



E-MAIL USE POLICY WITHIN THE CULLOMPTONTOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK DOMAIN

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1. PURPOSE AND USE

- 1.1 The e-mail service is installed expressly for the purpose of supporting the Council's business activities.
- 1.2 The Council is prepared to allow limited personal use of this service to employees and Members subject to the following conditions:
 - a. All guidelines apply to any use of e-mail, including personal use.
 - b. Under no circumstances should the e-mail service be used to operate or support a business or private venture.
 - c. Under no circumstances should the e-mail service be used for any purpose that may be considered illegal or mischievous.
- 1.3 The Council's e-mail service may not be used for transmitting, retrieving or storing any communication of a discriminatory or harassing nature or materials that are generally considered offensive, obscene, pornographic or sexually explicit.
- 1.4 Users must not use or transmit abusive, profane or offensive language on or through the Council's e-mail system.
- 1.5 No user may use the Council's e-mail system to deliberately propagate any virus, worm, Trojan, trap-door program code or any other malware.
- 1.6 No user may use the Council's e-mail system to disable or overload any computer system or network or to attempt to disable, defeat or circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.

- 1.7 No user may install additional e-mail related software or change the configuration of existing software without the authorisation of IT Software Administrator.
- 1.8 To help prevent unauthorised users gaining access to the e-mail system, computers must be locked when left unattended.
- 1.9 Accounts will be disabled for any members resigning from the Council. Prior to departure, all personal messages and files should be disposed of. Once the user has departed the Council, anything remaining in the mailbox will be dealt with by the Council.

2. USE OF THE E-MAIL SYSTEM

- 2.1 No communication via the e-mail system should be considered to be secure, private or confidential. E-mails containing personal or sensitive information should not be transmitted by e-mail from the cullomptontowncouncil.gov.uk domain.
- 2.2 Abuse or misuse of the e-mail system may result in disciplinary proceedings being instigated. Defamatory, libellous, abusive, harassing or discriminatory comments in e-mails may render the sender personally liable in any resultant Civil action.
- 2.3 *All messages sent from the cullomptontowncouncil.gov.uk domain reflect directly on the Council as a whole and users should be aware that their views will be construed as representative of the Council.*
- 2.4 *When composing an e-mail, the same care and considerations should be taken over language and content as would be taken in the composition of a letter to ensure that a professional image is projected at all times.*
- 2.5 In the event of an elected member falling ill, having a serious accident or in any other exceptional circumstances rendering them incapable of responding to e-mail correspondence, the Clerk and the Assistant to the Town Clerk may authorise access to that Member's cullomptontowncouncil.gov.uk e-mail account to ensure that any urgent messages requiring attention are dealt with, although permission would be sought from the councillor beforehand.

Receiving and Sending Data Files

- 2.6 No user should receive any files that install software on the computer via the e-mail system. Should such files be delivered to a user's Inbox, it should be deleted immediately.
- 2.7 Data sent or received must only be for direct Council business use.

- 2.8 No user may knowingly use the Council's e-mail facilities to receive or distribute pirated software or data.
- 2.9 No video images should be retained unless there is an explicit business related use for the material. Unsolicited video and photo chain e-mails (or "funnies") should be deleted immediately on receipt.
- 2.10 No user may send software to the council or data owned or licensed by the Council without explicit authorisation from the Council.
- 2.11 No user may transmit to third parties the works of others without their permission as this may infringe copyright.

3. VIRUS PROTECTION

- 3.1 Although the Council uses virus protection software on its computer systems which is configured to intercept viruses in e-mail attachments, it is not a substitute for extra vigilance when using the e-mail systems.
- 3.2 Members and employees should also be aware that, if they are using their personal e-mail addresses to conduct Council business, they should take all reasonable measure to ensure that no Council owned computer equipment is infected by any virus or malware.

4. MANAGEMENT OF YOUR INCOMING E-MAIL

- 4.1 E-mail should be dealt with in accordance with correspondence policy and opened and replied to quickly and efficiently. In all cases where discussion at Full Council or any Committee, Steering or Working Group is necessary, copies of this e-mail correspondence is to be forwarded to the Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk for inclusion in the relevant agenda.
- 4.2 Users should be aware that as soon as any e-mail is received by the Town Clerk, it can be considered to be in the Public domain for the purposes of information requests of any kind.
- 4.3 Personal e-mails should be deleted immediately after reading.

5. Access to E-mail Services

The Council needs to ensure that access to the e-mail service is managed. E-mail facilities will only be provided for authorised Members and employees.

E-MAIL DOs AND DON'Ts

The following procedures are recommended as best practice:

E-MAIL DO	E-MAIL DON'T
Consider whether e-mail is the best way to send a message.	Do not use e-mail to avoid a difficult face-to-face communication.
Understand that messages are not secure.	Do not use e-mail to send confidential, sensitive or private information.
Understand that messages may not be read immediately.	Do not use e-mail to send personal information without authorisation.
Consider that messages may be held to be legally binding.	Do not send messages in anger, even in response to an abusive e-mail.
Understand that messages may be subject to tampering after delivery of sending them. <i>Never assume that a deleted e-mail cannot ever be retrieved!</i>	Do not send messages that may be read as obscene, harassing, intimidating or discriminatory.
Apply the same principles you would use with a printed letter or memo.	DO NOT SEND THE BODY OF MESSAGES IN CAPITALS – IT MAY BE INTERPRETED AS SHOUTING!
Use plain English. Content should be clear and not open to misinterpretation.	
Include a meaningful and logical subject line. If the recipient is not expecting the e-mail and does not recognise the subject of the data, they may well delete it before opening it. Always ring the recipient if they are not expecting something unusual.	Do not open messages from senders you do not recognise or are not expecting. Delete the message from both your Inbox and Deleted Items folders.
Include your position and contact details the first time you correspond by e-mail.	Check that the recipient details are correct before sending
Use only standard fonts and effects to ensure legibility.	Do not open attachments that your are not expecting from either colleagues or unknown sources. Check with the sender if you are not expecting the attachment.
Only copy those who need to know in your e-mail distribution.	
Check incoming mail regularly and respond promptly.	Do not forward or respond to junk mail, chain letters, virus hoaxes etc.
Ensure replies to external authorities by e-mail, letter and telephone meet with Council guidelines.	Do not attach animated images