


# Artificial Intelligence (AI) Protocol

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<b>Version</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Protocol owner</b>	<b>Andy Felton, Director of Resources</b>
<b>Applies to</b>	<b>All Council staff, members, agency staff and contractors</b>
<b>Review due</b>	<b>March 2027, or sooner if there are significant protocol or practice changes</b>

# Introduction

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers both significant opportunities and important challenges for local government. This protocol sets out a clear framework to guide how AI technologies are developed, deployed, and used within our organisation.**

As a local authority, we recognise the transformative potential of AI to improve service delivery, support informed decision-making, and strengthen engagement with residents. Alongside these benefits, we have a duty to ensure that AI is implemented in a way that is ethical, secure, and delivers positive outcomes for all.

Our mission is to ensure that AI supports our organisational priorities and governance arrangements, enabling innovation that is both agile and safe. We are committed to using AI responsibly, in line with our Council Plan and legal obligations.

This protocol outlines our core principles for responsible AI use, demonstrating our commitment to ethical, transparent, and beneficial adoption of AI across Council services.

**Paul Johnson, Chief Executive**



# Purpose of protocol

We will use AI responsibly to improve outcomes for residents, strengthen decision-making, increase efficiency, support staff productivity and continue to ensure high-quality, accessible services.

This protocol sets out the standards, expectations and governance arrangements for the safe, ethical, transparent and lawful use of AI across all Council services.

It aims to ensure that:

- AI is used only where it adds value
- AI is used safely, ethically and transparently
- Human judgement, accountability and oversight remain central
- AI supports, rather than replaces, professional expertise and relationships
- The rights, dignity, independence and wellbeing of residents and staff are protected
- Use of AI aligns with the Council Plan and corporate priorities
- Risks such as bias, discrimination, hallucinations, misinformation and data breaches are properly managed

This protocol is based on clear principles and is designed to apply regardless of how technology evolves. Practical guidance on implementation is provided separately and updated regularly.

# Scope

This protocol applies to:

- All Council employees, elected members, contractors, agency workers, volunteers and anyone processing or accessing council information
- All AI tools and systems used in any Directorate (e.g. Copilot, data analysis, transcription, productivity tools)
- Public-facing AI (e.g. chatbots, triage tools)
- Third-party AI built into software procured by the Council
- AI used as part of commissioned or outsourced services

It covers all types of AI, including predictive models, machine learning, generative AI, natural language processing, automation, chat-based tools and decision-support systems.

# What we mean by AI

For the purposes of this protocol, AI includes:

- Tools that generate content (text, images, summaries)
- Tools that transcribe and summarise speech
- Tools that help spot patterns or trends
- Tools that predict things
- Tools that automate parts of processes
- Chatbots and conversational tools
- Any technology that uses machine learning or decision-support functions

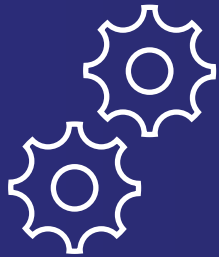
# Principles for responsible use

We are committed to the following principles to ensure responsible use of AI:



## Lawfulness and transparency

Ensures AI is used lawfully, openly, and with clear information for individuals impacted by use of AI.



## Choice, dignity and inclusion

Promotes accessibility, inclusion, and fairness by supporting staff, and preventing digital exclusion.



## Human oversight and accountability

Upholds human judgement and accountability by requiring people to remain responsible for key decisions, allowing staff to override AI, and preserving essential human contact.



## Safety, security and resilience

Strengthens safety and resilience by requiring robust cyber security, careful data handling, reliable and tested tools, and active risk mitigation.



## Purposeful, beneficial and proportionate use

Focuses AI use on clear benefits, including improving outcomes, productivity, quality, and insight, while treating generative AI cautiously as a supportive tool, not a replacement.

