

**SENDING EMAILS – guidance for clerks and councillors**

1. When writing your emails, always assume that they may have to be disclosed to a court or tribunal or to the Information Commissioner, because in some circumstances that could happen.
2. Before sending an email, please think about its purpose and consider if it is the best form of communication method to use. For example, is a telephone call or face to face discussion likely to be more effective.
3. Keep your message relevant and concise and do not send unnecessary copies of the message or forward it to others if not strictly necessary. Beware of hitting ‘Reply to all’ in error!
4. Always write emails as if they are permanent, because even when they have been deleted they can often be retrieved and may be disclosable to a court or the Information Commissioner.
5. Internal emails, even if marked private or confidential, might eventually need to be disclosed when it is lawful to do so, for example disclosure in the course of legal proceedings.
6. Information communicated by email may not be confidential but it may be sensitive information that needs to be respected.
7. Always respect the privacy of others.
8. Do not send emails that might be construed as offensive, discriminatory or harassing.
9. Do not make negative comments about an individual including members of the public, councillors – your own or those at district or county level, staff or business suppliers.