



## **POLICY ON COMMUNICATION**

### **POLICY STATEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

It is, and will remain, our intention to employ Information Technology in our drive to improve our service to our residents and increase our effectiveness.

At no time should any member of staff copy files or use any unauthorised software in the Council computers. This includes any diskette, CD or other file transfer methods. Failure to comply with this instruction may result in disciplinary action.

The Town Clerk may copy files or file transfer for use on another computer when the Council computers are not functional.

### **POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE SECURING & PRESERVATION OF ELECTRONIC DATA**

#### **Acceptable**

- Staff will be instructed to make daily backup copies of working data on designated portable storage equipment. Authorisation will be given to store this equipment over night or during office closure (e.g. Bank Holidays and weekends) at the employee's home and then returned to the office when they are required for back up or to reinstate the office computer.
- This data holder must ensure that this equipment is safely secured whilst in their possession at home or in transit.

#### **Unacceptable**

- Opening or use of data whilst in data holder's possession at home is strictly forbidden.

### **POLICY STATEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE FOR E-MAIL**

#### **Acceptable**

- Communication in connection with Council business.

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- Occasional personal use (during breaks, lunch hours, before or after working hours) including access to third party email systems such as Hotmail, G-mail etc.
- The Council has access to read employees' mail boxes where there is a legitimate Council need to do so (e.g. if a person is absent and important email is expected).

### **Unacceptable**

- Overuse of email for personal, non-Council business related communication during break times or after hours.
- Sending of non-Council business related file attachments unless authorised by the Town Clerk or Council Mayor.
- Subscribing to non-Council business related mailing lists.

### **Forbidden - at all times**

- Sending messages or files through Internet email or via the internet and external mail gateways that contain discriminatory, abusive pornographic, obscene, illegal, offensive potentially libellous or defamatory material.
- It is forbidden to use the Council email address for private personal gain.
- Subscribing for any non-Council email alerts or other services as these could lead to spam email being received.

## **POLICY STATEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE FOR PC'S, INTERNET & INTRANET**

### **Acceptable**

- Storing Council data.
- Running Council supplied software.
- Loading text, images, video or audio streams in connection with normal Council business.
- Storing limited amounts of personal data on your PC.
- Use of Town Council provided instant messaging and social media network accounts for dissemination of Council information to the public is permitted.
- This is all subject to reasonable use of disk space both on the pc and central servers. You may be requested to remove files if they are leading to excessive memory use or capacity requirements.

### **Unacceptable**

- Loading unauthorised or untested software i.e. software not purchased through the formal purchasing process. This includes, for example, installing software that enables free internet access from a public Internet Service Provider.
- Loading any software without the prior consent of the Council; any loaded software must be notified to the Council in advance and the relevant licence details deposited with them.

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- Loading and playing games.
- Transferring data/software to and from Council laptops/PC's and non-Council laptops / PC's (home PC's). This would include application software, screen savers, wallpapers, and Internet flash plug-ins and Quick Time viewers.

**Forbidden – during or outside working hours**

- Loading files containing pornographic, offensive or obscene content, whether in text, image, video or audio format.
- Using Council laptops/pc's to carry out business for another Council or in connection with self-employment activities.
- Accessing internet chat rooms at any time (unless for a proven Council purpose and with prior approval).
- Use of personal instant messaging systems and social media network accounts are not permitted unless for a specific Council purpose and approved by them.
- Use of Town Council provided instant messaging and social media network accounts for personal communications is not permitted.
- Unauthorised activity that may result in viruses getting into the system, including disabling of anti-virus or other security software.

**POLICY STATEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE FOR THE TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

**Acceptable**

- Communication in connection with Council business.
- Occasional personal use (during breaks, lunch breaks, before or after working hours) or in an emergency.
- Receiving limited personal calls as long as the length of such calls are kept to a minimum and do not have an adverse effect on the operation of Council business.

**Unacceptable**

- Giving personal calls priority above Council business calls.
- Making personal international calls.

**Forbidden**

- Making calls to 'chat' lines, premium rate numbers or any similar telephone service.

**POLICY STATEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE FOR FAX**

**Acceptable**

- Incoming and outgoing faxed information in connection with Council business.
- Occasional personal use (during breaks, lunch breaks, before or after working

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hours) or in an emergency.

- Receiving limited personal faxed as long as the length of the communication is kept to a minimum and does not have an adverse effect on the Council.

**Unacceptable**

- Putting personal faxed information priority above Council business requirements.
- Sending personal international faxes.
- Connecting to Premium Rate fax services.
- Subscribing to fax-back premium rate services.

All electronic and communication systems are the property of the Council and any material on these systems should not be considered as private.

The Council has access to and reserves the right to retrieve and review information on any system, including any information that might be protected by a password.

Erased or deleted material will also remain available for retrieval and renewal by the Council.

In serious cases, where an individual has been found to have used equipment or systems for illegal or immoral purposes (in particular the storage, production, receipt or distribution of illicit material whether inside or outside the Council), this will lead to disciplinary action and summary dismissal.

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