



**Policy Document**

**Internet Acceptable  
Usage Policy**

[23/08/2011]

**Document Control**

|                           |   |
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**Document Approvals**

This document requires the following approvals:

| Sponsor Approval                | Name          | Date             |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Head of Business Transformation | Deborah Poole | 23rd August 2011 |
|                                 |               |                  |
|                                 |               |                  |

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## **1 Policy Statement**

Redditch Borough Council will ensure all users of Council provided internet facilities are aware of the acceptable use of such facilities.

## **2 Purpose**

This policy document tells you how you should use your Council Internet facility. It outlines your personal responsibilities and informs what you must and must not do.

The Internet facility is made available for the business purposes of the Council. A certain amount of personal use is permitted in accordance with the statements contained within this Policy.

It is recognised that it is impossible to define precise rules covering all Internet activities available and adherence should be undertaken within the spirit of the policy to ensure productive use of the facility is made.

This policy replaces all locally agreed Internet usage policies.

## **3 Scope**

This Internet Acceptable Usage Policy applies to, but is not limited to, all Redditch Borough Council Councillors, Committees, Departments, Partners, Employees of the Council, contractual third parties and agents of the Council who access the Councils Internet service and IT equipment.

## **4 Definition**

This Internet Acceptable Usage Policy should be applied at all times whenever using the Council provided Internet facility. This includes access via any access device including a desktop computer or a smartphone device.

## **5 Risks**

Redditch Borough Council recognises that there are risks associated with users accessing and handling information in order to conduct official Council business.

This policy aims to mitigate the following risks:

- The non-reporting of information security incidents, inadequate destruction of data, the loss of direct control of user access to information systems and facilities etc.

Non-compliance with this policy could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council and may result in financial loss and an inability to provide necessary services to our customers.

## **6 Applying the Policy**

### **6.1 What is the Purpose of Providing the Internet Service?**

The Internet service is primarily provided to give Council employees and Councillors:

- Access to information that is pertinent to fulfilling the Council's business obligations.
- The capability to post updates to Council owned and/or maintained web sites.
- An electronic commerce facility.

### **6.2 What You Should Use Your Council Internet For**

Your Council Internet should be used in accordance with this policy to access anything in pursuance of your work including:

- Access to and/or provision of information.
- Research.
- Electronic commerce

### **6.3 Personal Use of the Council's Internet Service**

At the discretion of your line manager, and provided it does not interfere with your work, the Council permits personal use of the Internet in your own time (for example during your lunch-break).

The Council is not, however, responsible for any personal transactions you enter into - for example in respect of the quality, delivery or loss of items ordered. You must accept responsibility for, and keep the Council protected against, any claims, damages, losses or the like which might arise from your transaction - for example in relation to payment for the items or any personal injury or damage to property they might cause.

If you purchase personal goods or services via the Council's Internet service you are responsible for ensuring that the information you provide shows that the transaction is being entered into by you personally and not on behalf of the Council.

You should ensure that personal goods and services purchased are not delivered to Council property. Rather, they should be delivered to your home or other personal address.

If you are in any doubt about how you may make personal use of the Council's Internet Service you are advised not to do so.

All personal usage must be in accordance with this policy. Your computer and any data held on it are the property of Redditch Borough Council and may be accessed at any time by the Council to ensure compliance with all its statutory, regulatory and internal policy requirements.

### **6.4 Internet Account Management, Security and Monitoring**

The provision of Internet access is owned by the Council and all access is recorded, logged and interrogated for the purposes of:

- Monitoring total usage to ensure business use is not impacted by lack of capacity.
- The filtering system monitors and records all access for reports that are produced for line managers and auditors.

