



# Barrowby Parish Council

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## Use of AI Policy

### Document control

- **Owner:** Full Council
- **Responsible officer:** Clerk / Proper Officer
- **Adopted:** 11.05.2026 (Minute ref: 8e [26/008])
- **Version:** 2026.1
- **Review:** Annually or earlier if legislation/guidance changes
- **Next review due:** January-March 2027 at XXXXX for formal adoption at Parish Council  
May 2027

## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Barrowby Parish Council will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and services in a lawful, responsible, proportionate and transparent manner.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any use of AI:

- supports the Council's work without replacing human judgement;
- is consistent with the Council's legal duties and public responsibilities;
- protects confidential and personal information;
- supports accurate, professional and accountable communications; and
- aligns with the Council's IT, cyber security, social media, records management and data protection arrangements.

AI may be a useful support tool for drafting, summarising, structuring and improving administrative work, but it must not be treated as a substitute for professional judgement, lawful decision-making or proper Council governance.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all councillors, employees, contractors, volunteers and any other person using AI on behalf of the Council or in connection with Council business.

It applies to the use of AI for, or in connection with:

- drafting agendas, minutes, reports, letters, articles or routine correspondence;
- summarising information or preparing first drafts;
- generating website, newsletter or social media content;
- structuring or analysing non-sensitive information;

- improving clarity, tone or formatting of documents;
- research support, idea generation or administrative assistance;
- any other AI-assisted task carried out for Council purposes.

This policy applies whether AI is accessed through a website, app, integrated software tool, email assistant, search function, chatbot, document platform or any other digital service.

### **3. Relationship with other Council policies**

This policy must be read alongside the Council's:

- IT, Email and Cyber Security Policy;
- Social Media, Messaging and Digital Communications Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Privacy Notices;
- Records Retention / Document Retention Schedule;
- Personal Data Breach Procedure;
- IT / Cyber Security Incident Report Procedure;
- Code of Conduct;
- Complaints and staff conduct procedures where relevant.

Where there is any conflict or uncertainty, users must follow the stricter requirement and seek guidance from the Clerk / Proper Officer.

### **4. Core principles**

The Council will apply the following principles when using AI:

#### **4.1 Human oversight**

AI must be used only as a support tool. Final responsibility for all Council business remains with a human user.

#### **4.2 Lawfulness**

AI must be used in a way that complies with data protection law, confidentiality duties, copyright, freedom of information and any other relevant legal obligations.

#### **4.3 Accuracy and care**

AI-generated outputs must be checked for factual accuracy, completeness, tone, legality and appropriateness before they are relied upon, circulated or published.

#### **4.4 Proportionality**

AI should only be used where it adds value, improves efficiency, or assists with routine work in a proportionate and sensible way.

#### **4.5 Security**

Council information must only be entered into approved tools and in accordance with the Council's IT and data protection arrangements.

#### **4.6 Transparency and accountability**

The Council must be able to explain, if asked, how AI has been used in connection with Council work where that use is material or relevant.

#### **4.7 Public trust**

AI must not be used in a way that is misleading, unfair, discriminatory, deceptive or likely to undermine public confidence in the Council.

### **5. Permitted use**

AI may be used for low-risk support tasks such as:

- preparing first drafts of routine correspondence;
- improving the clarity, structure or tone of draft text;
- summarising non-confidential documents or notes;
- suggesting newsletter or website wording;
- producing draft public engagement content;
- brainstorming headings, formats, checklists or templates;
- assisting with the presentation of non-sensitive information;
- preparing draft social media posts for human review.

Any use of AI for outward-facing content must still comply with the Council's Social Media, Messaging and Digital Communications Policy.

### **6. Prohibited and restricted use**

#### **6.1 AI must not be used for:**

- making autonomous decisions on behalf of the Council;
- making decisions affecting individuals without meaningful human review;
- replacing councillor or officer judgement in matters of policy, discretion or governance;
- generating or sharing unlawful, defamatory, discriminatory, abusive or misleading content;
- producing formal legal, HR, financial or procurement conclusions without proper review;

- conducting Council business through unapproved AI tools or services.

## **6.2 Personal data and confidential information**

Users must not input the following into a public or unapproved AI system unless the Council has expressly approved that use and appropriate safeguards are in place:

- personal data;
- special category data;
- confidential staffing information;
- sensitive complaints information;
- legally privileged material;
- commercially sensitive or contract-sensitive information;
- unpublished Council business where disclosure could create risk;
- any information that should not be shared outside the Council's controlled systems.

Where there is any doubt, the information must not be entered into an AI tool until the user has checked with the Clerk / Proper Officer.

## **6.3 High-risk areas**

Particular caution must be exercised before using AI in relation to:

- staffing and HR matters;
- complaints or code of conduct matters;
- procurement or contracts;
- planning consultations or quasi-judicial matters;
- safeguarding;
- legal disputes or threatened claims;
- personal data breach handling;
- finance, payroll or banking matters.

In these areas, AI may only be used for low-risk drafting support and must not be relied upon without careful human checking.

## **7. Approved tools and systems**

Only AI tools and services approved by the Council, or otherwise authorised by the Clerk / Proper Officer, may be used for Council business.

Users must not:

- sign up to new AI services for Council work without approval;
- upload Council information to unapproved AI platforms;
- connect Council accounts or data sources to AI tools without authority;

- assume that a commonly used public AI service is appropriate for Council information.

