

Section 8 - Protocol for Members and Voting Co-opted Members – Use of Council Resources and Equipment

1.0 Context

Paragraph 5(b) of the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members provides that a Member:

“must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the authority –

- (i) act in accordance with the authority’s requirements; and
- (ii) ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the authority or of the office to which the member has been elected or appointed.”

Guidance for Members and voting co-optees is provided in this protocol.

2.0 General

2.1 The Council only has power to provide facilities that assist Members in discharging their role as Members of the Council. Services and equipment provided can, therefore, only be used on Council business and not in connection with party political or electoral campaigning activity. They may only be used for private purposes where specifically authorised. The Standards Committee has now specifically authorised the appropriate personal use of ICT facilities provided by the Council.

2.2 Members should have regard to the limit on Council resources.

2.3 Members should abide by the “Guidance for Members in Relation to the Use of Council ICT Facilities” (See Section 9, page 113)

3.0 PCs and Printers

3.1 The facilities are not to be used for producing material designed to affect public support for or to promote a political party or a candidate in an election or to promote a party political campaign.

3.2 No political logos can appear on printed material.

- 3.3 The name of a political party may appear on printed material once, but only in the form: “Name of party Member”.
- 3.4 The Council’s logo and Coat of Arms are only available for use in connection with Council business as set out and agreed by Cabinet on 6th December 2006.
- 3.5 Members will be issued with a reasonable supply of consumables (paper and printer cartridges) which are to be used only for Council Business. The Council has the right to limit or terminate the supply of consumables to any Member in the case of excessive demand or suspected abuse.

4.0 Photocopying

- 4.1 Photocopying facilities are provided in connection with Council business only.
- 4.2 There is no specific limit on the number of photocopies available but Members should be economic in their use of resources.
- 4.3 Members should be aware of copyright and that there are restrictions on what can and cannot be copied. Members should follow the guidelines displayed in Members Services.

5.0 Personalised Business Cards

There are provided for use only in connection with Council business.

6.0 Postage

- 6.1 This is available for Members in connection with Council business only. Members are requested to be economic in their use of this facility. Members are also reminded that this facility cannot be used in connection with party political or election purposes.
- 6.2 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, postage will be second class.
- 6.3 In the interests of economy, Members are requested to use e-mail instead of post wherever possible.

7.0 Members’ Services

The secretarial and research services provided by Members’ Services cannot be used in connection with party political or election purposes or for private purposes.

8.0 Broadband Service

The Council will contribute a sum of money per month towards the installation of a broadband service in Members' homes. Where a Member wishes to also make private use of the facility a contribution in respect of that use shall be made by the Member (The appropriate rates of contribution will be set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme).

9.0 Individual Web Sites

Individual Council web sites will be made available to those Members wishing to have one. These sites will be subject to editorial control by the Head of Law and Governance and will not contain information of a political nature. Members' Services will assist Members with the Management of these sites. The Standards Committee has agreed that the sites can contain a hyperlink to a Member's private Web – Logging (Blogging) site if so desired. An appropriate disclaimer statement on behalf of the Council will accompany any such hyperlink. Members who wish to take up an Individual Council Web Site will be required to sign up to the Protocol for use of Member Websites as agreed by the Standards Committee (see Section 10, page 121).

10.0 Car Park Passes

These can only be used on Council business.

11.0 Return of Equipment

At the end of the period as an elected Member, all items of equipment are to be returned to the Council in full working condition.

12.0 ICT

The following options are available to Members:

- Provision of a home PC or laptop
- Use of a PC in Council premises
- Provision of a printer
- Provision of a hand held remote email devices will be made available for those members who wish to have access to email but who do not require broadband and a lap top/PC

The Table below summarises the position:-

		Mobile Device	Printer	PC in Council Premises
(A)	The equipment is the property of the Council.	✓	✓	✓
(B)	At the end of the period as an elected Member, the equipment and software is to be returned to the Council in full working condition. In addition, the equipment and software is to be returned on request by the Head of ICT.	✓	✓	x
(C)	The equipment must be installed by an ICT Support Officer of the Council.	x	✓	✓
(D)	Members are required to undergo training provided by the Council in the use of the equipment.	✓	✓	✓
(E)	The system, including access to the internet and e-mail is provided for use in connection with Council business (excluding party political or electoral campaigning activity) together with appropriate personal use.	✓	✓	✓
(F)	The installation of software is only to be carried out by an ICT Support Officer.	✓	✓	✓

