



Artificial Intelligence Policy

2026

Artificial Intelligence Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is intended to help 'users' (Council employees, elected members, agency workers, contractors, consultants or other third parties) to understand the Council's position on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Large Language Models (GenAI).
- 1.2 This policy is designed to ensure that the use of GenAI is ethical, complies with all applicable laws, regulations and Council policies, and complements the Council's existing information and security policies.
- 1.3 GenAI is increasingly being used across industries, including the public sector. Whilst it has the potential to bring numerous benefits to the Council, which may include improved efficiency and cost savings, the risks and challenges associated with safe and responsible GenAI adoption must be taken into consideration at all times.
- 1.4 GenAI allows computers to learn and solve problems in ways that can seem human. It is important to remember however that computers cannot think, empathise or reason, therefore this policy sets out the Council's intention to only use GenAI as a tool to support work, and not as a full replacement of human intervention.
- 1.5 Due to the rapid changes and advancements within the field of GenAI this policy will be in a constant state of review. The policy will be formally reviewed at a minimum every 12 months.

2. What is AI?

- 2.1 The UK Government defines AI as:

'The theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages. Modern AI is usually built using machine learning algorithms. The algorithms find complex patterns in data which can be used to form rules.'
- 2.2 GenAI refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that would normally require human intelligence.
- 2.3 GenAI programmes can process large amounts of data, identify patterns and follow detailed instructions about what to do with that information
- 2.4 Common forms of GenAI technology include algorithms and predictive analysis, chatbots and virtual assistants, machine learning, remote monitoring tools, smart technologies, text editors and autocorrect, automatic language translation, and facial recognition or detection. It should be noted that the Council does not intend to use any image-based AI tools such as MidJourney, Google Gemini or Adobe Firefly.

3. Use

- 3.1 Users are permitted to explore and use Microsoft Copilot for work purposes on Council devices.
- 3.2 Whilst it is recognised that users may use other GenAI tools on personal devices or for personal use, Microsoft Copilot is the only approved General AI tool to be used to carry out Council work on any IT device.

- 3.3 Microsoft Copilot offers a wide range of AI-assisted capabilities that simplifies tasks like document creation, data analysis, project management and communication. The use of Microsoft Copilot is subject to the restrictions in this and related Council policies.
- 3.4 GenAI can provide valuable support while still incorporating users' professional judgment and expertise.
- 3.5 Users at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council will not use GenAI to replace any decision-making activities. GenAI can only be used as a tool to support work, not to replace human intervention.
- 3.6 GenAI tools can completely make up 'facts' because they have ingested information from a large amount of data sources, some of which may be fiction. As a result, it is important to fact check any content produced by GenAI. If there is any doubt about the accuracy of the GenAI generated output, it must not be used.
- 3.7 Before using Microsoft Copilot for work purposes, the user must evaluate and test the validity of the information it produces. The IT Team have a good working knowledge of this tool and may be able to help with this.
- 3.8 Microsoft Copilot needs to be used responsibly, ensuring it complements staff's professional judgement and expertise. Users remain professionally responsible and accountable for any work they produce with the help of Microsoft Copilot.

4. Governance, Risk and Legal Considerations

- 4.1 There is currently no legislation in place that directly refers to the use of GenAI. However, where an AI system is using or collecting personal data, it will fall within the scope of the UKGDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).
- 4.3 If a user wants to use different GenAI tool for work purposes, they need to seek approval from the IT Operations and Security Manager or the Head of IT before doing this. Software should never be downloaded or accessed on the Council's network without prior authorisation.
- 4.4 System modules, API and plug-in tools which enable access to GenAI must not be used without prior approval by the Senior Leadership Team and the IT Team.
- 4.5 Copyright law must be adhered to when utilising GenAI. It is prohibited to use GenAI to generate content that infringes upon the intellectual property rights of others, including but not limited to copyrighted material. If a user is unsure whether a particular use of GenAI constitutes copyright infringement, they should contact the Council's Legal Service before using it.
- 4.6 In addition to UKGDPR and DPA implications, users also need to consider the risks associated with the use of confidential and personal data, including commercially sensitive data. This type of information must not be entered into Copilot as there is a risk that it may enter the public domain. For example it is deemed acceptable to use Copilot to assist you with writing a letter to a customer, but you must not include any personal data into Copilot, like the customer's name or address. You must also not include any confidential information, like details on the customer's arrears, or a fine they have not paid. Commercially sensitive information relating to a Council contract for example, should also not be entered into Copilot. It is important to also note that once data is entered into a GenAI tool, there is no way to remove it, so if the user is unsure, they should not enter data into the GenAI tool.

- 4.7 Users must follow all applicable data privacy laws and organisational policies when using Copilot. If a user has any doubt about the confidentiality of information, they should not use this tool.
- 4.8 While a GenAI platform may be hosted internationally, information created or collected in the United Kingdom (UK), under data sovereignty rules, is still under jurisdiction of UK laws. The reverse also applies. If information is sourced from GenAI hosted overseas for use in the UK, the laws of the source country regarding its use and access may apply. GenAI service providers should be assessed for data sovereignty practice by any organisation wishing to use their GenAI.
- 4.9 The Council is under a legal duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. This means that when developing using or procuring AI technologies the Council needs to consider the potential impact on people with protected characteristics. This consideration must be made and evidenced through an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) where relevant.
- 4.10 Bias and discrimination must also be considered. Copilot may make use of and generate biased, discriminatory or offensive content. Users should use Copilot responsibly and ethically, in compliance with Council policies and applicable laws and regulations.

5. Compliance

Any violations of this policy should be reported to the Council's IT Team or the Senior Leadership Team. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with Council's HR policies and procedures.

6. Ethical Use

Copilot must be used ethically and in compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations and organisational policies. Copilot must not be used to generate and publish content that is discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate and careful checking of any content created must be undertaken.

7. Acknowledgment

By using Copilot, users acknowledge that they have read and understood these guidelines, including the risks associated with the use of GenAI.

This policy is based on guidance prepared by ALGIM (Aotearoa - New Zealand) and Socitm (UK).

www.algim.org.nz

www.socitm.net