



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

11TH SEPTEMBER 2023

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE ELECTED MEMBER ICT, INTERNET & EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND SERVICE DIRECTOR, DIGITAL & ICT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 Present an updated Elected Member ICT, Internet & Email Acceptable Use Policy to Members for consideration and approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members of the Democratic Services Committee:

- 2.1 Review the proposed Elected Member ICT, Internet & Email Policy (Version 3) as contained in Appendix A.
- 2.2 Approve the revised Elected Member ICT, Internet & Email Acceptable Use Policy (Version 3).
- 2.3 Agree the process for Elected Members to consent to the policy, as per the 'Policy Acceptance Form' contained within Appendix IV of the policy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Democratic Service Committee held on 12th February 2018 the Committee adopted the Elected Member ICT, Internet & Email Acceptable Use Policy.
- 3.2 This policy was taken forward by all Elected Members following this decision and has continued to form part of the Member Induction Pack, with it most recently being incorporated in the induction pack following the Local Government Elections in 2022, to which all Members signed up to.
- 3.3 Due to the new ways of working due to legislation requirements and due to the covid pandemic consideration needs to be given to the current policy to ensure it is still fit for purpose and acknowledges the new ways of working.

4. ELECTED MEMBER ICT, INTERNET & EMAIL POLICY

- 4.1 More than ever, the Council interact with service users and the public through digital means. Along side interaction with Constituents, Officers and other Council Partners, Elected Members now have the opportunity to attend Council meetings through digital platforms such as zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- 4.2 The Council considers the use of ICT equipment, internet and email to be a valued asset for both staff and Elected Members to assist in undertaking their roles more effectively. Therefore equipping Elected Members with the correct ICT provisions is essential to assist them in undertaking their role.
- 4.3 All Members have been provided with laptops and mobile phones and it is Council policy to promote its proper and efficient use.
- 4.4 The current policy defines what the Council considers as acceptable use of its ICT equipment, internet and email facilities and sets out rules and guidelines for its access and use.
- 4.5 The overall purpose of these conditions is to:
- promote efficient and safe use of Council ICT equipment, internet and email facilities;
 - protect the Council and its users from legal action, either civil or criminal;
 - protect and safeguard information, and
 - ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- 4.6 The policy applies to Elected Members when using Council internet and email (@rctcbc.gov.uk) facilities to conduct official Council business.
- 4.7 Elected Members are expected to comply with this policy at all times when using the Council's internet and email facilities, whether accessed locally or remotely (e.g. from a council office, Members home); and/or via any Council issued device (e.g. ipad, desktop computer, laptop, smartphone).
- 4.8 In respect of the usage of the Council mobile phone and accessing Council devices, Members are reminded that by limiting use to trusted Council digital devices this allows the Council to provide access to emails, teams and Council systems to Members, whilst Members are safe in the knowledge that this access is trusted.
- 4.9 Members on Council provided devices are more protected from cyber attacks, and also cannot be impersonated as they are protected by the Council's cyber security technologies. For the reasons mentioned above, Members are only able to access Council emails from a Council digital device. It is for this reason that all Members,

by default, were provided with the provision of a mobile telephone from the local elections in May 2022.

- 4.10 The current policy is contained in Appendix A with suggested amendments (illustrated in red) incorporated to bring the policy in line with current working practices.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Reviewing of the policy ensures that all Members have equal access to the appropriate ICT resources available.

6 CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 Discussions have been taken forward with colleagues within ICT to ensure the revisions are appropriate and reflect the cyber security requirements necessary.

- 6.2 The policy revisions have been shared with Group Leaders.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7 There are no financial implications aligned to this report

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

9 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 9.1 The work of all Councillors is fundamental to the work of the Council and subsequently the delivery of the Corporate Plan, hence ensuring Members are fully supported in undertaking their roles is important to the work of the Council overall.

- 9.2 Ensuring all Members are supported and have equal access to support and development links to the future generations well-being goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Ensuring policies are reviewed and updated to reflect working practices allow Members to confidently undertake their roles in the confidence that they are working correctly and adhering to Council policy.
- 10.2 Reviewing the policy allows the Council to strengthen the cyber security arrangements in place for the protection of the Council and its Elected Members.