Part 5 – Codes and Protocols

		Mobile Device	Printer	PC in Council Premises
(G)	No unlicensed software or software not related to Council business is to be installed ICT Support Officers are authorised to remove all such software.	✓	✓	✓
(H)	The copying of licensed software and data is illegal and prohibited.	✓	✓	✓
(I)	Software or data files are to be checked for viruses before being loaded on to the equipment.	✓	✓	✓
(J)	Members must not attempt to repair the equipment themselves.	✓	✓	✓
(K)	It is a Member's responsibility to ensure that any data he or she wishes to keep is backed up on CD, portable drive (memory stick) or PC.	✓	x	✓
(L)	Members should not only use the official Council e-mail address for Council business	✓	x	✓
(M)	Only the official Council website address, and the official Council e-mail address may appear on Council stationery.	✓	✓	✓

		Mobile Device	Printer	PC in Council Premises
(N)	Members' Services will keep up to date an inventory of all equipment supplied to Members.	✓	x	✓
(O)	Security: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passwords are not to be disclosed to unauthorised persons. • The unauthorised use of another person's password is not permitted. • Smart Card Security, where issued, should be utilised. 	✓	x	✓
(P)	Members should have regard to the privacy of other Members and should not, without permission of the Member, access another Member's e-mails or data.	✓	✓	✓
(Q)	Insurance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council maintains insurance on the equipment provided to Members. However, all reasonable care must be taken to prevent loss and damage so that all items are to be secured as far as practical. 	✓	✓	✓

Part 5 – Codes and Protocols

		Mobile Device	Printer	PC in Council Premises
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laptops/Handheld email devices must not be left unattended or unsecured wherever they may be. Any loss or damage to equipment must be reported as soon as possible. In the case of an insured loss the Council will meet the excess under the policy. However in the case of an uninsured loss the Member will be responsible for meeting the replacement cost (Members may wish to explore the possibility of extending their household insurance to cover the laptops/Handheld email devices for those areas not insured under the Council's policy). 	✓	✗	✗
		✓	✓	✓
		✓	✓	✓
(R)	Laptops shall be transported in the supplied carrying case and when returning a laptop to the Civic Centre for repair it shall be returned in the carrying case, together with all accessories provided with the laptop.	✓	✗	✗

		Mobile Device	Printer	PC in Council Premises
(S)	<p>Policy on the Use and Security of Corporate Intranet and Internet facilities.</p> <p>Members must comply with the City Council’s policy on the use and security of Corporate Intranet and Internet Facilities which will be reviewed from time to time. The current policy is available on the Council’s Intranet site under ‘Reference’ ‘Internet Policy’.</p>	✓	✗	✓
(T)	<p>The Council will provide consumables for Council use.</p>	✓	✓	✓
(U)	<p>Health and Safety:</p> <p>(a) Members are reminded of the following recommendations for safe use of a standard PC on their desktop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in a chair that gives good back support to avoid backache. • Position the screen in front of you to avoid twisting. • Regularly look away from the screen to reduce eye strain. 	✗	✗	✓

Part 5 – Codes and Protocols

		Mobile Device	Printer	PC in Council Premises
	(b) Members should avoid using a laptop on a low table or on the lap as these positions will increase strain on the lower back and neck.	✓	✗	✗
	(c) Members are encouraged to attend the relevant training course with regard to safe use of their computer system.	✓	✓	✓

13.0 Data Protection

Members are reminded that a separate note has been produced for them on this subject (see Section 11, page 127).

14.0 Libel

14.1 If Members publish something which is defamatory in a letter or an e-mail or on the web Members are personally liable.

15.0 Members' Commitment

Members with access to the Council's scheme for Remote Intranet/Internet Access for Members are required to sign up to and abide by the "Members' Commitment" (see Section 12, page 133).