



Winchester
City Council

MEMBERS' CHARTER

As a Member of Winchester City Council, you have been elected to perform a vital role in helping to provide the best possible services to residents, visitors and the business community.

You are an important part of the team of Councillors and Officers which makes up the City Council and which is dedicated to achieving high standards and value for money in all aspects of the Council's work.

You will receive the same standards of service as the public, plus support to help you carry out your various duties, particularly those in respect of your role as a Ward Member. This Charter sets out the main elements of that service and support.

Howard Bone
Head of Legal and Democratic
Services

City Offices
Colebrook Street
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 9LJ

INTRODUCTION

All City Council Officers are pleased to support Members as they carry out their work.

The support services set out in this Charter must only be used on Council business and never in connection with party political or campaigning activity. These services also should not be used for other private purposes, although attention is drawn to the section below on IT equipment, where additional guidance is given.

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

- Personal stationery in the City Council's corporate style (to include headed notepaper, compliment slips and business cards, plus a reasonable supply of blank paper).
- An identity/access card (issued by the Democratic Services Manager to cover the four year term of office) which allows access to the City and West Wing Offices and the Guildhall (access arrangements outside normal office hours will be notified separately, together with security information).
- Personal Attack Alarm (supplied on request by the Human Resources Team).

IT EQUIPMENT

- A suitable device to enable access to the Council's IT system and Internet use, subject to installation data being in accordance with the Council's policies. (Your attention is drawn to the Council's adopted IM&T Security and Conduct Policy which can be found in Section 8 of the Constitution).
- Connection to the Council's IT Network through Broadband (the Broadband ISP will need to be sourced and funded privately by each Member)).
- The Council's IT is provided jointly with Test Valley Borough Council. The Log-IT portal system is available 24 hours a day for you to log your issues. The Service Desk will be available to help you Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm with weekend cover only available by prior arrangement. The system is available for you to raise all your queries and requests for IT, Telephone, Software Applications and service requests.

For non urgent calls, please log your call using Log-IT, by clicking on the logo on the front page of the Council's Intranet. You can also log a call by dialling ext 2515.

- All IT issues which cannot be solved by the Help Desk should be raised with Jane Maughan, Business Support Officer on 01962 848 209 or jmaughan@winchester.gov.uk

INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

- Filofax (which includes the Council Diary and Year Book information).
- A copy of the 'full' version of the electoral register for your Ward in paper or electronic form (the Council is required to produce 'full' and 'edited' versions of the register – contact the Electoral Services Team on 01962 848 192 for more details).
- The Council's Constitution - which includes the Code of Conduct and Protocols, including those relating to Planning and Gifts & Hospitality (a paper copy is supplied to new Members but a regularly updated version is published on the Council's website).

The following documents are published on the Council's website, but can be made available in paper copy:-

- The Council's Budget Book.
- The Council's Statement of Accounts.
- The Community Strategy and Portfolio Holder Plans.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Members can use any of the photocopiers located at various points around the offices, provided their access card has been scanned to enable this.
- The weekly email publication to all Members of the Democratic Services Update, which gives the latest information about meetings, training events, etc.
- Advice on registration/declaration of interests under the Code of Conduct, Gifts and Hospitality and all other matters covered by the various Protocols agreed by the Council.
- Advice and assistance with updating Member Activity Statements on the Council's website (the Activity Statement offers an opportunity for Members to publish details such as a short biography, list of surgery dates and a quarterly activity report).
- Disposal of old committee reports and other Council documents, either by recycling or shredding those containing confidential information.

MEMBERS' ROOMS AND MEMBERS LIBRARY

Group rooms are provided for the Liberal Democrat and Conservative groups and are equipped with PCs. Additional PCs are available for Members' use in the Members' Library. Also in the library are bookshelves containing:-

- Relevant local government journals.
- The current and immediate past cycle committee agendas.
- A range of other local government publications.

ROOMS FOR GROUP MEETINGS

Each political group is entitled to the free use of Guildhall rooms for group meetings on 10 occasions per year, which may be booked in advance directly with the Guildhall by the Group Manager. Additional free bookings can be made at 24 hours notice, subject to room availability - please contact the Guildhall Manager for all bookings on 01962 848 258.

In addition to the above, Members may use meeting rooms located in the various offices, during normal office hours and subject to the use of a 'first come first served' booking system, recognising that the rooms may be in use by officers during the day. These rooms can be booked by contacting Democratic Services on 01962 848 264.

