

Committee: Members Privileges Sub Committee	Date: 11 July 2014
Subject: Members Accommodation	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision
Summary	
<p>Since the improvement works were carried out to the Members' facilities in Guildhall, the guidance for using the bedrooms has been updated by the Policy and Resources Committee. There is also a need to consider the current rates for using the bedrooms, as well as the list of those who are currently eligible to use the rooms and the process for booking them. This report outlines the current arrangements applied to the use of bedrooms in Guildhall and asks Members to consider whether any changes should be made to current procedures.</p>	
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION:</u></p> <p>That, Members decide on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the rates to be applied single and double occupancy of the bedrooms in Guildhall for Members and non-Members; (ii) the eligibility requirements for using the bedrooms; and (iii) the need, if any, to amend the process for booking bedrooms 	

Main Report

BACKGROUND

1. Following the improvement works carried out on the Member's facilities in Guildhall, it was felt that the guidance for use of the bedrooms should be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose. Members will be aware that the Policy and Resources Committee recently agreed new guidance for the use of Member bedrooms, and this can be found at the attached appendix.

2. In addition to reviewing the guidance for use of the bedrooms it was also agreed that other aspects, such as the rate applied and eligibility for using the bedrooms, should also be considered. This report looks at each aspect in turn, to give Members a picture of the current arrangements before making any decisions for change.

CURRENT POSITION

Bedroom Rates

3. When not being used for official City Corporation business by Members, in accordance with the guidance, Members are able to book a bedroom at a rate £15 for a double room and £10 for a single room. The non-Member rate is £93.28 for a double bedroom and £57.24 for a single bedroom. Both these rates are well below rates applied for comparative accommodation in the City of London.
4. Following a random search of hotels in the City of London, it has been ascertained that the cheapest double room available in the City of London on a weeknight is £90 for very basic accommodation at the LSE Bankside House. A double room in a Travelodge in the City would cost around £110, depending on the location and date. However, the average price of a double room in a 4-star hotel within the Square Mile is around £150-200, assuming the reservation is prepaid and made well in advance. The most expensive 5-star hotels are around £250-300.

Bedroom Eligibility

5. In addition to City Corporation Members, the following are currently entitled to use the bedrooms (all at non-Member rate unless specified):

Past Lord Mayors (Member rate)
Past Chief Commoners
Masters of Livery Companies currently in Office
Clerks of Livery Companies currently in Office
Sir John Cass Foundation
Immediate Past Masters (Only when deputising for the Master in Office)
Past Members who have a minimum of 10 years on the Court of Common Council
Senior Officers of the Corporation and others who are detained on Corporation-related business (Free of charge in accordance with guidance to Members)

6. In addition, the following individuals are also entitled to use the bedrooms:

Bernard Harty		Members Rate
Dr John Moses		Members Rate
Mr Shillingford		Members Rate
Neil O'Connor Mansion House Scholars		Non-Members Rate
Sam Jones	EX Town Clerk	Members Rate
Sir Alan Traill	EX LM	Members Rate
Sir Lawrence Verney		Members Rate
Sir M Oliver	EX LM	Members Rate
Mr Willoughby		Members Rate
Irish Society		Members Rate

7. Since the re-opening of the Members' bedrooms earlier this year, there have been on average 70 bookings made per month by Members. During this time, the bedrooms have been used by those described as non-Members as follows:

Past Lord Mayors	6
Former Common Councilmen	20
Irish Society	2
Sir John Cass Foundation	3
Other individuals	5
Livery Company Masters	2

