

Oswestry Town Council

Report from the Town Clerk and Office Manager to Council – 26th August 2020

Electronic Communication

Background

Electronic communication is an essential part of this Council's way of working in order to inform Members of important information such as dates of meetings, briefings and notifications of agendas and minutes along with emails from the public and officers.

As a result of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which took effect in May 2018, it is recommended that Councillors have their own specific Town Council email account. This will improve the Council's data protection compliance, obligations and responsibilities.

Purpose

As a data controller, this Council has obligations relating to the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all personal data it holds. This means that the Council is accountable for any Council business conducted involving personal data through any email account.

In addition there are advantages from Town Councillors conducting business from a tc.gov.uk e-mail address; it provides confidence to the public/recipient and could help to separate Council life from personal life.

With the Council's objectives to reduce costs and protect the environment, there will be an expectation that all Councillors will view committee agendas and reports online rather than require printed hard copies. All documents are already available to access on the Council's website.

TC/3917/20

If Council wished to take this approach then Councillors will be expected to check their Council email account on a regular basis to ensure awareness of all relevant information relating to their role and any committee responsibilities.

All correspondence from the Guildhall to elected Members would be via their tc.gov.uk e-mail address – this would be an adopted policy.

Due to security restrictions, Councillors must not forward emails received at their Council email address relating to Council business to a private email address. This does not preclude the sharing of public information such as Press Releases, Council documents which are already in the public domain or calendar items, provided there is no sensitive personally identifiable information included within the message or attached files.

Councillors would be requested not to use their tc.gov.uk address to conduct personal business and an Acceptable IT Use Policy would need to be produced and agreed.

Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Market Drayton and Ellesmere Town Councils all use TC email addresses due to GDPR. The cost of creating 18 individual Councillor email addresses from our current IT provider is **£1080** per year.

Whilst this does raise a broader question of the use of personal devices for council business, this may be a matter that Council delegate to the IT Working Group to consider and put forward recommendations. Members may also wish to consider whether changes should be introduced as soon as practicably possible or for the beginning of the new Council year.

Summary

Members are asked to consider having their own specific Town Council email account to improve the Council's data protection compliance.

Arren Roberts
Town Clerk

Sandra Trevor
Office Manager