

## **Protocol on the use of ICT by Members**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council offers Councillors a laptop or IPad to use to facilitate the performance of their duties as Councillors. The Council is committed to the development of e-Working 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 laptops/Ipads can make Councillors much more effective, but there are risks associated with such use. This protocol sets out the conditions on which IT equipment is provided, in order to minimise those risks both to the Council and to individual Councillors.
- 1.2 Each Councillor is required to sign a copy of this protocol as a condition of being provided with IT equipment and must comply with its terms. For this purpose, "WLBC IT equipment" means the laptop or IPad provided to the Councillor by the Council, together with any hardware, software or materials provided for use with the equipment.
- 1.3 Councillors are required to use their own broadband.
- 1.4 Councillors can also have Council emails redirected to their own personal email accounts on their own computer or mobile device where it is appropriate to do so. This can be arranged by contacting the ICT Customer Services Help Desk on 03001236795. This is subject to appropriate controls on access to these accounts / devices being operated eg. password protection and, where necessary, encryption.
- 1.5 Members who are also Lancashire County Councillors have the option of accessing the secure Council network through the LCC secure private network, they will be advised of any relevant requirements by ICT Help Desk personnel.
- 1.6 Cabinet Members, Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition are offered the use of a mobile phone. The mobile phone will be chosen in consultation with the Legal and Democratic Services Manager, to suit the requirements of the role.
- 1.7 Councillors will be provided with a user name and password and this can be used when logging into the network. Councillors are able to log into any spare PC in Council Buildings in order to manage e-mails or access the payroll system. Spare PC's can be found in the Members Room, the Conservative Office or Member Services. Councillors should log off when they have finished using PCs in the Council offices.
- 1.8 It is intended that this protocol will be subject to an annual review by the Legal and Democratic Services Manager due to the speed and growth in potential new technologies.

## **2.0 Security of WLBC IT Equipment and Network**

- 2.1 The Councillor accepts responsibility for the safekeeping of WLBC IT equipment made available for their use. The WLBC IT equipment should be kept in a secure environment. It should not be exposed to extremes of heat or humidity, nor should it be exposed to water, dust or dirt. Drinks and food should be kept well away from the IT equipment. When the IT equipment is being transported, a carrying case should be used to reduce the risk of accidental damage. Protective covers for iPads are available to order from Member Services on 01695 585016.
- 2.2 If the WLBC laptop or iPad is left unattended it should be kept in a securely locked building or room, password protected and set with an automatic shutdown and if this is delayed manual shutdown will be required on leaving the device.
- 2.3 When WLBC equipment is being transported a carrying case should be used to reduce the risk of theft and subsequently, unauthorised access and loss of data. It must not be left unattended in a vehicle unless all doors, windows and other means of access have been secured and locked and all keys of the vehicle removed to a place of safety, and the equipment placed in the boot of the vehicle. The insurers accept that the rear compartment of a hatchback vehicle is considered to be the boot as long as the equipment is stored under the factory fitted cover. Failure to adhere to this will mean that insurance cover will not be available and that the Council may look to the Councillor for indemnity.
- 2.4 When using IT equipment in a public place, users should be vigilant as theft is common. Sensitive information (e.g. personal data or confidential information) should not be displayed in a public place where it could be overlooked.
- 2.5 The Councillor should not access the WLBC network if there is any doubt as to its safety. WLBC laptops should only be repaired by ICT Services staff or organisations approved by ICT Services. The Councillor should contact the ICT Customer Services Help Desk on 0300 1236795 or log a call on the ICT Portal via the intranet. Repairs to iPads should be requested via Member Services. New equipment must not be used under any circumstances until it has been electronically tested (PAT tested) by a qualified electrician (this requirement may need to be refreshed from time to time in accordance with relevant programmes for this work).

Note: ICT are not able to provide support or repair equipment owned by Councillors.

- 2.6 Access to the WLBC network is subject to password security. The Councillor shall ensure that no-one other than the Councillor is given access to that network and Council e-mails and shall not reveal any

such password to any other person. It is a requirement that passwords are changed regularly. If you require any assistance or guidance on this please contact the ICT Customer Services Help Desk

- 2.7 Deliberate unauthorised access to copy, alter or interfere with any computer system, program or data is prohibited.
- 2.8 Most proprietary software used by the Authority is licensed for use on a single computer system only. Copies of software should not be made (except for backup purposes) without the written permission of the Chief Operating Officer..

### **3.0 Use for Council Business**

- 3.1 WLBC IT equipment 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 WLBC computer in any manner which will prevent or interfere with its use for that purpose.

- 3.2 Accordingly, the Councillor must not:

- 3.2.1 Misuse the WLBC IT equipment in such a manner as to cause it to cease to function.

- 3.2.2 Install or use any equipment or software which may cause the WLBC IT equipment to malfunction.

- 3.2.3 Install software where a corporate licence is not held.

- 3.3 The Councillor must:

- 3.3.1 Ensure that the WLBC IT equipment is maintained in a working condition.

- 3.3.2 Report any faults promptly to the ICT Customer Services Help Desk on 0300 1236795 or via the ICT Portal on the Intranet.

- 3.3.3 Provide regular access to ICT to service, maintain and repair the equipment.

