

Return to face to face meetings in The Salford Suite at the Civic Centre from 1st September 2021

It is planned to return to face to face meetings in The Salford Suite in the Old Town Hall Building at the Civic Centre from Wednesday 1st September 2021.

The Salford Suite is the only available room that is large enough to hold meetings and still comply with social distancing and Covid safe guidelines, as advised by Public Health.

Everyone involved has worked hard to ensure that the transfer of face to face meetings to the Salford Suite will be held in a COVID-19 secure environment. Your safety and that of members of the public is our utmost priority, whilst also supporting transparency, accountability and effective decision making.

This briefing note outlines the arrangements in place and the guidelines that we are all asked to adhere to ensure everyone is kept safe and the city council's decision making remains legally compliant.

1. General guidelines for meetings

- a. Elected members, co-opted members with voting rights, and officer members of joint committees have to attend in person to participate in meetings and to make formal decisions. There is, unfortunately, no option available in legislation to allow councillors to attend meetings remotely.
- b. It should be possible to hold most of the decision making meetings back in the Salford Suite but **it will not be possible to hold the meetings of the Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board, Licensing and Safety Regulatory Panel (taxis) and Planning and Transportation Regulatory Panel**, due to the number of people required to attend and so they will remain at 100 Embankment for the foreseeable future. There may also be times, when the date and times of meetings clash, that one may need to move to 100 Embankment.
- c. The Monitoring Officer has confirmed that Lead Member Briefings, can and should, continue to happen remotely, including if a decision is being taken.
- d. Briefings or training sessions can continue to be held remotely and your clerk will liaise with Chairs and Lead Members as appropriate and continue to arrange these via Microsoft Teams.
- e. Meetings held in the Salford Suite will not be live streamed as this facility is currently not available.
- f. Officers of the council will not be required to attend meetings in person as they are not formal members of any of the committees/panels or part of the formal decision making process at meetings. Officers who usually attend meetings to present reports and/or advise at meetings are asked to continue to do so remotely, to reduce the numbers of people who are attending face to face and so help minimise the risks due to COVID-19. Officers will continue to receive Microsoft Teams invites for meetings.

- g. Only elected members and the senior designated officer should attend the meeting in person.
- h. The venue for each meeting will be confirmed by the committee clerk and included in the diary invitation and published agenda for each meeting.
- i. The use of the Salford Suite will be dedicated to decision making meetings until further notice. It will not be a bookable space on the room booking system and any enquires about using the room should be directed to decisionmakingandscrutiny@salford.gov.uk . The room must be available at short notice for decision making purposes and the room has been set up to meet Covid secure guidelines for this purpose, so the layout of the room must not be changed.

2. Using the Salford Suite for face to face meetings

It is very important, for everyone's safety, that members and officers only access the Salford Suite and the work spaces detailed in this section when attending the meetings.

a. Where to enter the building

For daytime meetings, elected members (and the senior designated officer) and the public attending meetings **must** enter the building by the main front door of the Old Town Hall building and take their place in the meeting room. An officer from Democratic Services should be on hand to direct you to The Salford Suite.



For evening meetings (after 4:30pm), elected members (and the senior designated officer) and the public attending meetings **must** enter the building by the main reception area and press the buzzer on the Entryphone to be admitted by the security officer on duty.



- b. Areas of the building that are closed to people attending meetings
- Extensive rebuilding renovations are taking place in the Civic Centre so access to rooms and space is very limited. Most of the building will remain closed and many contractors will be working on site.
 - Members of the public are also using the building to access the Registrars offices and the ceremony rooms and arrangements are in place for them to do so safely, so **there will be no access to the Registrars corridor and the ceremony room's corridor.**
- c. Toilets
- The toilets on the first floor on the committee room corridor **must** be used. The Registrars corridor will not be open to members, officers and members of the public attending meetings in The Salford Suite.
 - The accessible toilet can be used on the Registrars corridor if required and an officer from Democratic services will act as a marshal on the corridor so members can use it. Please alert the clerk in attendance at the meeting on the day.
- d. Working areas available when attending meetings in The Salford Suite
- For Cabinet members: Four work spaces have been set up for you to use in the Deputy Mayor's Office on the first floor on the Mayor's corridor.
 - For other elected members: Two work spaces have been set up in The Boardroom (next to The Salford Suite) for you to use.
 - For senior officers: Two work spaces have been set up for you to use in what was the Members Conference Room on the first floor on the Mayor's corridor.

