



BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

Computer, Telephone and Desk Use Policy

This document will be distributed to:

Name

Job Title

Email Address

Contents

1. Policy Statement
2. Purpose
3. Scope
4. Definition
5. Risks
6. Applying the Policy
 - 6.1. Computer Resources Misuse
 - 6.2. Telephone
 - 6.3. Securing laptops
 - 6.4. Clear Desk
 - 6.5. Legislation
7. Policy Compliance
8. Policy Governance
9. Review and Revision

1. Policy Statement

Biggleswade Town Council will ensure that every user is aware of, and understands, the acceptable use of Biggleswade Town Council's computer and telephony resources and the need to operate within a "clear desk" environment.

2. Purpose

Modern day business operations and advances in technology have necessitated the wide spread use of computer facilities into the offices within Biggleswade Town Council and, with the advent of portable computers, away from the Council's premises.

As such, there is considerable scope for the misuse of computer resources for fraudulent or illegal purposes, for the pursuance of personal interests or for amusement/entertainment.

The Council also handles large amounts of **PROTECTED** and **RESTRICTED** information.

The security of this information is of paramount importance. Ensuring that a clear desk policy operates across the Council can help prevent the security of this information from being breached.

The misuse of Biggleswade Town Council's computer and telephony resources is considered to be potential gross misconduct and may render the individual(s) concerned liable to disciplinary action including dismissal.

The purpose of this document is to establish guidelines as to what constitutes "computer and telephony resources", what is considered to be "misuse" and how users should operate within a clear desk environment.

3. Scope

This document applies to all Members, Committees, Services, Partners, Employees of the Council, contractual third parties and agents of the Council who have access to information systems or information used for Biggleswade Town Council purposes.

4. Definition

This policy should be applied whenever users who access information systems or information utilise Biggleswade Town Council's computer and telephony resources.

Computer and telephony resources include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Mainframe computers.
- Service computers.
- Personal computers.
- Portable laptop computers.
- Printers.
- Photocopiers.
- Scanners.
- Mobile telephones.
- Network equipment.
- Telecommunications facilities.

5. Risks

Biggleswade Town 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:

- Viruses, malware etc.
- Increased risk of data loss and corresponding fines.
- Inappropriate access to and unacceptable use of the Council's network, software, facilities and documents.
- Inadequate destruction of data.
- The non-reporting of information security incidents.
- Inconsistency in how users deal with 'secure' documents.
- The impact of insufficient training for users.
- The sharing of passwords.
- Incorrect or inappropriate classification of documents.
- Risk of reputation damage and further loss in public confidence.
- Operational difficulties providing services.

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. Computer Resources Misuse

No exhaustive list can be prepared defining all possible forms of misuse of computer resources. |

The individual circumstances of each case will need to be taken into account. However, some examples are outlined below:

- Use of computer resources for the purposes of fraud, theft or dishonesty.
- Storing/loading/executing of software for a purpose which is not work related.
- Storing/loading/executing of software: which has not been acquired through approved Council procurement procedures, or for which the Council does not hold a valid program licence, or which has not been the subject of formal virus checking procedures.
- Storing/processing/printing of data for a purpose which is not work related.

6.2. Telephone

Biggleswade Town Council's policy for telephones relates to the use of Council owned static and mobile telephones for private telephone calls.

Telephones (land-lines and mobiles) - must not be used for any illegal, defamatory or obscene purpose. Personal use of telephones is acceptable, subject to the following:

- The use is legal.
- The use does not impinge on the member of staff's work or that of other officers.

- The use is not connected to any business or profit making venture.
- Personal calls on land-lines are limited to emergencies and other unforeseen events at the discretion of the line manager.
- The costs are reimbursed to the Council for calls on Council mobile phones.

Health and safety – before using mobile phones in vehicles staff and Members should refer to the Town Council’s Mobile phone policy and the Manufacturer’s instructions.

Monitoring – the Council maintains records of telephone calls which can be identified against an individual number.

The misuse of Biggleswade Town Council’s telephone services is also considered to be potential gross misconduct and may render the individual(s) concerned liable to disciplinary action.

6.3. Laptops

All laptops should be locked away every evening and at weekends, either in cupboards or laptop safes. Portable equipment taken home should be securely stored.

6.4. Clear Desk

Biggleswade Town Council has a clear desk policy in place in order to ensure that all restricted and confidential information is held securely at all times. Work of this type should not be left on desks unattended and should be removed from view when unsupervised.

At the end of each day it is the employee’s responsibility to clear their desk of all documents that contain any Biggleswade Town Council **PROTECTED** or **RESTRICTED** information, or any information relating to clients or citizens. Unclassified material, together with non-Biggleswade Town Council specific operating manuals may be left tidily on desks. Biggleswade Town Council **PROTECTED** or **RESTRICTED** information must be stored in a facility (e.g. lockable safe or cabinet) commensurate with this classification level.

Nothing should be left lying on printers, photocopiers or fax machines at the end of the day.

Users of IT facilities are responsible for safeguarding data by ensuring that equipment is not left logged-on when unattended, and that portable equipment in their custody is not exposed to opportunistic theft.

Computer screens must be locked to prevent unauthorised access when unattended and screens will lock automatically after 5 minutes of inactivity, in order to protect information. A screen saver with password protection enabled will be used on all PCs. Attempts to tamper with this security feature will be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action.

Remember, when you are not working at your workstation there could be a business requirement for other staff to use that station.

Floor space under furniture and around the office should remain free from obstructions at all times to facilitate the cleaning and maintenance of the building.

As part of good housekeeping, boxes, folders etc. should not be stored on top of furniture, cabinets, window ledges etc.

The clear desk policy is not intended to hinder your day to day working. In an ideal world, we would all work with a clear desk.

6.5. Legislation

Users should understand the relevant legislation relating to Information Security and Data Protection, and should be aware of their responsibilities under this legislation. The following statutory legislation governs aspects of the Council's information security arrangements.

This list is not exhaustive:

- The Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Electronic Communications Act 2000.
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
- The Data Protection Act 1998.
- The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990.
- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005.

Individuals can be held personally and legally responsible for breaching the provisions of the above Acts.

7. Policy Compliance

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they will be subject to Biggleswade Town 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).

8. Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Biggleswade Town 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.

Responsible

Town Council and Committees.

Accountable

Town Clerk.

Consulted

Town Councillors and Committee Members.

Informed

All Council Employees, All Temporary Staff, All Contractors.

9. Review and Revision

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