

PARTY GROUP/POLITICAL ADVISER/LONDON COUNCILS RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This Protocol establishes guidelines for relations between the London Councils' Political Advisers, Party Groups and the rest of the organisation.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL ADVISERS

1. The role of the Political Advisers is to serve and support London local government and the Members belonging to their London Councils Party Group.
2. They do not work for the national political parties or their regional organisations (although a valuable part of their work is contact and influence with those parties) and it is important that this separation is maintained.
3. Political Advisers are the main point of contact between London Councils and other national/regional or local groupings of their respective political parties.
4. London Councils Leaders' Committee, Executive and statutory Committees, supported by other Member bodies, make policy, and the mainstream officers will do associated policy development work. Political Advisers may supplement this policy work by providing a particular Party Group perspective to their own members and will advise members of their particular Party Group during the process of developing this policy.

INTERNAL LONDON COUNCILS RELATIONSHIPS

1. Political Advisers should be copied into all correspondence addressed to all councillors that are part of their Party Group (except correspondence which contains confidential staffing matters, or is of a routine nature).
2. Arrangements for a substitute for any Member should be conducted through the relevant Political Adviser.
3. Any London Councils Member Body meeting should be notified in advance to the relevant Political Adviser/s and they have attendance rights at those meetings (except when that meeting is discussing confidential staffing matters).
4. Member level meetings or significant events (e.g. dinners) with representatives of external organisations should be notified to the relevant Political Adviser/s. The relevant Political Adviser/s may be invited to any pre-meeting of Members.
5. Any meeting involving members of only one party should normally be organised by the relevant Political Adviser. Exceptions might include a meeting between the Chair of a London Councils' Member Body and a Minister when that meeting was not political (for example, when civil servants would be accompanying the Minister).

Other officers from London Councils can be invited to attend these meetings.

6. Political Advisers do not have attendance rights for formal London Councils internal officer meetings but can be invited for all or part of any such meetings.

7. Political Advisers have the same level of access to London Councils' core resources as other officers. This includes room bookings for London Councils' use, reasonable use of support services, access to papers and links to the communications and public affairs resource.

The access is equal for all Political Advisers. Any request for support or information should be responded to positively where practicable. The Chief Executive will settle any dispute.

8. The Communications and Public Affairs Division will:
 - a. provide advice and facilities to Political Advisers; and
 - b. ensure that all Political Advisers are supplied simultaneously with any materials they publish on behalf of London Councils.
9. Political Advisers have access to any London Councils Member Body reports, published documents and circulars (except those documents which contain confidential staffing matters). As a general rule any information that would be released to a member authority should be made available to Political Advisers.
10. When sending out printed materials the Group Advisors will use notepaper that clearly denotes that it is a party communication and if possible includes the group logo.

OUTSIDE RELATIONSHIPS

1. All meetings between Members or officers and an Outside Representative¹ of a political party should be notified to the relevant Political Adviser and consideration should be given by the Chief Executive or Directors to the attendance of the political adviser where it is felt to be beneficial and practicable to do so.
2. All Ministerial meetings (i.e. meetings with an MP/Peer in their ministerial role) and official-level meetings with Outside Representatives should normally be reported to all Political Advisers².

This does not preclude meetings with the same MPs/Peers on a political basis. These should be organised through the relevant Political Adviser.

3. If an Outside Representative initiates contact, the relevant Political Adviser should be told as soon as possible and be involved in deciding the best response.
4. The relevant Political Adviser should be notified before any initial contact is made with an Outside Representative of a particular political party. Where circumstances make this impossible, the relevant adviser should be notified as soon as possible.
5. Where non-political briefings are being sent out to Outside Representatives, these must be copied to all Political Advisers.

² "Outside Representatives" in this clause includes any elected member of a political party acting in the capacity of their elected position (e.g. MPs, MEPs, GLA members, etc) and those non-elected members of a party who perform the functions of elected politicians (e.g. Peers).

6. Where material is being prepared for an Outside Representative or group of representatives of only one party, that material will only be distributed to that representative or group of representatives of that party and the relevant Political Adviser must have an opportunity to review and comment on that material before its distribution.