



# EMAIL POLICY

## 2024

To be reviewed every 3 years or when legislation or guidance changes		
<b>ADOPTED</b>	<b>AMENDED</b>	<b>REVIEWED</b>
25 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 Minute Ref: 16	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 Minute Ref:69	

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Rhosddu Community Council will provide all councillors and officers with their own email address. This is to aid them in their work, present a professional image and assist the council in managing its obligations with regards to data protection and freedom of information requests.

The aim of this policy is to assist Councillors and officers with email protocol and compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and GDPR/DPA. It sets out best practice for use of emails when dealing with Council business.

The Council is a corporate body working within the framework of the law and local governance. As such, all employees and Councillors are responsible for maintaining a professional approach at all times.

## 2. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and GDPR/DPA applies to public bodies. The FOI Act allows members of the public to request information from the Council which must be treated in accordance with GDPR/DPA.

Council information is held by Council administrators, and some is held by Councillors, although the length of time that information is held by Councillors will not be subject to the Council's retention and destruction policies. Council information held by Councillors is subject to the FOI Act and must be made available if requested in accordance with the FOI Act and GDPR/DPA Regulations. As data controllers' Councils must ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all personal data they hold, even if the data is being processed through personal email accounts or is stored on a privately-owned device.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assist Councillors and officers in their use of emails when the information transmitted applies to the official business of the Council. This Policy will help mitigate risks from:

- Damage to the Council's reputation.
- Potential litigation against the Council or Councillors.

The use of dedicated Council email addresses makes it easier for the Council to process personal data securely. The use of personal email accounts makes it more complicated for the Council to comply with GDPR/DPA and therefore Councillors should use their Rhosddu Community Council email address assigned to them when acting in their capacity as a Community Councillor or officer.

#### 4. THE USE OF EMAILS

The Council will provide all Councillors and officers with a dedicated Council email account for use with Council business. These email addresses can be found by members of the public via the Council website and all follow the same format, this being:

rhosddu(initials)@gmail.com

All Councillors and officers should use their own dedicated Council email address for all official Council business. Council email addresses should not be used by anyone other than the Councillor/ officers to whom the Council email address has been assigned.

Any official Council business held by Councillors in their own private email accounts is still subject to the FOI Act and therefore their individual account can be searched for requested information. Deleting or concealing information with the intention of preventing its disclosure following receipt of a FOI request is a criminal offence under section 77 of the FOI Act and the person concealing the information is liable to prosecution.

#### 5. EMAIL CONTENT

Much of the information conveyed to Councillors is via email. This is a speedy and efficient method of information exchange from one recipient to another. However, Councillors should take care with the content of any emails they write and send on to others as improper language may lead to claims for discrimination, harassment, defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract. When acting on Council business Councillors/ officers should not:

- Send emails that contain libellous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene comments.
- Forward emails or attachments without being assured that the information can be passed on.
- Publicise the content of emails that contain confidential information.
- Send emails that could contravene the Councillors' Code of Conduct
- CC in other councillors or officers unless the subject matter specifically relates to them or their responsibilities.

#### 6. OUR COMMITMENT

The Council recognises the importance of data control and information exchange, and all email use will comply with the adopted policies of the Community Council.