- 3.3.4 Accept responsibility for the content of all text, audio or images that they place or send over the Authority's e-mail and Internet. No e-mail or other electronic communications may be sent which hides the identity of the sender or represents the sender as someone else. All messages communicated on the Authority's e-mail and Internet system should contain the Councillor's name. Information sent to another individual outside the Authority via e-mail are statements that reflect on the Authority.

- 3.3.5 Ensure that all communications sent comply with this and other Council policies and may not disclose any confidential or propriety Council information.
- 3.4 The Council provides IT equipment 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.
- 3.5 Councillor's WLBC IT equipment will be replaced/renewed approximately every 4 years as part of a rolling programme. Priority will be given to Cabinet Members to ensure that they have WLBC equipment with a level of performance and functionality to carry out their duties. WLBC IT equipment will then be replaced on an 'oldest first' basis. However, any Councillor with WLBC IT equipment, which is experiencing performance issues and is not fit for purpose will have it replaced as a matter of urgency if upgrade or repair is not viable.
- 3.6 Councillors who are entitled to mobile phones will have their equipment and needs evaluated every 12 months. Equipment will be replaced only on the approval of the Legal and Democratic Services Manager.
- 3.7 Each Councillor will have their computer training needs assessed and will be provided with the appropriate training. Councillors should contact Member Services if they have any specific training requirements.
- 3.8 Voice recognition software will be available to Councillors with a relevant disability or medical condition together with an appropriate microphone.

#### **4.0 Other Use**

- 4.1 Where WLBC IT equipment is not required for Council business, the Councillor may use it for private and personal purposes and may permit members of his/her immediate family to use it for private or personal purposes, but the Councillor is then responsible for this use. Note: This would not entitle the other user access to the WLBC network or Council e-mails, either on the relevant councillor's user profile or otherwise.
- 4.2 The Council is prohibited from publishing any material of a party-political nature. If the Councillor uses WLBC IT equipment 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.

4.3 The Council has obtained the necessary software licenses for the use of the IT equipment by the Councillor in a private capacity, but not for any non-Council business use of the computer. **WLBC IT equipment should not be used for any commercial business use.**

4.4 The Council accepts no responsibility for such private use of WLBC IT equipment or any loss, costs or liability, which the Councillor or any other person may suffer as a result of its use.

## **5.0 Bringing the Council into Disrepute**

5.1 The Councillor shall not use WLBC IT equipment or permit its use, in any manner which may bring the Council or Councillor into disrepute.

5.2 The Council's e-mail and Internet access must not be used for transmitting, retrieving or storage of any communications of a discriminatory or harassing nature or materials that are obscene or X-rated. Councillors accessing websites or receiving e-mails of an obscene or X-rated nature should contact the ICT Customer Services Help Desk immediately. Harassment of any kind is prohibited. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes or sexual preference shall be transmitted. No abusive, profane or offensive language is to be transmitted through the Council's e-mail or Internet system. Electronic media may also not be used for any other purpose that is illegal or against the Council's policy or best interest. All Councillors have a responsibility to maintain and enhance the Council's public image and to use the Council's e-mail and access to the Internet in a productive manner.

## **6.0 Inspection and Audit**

6.1 The Council reserves the right to inspect WLBC ICT equipment 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 WLBC ICT equipment has a history file which records its use, and particularly any websites which it has accessed.

6.2 E-mail is **not** confidential and should not be treated as such. The Council will routinely monitor usage patterns for e-mail and Internet communication. The reasons for monitoring are many, including cost analysis/allocation and the management of the Authority's gateway to the Internet. All messages created, sent or retrieved over the Authority's e-mail and Internet are the property of the Council and should be considered public information. The Council reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the Authority's e-mail and Internet. Councillors should not assume electronic communications are totally private and should communicate

confidential data in other ways. Care must be taken to ensure emails are properly directed to ensure content is appropriate to the receiver of the information.

## **7.0 Costs**

- 7.1 In relation to Council use only, the Council will meet the cost of providing a WLBC laptop or IPad.
- 7.2 Councillors are responsible for their own broadband costs.
- 7.3 Each Councillor is responsible for his/her own electricity bill.
- 7.4 Councillors who have a mobile phone will be required to reimburse the Council the cost of any personal calls.

## **8.0 Return and Recovery of the Computer**

- 8.1 The WLBC IT equipment remains the property of the Council.
- 8.2 The Council reserves the right to require the Councillor to return WLBC IT equipment at any time and the right to recover it from the Councillor.
- 8.3 The Councillor is required to return WLBC IT equipment to the Council immediately upon ceasing to be a Councillor.

## **9.0 Confidentiality**

- 9.1 The Councillor will be able to access confidential Council information and 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 their WLBC IT equipment. 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.
- 9.2 Some of this information may 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. Councillors should be aware that failure to observe these requirements may result in actions including criminal sanctions. Councillors can obtain advice on the Act from the Borough Solicitor.
- 9.3 Councillors holding information in relation to their duties as a Councillor should be aware that the information is potentially disclosable under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Councillors should assist

the Council in dealing with any requests under the aforementioned legislation within the statutory timescales.

**10.0 Restriction of Use**

10.1 The Council reserves the right to restrict the use of WLBC IT equipment and the network if it has reason to believe that use is likely to offend any provision of the Protocol. In particular, the Council reserves the right to:

10.1.1 remove or disable any software or equipment.

10.1.2 remove any information stored on laptops or IPads.

**Signed by** .....

**Councillor's signature**

**Date:**

Related policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- ICT & Data Security Policy