



WEST HANNINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) STRATEGY

1. Purpose

West Hanningfield Parish Council recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have the potential to support the efficient delivery of council services and administration.

The purpose of this Strategy is to set out how the Council intends to use AI tools responsibly, securely and transparently, whilst ensuring that all decisions remain under the control of elected Members and authorised officers.

This Strategy should be read alongside the Council's Artificial Intelligence Policy, Data Protection Policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

2. Strategic Objectives

The Council will seek to use AI technologies to:

- Improve administrative efficiency.
- Reduce the time spent on routine tasks.
- Support the preparation of reports, agendas, minutes and correspondence.
- Improve accessibility and clarity of council communications.
- Assist with research and information gathering.
- Support knowledge sharing and continuity of administration.
- Deliver better value for money for residents.

The Council will not use AI to replace democratic decision-making or professional judgement.

3. Principles

The Council's use of AI will be guided by the following principles:

Transparency

Where AI has materially assisted in the preparation of documents or communications, the Council will be open about its use where appropriate.

Accountability

All decisions remain the responsibility of the Council, its committees, or authorised officers.

Human Oversight

AI-generated content will be reviewed by a human before use.

Security and Privacy

Personal, confidential or sensitive information will not be entered into AI systems unless permitted under the Council's AI Policy and data protection legislation.

Value for Money

The Council will only adopt AI tools where there is a clear benefit in efficiency, quality, resilience or cost-effectiveness.

4. Areas of Use

The Council may use AI tools to assist with:

- Drafting agendas, minutes and reports.
- Producing policy documents and procedures.
- Preparing public communications.
- Summarising legislation, guidance and consultation documents.
- Researching best practice.
- Creating training materials.
- Assisting with website content.

The Council will not rely solely on AI outputs for legal, financial, planning or employment decisions.

5. Training and Awareness

Councillors and officers using AI systems should:

- Understand the limitations of AI.
- Verify information produced by AI before use.
- Follow the Council's AI Policy.
- Complete any training deemed necessary by the Council.

6. Monitoring and Review

The Clerk will monitor the effectiveness of AI use within the Council and report any significant issues, risks or opportunities to Members.

This Strategy will be reviewed annually by the Council.

7. Expected Outcomes

The Council expects responsible use of AI to:

- Improve efficiency and productivity.
- Reduce administrative burden.
- Improve consistency of documentation.
- Support continuity during staff absence or change.
- Enhance value for money for residents.
- Allow more officer and councillor time to be focused on community priorities.