



## **PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS RE HANDLING OF CONFIDENTIAL/EXEMPT INFORMATION**

1. Confidential/exempt information relating to business to be conducted at meetings will be provided to councillors via modern.gov, clearly stating the category of confidential/exempt information.
2. The exception to the above is where information is of a sufficient level of sensitivity as to, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, warrant managed access. Information relating to the Council's companies falls into this category and other information may also do so on a case-by-case basis.
3. Under managed access, councillors may inspect and annotate documentation in the presence of a member of the Democratic Services Team. They will then be provided with the annotated version of the document at the meeting to which it is pertinent. The document will then be collected once consideration of that item has been completed.
4. Councillors should ensure that any confidential/exempt information is not shared with members of the public or the press.
5. Where a councillor is participating in a meeting at which confidential/exempt information is to be considered, the confidential/exempt details should not be discussed until the public and the press have been excluded from the meeting.
6. There is an ongoing obligation to ensure that the information remains confidential/exempt (see para 2.4(c) of the Member Code of Conduct). The details of the confidential/exempt information should not be shared following the meeting at which the information is considered.
7. Councillors should consider whether they need to retain copies of confidential/exempt information (that is not subject to managed access) following the meeting at which the information is considered. If a councillor determines that they need to retain the confidential/exempt information for future reference, then they have a duty to ensure that the information is stored in a secure way and cannot be accessed by any third party. Best practice is to securely destroy any hard copies and to access the information solely via modern.gov.
8. There may be circumstances when information can be released at a future date. Advice must be sought from the Monitoring Officer if it is felt that there is a justification for releasing confidential/exempt information at a future date.
9. Councillors should familiarise themselves with the categories of confidential and exempt information as set out in the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.
10. Further advice can be obtained from the Monitoring Officer.