

APPENDIX B

PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS' USE OF PERSONAL COMPUTERS PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's policy is to communicate through the use of e-mail, Intranet and Internet. The Council has therefore provided each Councillor with a laptop, associated hardware, the appropriate software and a second telephone line.
- 1.2 The provision of a Personal Computer and related equipment is to support you as a Member in performing your duties. However, although the computer should be predominantly used for Council business, the Council accepts that it will be used by Members for other purposes or by other members of their households. Under the revised Members' Code of Conduct at paragraph 6(b), Members must act in accordance with this Protocol when using, or authorising the use by others, of Council provided equipment.
- 1.3 These terms are therefore to be regarded as requirements of the Authority for the purposes of paragraph 6 (b) of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 1.4 All equipment provided by the Council is subject to this Protocol.
- 1.5 The equipment remains the property of the Council and therefore:-
 - should be protected against misuse, loss or unauthorised access
 - should be returned when a Councillor ceases to hold office
 - should be made available upon request to Council staff or authorised contractors for the purposes of for upgrades, maintenance or auditing
 - programs on the computer must not be added to, removed or amended by Members.
- 1.6 It is your responsibility to make back-up copies of any data on the hard disk of the allocated computer, using back-up equipment provided by the Council.
- 1.7 You must also comply with any guidelines issued from time to time by the Council's ICT department on usage and other relevant matters.

2. Protocol for using E-Mail

- 2.1 The e-mail address is provided predominantly for Council business, but may be used for personal or business use. However, it should not be used for activities that are unlawful or which might give rise to a suggestion of impropriety. Where a Councillor is a candidate in an election other than for Richmond upon Thames Council, his or her Council e-mail address should also not be advertised in party political literature relating to such an election in the period between the notice of that election and the election itself. You are

advised to have a separate e-mail address which can be used, when necessary, instead of your Council address.

- 2.2 You should be aware of the Council's e-mail monitoring policy. The Council has a responsibility under the Data Protection Act 1998 and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to ensure that Members and staff are made aware of its policy relating to the monitoring of e-mail.
- 2.3 Any e-mails that contain attachments such as programmes, pictures and executable code, and which are sent or received via the Internet are automatically prevented from onward transmission until their contents are checked. The originator of the message is advised that his or her message has been blocked. If blocked mail contains inappropriate material, the message is deleted otherwise the message is released for onward transmission.
- 2.4 In addition, messages containing certain keywords that may indicate misuse are checked. The Council may also carry out specific surveillance of e-mail usage where it believes there may be abuse or misuse of the system. Please be aware of this operation when sending and receiving Internet mail.
- 2.5 It is your responsibility as a Member to actively maintain the contents of your e-mail mailbox within the limits of the mailbox capacity, ensuring that wherever possible correspondents will not have their emails rejected because your mailbox has been allowed to become full.

3. Protocol for using the Internet

- 3.1 The Internet is a facility provided to assist you as a Member in your work for the Council. The Internet contains considerable material of value, including information from Government departments, research organisations, private companies etc. It also contains sites containing inappropriate material: accessing such sites, via Council facilities is an abuse of the equipment and, if so, will be dealt with under the procedures of the Standards Committee. Internet usage is monitored centrally.
- 3.2 The Council has installed "Websense". This is censoring software which blocks certain sites according to their content. The categories banned include subjects that promote violence, sex, racism, hacking, and weapons. This is a generic system and can catch sites that are suitable, such as interest group sites. If you believe a site that is restricted is suitable or feel that an unrestricted site should be restricted, IT Customer Support should be contacted to unblock or block the site. You should consider the need to ensure that they do not, even if inadvertently, lay yourself open to accusations of abuse of privilege.
- 3.3 You are reminded of the fact that you are bound by the local and national Members' Codes of Conduct and that these general principles also apply to specific instances, such as use of the Internet, Intranet or e-mail.
- 3.4 As Members you must ensure that your conduct accords with the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the Members' Protocol. As the Members' Protocol says (at paragraph 3.1.2):

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“Never do anything as a Member which cannot be justified to the public; avoid at all times any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct.”