



NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

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North Tawton Council IT Policy

1. Introduction

It is a legal requirement for the Council to have an IT Policy.

All authorities should have an IT Policy that mandates the use of authority-owned email accounts for official business. These policies are designed to ensure that all communications are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the authority's standards and legal obligations – (Point 5.121. Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel, Changes to the Practitioners' Guide 2025).

North Tawton Town Council recognizes the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers and contactors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use North Tawton Town Council's IT resources, including computers, lap-tops, tablets, networks, software, devices, data and email accounts.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

North Tawton Town Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate any part of this, or our other policies. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright, intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

4. Devices and software usage

Where possible, authorised devices, software and applications will be provided by North Tawton Town Council for work-related tasks.

Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

5. Data Management and security

All sensitive and confidential North Tawton Town Council data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be

performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary. All data should be handled and managed using the North Tawton Town Council data protection and data retention policies.

6. Network and internet usage

North Tawton Town Council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorization is prohibited.

7. Email Communication

Email accounts provided by North Tawton Town Council are for official communication only. Emails should be professionally and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted. The contents of emails are confidential and cannot be shared to a third party without the consent of the sender. Unauthorised sharing of Council information via email is prohibited and causes a breach of data protection and retention policies.

Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

8. Password and account security

North Tawton Town Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others. Regular password changes are encouraged to enhance security. If any person using official Council computers, tables, other media, etc., suspects that there has been a security issue with either the device or the email, media and online accounts held by the Council this must be reported immediately to the Town Clerk or the Chair.

9. Mobile devices and remote work

Mobile devices provided by North Tawton Town Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

10. Email monitoring

North Tawton Town Council reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

11. Retention and archiving

Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organized inbox.

12. Reporting security incidents

As stated, all suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Town Clerk or Chair, for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the IT administrator immediately so that this can be followed up on accordingly.

13. Training and awareness

North Tawton Town Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training in email security and the best practices.

14. Compliance and consequences

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.

Any device that is lost or stolen must be reported immediately to the Town Clerk or Chair, and the appropriate action taken.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address the emerging technological trends and security measures.

16. Contacts

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact North Tawton Town Council.

All staff and Councillors are responsible for the safety and security of North Tawton Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and email usage within this IT Policy, North Tawton Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its missions and goals.

Date _____

Signature _____

Role _____