor must be paid for by that Councillor personally. The Catering Company has an 'exclusive' contract.

Toilets/Lockers

33. Cloakrooms for councillors and staff (both sexes) are located on level 2 in the corridor leading from the lift from the undercover car park. There are some lockers available for councillors. Keys for these can be obtained from Audrey Sidwell in the Member Support Unit. An accessible toilet for disabled users is located opposite County Hall's Main Reception on Level 1.

Noticeboards

34. Except insofar as current practice is continued in respect of any 'Trade Union' board specifically provided for the purpose,

No Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any County Council workplace, except in rooms or places especially designated for the purpose. The only places designated in County Hall are the Monnow Room (which is the building's smoking room) located on Level 1 and in any political group rooms where that group so desires.

How to obtain Medical Assistance

If you know who the designated First Aider is for the area, go to them. If you do not know who the First Aider is, see if there is a contact name and telephone number displayed. If there is, contact them from the nearest telephone. If there is no contact listed, telephone extension 6666. Tell the telephonist which pavilion you are in and give them your name. They will contact a First Aider and direct them to you.

NB 6666 is only available 8.30 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. Outside these hours if you receive an injury that requires immediate attention telephone for an ambulance by dialling **75-999**. You will not be charged for this call.

For minor injuries or sickness please visit your GP or go to the Accident and Emergency Unit at Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

At all times:-

To contact emergency services dial 75–999; inform Reception/Security on extension 6325 and telephone room on extension 6666.

Fire and Security Alert and Evacuation Arrangements

Separate information is contained in this section (Red pages).

Facilities for disabled users

Wheelchairs are available for use either by councillors or visitors. Please ask staff in the Member Support Unit for assistance.

Certain documents can be supplied, on request, in braille, larger print, computer disk or taped. A Minicom facility (01905) 766399 is also available.

Bus Service

Midland Red West timetables showing the bus services to and from County Hall are available on request in the Member Support Unit and Reception.

Booking and Hiring of County Hall

The Council operates a policy of letting County Hall to outside bodies and private individuals for meetings and functions, on a standard scale of charges. All applications for the use of rooms at County Hall for any purposes should be directed to the Head of Member and Administrative Services.

There is maintained a central register of rooms being used. If you are uncertain of the whereabouts of any meeting you should contact the staff in the Member Support Unit who will be pleased to assist you.

Official meetings are listed daily at the entrance to the lift from the undercover car park in the corridor outside the Member Support Unit and Reception.

General Enquiries

Should you have any queries about either the facilities available or County Hall or of a more general nature, the staff in the Member Support Unit (01905 766308) will be pleased to assist.