

ICT Acceptable Use Policy Appendix for Councillors and Co-opted Members

1. Purpose

This annex sets out guidance for councillors and co-opted members on the acceptable use of council ICT facilities and should be read in conjunction with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

All councillors need to use County Council's ICT facilities in carrying out their duties as a member of the council and as an elected representative of their local area. Co-opted Members may need to use the County Council's ICT facilities in their capacity as a co-opted member of the Council and as a representative of a body or group. This guidance should be followed by all councillors and co-opted members when using council ICT facilities at home, in council premises or elsewhere.

2. What are your responsibilities?

Members' Code of Conduct

Under Section 6 (2) of the Members' Code of Conduct you: must when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority:

- (a) act in accordance with your authority's reasonable requirements; and
- (b) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes)

3. What does the Policy include?

This Policy includes the use of the following, which should only be used for council business purposes:

- (a) Council provided equipment e.g. laptops, desktop PCs, printers, photocopiers, phones, mobiles, PDAs (e.g. BlackBerrys), fax machines.
- (b) Council provided systems e.g. email, internet, intranet, Word.
- (c) Council provided consumables and devices e.g. memory sticks.
- (d) Council provided broadband connections

4. Policy compliance

Any breach of the Policy by a member, or exceptions to it, will be dealt with by the Council's Assistant Head of Finance (Audit) or the Monitoring Officer. Any serious breach of the Policy will be referred to the Monitoring Officer if it appears also to be a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.

If you believe that others are not using systems appropriately then you should contact the Council's Monitoring Officer or the Assistant Head of Finance (Audit) – see Raising Serious Concerns & Whistleblowing guidance for councillors.

5. Not to be used for purely Political Purposes

Any ICT facilities provided by the Council for elected members to carry out their duties as councillors are to be used for those duties only. The Council's ICT equipment, systems and devices should not be used for purely party political purposes e.g. canvassing and electioneering etc.

Examples:

(a) Councillors should not:

- (1) use council facilities to publish purely political material, including party political material.
- (2) publish their County Council email address on election campaign publicity i.e. a separate email address must be used.

(b) Councillors can:

- (1) Reply to and deal with all queries/correspondence from constituents on council provided facilities
- (2) Use council facilities to publish details of councillor surgeries
- (3) Continue to use ICT facilities for councillor-related duties during the period leading-up to an election

6. Not to be used for Private Business Purposes

Council facilities, including information and officers, should not be used for private business purposes or for furthering your business interests. When dealing with councillor-related business you should not be publicising your professional business.

7. Removable media

If members need to use memory sticks then only those supplied by ICT Services should be used. These memory sticks have an automatic password facility to ensure no unauthorised access to the data. Contact the ICT Service Desk.

8. Communications – Security

Locking screen

- When going away from a computer but leaving it switched-on, the screen must be locked by pressing Ctrl-Alt-Delete simultaneously then clicking Lock Computer. When returning to the computer, unlock it by pressing Ctrl-Alt-Delete and typing in your log-in password.

Log-in Password

- When using computers at County Hall periodically you will receive a message to state your current password will expire and ask you to change your password. If your password has expired without being changed then contact the ICT Service Desk.

9. Using the Internet

Internet Search

- Be careful about the keywords you put into an internet search facility to ensure you do not accidentally access an unauthorised website

Access to unauthorised site

- If you do accidentally access an unauthorised website then inform the ICT Service Desk as soon as possible.

10. Returning Equipment

Where a Member is not re-elected or has to or chooses to stand down, IT equipment loaned to that person must cease to be used and must be returned within a month.

If the Democratic Support Manager requests the return of any equipment at any time then this request must be complied with.

Related documents:

Members' Code of Conduct

Raising Serious Concerns & Whistleblowing guidance for councillors

Access to Information Procedure Rules

Protocol on Members Rights and Responsibilities