Booking a Bedroom

8. The procedure for booking a room currently involves emailing the Committee desk at the following address to confirm requirements: remcommitteerooms@cityoflondon.gov.uk.
9. On the occasion of Corporation functions – State Banquets, Dinners etc - all bedrooms are to be kept for the exclusive use of Members, with priority being given to Members wishing to stay as opposed to those only wishing to use the accommodation for changing.
10. The following requirements are also in place when booking bedrooms:
- Members may not book more than 2 months in advance of the date of the intended stay;
 - The reason for requiring use of the room should always be specified when booking, whether it is on official City business or personal use;
 - Non Members / Officers may not book more than 1 month in advance of the date of the intended stay;
 - Members have priority for the Bedrooms - should a Member require a bedroom, any Officers or non-Members who are booked in will be asked to stand down from their booking; and
 - guests are asked to vacate their bedroom by 9am the following day in order to clean and service the rooms.
11. In order to retain some flexibility over these arrangements, where exceptional requests are made for use of the bedrooms outside the scope of the guidance, these are subject to the approval of the Chief Commoner.

OPTIONS

12. **Bedroom Rates:** The rates applied for Members and non-Members have been the same for some time and are much lower than the market rate for similar bedrooms in the City. Members therefore may feel that these rates should be increased. Bearing in mind that the rooms are provided principally to support and assist Members, the Sub-Committee may consider maintaining Members' rates at

relatively low levels compared to City hotels and an increase to say, £25/40 per night for a single / double occupancy might be considered reasonable. However, Members may wish to consider an even higher rate for both Members and non-Members.

13. **Bedroom Eligibility:** The eligibility requirements for using the bedrooms are currently quite far ranging and Members may feel these need some tightening up to ensure a more consistent approach. All of those currently eligible for use of the bedrooms have some historic link to the City Corporation, although this may not be felt to be enough of a reason to be given the benefit of these facilities. Members are therefore asked to consider who should be eligible for use of the bedrooms in future and which rate should be applied to them going forward.
14. **Booking a Bedroom:** The current process for booking a bedroom does not seem to present any obvious problems, and a clearer guidance and rate policy should help those who administer this reservation system in future. However, Members may feel that the requirements put in place for bookings need to be looked at further.

CONCLUSION

15. This report asks Members to consider the options for amending the charging policy and eligibility requirements for using Members' bedrooms at Guildhall. The current approach towards bedroom rates, eligibility and booking process have all been reviewed in this document. Members are now asked to consider whether any changes to this are desired and, if so, suggest more appropriate rates, eligibility requirements and booking procedures that should be followed.

APPENDIX

Guidance for Use of Members Bedrooms at Guildhall

Over the last few years the question of when Members are entitled to have free use of the bedrooms has become confused, as a result of which for the same events some Members are claiming free use while others are paying for private use. This is clearly unsatisfactory. The most recent official position was set out in 1995 –

“no charge will be levied for Members using the overnight accommodation at Guildhall where it necessary for the Member concerned to attend very early official Corporation engagements such as breakfast meetings”.

The Policy and Resources Committee has reviewed this and feel that the intention is still correct but that a modest refinement to cover dinners is appropriate and that “very early” is better defined by reference to market visits (which can start before 7:00) rather than breakfast meetings which are in effect part of many people’s normal working day. The Committee also felt some leeway is needed when a Member (typically a chairman) is hosting a breakfast meeting or a dinner and therefore reasonably needs preparation time and to be on time or to be the last person leaving a dinner.

Accordingly the position going forward is that no charge will be levied where –

A Member needs to attend early (ie before 8:30 am) official City Corporation engagements such as Market visits.

A Member is representing the City at an official event (eg a Party Conference) which finishes very late at night, ie 10:30pm or later.

A Member is hosting or speaking at an early morning event and therefore needs to be certain of being on time.

A Member is hosting a dinner or speaking on behalf of the Corporation at a major evening event.

For the avoidance of doubt members will be charged when they use the accommodation -

When they attend morning discussion meetings – but are not hosting or speaking.

When they attend Banquets and dinners unless they are hosting/chairing a reception committee.

When they attend social events eg concerts at the Barbican.

When they attend Ward Club or Livery events unless they have a speaking role and are representing the Corporation.

When booking rooms, Members requesting free use should clearly indicate which of the four categories is relevant.

Those Members who do not use the bedrooms might usefully consider doing so when appropriate. They are now of a good standard and may be a good alternative to late night/early morning travel.