

## **Runnymede Borough Councils Policy for Councillor Surgeries**

As a ward representative, a councillor's primary role is to represent the ward and the people who live in it.

One of the ways for councillors to meet with constituents is through the use of surgeries at scheduled monthly meetings.

At surgeries, residents may speak to councillors about a wide range of issues. These sometimes include: complaints about anti-social behaviour; wanting a housing transfer; objecting to proposed Controlled Parking Zone schemes; lobbying for more traffic calming measures; complaining about rubbish; and seeking guidance on how to apply for grants and benefits.

### **Surgeries enable councillors to:**

- meet their constituents
- solve people's problems
- receive casework queries
- gain support for their work and ideas
- discuss the impact of council policies on the area
- raise their profile
- be an effective advocate for the people and communities they represent

Most councillors choose to make themselves available to their constituents through holding a regular surgery. These are usually held at appointed times each month.

It is members responsibility to make arrangements, but should they require help with setting up a surgery, Democratic Services will be able to provide advice.

Any charges up to £40 (incl VAT) per session for a single session per month (session is defined as a two-hour period) for the use of the surgery accommodation will be met in full by the Council but Members are encouraged to use Runnymede or Surrey facilities where these are appropriate in their own wards, enabling the Council to keep down costs and know members of the public are covered by the Councils own public liabilities insurance.

Councillors are encouraged to hold their surgery with fellow ward Councillors to keep costs down and make it easier for constituents to know where to go and when. In the event that two or more Councillors share the hire of premises they will only be entitled to seek reimbursement of one lot of charges i.e. they will only be able to claim a total of £40 between them.

Claims for reimbursement will be dealt with in the same manner as Councillors currently claim mileage expenses.

Officers can also arrange for the printing of surgery publicity for which there is a standard pattern, giving relevant details of Members and surgery arrangements, which can also be used in Runnymede social housing blocks and other private or housing association block providing agreement is sought from the owners.

All Runnymede councillors' surgery locations and times are publicly available and can be found under the individual member's webpages on the Council's website. It is important that councillors keep their surgeries details up to date. If you require any changes or spot any errors, please contact a member of Democratic Services.