AI use must align with the Council's IT, Email and Cyber Security Policy, including requirements relating to passwords, multi-factor authentication, approved systems, incident reporting and personal devices.

## **8. Review and checking of AI outputs**

All AI-generated outputs must be reviewed by a competent human before use.

The user reviewing the output must check, so far as appropriate:

- factual accuracy;
- relevance and completeness;
- lawful and professional wording;
- confidentiality and privacy risks;
- whether any statements need evidence or source checking;
- whether the tone is suitable for the audience;
- whether the content could mislead or overstate the Council's position;
- whether the output contains invented information, false citations, bias or unsupported conclusions.

AI outputs must never be copied and used blindly.

## **9. AI and Council decision-making**

AI may assist with drafting or summarising information, but it must not be treated as the decision-maker.

Council decisions must be made through lawful Council processes and by those with proper authority.

AI must not:

- determine the Council's policy position;
- approve expenditure;
- determine staffing outcomes;
- decide complaints;
- determine responses to statutory consultations;
- replace officer advice, councillor debate or formal resolutions.

Where AI has been used to help prepare material for Council consideration, the final content remains the responsibility of the person submitting or approving it.

## **10. AI and communications / social media**

AI may be used to help draft:

- newsletters;
- website content;
- routine emails;
- public notices;
- consultation summaries;
- draft social media posts.

However:

- all outward-facing content must be checked by a human before publication;
- posts and messages must still comply with the Council's Social Media, Messaging and Digital Communications Policy;
- AI must not be used to generate misleading engagement, fake testimonials, fake public responses or impersonated communications;
- AI must not be used to automate responses in a way that gives the impression that a human has personally reviewed a matter when they have not.

Where a social media post or public statement concerns a sensitive, controversial or legally significant matter, AI should only be used for limited drafting assistance and the final text should be reviewed particularly carefully.

## **11. Record keeping and retention**

Where AI is used in a way that materially contributes to a Council document, report, communication or decision-support process, the responsible user should ensure that an appropriate record is kept where proportionate.

Depending on the context, this may include:

- saving the final approved version of the document;
- keeping a note that AI was used to help draft or summarise content;
- retaining source material relied upon for checking;
- saving any substantive prompt/output history where it is necessary to explain how the document was prepared.

Routine and trivial use of AI for minor drafting assistance does not always require a separate record, but important Council business must still be retained in line with the Council's records management arrangements.

Users must not assume that content held within an AI tool will be retained or retrievable as the Council's official record.

## **12. FOI, EIR and information rights**

The use of AI does not remove or reduce the Council's obligations under freedom of information, environmental information or data protection law.

Where AI has been used in relation to Council business, users must ensure that:

- important records are captured in the Council's own systems where appropriate;
- official information can still be located and retrieved if required;
- drafts, notes or related records are managed in line with the Council's retention arrangements.

AI must not be used as a means of avoiding proper record keeping or disclosure responsibilities.

## **13. Incident reporting and concerns**

Any incident, concern or suspected misuse involving AI must be reported promptly to the Clerk / Proper Officer.

This includes, for example:

- accidental disclosure of confidential or personal information into an AI tool;
- use of an unapproved AI platform for Council business;
- AI-generated content being published with serious inaccuracies;
- output that is discriminatory, inappropriate or misleading;
- compromised accounts or suspicious AI integrations;
- concerns that AI has been used in a way that bypasses lawful governance.

Where personal data, cyber security or confidentiality may be affected, the matter must also be handled in line with the Council's Personal Data Breach Procedure and IT / Cyber Security Incident Report Procedure.

## **14. Responsibilities**

### **14.1 Full Council**

Full Council is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring that AI use remains proportionate and consistent with the Council's governance arrangements.

### **14.2 Clerk / Proper Officer**

The Clerk / Proper Officer is responsible for:

- overseeing implementation of this policy;
- identifying or approving suitable AI tools where appropriate;
- ensuring staff and councillors understand the limits of AI use;
- escalating issues to the DPO, IT support or legal advisers where required;

- ensuring that AI use is consistent with the Council's other policies.

### **14.3 Councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors**

All users are responsible for:

- complying with this policy;
- checking outputs before use;
- protecting Council information;
- using only approved tools;
- reporting incidents or concerns promptly;
- not presenting AI output as verified fact unless it has actually been checked.

### **14.4 Data Protection Officer**

The Data Protection Officer will advise, where required, on data protection implications of AI use and on any incidents or risks involving personal data.

## **15. Training and awareness**

The Council will provide proportionate awareness and guidance on the safe and responsible use of AI.

This may include:

- what AI can and cannot be used for;
- confidentiality and data protection risks;
- checking for hallucinations, bias and inaccuracies;
- records and retention expectations;
- AI use in drafting communications and social media content;
- reporting misuse or incidents.

Users are expected to remain cautious and not assume that AI outputs are accurate simply because they sound confident or professional.

## **16. Breach of this policy**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- withdrawal or restriction of access to AI tools or Council systems;
- internal action under the Council's relevant procedures;
- referral under the Code of Conduct where applicable;
- referral to external authorities where appropriate;
- contractual action in the case of contractors or service providers.

Any response will be proportionate to the seriousness of the issue.

## **17. Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner if needed due to:

- changes in legislation or official guidance;
- changes to Council systems or approved tools;
- significant incidents or identified weaknesses;
- changes in how the Council uses digital systems and communications.

## **18. Contact**

Questions about this policy should be directed in the first instance to the Clerk / Proper Officer.