

PROTOCOL ON THE USE OF COUNCIL RESOURCES BY MEMBERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Herefordshire Council Member Code of Conduct provides that, when using Council resources, you must ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate the functions of the Council or of any office to which you have been elected or appointed.
- 1.2 A breach of this Protocol is a breach of the Code and carries penalties up to and including disqualification from office.
- 1.3 If you are in any doubt about the application of this Protocol, you should seek advice from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

2. Council Resources

- 2.1 These include: the use of Council premises; ICT equipment such as computers and software; telephone and fax; photocopiers; stationery; postage; Council transport; secretarial and clerical support; and allowances and expenses.

3. Permitted use

- 3.1 Except as set out in Section 5 of this Protocol, you may use Council resources only on Council business. If you represent the Council on outside bodies you may use Council resources to assist you in this role, and this Protocol applies to such use.
- 3.2 You may use Council resources for political purposes where that use will facilitate the functions of the Council or any office you hold at the Council. This will include e-mailing colleagues in your and other political groups registered with the Council (including the Independent Group), setting up political group meetings and conducting discussions on policy with political colleagues locally, regionally or nationally.

4. Prohibited use

- 4.1 You may not use Council resources:
 - For the publication of material which, in whole or in part, appears designed to affect public support for a political party. This includes campaigning leaflets and correspondence.
 - For mass mailings, even if these are related to Council business.
 - During an election period to promote yourself or others as candidates to the electorate.

5. ICT equipment

- 5.1 You may make modest personal use of Council-installed computers but you must not permit others (for example, family members) to do so.

6. Use of the herefordshire.gov.uk address

- 6.1 The Council is statutorily prohibited from publishing material designed to affect public support for a political party. You must therefore not use your Council e-mail address (name@herefordshire.gov.uk) for this purpose nor, on a matter of controversy, to promote a point of view which is associated with a political party.
- 6.2 E-mails from your official address will be seen to be associated with the Council and may get preferential treatment, or may be thought by the public to be seeking such treatment. You should not therefore use the address for placing orders and similar activity as a private individual.
- 6.3 You will be provided with a personal e-mail address to allow modest personal use of ICT equipment as permitted in Section 5.

Herefordshire Council
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