CAR PARKING

Each Member will be supplied with a car parking permit which may be used whilst on Council business.

The paper permit enables parking at Chesil Street multi-story car park, Tower Street multi-storey car park, Alresford Station car park (Alresford), Lower Lane car park (Bishop's Waltham) and Wickham Square car park (Wickham). The permit may also be used short-term on-street, in Residents' permit parking bays and On-street pay & display bays, when carrying out official duties on Council business. **However, the permissions do not allow use of the on-street parking bays in Colebrook Street, High Street (The Broadway), Paternoster Row or Market Lane at any time.**

Wherever possible, Members are encouraged to apply for a permit to use Park and Ride, particularly if they are intending to remain in Winchester for most of the day.

If, for reasons of timeliness or personal safety, a Member has to use the Colebrook Street public car park to attend a meeting at the Guildhall or City Offices, the fee may be reclaimed on the monthly Members' Allowance Scheme claim form (remember to retain the ticket and attach it to the claim form). If Members have to use other car parks on Council business for which they do not have a pass, then any fee paid may be reclaimed in the same way.

Please remember that, even if you are parking on Council duties (either on or off street), you will not be exempt from traffic regulations which prohibit or restrict parking in certain areas.

CYCLE PARKING FACILITIES

If you wish to cycle to the City Offices, you can park your bike in the Guildhall Yard cycle shed. The shed includes a secure parking facility for which Members will need to obtain access authorisation – for further details, please contact Emma Macdonald on 01962 848 450 or emacdonald@winchester.gov.uk. In addition, the Members' Allowances Scheme includes a provision for Members to claim an allowance for travel by bike within the District (current rate of 20p per mile).

EXPENSES

You will receive a Basic Allowance, plus a Special Responsibility Allowance for qualifying additional duties, all as defined in the Council's Members Allowances Scheme (see Part 6 of the Constitution). Mileage payment will be made for all 'approved duties' which you undertake. Subsistence is only payable in respect of approved duties outside the Winchester District. Please study carefully the information given in the Members' Allowance Scheme because different rates of payment apply to certain duties. In some cases there are no expenses payable.

You will receive a claim form each month. Please note that claims for travel and subsistence must be submitted within two months of the approved duty, otherwise you may not be reimbursed. VAT receipts are required when claiming mileage expenses and other expenses should be supported by receipts where available.

If you use your own car for the purposes of travelling on Council business, you are required by law to have adequate motor insurance that specifically covers business use. All travel conducted whilst on Council business (including travel between your home and the City Offices, e.g. for attending Council meetings, or any other approved destination, such as planning site visits) is classified as business mileage for insurance and taxation purposes.

Please check your insurance documentation to ascertain whether or not you are covered for business use. If not, you should contact your insurer and arrange for the additional cover as soon as possible, which may involve a higher premium (the mileage rates payable to Members are designed to cover any additional cost in your premium).

TRAINING

Opportunities for training will be provided on a regular basis and will include:-

- Induction training for new Members (including basic IT training where required).
- Courses, seminars and conferences covering current Local Government issues.

- Skills based training (e.g. chairmanship, dealing with the media, IT refresher courses etc).

Where external courses are involved, co-ordination of hotel, travel and place bookings will all be arranged on Members behalf. Please remember that you must gain prior approval for attendance from the relevant Committee or the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

ACCESS TO OFFICERS

Every Officer of the City Council will be pleased to assist Members with advice on matters within their area of responsibility. However, it is advisable to check first on availability before making a personal visit to the offices.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Officers will take all reasonable steps to ensure that Portfolio Holders are kept up to date with all information relevant to their area of responsibility. Many Heads of Teams arrange regular meetings with the Portfolio Holder(s) relevant to their work. Portfolio Holders will also be consulted on draft Committee reports covering matters within their responsibility, prior to their publication.

Portfolio Holders will of course be consulted on matters set out under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (Part 3 of the Constitution).

WARD MEMBER SUPPORT

To perform the role of Ward Member effectively, a regular supply of relevant, accurate and up to date information is essential.

This Charter aims to focus upon the information which Ward Members are likely to find most important when working with local residents, businesses, parish councils, amenity groups etc. In that context, emphasis has been placed upon a 'Think Ward Member' culture amongst all Council staff, so that active consideration is automatically given as part of the work process, as to whether or not a Ward Member would find certain information useful.

In a very few cases involving particularly sensitive information of a commercial or personal nature, Officers will be required to assess a Ward Member's 'need to know' and may not supply details without further investigation.

