REPORT TO:	**FINANCE & MANAGEMENT**	**AGENDA ITEM: 12**
DATE OF MEETING:	**12ᵗʰ June 2003**	**CATEGORY: DELEGATED**
REPORT FROM:	**CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**	**OPEN**
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	**TERRY NEAVES (Ext 5800)**	**DOC:** s:\cent_serv\committee reports\finance and management\12 june 2003\electronic communications policy - fm june.doc
SUBJECT:	**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**	**REF: TN/**
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	**ALL**	**TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM10**

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 The Finance & Management Committee is asked to:-

⇒ approve the attached policy document 'Electronic Communications version 1.4' as agreed by the Joint Negotiating Group on 15ᵗʰ May 2003

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To provide a comprehensive 'Electronic Communications' policy, embracing Council policy on Email, Internet, Telephone Use and Virus Controls for all Councillors and employees.

2.2 The need exists for a formal policy explaining the Council's position with regard to use of telephone, email and internet equipment, along with guidelines on computer virus protection.

2.3 This policy embraces the current telephones policy in force.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 All council staff rely heavily on IT and computer systems to carry out their work. This can include

- financial transactions involving considerable sums of money
- using sensitive personal information provided to the council by our customers
- publishing information about the services that we deliver.

3.2 At the same time IT represents a significant investment for the Council which it will naturally wish to produce the maximum benefit.

3.3 It is important that staff have clear guidance, which sets out good practice when using IT to help them and the Council get the best use form IT and Computer Systems.

4. Content

4.1 The Electronic Communications working group was formed, led by IT Services and comprising representatives Audit, Legal and Democratic Services, Personnel and Union. This group has agreed the content of this policy over 2002/03 and the basis for this document is set out in the Introduction to the Policy.

4.2 The Policy comprises outline details of:

⇒ Legal requirements,
⇒ Sections giving best practice guidelines and responsibilities,
⇒ Information on the monitoring of communications,
⇒ General information on use of email, internet and telephone systems.
⇒ Appendices covering specific guidelines for email, internet and telecommunications.

4.3 The Policy aims to set out good practice to guide staff when using electronic communications – computers, telephones etc.

4.4 The Document tries to promote good practice in using technology, which will help the people who are using it.

4.5 The Policy also recognises that increasingly there are extra legal requirements that affect how technology can be used. It is important that all our staff are aware of this.

4.6 The strategy was considered by the Joint Negotiating Group on 15th May 2003.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications stemming directly from this report.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 All staff and members of the Council will be required to follow this policy when using council IT systems and equipment.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 None specific to this report

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The guidance will help all users of IT systems to understand clearly their responsibilities as well as helping them to make the best use of our computer resources.

9.0 **Background Papers**

9.1 None