

Causeway Coast & Glens Shadow Council

For Decision

1.0 Councillor Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy

1.1 Background

The purpose of this paper is to agree a policy for the use of ICT equipment that is provided for the 40 Members of Causeway Coast and Glens (CC&G) Shadow Council. The paper has been prepared following consultation with the Local Government Auditor. The rationale for ICT provision to Elected Members is based on the need to update Council communications, for example distributing meeting papers by e-mail rather than being hand delivered by a Council employee. There is also an awareness that, historically, there has been differing levels of provision of ICT in the 4 constituent Councils.

2.0 Aim of ICT support to Elected Members

Computer equipment provided by the Council will assist Elected Members in their work as Councillors. The ICT team strives to provide excellent ICT support and innovative business-driven solutions, while working to control costs. The ICT equipment provided to Members can be used for tasks such as preparation and distribution of correspondence. It can also be used for contacting Council employees and Government agencies by email. Access to the Internet will also help in constituency work as a Councillor.

3.0 Computer Ownership

The computer equipment is and will remain the property of CC&G Shadow Council. If an individual ceases to be a Member of CC&G, the ICT Section will contact them to recover the equipment. All items will be marked with an identification number and included on the Council's inventory list.

4.0 Recommended equipment to be provided to each Councillor

It is proposed that the following equipment will be provided to Elected Members of CC&G Shadow Council:

- One standard specification HP Laptop Computer or Apple Ipad; and
- One standard mono-laser printer.

It is proposed that the Presiding Councillor will also be provided with a smartphone handheld device for use during their term of office.

Where a Councillor already has existing ICT equipment from one of the 4 constituent Councils, this will be replaced on a case-by-case basis on consultation with the parent Council ICT Officer.

5.0 Alternative ICT equipment

Where a Councillor wishes to source an alternative model of computer, it is recommended that they can receive an amount equivalent to the cost of the standard laptop or Ipad (suggested £500). In such circumstances, the Councillor will forego any technical support by ICT officers but can retain the laptop for personal use after 4 years. In this way, personal preference can be accommodated without placing increased pressure on technical support or cost on the District Rates.

6.0 Applications Supported

The applications that will be supported with the computer are those that are pre-loaded onto the laptop or Ipad prior to Councillors taking receipt. For laptops, these applications are as follows:

- Microsoft Windows 7 Professional;
- Microsoft Office 2013 Professional (Word, Excel, Access, Publisher, PowerPoint, Outlook);
- MS Internet Explorer;
- Anti-Virus Software/Firewall;
- Printer Software.

7.0 Consumables

It is recommended that consumables (paper and printer ink) be purchased by Councillors at their own cost.

8.0 Use of ICT devices for Personal Purposes

The laptop or Ipad is provided for lawful Council business purposes only.

9.0 Access to the Internet and Email

Without connection to the Internet, little advantage would be gained by the introduction of this scheme. All laptops and ipads will be configured for Internet access. It is proposed that Elected Members are responsible for their own WEB provider for example BT, Virgin, Talk Talk.

10.0 Installation of Additional Software

No additional software should be installed. If a Councillor identifies software of potential benefit to the needs of Council, details should be forwarded to the ICT Manager for assessment and with a view to distribution to other Councillors. An ICT Officer will audit the hardware at least annually as part of the Council's policy to adhere to software legislation and compliance with FAST (Federation Against Software Theft). On no account should anyone, other than a qualified Council ICT Officer, carry out any work on Council ICT equipment.

11.0 Installation of Additional Hardware

No additional hardware may be installed internal to the Computer. Due to resource constraints, the ICT Section can give no support for additional external devices installed on the Computer. Installation of unauthorised software / hardware may cause conflicts which will not be deemed to be priority for Council, and may adversely impact on insurance, warranty, and the cost of maintaining ICT support.

12.0 Use in Council Chamber

It is envisaged that Members will avail of wireless facilities in the Chamber. Council will develop a portal for Members' exclusive access, and it is anticipated that this private area will provide Members with suitable access to all relevant documentation.

13.0 Support

Technical Support will be provided in house by the ICT Section. To contact ICT Support please log the issue with ictsupport@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk. Support is provided during the normal office hours of 9am to 5pm. In exceptional circumstances, equipment can be left out of hours at Reception for collection by ICT. A written description of the fault/issue should be left with the equipment.

14.0 Insurance and Security

The laptop computer and all peripherals are insured by the Council. Any incidents of theft or damage should be reported immediately to the ICT Section who will liaise with the officer responsible for insurance claims. To ensure security of equipment and associated cover under our policy, please ensure that:

- When in transit, laptops and associated hardware must be carried in the locked boot of the vehicle otherwise there is no cover for loss or damage to the computer equipment:
- Laptops are not left unattended in a vehicle. Theft from an unattended vehicle will be excluded from insurance cover. Laptops must not be left in vehicles overnight.
- If left overnight in Council offices, laptops must be kept in a secure place, for example, in a locked drawer, cupboard, safe etc with the keys taken away from the office or removed to a secure place.

15.0 Training

Prior to the issue of the equipment, all Councillors have the option do undergo ICT training. Training will be based on individual needs, however periodically corporate training will also be provided to cover issues such as data protection, freedom of information, along with guidance on how the equipment should be used for council and committee related business. Equipment will not be issued unless training has been completed.

16.0 Data Security

Whilst the equipment will remain the property of the Council, the Council will not accept responsibility for any data that is stored on the equipment. Section 8 clearly highlights that the equipment is for lawful Council business purposes only. In the event of any data being identified as being inappropriate, this will be referred to the Chief Executive who, having considered the matter and taken appropriate advices, will decide on the most appropriate course of action. Laptops and Ipads will have security encryption and will require a password to be entered when the device is turned on.

17.0 Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than 12 months. Policy review lead will be the Head of ICT.

18.0 Declaration

Each Councillor will be required to sign a declaration that they understand and accept the Councillor ICT Policy as detailed below.

Declaration on receipt of ICT equipment from CC&G Shadow Council

I, Councillor _____ (**Block Capitals**) hereby declare that I have read, fully understand and accept this Policy for the provision of ICT equipment.

Signed, _____ Date: _____

Recommendation

It is Recommended that Councillors approve the Policy for their use of ICT equipment as set out in this report.