With a number of service agencies constantly carrying out public works across the District, it is not possible to guarantee that every matter of potential interest to a Ward Member will be notified to them. Even with functions solely administered by the City Council, the volume of work means that it is simply not practical to keep Ward Members informed of every activity taking place in their area. This is why the following general and team lists concentrate on the key areas of work.

GENERAL

- (a) Copies of correspondence with parish councils involving changes to services or facilities or requesting that any matter be raised at a parish council meeting.
- (b) Copies of correspondence with local residents, businesses, amenity groups, parishes etc, where it is known that the Ward Member has a specific interest and/or has been previously involved (particularly where an update is being given on information previously supplied to a Ward Member).
- (c) Copies of correspondence regarding public meetings, consultation exercises or ceremonial events taking place in the Ward which are being organised by the City Council.
- (d) Advance notice in the Democratic Services Update of major schemes to be carried out by other service agencies in the Ward.
- (e) Copies of correspondence with Government departments or service agencies regarding specific Ward related issues.
- (f) Consultation regarding proposed new City Council initiatives for the Ward.
- (g) Consultation regarding proposed changes by the City Council to the availability of facilities located within or used by people living in the Ward.
- (h) Advance notification when Directors or Portfolio Holders are attending public functions in the Ward.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Notification of correspondence with the MPs and Regional MEPs regarding:

- all Ward related issues which do not involve individual case work; and
- case work in respect of individuals within their Ward where the Member has previously been involved.

Communications Team

None specific.

Organisational Development and Human Resources Team

None specific.

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS (GENERAL)

- (a) Notification of any projects or proposals arising from the work of the Local Strategic Partnership that are specifically Ward related.
- (b) Support in developing and overseeing the delivery of annual Portfolio Plans.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER)

- (a) Notification to Ward Member of Authority to Evict request being approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services.
- (b) Notification of major modernisation schemes or large programmed works to the Council's stock.

New Homes Delivery Team:

- (a) Notification of new social housing developments proposed for a Ward.
- (b) Notification of when a Community Lettings Plan is in place for a Ward.
- (c) Notification of any community-led planning activity, or proposal to commence such activity.

Health and Wellbeing Team

- (a) Notification of significant Ward related issues concerning health and wellbeing.
- (b) Notification of any public health related events, activities and campaigns taking place in the Ward.

Sports and Physical Activity Team

Notification of any major sporting event or initiative taking place in the Ward.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (POLICY & PLANNING)

Strategic Planning Team

Notification of important planning policy consultation exercises and developments specifically related to the Ward.

Policy & Major Projects Team

Notification of any proposed Major Projects specifically related to the Ward.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Business Management Team

- (a) Notification of Ombudsman cases which have been referred to the City Council for further investigation.

Democratic Services Team

- (a) A paper copy of every agenda and report for Members of that Committee (electronic copies of all agendas and reports may be found on the Council's website).

All Members will receive (in paper form) the Council Minute Book at the end of each cycle, containing all recommended committee minutes and reports.

Members also have the opportunity to attend and address all meetings (subject to the Chairman's discretion), and to place an item on the agenda of Cabinet or any committee.

- (b) A note on every committee report highlighting the Ward(s) which are affected by the subject matter.
- (c) Electronic notification of all draft Portfolio Holder Decision Notices and weekly publication of a summary of Final Decisions made.

Electoral Services Team

- a) Consultation regarding relocation of polling stations.
- b) A copy of the electoral register (see Section on Information Documents above).

Estates Team

- (a) Consultation on the proposed lease of individual parcels of land in the Ward.
- (b) Consultation on disposals, the release or modification of covenants, and the grant of easements where the consideration does not exceed £15,000 in any one case, relating to land within the Ward.

Legal Services Team

- (a) Consultation on specific Ward related Footpath Diversion and temporary road closures for public events.
- (b) Notification of specific Ward related Tree Preservation Orders.
- (c) Notification of forthcoming prosecutions or Court actions regarding specific Ward related issues (but excluding individual tenancy cases).
- (d) Consultation on determination of Lawful Development Certificates (existing uses).

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Finance Team

All Members will receive a copy of the Annual Audit Letter issued by the External Auditor.

Revenues Team

Consultation regarding individual applications submitted under the discretionary Rural Rate Relief Scheme regarding property within the Ward.

