

Meeting	General Functions Committee
Date	25 March 2014
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Information Management Policies</b>
Report of	Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Summary of Report	This report seeks the approval of the committee of new and revised Information Management policies that apply to Members.

Officer Contributors	Victoria Blyth, Information Manager Jenny Obee, Head of Information Management
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards Affected	Not Applicable
Key Decision	Not Applicable
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	N/A
Function of	Council
Enclosures	<b>New Policy</b> Appx 1 - Members Access to Information Policy v1.0 Appx 2 - GCSx Protective Marking for Emails Policy v1.0  <b>Revised Policies</b> Appx 3 - Acceptable Use Policy v8.0 Appx 4 - BlackBerry Policy v1.0 Appx 5 - PSN Acceptable Use Statement
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## **1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 That the committee approves the new policies on Members Information Management and GCSx Protective Marking for Emails, and the revised policies on Acceptable Use and BlackBerrys.**
- 1.2 That the Information Security Manager be instructed to ensure that all Members with a GCSx email account have signed a copy of the PSN Acceptable Use Statement**
- 1.3 That the Head of Information Management in conjunction with the Head of Information Systems be instructed to publicise the policies to Barnet systems and equipment users.**

## **2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- 2.1 General Functions Committee, 14 January 2009, Decision item 17, Information Systems Policies.

## **3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council's corporate plan for 2013-15 sets our strategic priorities as:
  - "promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough;
  - support families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being; and
  - improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study".
- 3.2 The introduction and revision of these policies underpins the appropriate use, storage and security of information, ensuring that information is available when required by Members to make robust, evidence based decisions to support realisation of these strategic priorities. As information is a strategic asset for Barnet, it is important that it is managed well – managing information 'well' includes ensuring that it is stored and used safely and in accordance with information legislation. These policies set out the requirements of Members in ensuring that information is managed accordingly.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 The absence of effective corporate policies leaves the Council exposed to risk if sensitive or confidential information is lost. This loss can be through human error, but also through unauthorised use of Council equipment. It is therefore important that we put into place appropriate risk mitigations against information loss – this includes technical controls such as effective anti-hacking measures and password protection of equipment, as well as implementing policy to ensure that staff and Members are aware of the requirements for operating safely and securely.
- 4.2 The Council is connected to the Public Services Network (PSN), a Government network which provides connections between public sector

organisations such as Central Government Departments and Local Authorities. Connecting to the PSN allows the Council to access several key central government services, including the GCSx system for communicating securely and the DWP system that enables us to run the Revenue and Benefits service in the borough. Barnet's use of the PSN requires us to meet the controls set out in the PSN Code of Connection, which we must meet annually to retain our PSN connection. The implementation of effective policy is a necessary control within the PSN Code of Connection.

## **5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 5.1 These policies help to ensure the security of information and technology and have no effect on staff or Members in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or religion.

## **6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 6.1 The specific costs of introducing and maintaining these policies are minimal and met within current budgets. Supporting these policies technically is included within the business as usual activities of the Information Systems Team.

## **7. LEGAL ISSUES**

- 7.1 The council and its elected Members are obliged to abide by information management legislation including the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. In addition Members have individual responsibility for complying with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 7.2 The council accesses the Public Services Network (PSN), which allows the council secure contact with government agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The PSN requires the council to meet their requirements in areas such as information security in order to remain on the network. These policies cover some of the requirements relating to network users.

## **8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS (Relevant section from the Constitution, Key/Non-Key Decision)**

- 8.1 Council Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, Terms of Reference of General Functions Committee, All other Council Functions that are not reserved to the Council.

## **9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 9.1 The council will be taking part in an audit by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) into the council's data protection practices in July 2014. The council therefore wishes to ensure that information legislation policies reflect current working practices and incorporate the most recent ICO and industry guidance.

- 9.2 The council and its elected Members are obliged to abide by information management legislation including the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. In addition, Members have individual responsibility for complying with the Data Protection Act 1998. Guidance has been requested by Members on what their responsibilities are under relevant information legislation, both as representatives of the council and as elected ward representatives. In addition, guidance has been requested by officers to clarify their obligations to provide Members with access to information.
- 9.3 The new Members Information Management Policy clarifies rights of access to information. Bringing the information legislation that applies to Members into one policy means that Members do not have to read and comply with council-wide information legislation policies such as the Data Protection Policy, as these are in-depth operational requirements that are more detailed than are required by Members. The new policy brings current working practices together into one policy.
- 9.4 The council accesses the Public Services Network (PSN), which allows the council secure contact with government agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Access to the PSN is critical for, for example, provision of a revenues and benefits service.
- 9.5 The PSN authority requires the council to meet a stringent set of requirements in areas such as information security in order to remain on the network. These policies cover some of the requirements relating to network users.
- 9.6 Policy Summary
- Members Information Management Policy – This policy clarifies a Member's rights of access to information and their responsibilities under information legislation, both when acting as a Member of the Council and handling council information, and also when acting as a ward representative where they are solely responsible for the handling of information.
  - GCSx Protective Marking for Emails Policy – GCSx is a secure email service used by the council for the secure transmission of electronic information. It is heavily used in Adults and Children's Services and by some Members for their committee work. GCSx forms part of the PSN network and as such the council is obliged to abide by stringent requirements, which include ensuring that users are individually aware of their responsibilities.
  - Acceptable Use Policy - This policy sets out the manner in which the council's computer systems are utilised and is designed to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of its information systems. The policy provides an insight into what Barnet requires from its equipment and system users in order to reduce risks to the network and the risk of data getting into the wrong hands through the misuse of corporate infrastructure.
  - BlackBerry Policy – This policy confirms the requirements of all BlackBerry users and helps to ensure that the council protects its entire network as well as personal and confidential information while using mobile smart phone devices.

- PSN Acceptable Use Statement – The council’s use of the PSN places stringent obligations on the council, which include ensuring that network users abide by those requirements. The council needs to keep a record that every GCSx account user has read and agrees to abide by these requirements by signing the statement.

## **10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

<b>Cleared by Finance (Officer’s initials)</b>	<b>AD / JH</b>
<b>Cleared by Legal (Officer’s initials)</b>	<b>CE</b>