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**VOLUME B**  
**ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THE CONSTITUTION**

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## VOLUME B

### ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THE CONSTITUTION

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## C. GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE USE OF COUNCIL FACILITIES, PRINTING AND POSTAGE

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### INTRODUCTION

The Council only has power to provide facilities that assist Members in discharging their role as Members of the Council. Services can therefore only be used on Council business and never in connection with party political or electoral campaigning activity or for private purposes.

This Guidance Note was approved by the General Purposes Committee on 17 March 1999 and further revised by the Council Business Management Committee in May 2005.

It covers the use of facilities provided under the Members Support budget.

### PRINTING

#### Basis of Provision

Printing facilities are available to Members of the Council in their capacity as Ward Councillors for the purpose of the provision of information to constituents in their Wards about

- The work of the City Council, its Committees and Sub Committees or any matter being or likely to be considered at any such meetings
- Services in the area provided by the City Council or joint authorities [e.g. police, fire, transport, health]
- How to contact their local Councillors or MP and raise issues
- Meetings, consultation and local initiatives for the area organised by or on behalf of the City Council.

**The facilities are not available for the production of material which in whole or in part appears to be designed to affect public support for or to promote**

- A political party
- A candidate or group of candidates in an election
- An electoral or party political campaign

#### Detailed Arrangements

**Quantity** Entitlement is for a maximum of 2,700 A4 copies (black and white only) per Member per calendar month. Two or more Members are permitted to "combine" their entitlements.

**Materials** Standard range of white/tinted paper or card stocked by City Supplies will be available for use. Produced in black ink.

- Content** Under no circumstances can the name of a political party appear on the printed material. Slogans, titles or phrases which are associated with a political party cannot be part of the text. The Council's Standards Committee has also imposed specific requirements (set out in the Member/Officer Relations Protocol) which must be adhered to at all times.
- Layout** There is no prescribed format for the layout.
- Logos** Material produced should include an indication that it has been printed by the City Council under the arrangements for members printing. This can be by use of the City's Coat of Arms or Logo or the acknowledgement 'Printed by Birmingham City Council'
- Names** In addition to the names of Members of the City Council printed material can contain the name of the MP or MEP for the area and the names of relevant officers of the City Council.
- Photos** These can be incorporated on the same basis as that which applies to the inclusion of names.

### **Processing of Requests**

Printing requests should be submitted to Administrative Services [Room B5, Council House] for approval under the above arrangements. Any decision not to process the request will be advised to the Member.

The opportunity will be available to discuss any aspect further with the Democratic Services Manager. In the event of any unresolved issue the matter can be further considered by the Corporate Director of Governance.

### **PHOTOCOPIERS**

Short run copying facilities are provided in Group Offices for use on a self service basis by Members of the Council in connection with Council business only. Members will be provided with controlled access to these facilities and use will be monitored on an individual and overall basis.

With the obvious exception of the print quantity the principles under which these facilities can be used are the same as apply to requests for printing via Administrative Services already described in this guidance note.

### **COAT OF ARMS**

The Coat of Arms and the City Council's logo are only available for use in connection with Council business.

Use by Members of the Council is only acceptable on material produced under the arrangements for Members printing, on Members personalised stationery or approved

activity. In addition, as per a Council Business Management decision on 20 October 2009, the Coat of Arms can be placed next to the entry in the Book of Remembrance in memory of any late Councillor and the entry may make reference to the Councillor being a Birmingham Councillor and the size of the Coat of Arms should be similar to the size found on Councillors' business cards.

Under no circumstances should the Coat of Arms or the City Council logo be used as part of material produced by or on behalf of Members of the Council outside of the approved arrangements described above.

### **PERSONALISED LETTERHEAD AND BUSINESS CARDS**

These are provided for use only in connection with Council business and are available to:-

- Members of the Council
- Chairpersons of Committees and Sub Committees
- Leaders, Deputy Leaders, Group Secretaries and Chief Whips

Letterheads and business cards can, as a matter of fact, state the name of the relevant Political Party.

Personalised business cards can include details of advice bureaux or reference to other representative roles undertaken where that role arises from being a Member of Birmingham City Council

### **POSTAGE**

#### **Basis of Provision**

Facilities are available to Members of the Council on the basis of posting individual letters for the purpose of

- Responding to individual or small groups of constituents on specific matters raised by them
- Communication with other organisations as a part of dealing with issues raised by constituents
- Providing information on a one off basis to new electors in the Ward on the work of the City Council, its Committees and Sub Committees, services in the area provided by the City Council or joint authorities [e.g. police, fire, transport, health] and how to contact their local Councillors or MP.

**The facilities are not available for mail shots, the distribution of leaflets or the posting of general information to constituents other than in the circumstances described above.**

**They are also not available for posting any material which could not be printed by the City Council.**

Clarification on any proposed use of postal facilities can be obtained from the Democratic Services Manager.

### **Business Reply/Freepost Service**

**The Council House Business Reply/Freepost Licence can be used by Members, so long as it is used for Council business and not for private or political purposes.**

- On cards which have been produced under the arrangements for Members printing set out in this guidance note

### **LOCALISATION/DEVOLUTION PRINTING AND POSTAGE**

Separate arrangements apply to printing and posting of material around Localisation/Devolution. This might cover the circulation of information to individuals or groups of individuals or the conduct of surveys.

The use of facilities in such circumstances would be under the authority of the Ward Committee and be organised by or on behalf of the Ward Lead Officer using the resources available for Localisation/Devolution.

**Guidance approved by CBM: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2005 (Updated AGM 2011)  
Corporate Director of Governance**

## USE OF COUNCIL PRINTING AND POSTAGE

The Council provides the following services, **subject to budget availability**, to assist Councillors in discharging their role as Members of the City Council. Services can therefore only be used on Council business and **never** in connection with party political or electoral campaigning activities, or for private purposes.

### PRINTING



#### **YES**

Black ink only on different colour paper / card.

Photocopiers to be used for single copies for Council business only.  
Multiple copies through Democratic Services.

Information for Constituents can include:

- Services provided by City Council or Joint Authorities
- Contact details for local Councillor, MP, MEP and relevant officers of the City Council.
- Local meetings/initiatives organised by, or on behalf of City Council.

Letterheads, Business Cards and Compliment Slips.

With the exception of Letterheads and Business Cards where coat of arms is set, Members can determine layout of print.

Political Party can **only** appear on printing as:  
Cllr X, X Ward, X Party

Coat of Arms for use only in connection with Council Business or printed material produced by Birmingham City Council.



#### **NO**

Colour ink.

Use of photocopiers for private / political purposes.

Use of slogans, titles or phrases which are associated with a Political Party.

Information during the "Purdah Period" leading up to elections which appears to promote a Councillor seeking re-election.

Name of person standing as a candidate in an election, who is not a current serving City Councillor.

Use of Coat of Arms on Private/Political publications.

### POSTAGE

Individual letters responding to a constituent on specific matters raised by them.

Individual responses to petitions.

Business Reply service used for:

- Cards produced through Democratic Services.
- Individual responses from a constituent on a specific matter raised by them.

General letters/information to constituents.

Distribution of Printing.

Use of business reply for collecting signatures for Petitions.