

GUIDELINES ON REPRESENTATION: LOBBYING

The Mayor and the Assembly wish the Greater London Authority to be as open and as accessible to the people of London as is possible. The Authority should provide a forum for debate for all of the issues and matters which concern Londoners. The interests of all Londoners should be represented, and all of their voices should be heard.

The Authority will therefore ensure that Londoners will have easy access to the Mayor and Assembly members both through the normal means of communication – letters, “e” Mails, telephones and meetings which they attend to make representations about specific issues – and through the unique public meetings which the Mayor must hold each year – the Peoples Question Time and the State of London Debate. Also the Assembly will hold regular public meetings and, ten times each year will hold meetings at which it will question the Mayor.

The Mayor and the Assembly are, of course, statutorily required to consult Londoners whose interests are likely to be affected by any decisions or actions they take in the exercise of their functions or powers.

The Mayor and the Assembly are anxious that the open access they are proposing should be a privilege enjoyed by all of those who genuinely represent the interests of Londoners as a whole, or who represent significant minority interests. They are concerned that this privilege should not be abused by permitting the Authority to become yet another target for professional lobbyists, paid to represent multiple clients with specific or singular interests which may not be representative of, or represent, the wider interests of London.

The Mayor and the Assembly understand that lobbying is not just practised by professional lobbying firms or public relations firms with multiple clients. They also recognise that it is undertaken by paid staff and by members of business and trade associations, individual companies, trades unions, charities, churches, voluntary organisations and other individuals and groups, many of whom have no professional staff and only very limited resources. They recognise, therefore, that it is essential that this constituency of interests should be able to lobby the Mayor and Assembly on an equal basis.

Consequently they do not intend to impose a ban on the access of lobbyists to either the members or officers of the Authority.

What they will seek to ensure is that equality of opportunity, in terms of access to both the Mayor and Assembly members will be a touchstone of the Authority.

To secure this aspiration the actions of members and officers of the Authority will be governed by the following rules:

A member will not:

- offer or accord any preferential access or treatment to those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients compared with that which a member accords any other person or organisation which approaches him or her;
- give the lobbyist any indication that they will receive preferential access or treatment compared to that which will be accorded to any other person or organisation – from any member, group or person connected with the Authority [or its functional bodies].

It will be for the member of the Authority to establish the identity of the person or organisation who is lobbying him or her, and their motive for lobbying. [The same rule will apply to the officers of the Authority and its functional bodies].

Members and officers should:

- declare the acceptance of any hospitality, gifts or benefits, from any source, where they have been lobbied in relation to any functions of the Authority;
- not accept any paid work which would involve them in lobbying on behalf of any person or organisation or any clients of a person or organisation;
- not accept any paid work to provide services as an adviser or consultant the consequence of which would be to influence the activities of the Authority; [this would not affect activities such as journalism, involving political comment or involvement in representative or presentational work];
- decline all but the most insignificant or incidental hospitality, benefit or gift if the member is aware it is offered by a company or individual who lobbies on a fee basis on behalf of clients. As a general guideline, a member should not accept any offer that

- participate in an event if they are aware, or become aware, that the organisers are promoting the event on the basis that those paying to attend the event are “buying” influence over members of the Authority, or that they can expect to receive better subsequent access to members, or treatment, than would be accorded to any other person or organisation;

Where a member of the Authority has concerns about the approach or methods used by any person or organisation, the member should seek the guidance of the Standards Committee, or its clerk.

Staff employed in the Mayor’s Office, or directly recruited by the Mayor, and staff employed as officers giving Party Group support, will be in a position to exert influence. They will therefore be required to register any interests which might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement, and to declare the acceptance of hospitality, gifts and benefits.

[Under the Secretary of State’s Ethical Guidance the Mayor and Assembly Members are already required to declare interests and register hospitality etc.]

Staff seconded to the Authority, or students and others seeking work experience, will be expected to declare any interests which might affect their work with the Authority. They will be recruited subject to conditions of confidentiality about anything they may learn as a consequence of their work for the Authority, and subject to conditions that they may not pursue within the GLA, the specific interests of the organisation or institution from which they have been seconded or recruited.

Staff will not be seconded from political parties or organisations, or from political lobbying companies.