



## **USE OF COUNCIL IT FACILITIES**

### **CODE OF PRACTICE - MEMBERS**

In order to assist Members carry out and discharge their role effectively, the Council provides personal computers with necessary software, peripheral hardware and consumables ("IT Facilities") to all Members so as to enable Members to carry out their role effectively. When using the IT Facilities provided, Members are required to adhere to this policy.

This policy outlines the manner in which IT Facilities, should be used by Council Members and should be considered in conjunction with any guidance issued in relation to the use of IT Facilities, in particular in relation to email and internet use.

This policy must be signed by all newly elected and re-elected Members.

All IT Facility provided by the Council shall remain the property of the Council and must be surrendered to the Council in the event that a Member ceases to be a Wirral Councillor. access to Council electronic systems will be suspended and terminated in the event that a Member ceases to be a Wirral Councillor.

Internet use by Members using the IT Facilities will be routinely monitored for any unauthorised or unacceptable use.

IT Facilities are provided for the sole use and benefit of Council Members and should be used primarily for Council business. Use by family/ friends and the like is not permitted.

Members are expected to demonstrate a responsible approach to the use of the IT Facilities provided and are expected to behave in a legal, moral and ethical fashion that is consistent with Council policies and standards.

All access to the Internet by computer (including portables computers) provided by the Council must be via the Council's firewall. This means that a log of visited sites will be kept. These logs will be routinely monitored. Access to the internet using computers provided by the Council must only use the approved service providers. (Downloading "free" browsers etc. is not allowed as this may significantly change the way in which the computer is organised, which may in turn give rise to support problems.)

It must be recognised that any view communicated over the Internet will be deemed to be the view of the Council, and will in most cases be treated as equivalent to correspondence sent by traditional formal routes. Any personal view expressed via a Council e-mail address should be endorsed "The contents of this e-mail are the personal view of the author and should in no way be considered the official view of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council".

Members must use a password to log on to the computer provided as part of the IT Facilities. Members should not disclose their password to another person. In the event that the password becomes known by anyone (or a Member suspects it has become known) then the password must be changed immediately.

Members must not connect personal devices or load personal software, including games, onto computers supplied by the Council. Hardware and configuration of the computer must not be changed and any such requirements must be requested via the Council's IT support service. A personal e-mail account (e.g. "MSN hotmail" or "Yahoo") may be loaded onto the machine.

The security of any personal data held on a Council provided computer is the responsibility of the Member and recovery of such data cannot be guaranteed should the computer need repair. Members are responsible for the backing up of data held on the computer in accordance with any guidelines issued.

Members should print only essential material, and should check the length of a document before printing. Consumables, e.g. printing ink and paper provided by the Council should only be used for Council business.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1986 and the Local Authority Code of Practice on Publicity, Members should not utilise IT Facilities for any party political purpose or to publish any material which in whole or part appears to be designed to effect public support for a political party. Members should have due regard to any guidance issued by the Council concerning the use of IT Facilities.

all communications sent or received via Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSx) or Government Secure Intranet (GSI) may be intercepted or monitored.

Members must not automatically or manually forward electronic mail from a Wirral Council email account to another email account in a lower classification domain (ie - an internet email account such as Hotmail or personal email account).

### **Unacceptable Deliberate Use**

The following activities, whilst not an exhaustive list, are considered unacceptable:

The access to or creation, transmission or publication of any illegal or indecent images, sounds, data or other material.

The access to or creation, transmission or publication of any data capable of being displayed or converted to such illegal or indecent sounds, data or other material

The creation, transmission or publication of any material which is designed or likely to cause offence, inconvenience, discrimination or needless anxiety, or which may intimidate or create an atmosphere of harassment.

The creation, transmission or publication of defamatory material.

The receipt or transmission of material that infringes the copyright of another person.

The creation, transmission or publication of any material in violation of Data Protection legislation or of any UK or International laws or regulations. Such activity may constitute a criminal offence.

The transmission of unsolicited commercial or advertising material to other users of the Council's network or users of the Internet.

The deliberate unauthorised access to facilities, services, data or resources within the Council or any other network or service accessible via the Internet, or attempts to gain such access.

Unauthorised access to the electronic mail of another individual.

Deliberate activities with any of the following characteristics or that by their nature could result in:

- wasting staff or other users' efforts or network resources;
- corrupting or destroying other users' data;
- violating the privacy of other users;
- disrupting the work of other users;

using the Internet in a way that denies service to other users (for example by overloading the connection to the network by unnecessarily, excessively and thoughtlessly downloading large files);  
continuing to use any item of software or to access any material after being requested to cease its use because of disruption caused to the functioning of the Council's network or the Internet (for example utilities designed to broadcast network-wide messages); and/or  
the introduction or propagation of viruses.

Where the Internet is being used to access another network, any abuse of the acceptable use policy of that network.

Any use of the Internet or other facilities that could damage the reputation of the Council.

Any breach of this policy could result in the withdrawal of IT Facilities from the relevant Member or in some cases result in further action being taken. (See below).

Any alleged breach of this policy will be subject to an investigation by the Council's Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Council's Internal Audit Section. Upon conclusion of any investigation undertaken where in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer a breach(es) has been found, the Monitoring Officer may take one or more of the following actions,:

- Notify the Member's Party Group Leader of the breach;
- By complaint refer the breach(es) to the Council's Standards Committee Initial Assessment Panel;
- By complaint refer the breach(es) to Standards for England;
- Notify the breach(es) to the Police.

Issued to: Councillor ..... Date

I agree to abide by terms defined above

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date

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A signed copy of this document should be returned to the Monitoring Officer with a copy held by the individual Member.

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