## 6.5 Things You Must Not Do

Access to the following categories of websites is currently blocked using a URL filtering system :

- Adult
- Advertisements
- Alcohol and Tobacco
- Cheating and Plagiarism
- Child Porn
- Cults
- Dating
- File Transfer Services
- Filter Avoidance
- Freeware and Shareware
- Gambling
- Games
- Hacking
- Hate Speech
- Illegal Activities
- Illegal Drugs
- Instant Messages
- Internet Telephony
- Non-Sexual Nudity
- Online Communities
- Online Storage and Backup
- Paranormal and Occult
- Peer File Transfer
- Porn
- Social Networking
- Software Updates
- Streaming Media
- Tasteless or Obscene
- Weapons
- Web Hosting
- Web-based Chat
- Web-based Email

Except where it is strictly and necessarily required for your work, for example IT audit activity or other investigation, you must **not** use your Internet access to:

- Create, download, upload, display or access knowingly, sites that contain pornography or other “unsuitable” material that might be deemed illegal, obscene or offensive.
- Subscribe to, enter or use peer-to-peer networks or install software that allows sharing of music, video or image files.
- Subscribe to, enter or utilise real time chat facilities such as chat rooms, text messenger or pager programs.
- Subscribe to, enter or use online gaming or betting sites.
- Subscribe to or enter “money making” sites or enter or use “money making” programs.
- Run a private business.
- Download any software that does not comply with the Council’s Software Policy.

The above list gives examples of “*unsuitable*” usage but is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. “*Unsuitable*” material would include data, images, audio files or video files the transmission of which is illegal under British law, and, material that is against the rules, essence and spirit of this and other Council policies.

You must not attempt to by-pass or remove any of the security and monitoring facilities.

## 6.6 Your Responsibilities

It is your responsibility to:

- Familiarise yourself with the detail, essence and spirit of this policy before using the Internet facility provided for your work.
- Assess any risks associated with Internet usage and ensure that the Internet is the most appropriate mechanism to use.
- Know that you may only use the Council’s Internet facility within the terms described herein.
- Read and abide by the following related policies :
  - Email Policy.
  - Software Policy.
  - IT Access Policy.
  - Remote Working Policy.
  - Legal Responsibilities Policy.

## 6.7 Line Manager’s Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Line Managers to ensure that the use of the Internet facility:

- Within an employees work time is relevant to and appropriate to the Council’s business and within the context of the users responsibilities.
- Within an employees own time is subject to the rules contained within this document.

## 6.8 Whom Should I Ask if I Have Any Questions?

In the first instance you should refer questions about this policy to your Line Manager or ICT. You should also refer technical queries about the Council’s Internet service to the ICT Services Helpdesk.

## 6.9 Acceptable Usage Policy

Each user must read, understand and sign to verify they have read and accepted this policy. This policy must be signed annually.

- I understand and agree to comply with the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy of my organisation.

Signature of User: .....

Print name: ..... Date:.....

A copy of this agreement is to be retained by the User and ICT.

## 7 Policy Compliance

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they will be subject to Redditch Borough Council's disciplinary procedure. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).

If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, seek advice from your line manager or ICT.

## 8 Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Redditch Borough Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and implementing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation or amendment.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation or amendment.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Responsible</b> | ICT Transformation Manager                                      |
| <b>Accountable</b> | Head of Business Transformation                                 |
| <b>Consulted</b>   | Corporate Management Team                                       |
| <b>Informed</b>    | All Council Employees, All Temporary Staff, All Contractors etc |

## 9 Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 12 months.

Policy review will be undertaken by the ICT Transformation Manager.

## 10 References

The following Redditch Borough Council policy documents are directly relevant to this policy, and are referenced within this document:

- Email Policy.
- Software Policy.
- IT Access Policy.
- Remote Working Policy.
- Legal Responsibilities Policy.

The following Redditch Borough Council policy documents are indirectly relevant to this policy;



- GCSx Acceptable Usage Policy and Personal Commitment Statement.
- Computer, Telephone and Desk Use Policy.
- Removable Media Policy.
- Information Protection Policy.
- Human Resources Information Security Standards.
- Information Security Incident Management Policy.
- IT Infrastructure Policy.
- Communications and Operation Management Policy.

### 11 Key Messages

- Users must familiarise themselves with the detail, essence and spirit of this policy before using the Internet facility provided.
- At the discretion of your line manager, and provided it does not interfere with your work, the Council permits personal use of the Internet in your own time (for example during your lunch-break).
- Users **must not** create, download, upload, display or access knowingly, sites that contain pornography or other “unsuitable” material that might be deemed illegal, obscene or offensive.
- Users must assess any risks associated with Internet usage and ensure that the Internet is the most appropriate mechanism to use.
- You must not allow anyone else to use your internet access.