CORPORATE DIRECTOR

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS (GENERAL)

- (a) Notification of any projects or proposals arising from the work of the Local Strategic Partnership that are specifically Ward related.
- (b) Support in developing and overseeing the delivery of annual Portfolio Plans.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Building Control Team

Notification of any dangerous structures in the Ward.

Community Safety and Neighbourhood Services Team

- a) Notification to Ward Members and Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Environment, of crime or disorder related police/partner incidents that could have a profound community impact.
- (b) Consultation with Ward Councillors when considering making, varying or discharging Public Space Protection Orders under Sections 59-61 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Development Management Team

Via the Council's website:

- (a) The weekly availability of a list of new planning applications received.
- (b) The weekly availability of a list of planning application decisions made by the Head of Development Management under delegated powers.
- (c) The monthly availability of a list of planning application decisions made by the Planning Committee.

Historic Environment Team

- (a) Notification of buildings which have been newly listed by Department of Culture, Media and Sport or other historic environment designations.
- (b) Notification of any notable archaeological finds or excavations within a Ward, subject to any overriding ethical or commercial sensitivities.
- (c) Notification of any criminal damage to notable buildings or monuments within a Ward.

Landscape and Open Spaces Team

- (a) Notification to relevant Ward Member(s) of significant work to council trees located in the ward.
- (b) Notification to relevant Ward Member(s) of proposals and consultations for refurbishment of play areas and open spaces in the Ward.
- (c) Notification to relevant Ward Member(s) of proposals for significant changes to provision or management of play areas, amenity open spaces and allotments in the Ward.
- (d) Notification to relevant Ward Member(s) of significant projects, partnerships or initiatives affecting the Ward.

Traffic, Transport & Engineering Matters

- (a) Notification of proposals for new, or to amend existing, Traffic Regulation Orders in the Ward.
- (b) Notification of proposals for temporary road closures.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES)

Economy and Arts Team

Notification of any major arts initiative taking place in the Ward.

Environmental Team:

- a) Notification of significant Ward related issues concerning environmental health, including petitions and multiple complaints.
- b) Notification of specific food poisoning outbreaks and Food Hazard Warning in the Ward.
- c) Notification of specific Ward related items of media interest relating to the health, safety and well being of residents.

- d) Notification of major occupational accidents/fatalities in the Ward.
- e) Notification of specific Ward related air pollution application/variations for industrial or agricultural processes.
- f) Consultation on specific Ward related animal licensing issues to be the subject of a report to Licensing and Regulation Committee.
- g) Notification of new licensing applications which relate to premises in the Ward, as follows:
 - (i) Premises Licences under the Licensing Act 2003 (alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment)
 - (ii) Tables on the Highway
 - (iii) Designation of Streets for Street Trading Purposes
 - (iv) Amusement Arcades and other Gaming Premises
- h) Notification of any Anti-Social Behaviour Order granted against a resident of that Ward which has been made public.
- i) Notification of any issues affecting delivery of contracted services.

Museums Service

Notification of any notable archaeological acquisitions relating to a Ward, subject to any overriding ethical or commercial sensitivities.

Tourism Team

Notification of any major community event taking place in the Ward.

MEMBER SURGERIES

Apart from providing noticeboards to each Group, the Council does not arrange for, or meet the costs of, ward surgeries. The Basic Allowance is set at a level which is intended to cover any expenditure which a Member incurs undertaking this activity.

Where there is the opportunity to use a sheltered housing scheme community lounge for a surgery venue, it is expected that the Member(s) concerned will make an appropriate donation to the respective tenants' social fund.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Democratic Services Team is pleased to act as a first point of contact for Members' general enquiries.

David Blakemore – Democratic Services Manager
(848 217)

General Enquiries
(848 264)

You are also most welcome to call in person.

COMMENTS OR COMPLAINTS

Whilst we try to provide Members with the best possible service, things sometimes go wrong and you may not be happy with the service you receive. If you do have a problem or feel that our work is not up to the standard set by the Charter, then we want to know, so that we can investigate and resolve the situation as soon as possible.

If your complaint relates to a particular service, you might wish to contact the appropriate Director (contact names and details listed in your Council Year Book). For any complaints relating to the Members' Charter generally, please contact either Howard Bone (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) on 848 552 or Stephen Whetnall (Chief Operating Officer) on 848 220, who will be pleased to help.

The Council also publishes a Complaints Leaflet which sets out the procedures available if a member of the public considers the Council has failed them in some way. Copies of this leaflet are available from the Business Services Team. Alternatively it can be viewed on the Council's website.