# Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy

## 1. Purpose and scope

The council recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) can support efficient administration, accessibility, communication and service delivery. This policy sets the conditions for using AI safely, ethically and lawfully while protecting council information and public trust.

It applies to councillors, employees, contractors, volunteers and any person using AI for council business, whether on a council or personal device. It covers standalone AI services and AI features built into other software.

**Core position**
AI may support research, drafting, analysis and administration. It must not replace human judgement, democratic accountability, professional advice or the lawful exercise of the council's functions.

## 2. Policy principles

- Accountability: the council and the individual user remain responsible for every decision, communication and action.
- Human oversight: AI output is advisory or draft material only and must be reviewed before use.
- Lawfulness and privacy: use must comply with data protection, confidentiality, equality, freedom of information, copyright and other applicable duties.
- Accuracy: factual claims, calculations, quotations, sources and legal references must be checked.
- Fairness: users must consider bias, discrimination, accessibility and the effect on different people or groups.
- Transparency: significant AI involvement should be recorded or disclosed where that would help explain how work was produced.
- Security and proportionality: users must select an appropriate approved tool and enter no more information than is necessary.

## 3. Using AI Tools

### Option B: controlled user choice

Users may select a tool only where it is suitable for the task, this policy is followed, no restricted data is entered, and the user has checked the service's privacy and security arrangements. The Clerk may prohibit a tool or require its use to stop.

## 4. Permitted and prohibited use

### AI may be used to assist with:

- first drafts of routine correspondence, reports, policies, agendas, newsletters, website or social media content;
- proofreading, summarising and explaining public or appropriately anonymised information;
- research and idea generation, provided sources and claims are independently checked;
- accessibility tasks, such as plain-English versions or alternative text, subject to human review;
- meeting transcription or note support where authorised and participants are appropriately informed.

### AI must not be used to:

- make or determine council, employment, disciplinary, regulatory, procurement or other decisions;
- exercise delegated authority, approve expenditure or provide an unchecked planning response;
- publish or send content automatically without an accountable person reviewing it;
- create false, deceptive, defamatory, discriminatory or misleading material;
- present invented facts, sources, quotations or records as genuine;
- circumvent council procedures, access controls, legal duties or professional advice.

## 5. Information and data handling

Where possible, personal, confidential, commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted information must be avoided. If AI use genuinely requires such information, it may only be processed for an authorised purpose in a specifically approved secure application with appropriate access, contractual and data-protection safeguards. A paid account is not automatically secure or approved.

| Classification | Examples | Rule |
|---|---|---|
| **GREEN: public** | Adopted policies, published agendas and minutes, website text, public reports | May be entered into an approved tool. Check accuracy and copyright. |
| **AMBER: internal** | Draft reports, working notes, operational information, non-public correspondence | Use only where necessary in an approved secure tool. Remove identifiers and confidential details where possible. |
| **RED: restricted** | HR or complaint files, bank or payroll data, safeguarding information, legal advice, tender evaluations, special category data | Do not enter into free, public or unapproved tools. Use only where expressly authorised following data-protection and security checks. |

**Before submitting information**

- Use the minimum information necessary and remove names, contact details and other identifiers where possible.
- Check who can access the input and output, where it is stored, how long it is retained and whether it may be used to train the provider's model.
- Consider whether a data protection impact assessment, contractual check, consent or other authorisation is required.
- Do not rely on an AI provider to decide whether council information is lawful or appropriate to submit.

## 6. Accuracy, oversight and decisions

AI can produce confident but inaccurate, incomplete or invented answers. The user must review the full output, verify material facts against reliable sources, check calculations and legal references, and correct unsuitable language. Specialist legal, financial, HR, planning or technical advice must not be replaced by AI output.

No AI system may make a final decision on behalf of the council. Councillors remain responsible for their motions, statements, correspondence and social media activity. Officers remain responsible for advice and decisions within their roles and delegations.

## 7. Ethical and fair use

- Use AI only for a legitimate council purpose and in a way that is necessary and proportionate.
- Consider whether the output could disadvantage, exclude, stereotype or discriminate against any person or group.
- Provide a meaningful human route for challenge or correction when AI has materially informed work affecting an individual.
- Do not use AI to imitate a real person, manipulate residents, fabricate public support or undermine democratic debate.
- Apply the Nolan Principles and the council's codes, policies and values to AI-assisted work.

## 8. Transparency, records and copyright

Material AI use should be recorded where necessary to evidence how a report, recommendation or communication was prepared. Prompts, outputs and related records may be subject to records-management, audit, freedom of information, data-protection or disclosure requirements.

Routine spelling, grammar or formatting assistance does not normally require disclosure. Users must check that AI-generated text, images or other content can lawfully be used and does not infringe copyright, trade marks, licences or other rights.

## 9. Meetings and transcription

- AI recording, transcription or note-taking must be authorised and used consistently with the council's meeting, privacy and retention arrangements.
- Attendees should be appropriately informed about recording or transcription and how the information will be used.
- AI transcripts and draft minutes must be checked by a responsible officer. They are not the formal minutes unless approved through the council's usual process.

## 10. Incidents and concerns

Any unauthorised disclosure, inappropriate output, suspected personal data breach, security concern or misuse must be reported immediately to the Clerk. The council will contain and assess the incident, preserve relevant records, consider notification duties and suspend the tool or use where appropriate.

## 11. Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| **Full Council / committee** | Adopts the policy, determines the approval model and oversees material risks. |
| **Clerk / Chief Officer** | Implements the policy, approves or records tools where authorised, provides guidance and manages incidents. |
| **All users** | Follow this policy, protect information, check outputs and remain accountable for their work. |
| **Contractors and suppliers** | Meet the council's contractual, security, confidentiality and data-protection requirements. |

## 12. Approval, training and review

Users should receive guidance proportionate to the tools, information and risks involved. The council may require training before particular tools or uses are authorised. Failure to comply may result in access being withdrawn and action under relevant council procedures or contracts.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a significant change in technology, legislation, guidance, council systems or risk. Approved tools and local details may be updated under the authority recorded below.