

Protocol on the Use of IT by Members

1 Introduction

The Council provides Councillors with computers to use at home to facilitate the performance of their duties as Councillors. The Council is committed to the development of E-Commerce and will be working over the coming years to increase the range of information which is available to Councillors electronically and to enable Councillors to conduct more of their business remotely. The use of these computers can make Councillors much more effective, but there are risks associated with such use. This protocol sets out the conditions on which such computers are provided, in order to minimise those risks both to the Council and to individual Councillors.

Each Councillor is required to sign a copy of this protocol as a condition of being provided with the computer and must comply with the terms of this protocol. For this purpose, "Computer" means the computer provided to the Councillor by the Council for use at the Councillor's home, together with any equipment, software or materials provided for use with the computer.

2 Security for the Computer

- (a) The Councillor accepts responsibility for the safe-keeping of the computer and shall not remove the computer or allow it to be removed from the Councillor's home.
- (b) The Councillor shall make reasonable arrangements for the safe-keeping of the computer.
- (c) Access to the Council's information systems via the computer is subject to password security. The Councillor shall ensure that no-one other than the Councillor is given access to those Council information systems and shall not reveal any such password to any other person.

3 Use for Council Business

- (a) The computer is provided to the Councillor specifically to facilitate the discharge of the Councillor's functions as a Councillor. The Councillor must therefore not use the computer in any manner which will prevent or interfere with its use for that purpose.
- (b) Accordingly, the Councillor must not:
 - (i) misuse the computer in such a manner as to cause it to cease to function

- (ii) install or use any equipment or software which may cause the computer to malfunction.
- (c) The Councillor must:
 - (i) Ensure that the computer is maintained in a working condition;
 - (ii) Report any faults promptly to the appropriate officer of the Council;
 - (iii) Provide regular access to Council officers to service, maintain and repair the computer.
- (d) The Council provides the computer together with ancillary equipment and materials required for the Councillor's functions as a Councillor. Accordingly, the Council may decline to provide further equipment or material beyond a certain allowance where the use of such equipment or material appears to the Council to be required for private (non-Council) use.

4 Use for Private Purposes

- (a) The Councillor may use the computer for private and family purposes and may permit members of his/her immediate family to use the computer for private purposes, but is then responsible for their use of the computer;
- (b) The Council is prohibited from publishing any material of a party-political nature. If the Councillor uses the computer for the preparation of any material of such nature, he/she must make it clear that such material is published in a private capacity and not by or on behalf of the Council, and that no costs have been incurred by the Council as a consequence of its publication;
- (c) The Council has obtained the necessary software licenses for the use of the computer by the Councillor in a private capacity, but not for any non-Council business use of the computer. If the Councillor wishes to use the computer for any non-Council business use, it is the Councillor's responsibility to obtain any necessary software licences.
- (d) The Council accepts no responsibility for such private use of the computer or any loss, costs or liability which the Councillor or any other person may suffer as a result of the use of the computer.

5 Bringing the Council into Disrepute

- (a) The Councillor shall not use the computer, or permit its use, in any manner which may bring the Council or the Councillor into disrepute.
- (b) Specifically, where the Council provides web-sites for Councillors, the Council reserves editorial control of such websites and the right to remove or require the removal of any material which is unlawful,

defamatory or likely to cause offence or bring the Council into disrepute.

6 Inspection and Audit

The Council reserves the right to inspect the computer at any time. The Councillor is required to give Council officers access at any reasonable time for such inspection and audit, which may be undertaken remotely and without notice to the Councillor. Councillors are advised that the computer includes a history file which records its use, and particularly any websites which it has accessed.

7 Costs

- (a) The Council will meet the cost of providing the computer, together with a limited supply of paper and printer cartridges (contact ext. XXXX or email at YYYY if you need some more), and provides a freephone link for the Councillor to dial in to the Council offices to access the central systems for information, E-Mmail or internet access.
- (b) Each Councillor is responsible for his/her own electricity bill. When turned on, the computer consumes about the same amount of electricity as a 100 Watt light bulb.
- (c) If the Councillor wishes to make use of the computer for extensive private E-Mail or internet access, he/she should take out a personal subscription to an Internet Service Provider. Any such telephone time will then be on the Councillor's own telephone bill and will not be reimbursed by the Council.

8 Return and Recovery of the Computer

- (a) The computer remains the property of the Council.
- (b) The Council reserves the right to require the Councillor to return the computer at any time and the right to recover the computer from the Councillor.
- (c) The Councillor is required to return the computer to the Council upon ceasing to be a Councillor.

9 Confidentiality

- (a) The Councillor will be able to access confidential Council information using the computer. The Councillor is responsible for ensuring the continued security of any such confidential information which he receives, including the security of any storage of such information on the computer. The Councillor is reminded of his/her obligations under the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors not to disclose such confidential information to any third party.

- (b) Some of this information will be personal information relating to individuals. The unauthorised processing or disclosure of such information is prohibited under the Data Protection Act and the Councillor is responsible for ensuring that there is no such unauthorised disclosure from the computer.

10 Restriction of Use

The Council reserves the right to restrict the use of the computer if it has reason to believe that the use of the computer is likely to offend any provision of the Protocol. In particular, the Council reserves the right to:

- (a) remove or disable any software or equipment;
- (b) remove any information stored on the computer.

Signed by the Councillor on receipt of the computer:

Date: