

6D: Protocol on the Use of Council Facilities and Resources by Councillors

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council provides facilities and resources to assist members in carrying out their duties as councillors or as holders of an office within the Council.

1.2 The Members Code of Conduct makes some provision regarding the use of resources.

1.3 This protocol seeks to build on the Code of Conduct and explain the limitations placed on the use by Members, of the Council's facilities and resources.

2. Use of facilities and resources

2.1 Members may use Council facilities and resources for political purposes, in connection with the following business;

- (a) holding ward surgeries;
- (b) dealing with correspondence from constituents;
- (c) communication group activities;
- (d) meetings between group members

2.2 The Council is prohibited from publishing any material of a party political nature and Members should ensure that when using or authorising the use by others of the Council's facilities and resources, that such facilities and resources are not used for purely political purposes and that the use of Council premises is restricted to premises available to the public generally and paid for at the full hire costs.

2.3 A Member's use of Council facilities and resources must not extend to political parties more generally. Use of Council owned premises for party political purposes (where such meetings are used to further the political aims and objectives of the party concerned) must be restricted to premises available to the public generally and paid for at the full hire costs.

2.4 In cases where 2.3 does not apply, such as political group meetings where the purpose includes Council business and is not solely to further political aims and objectives, then Members can make use of rooms available at the Council Offices, without charge provided that:

- (a) rooms are available for the required time;
- (b) meetings are restricted to the facilities opening hours. If Members want to hold meetings outside of these days/times then it must be agreed in advance with the Chief Executive and any expenses incurred must be met by the political party's funds and not Council funds;

- (c) Third parties may attend political group meetings held in the Council's offices, provided that the primary purpose of the meeting is the consideration of business relevant to West Oxfordshire District Council and not the political party.

2.5 Members must not use any Council facilities and/or resources for purely political purposes, including designing and distributing party political material produced for publicity purposes and support of any political party or group activity or elections and campaigning.

3. Private/Personal Use

3.1 As a general rule, facilities and resources paid for by the public purse and provided for use in Council business should only be used for Council business.

3.2 Members are required to adhere to the Council's Information Security Policies.

4. Complaints and allegations of breaches of this protocol

4.1 Allegations of any failure to meet this Protocol must be made in writing, to the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer will consider how the complaint or allegation should be dealt with.

5. Further Guidance

5.1 Further advice or clarification can be sought from the Monitoring Officer.