

Meeting:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date:	17 DECEMBER 2007
Subject:	Protocol For Councillors Website
Responsible Officer:	Carol Cutler
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Chris Mote
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Draft Protocol and Disclaimer

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out proposals for a protocol for councillors writing information and/or including material on the Internet pages web logs or blogs.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

- (i) Approve the Protocol;
- (ii) Recommend that Council formally adopt the Protocol for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

Section 2 – Report

The Council is considering setting up Internet web pages, logs or blogs for Councillors, in line with recommended best practice from SOCITM (Society of IT Managers). The proposal is that the Council would provide and administer a dedicated Internet web page, logs or blogs for all members of the Council.

The attached Acceptable Use Protocol is intended to cover the use of the website and all councillors wishing to make use of the facility must sign the Acceptable Use Protocol prior to being permitted use of the dedicated site.

Councillors would be allowed to provide certain details on their pages to include a photograph, contact details, the position they hold in the council and associated responsibilities.

In using the pages, councillors must avoid unnecessary or negative comments, on areas, which may be considered offensive, eg religion, race, gender age, disability and terrorism. In addition the pages must not be used to promote political campaigns or events, make political comments or expressly advocate the politics of their political party, not attack the opinions of members of their own or other political party. Councillors who sit on quasi-judicial committees eg, planning and licensing should no state information on their pages about matters that have been or that they have notice will be on the committee agenda.

In addition councillors must remove all content from their pages 6 weeks prior the any council elections, safe for the council's main website address.

In using the internet web pages, logs or blogs, Councillor must comply with the following legislation Defamation Act 1996, Copyright legislation, Data Protection, Equalities Act 2006, Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Regulations 2003, Sex Discrimination Act 1976, Local Government Act 1988, Age Discriminations Act 2005, Crime and Security Act 2001 and Obscene Publication Act 1959, Protection of Children Act 1978 and Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Failure to comply could result in action being taken against the Council. Councillors must therefore sign the Protocol prior to being able to access the internet web pages, logs or blogs. Failure to comply with the Protocol could result in a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members.

Members are asked to consider and agree the protocol and to recommend it to Council for formal adoption.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications of this decision. There is no additional cost in terms of maintenance and licences in implementing this decision.

Performance Issues

There is no direct effect on performance indicators, although the addition of these pages will help us attain a higher score in the national SOCITM rankings.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 5 th December 2007		
Name: Hugh Peart	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring Officer
Date: 5 th December 2007		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Ben Jones, Project Support Officer, Business Development telephone extension 6781,

Background Papers: None