3. Guidance for attending the meetings in a COVID-secure manner

- a. Lateral flow testing and PCR tests
- A vital element of our COVID-secure plans is that everyone attending **should complete a COVID-19 lateral flow home tests** three days before the meeting and on the morning of the meeting. You can order or collect a home testing kit by:
 - [Ordering](#) a box of test kits to be delivered to your home
 - [Collecting](#) a box of test kits from a local collection point
 - If you test positive before or on the day you were meant to attend the meeting **under no circumstances should you attend**. Please email your apologies to Democratic Services of your decisionmakingandscrutiny@salford.gov.uk. If your lateral flow test is positive you will then need to book a complementary PCR Test and follow national guidance on self-isolating.
 - Despite all the COVID-secure measures we have put in place there remains a residual risk and coronavirus can make anyone seriously ill. For some of you the risk is higher, particularly if you are clinically extremely vulnerable or if they are at significant risk or you have one or more health conditions as a number of risk factors may interact as well as health conditions.

- You may wish to take medical advice about your particular circumstances, if either of the above applies to you before you make a decision about attending face to face meetings.

b. Attending the meeting on the day in The Salford Suite

- Please arrive at least 20 minutes before the start of the meeting to allow for controlled access to the building and meeting space.
- The meeting will be run in line with Government guidance, and using the principle of ‘hands, face, space and fresh air’. You are asked to regularly wash and sanitise your hands, wear a face covering unless you hold a medical exemption, and please maintain a social distance (1.5m) from others at all times whilst attending meetings.
- You may remove your mask when you are seated but please wear your face covering when moving around the room or building.
- Movement around the meeting spaces will be kept to an absolute minimum with pre-defined entrances and exits and restricted areas, as outlined above.
- Please make sure your devices are fully charged as there is only limited access to electrical points in the meeting room.
- There is no facility for providing refreshments but bottled water will be provided at each meeting.

4. Notification of meetings and attendance at meetings

a. Notification of meetings

- You will continue to receive the notification of your meetings from the clerk in Committee Services by email and the papers will be available via the ModGov App.
- Please take particular note of the venue for each meeting.

b. If you cannot attend a meeting

- Non-attendance at face to face meetings will impact on your attendance record as a councillor. If you are unable to attend because you test positive for coronavirus please email your apologies to Committee Services at decisionmakingandscrutiny@salford.gov.uk.
- If you are unable to attend for the longer term and are concerned about the impact of this on your attendance record, you can apply for a dispensation via the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services can advise you about this.

5. Meetings continuing at 100 Embankment

a. Lateral flow testing and PCR tests

The guidance listed under 3a above also applies at 100 Embankment.

b. Travelling to 100 Embankment

- There are a range of travel options to 100 Embankment, and full details can be found at this link: <https://embankmentmanchester.com/transport-options>.
- It is a 4 minute walk from Manchester Victoria train and tram stations
- The Free Bus stops outside both Salford Central Station and 100 Embankment
- There is secure cycle storage and showers on site.

c. Parking at 100 Embankment

- There is onsite parking in the underground QPark (Deansgate North) immediately below the building. Discounts are available for parking booked in advance (<https://www.q-park.co.uk/en-gb/cities/manchester/deansgate-north/>). Cleminson Street remains the closest SCC parking, where councillors and officers are able to park using SCC parking permits.
- Taxi drop off is available immediately to the front door of the building.
- Where members incur additional costs from the travel to and from these meetings, including the cost of parking and / or taxi's, this is recoverable via members' expenses. Please do indicate on the claim form that this is to attend a face-to-face meeting so that we are able to monitor these additional costs. We are working with finance to ensure we can be transparent about the additional costs of the return to face-to-face meetings whilst restrictions remain in place and for the exceptional reasons for those costs to be incurred.