

# Electronic document storage recommendation report

01 January 2020

## INTRODUCTION

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The council is responsible for ensuring that its documents are stored appropriately, including those held in an electronic format.

Electronic documents need to be backed up regularly, with the back-up being stored securely off-site, or stored securely “in the cloud”.

The council also has to ensure that councillors have access to the electronic documents they require to carry out their role. Councillors have a duty to ensure that these documents are kept safely and remain confidential.

The council needs to agree how its electronic documents will be stored, and how they will be accessed by councillors.

The Clerk currently uses the 1TB OneDrive storage linked to the council’s Microsoft 365 account for the storage of council documents.

## FINDINGS

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### **Electronic storage**

Best practice suggests that “cloud storage” is a better option, rather than creating hard back-ups which are stored securely off-site. If data is created and edited “in the cloud” it is immediately held off-site, and can be accessed from other machines/sites etc. Even if a hard back-up is taken at the end of every session, there will always be some data lost, in the event of a computer failure. The security and accessibility of a hard back-up also has to be considered.

### **Councillor access to documents**

Councillors require access to documentation to carry out their roles, but do not have the right to access any information not required for their personal role on the council. Councillors are responsible for the safety and confidentiality of any information which they hold as part of their role. Councillors currently receive documents and information via email to their personal email addresses.

Using a shared “cloud” storage system for councillors to access and view information would ensure that the information remains within the bounds of the council. It would reduce the need for the Clerk to email documents to councillors. Councillors would not have to store the information on their private computers, and remove council documents when they cease to be a councillor. Councillors would have access to the most up-to-date documents.

## CLOUD STORAGE

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Dropbox is a cloud storage system, which would allow councillors to access council documents. It is GDPR compliant. Users are advised when changes and updates are made to files. The Basic option provides 2GB of space and is free. The next option, Plus, provides 2TB of space for £7.99 per month.

## RECOMMENDATION

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I recommend that the council agree to set up Dropbox Basic for the storage of all council documents they require for their role, and that the Clerk continues to use OneDrive as well for working documents etc, also giving a second back-up system.