



Report to	Wem Town Council
Date of meeting	15 th October 2026
Subject	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
Report author	A Roberts (RFO)
Decisions required	Yes – see recommendation

1. Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used to support administrative, communication and research tasks. It can save time and improve the preparation and accessibility of information, but its use also creates risks relating to accuracy, bias, confidentiality, data protection, copyright and information security.

The proposed policy provides a simple framework for the safe and responsible use of AI by Councillors, staff. It emphasises that AI may assist Council work but does not replace human judgement or responsibility.

2. Recommendation

That the Council approves the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.

3. Background

AI tools are becoming increasingly accessible and are already capable of assisting with tasks such as drafting, summarising, research, translation, analysis and communications. Wem Town Council staff use free AI tools to assist with such tasks on a regular basis.

Other local councils have introduced policies to establish appropriate safeguards for their use. The proposed Wem Town Council policy is based on these approaches but has been kept proportionate to the Council's size and requirements.

4. Details

The policy establishes the following key principles:

- AI may be used to assist Council work where appropriate.
- The person using AI remains responsible for checking and approving the resulting work.
- Personal, confidential or sensitive information must not be entered into public AI tools.
- AI must comply with the Council's existing data protection, confidentiality, information security and other relevant policies.
- AI must not make decisions on behalf of the Council or replace human judgement.
- AI-generated information must be checked for accuracy, bias and appropriateness.
- Significant new AI systems should be subject to appropriate risk and data protection assessment before being introduced.

- Problems or suspected data breaches involving AI must be reported promptly and appropriately.
- Councillors and staff should receive appropriate guidance on responsible use.
- The policy will be reviewed regularly to reflect changes in technology, legislation and Council practice.

5. Financial Implications

No direct financial implications arise from adopting the policy. Any future expenditure relating to AI systems, training or risk assessment would be considered through the Council's normal budget and procurement arrangements.

6. Legal, Risk and Governance Implications

The policy supports the Council's responsibilities for data protection, confidentiality, information security and good governance. It intends to reduce risks of inaccurate information, inappropriate decision-making, data breaches and misuse of AI.

The Council remains responsible for decisions and information produced using AI.

7. Consultation and Engagement

No public consultation is required. The policy is an internal governance arrangement applying to Councillors, staff and others using AI for Council business.

8. Next Steps

- Council approves the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.
- The policy is provided to Councillors and relevant staff.
- Training is made available for staff.
- Appropriate guidance is provided on the safe and responsible use of AI.
- The policy is reviewed regularly and updated when required.

Appendix A Wem Town Council Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2026

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can provide useful support to the Council by helping to draft and summarise information, improve communications, analyse information, increase accessibility and save staff and Members time.

However, AI can produce inaccurate, misleading or biased information and may create risks relating to confidentiality, data protection, copyright and information security. AI should therefore be used as a tool to assist Council work, not as a replacement for human judgement, responsibility or decision-making.

This policy sets out the principles that apply when AI is used for Council business.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Councillors and employees using AI on behalf of Wem Town Council.

3. Responsible Use

AI may be used to assist with Council work where its use is appropriate and proportionate.

Anyone using AI remains responsible for the resulting work and must:

- check AI-generated information for accuracy and completeness;
- consider whether the output is biased, inappropriate or misleading;
- make any necessary corrections before the information is used; and
- ensure that the use of AI complies with Council policies and legal requirements.

4. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- Personal, confidential or sensitive Council information must **not** be entered into publicly available AI tools.
- AI must be used in accordance with the Council's data protection, confidentiality and information security requirements.
- Where a proposed AI system will process personal data on behalf of the Council, appropriate data protection and risk assessments must be undertaken before it is introduced.

5. Human Decision-Making

- AI must not make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- AI may assist with research, analysis or preparation of information, but decisions affecting individuals, organisations, Council services or the use of public funds must remain the responsibility of authorised Councillors or officers.

6. Accuracy, Bias and Fairness

AI-generated information must be checked before it is relied upon or published.

Particular care must be taken where AI is used to analyse information, make recommendations or produce material relating to individuals or groups. The Council

must not rely on AI where its use could result in unfair, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate outcomes.

7. Public Information and Transparency

- Where AI has been used to produce significant public-facing content, the Council will identify that AI has been used.
- AI-generated content must not be presented as independently verified information unless it has been checked by a person with appropriate knowledge or authority.

8. Copyright and Intellectual Property

- AI must be used in accordance with copyright and other intellectual property requirements.
- Users must take reasonable steps to ensure that AI-generated material does not improperly reproduce or use copyrighted or otherwise protected material.

9. Security and Approved Systems

- AI tools used for Council business must be appropriate for the intended purpose and must not compromise Council information or systems.
- Before introducing an AI system that processes Council information, the Council should consider its security, data protection, risks and suitability.

10. Reporting Problems

- Any suspected loss, disclosure or misuse of Council information (data breach) through an AI system, or any other significant problem arising from its use, must be reported promptly in accordance with the Council's existing reporting procedures.

11. Training and Awareness

- The Council will provide appropriate guidance and training to Councillors and staff on the safe and responsible use of AI.
- Users are expected to understand the limitations and risks of AI and to follow this policy and related Council policies.

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, technology or the Council's use of AI.

Appendix A1**AI Guidance for Staff and Councillors****AI – 10 things to remember****Use AI to help, not to decide.**

AI can help draft, summarise, research and generate ideas. You remain responsible for the final work.

1. Check everything

AI can get things wrong, invent information and misunderstand the question. Check facts, figures, names, dates and references before using the output.

2. Don't put personal or Council information into public AI tools.

Never enter residents' names, addresses, contact details, complaints, casework or other personal information unless the Council has specifically approved the AI system for that purpose. Think about what information you are sharing, who should have access to it and whether the AI service is appropriate for that information.

3. Don't enter confidential Council information.

If information is confidential or restricted, don't put it into a public AI tool.

4. Acknowledge the Use of AI

Make it clear when AI has been used to produce significant public-facing content

5. Watch for bias.

AI can reproduce bias or produce inappropriate or discriminatory content. Check the output carefully.

6. Keep your own judgement.

AI doesn't know Wem, its residents or the circumstances behind a local issue in the way Council staff do. Use your knowledge and judgement.

7. Don't use AI to make Council decisions.

AI can help prepare information, but decisions remain with the appropriate officer or Councillor.

8. Check copyright and sources.

Don't assume that material produced by AI is free to use. Check important sources and references.

9. If something goes wrong, report it.

If you accidentally enter personal or confidential information into an AI system, or have another significant concern about its use, report it promptly.