28. Code on use of IT equipment

In this section

28.1 When does this code apply?

This policy applies when councillors and co-opted committee members use the council's IT equipment, including any laptops they have borrowed.

28.2 Security of IT equipment and data

Councillors must follow the council's IT security policy. For example, they must:

- allow the anti-virus software to update itself

- allow any other automatic software updates

- keep the firewall installed and switched on

- not open email attachments that look suspicious

- use passwords that are difficult to guess

- log out or lock the screen when they leave their workstation.

The business systems business manager must be told of any security problems immediately.

28.3 Use of IT equipment

IT equipment is provided for councillors to do their work as councillors. Councillors must not use council IT equipment to:

- break the law

- break the council's email and internet policy

- download or distribute pornography

- pass on anything they should keep confidential

- download or distribute pirated software

- damage or spy on other computers or networks

- interfere with other users' data.

28.4 Usernames

Councillors should not use any council username except their own or let other people use their own council username.

28.5 Email

When councillors send emails from oxford.gov.uk addresses, they should:

- be aware of the risk of libel

- be aware of the effect they might have on the council's reputation

- not harass other people, for example by flaming them or forwarding chain letters or flooding their mailboxes.

28.6 Computer settings and software

When using the council's computers, councillors must not:

- change the internet settings

- load their own software without the agreement of the business systems business manager.

Councillors must not connect IT equipment of their own to the council's networks unless it has been checked by the business systems business unit.

28.7 Technical support

The council only provides technical support for its own machines.

28.8 Monitoring

The council records internet use, emails and any files that are sent to outside users. Access to some websites is automatically blocked. Councillors who need to visit these websites to do their council work should talk to the business systems business manager.

28.9 Complaints about this code being broken

Complaints about this code being broken should be directed to the monitoring officer. Serious complaints may be investigated by the standards committee.

28.10 Reviewing this code

The business systems manager and the standards committee have overall responsibility for this code and how it is used. The standards committee will review how the code is working.

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