



PARTY GROUP/POLITICAL ADVISER/LONDON COUNCILS RELATIONS

June 2019

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 London Councils as a whole. They primarily seek to do this by supporting the collective work of the relevant London Councils political group and its members. These are publicly funded posts – they are appointed by and report directly to London Councils staff.
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, the Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) and the Grants Committee (our 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 or the Mayor, when that

meeting was not political (for example, when civil servants or officers would be accompanying the Minister/Mayor)

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 Team will:
 - a. provide advice and support to Political Advisers; and
 - b. ensure that all Political Advisers are supplied with any materials they publish on behalf of London Councils in a timely way.
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 on behalf of individual political groups, the Group Advisers will use notepaper that clearly denotes that it is a party communication and if possible, includes the group logo.

OUTSIDE RELATIONSHIPS

All meetings between Members or officers and an Outside Representative¹ of a political party should be notified to the relevant Political Adviser. 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 normally be organised through the relevant Political Adviser.

1. If an Outside Representative of a political party initiates contact, the relevant Political Adviser should be told as soon as possible and be involved in deciding the best response.

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).

2. Where non-political briefings are being sent out to Outside Representatives of political parties, these must be copied to all Political Advisers.
3. Where material is being prepared for an Outside Representative or group of representatives of only one party and, that material will only be distributed to that representative or group of representatives of that party, the relevant Political Adviser must have an opportunity to review and comment on that material before its distribution.

BUDGET

Each Party Group has a small budget to be used for e.g. that Party's away day, banners at party conferences. The budget is managed by the respective Political Adviser.