# Appropriate use of AI

AI will only be used when it is lawful, safe and appropriate. Examples include:

## **Productivity and internal efficiency**

- Drafting emails, reports, summaries and presentations
- Improving readability and accessibility of content
- Translating material
- Transcribing meetings
- Drafting options appraisals or project plans

## **Supporting residents and customers**

- AI Chatbots or digital assistants for queries (with clear signposting to humans)
- Accessibility tools (speech-to-text, text-to-speech, reading aids)

## **Data, insight and improvement**

- Demand forecasting
- Data validation and data quality tools
- Trend analysis and pattern recognition
- Support to improve performance insights and reporting

These uses will be transparent and overseen by appropriate governance.

# Prohibited or restricted use

AI will **not** be used:

- As the sole basis for decisions affecting rights, entitlements, enforcement or individual outcomes
- In ways that remove meaningful choice or reduce necessary human contact
- To generate misleading, harmful, discriminatory or offensive content
- Where accuracy cannot be validated or where the risk to residents is disproportionate

AI will **never** be deployed without a documented governance decision for high-risk contexts.

# Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIAs) and Fair Treatment Assessments (FTAs)

All AI use will be screened for a **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**.

A **full DPIA** is required where:

- Personal data is processed
- Profiling or prediction occurs
- AI may influence decisions about individuals
- Vulnerable groups may be affected
- Automated triage or decision-support is involved

An **FTA** is required when:

- AI could disproportionately impact protected groups

- The tool is used at scale
- The tool could shape or filter access to services

All use of AI within the Council must comply with [Solihull Council's Privacy Notice](#), which explains how personal information is collected, used, stored and shared, and outlines individuals' rights under UK data protection legislation.

### **Informed choice and consent**

Where AI interacts directly with residents, we will:

- Provide clear, jargon-free information
- Ensure people know how to opt out
- Explain how data will be used, stored and protected

# **Procurement and supplier responsibilities**

We will ensure that when procuring AI systems that they are:

- Clearly identified and described by suppliers
- Tested for accuracy, risks, security and bias
- Supported with documentation on training data and model limitations
- Contractually compliant with UK data laws and cyber standards
- Subject to audit and human oversight
- Configurable so automated functions cannot operate without explicit Council approval

Suppliers may not use Solihull data to train or improve their models without explicit permission.

Procurement will follow **LGA Responsibly Buying AI** guidance.

# Staff responsibility

- Use AI tools responsibly as set out within this Protocol
- Protect personal and sensitive data
- Validate and check AI outputs
- Maintain transparency with members of the public we are working with

# Managers' responsibilities

Where AI is to be introduced within a service area we will (either as a new system, or new use within the service):

- Outline the proposal to the AI Governance Board for initial approval
- Complete a DPIA as required by the AI Governance Board
- Ensure that the solution and its intended use comply with this protocol
- Assess data readiness and quality
- Plan for human oversight
- Ensure users are fully trained in the use of the system and ethical responsibilities

# Governance and roles and responsibilities

## AI Governance Board

- Consider and approve new use of AI
- Escalate approval as required
- Oversee ethical, legal and responsible AI use
- Manage risk and assurance
- Set and maintain AI policies, standards and processes
- Maintain a register of approved AI systems

## Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Corporate Transformation Board

- Approves high-risk AI applications
- Oversees the strategic direction of AI adoption

## AI workstream of the Corporate Transformation Board

A cross-Council group including ICT, Information Governance, Legal, HR, Risk and representatives from each Council Directorate. The group is responsible for:

- Reviewing high-risk proposals
- Monitoring emerging risks, bias and harm
- Maintaining an AI systems register
- Ensuring alignment with national standards
- Leading corporate learning and good practice

## **Directors and Heads of Service**

- Ensure AI use in their areas is lawful, safe and appropriate
- Ensure staff complete mandatory training
- Ensure DPIAs and FTAs are completed
- Monitor impacts and feedback

## **The Council's Information Governance Service**

- Leads DPIA processes
- Advises on data protection, risks and mitigation
- Supports transparency and lawful processing

## **The Council's ICT Service**

- Approve technical tools and integrations
- Ensure cyber security, configuration and monitoring
- Maintain guardrails and technical standards

## **All Council employees, agency staff and members**

- Must follow this protocol and accompanying guidance
- Must complete any mandatory training before using AI tools e.g. Magic Notes training
- Must fact-check AI output
- Must report concerns, errors or harmful outputs

# Monitoring and continuous improvement

We will:

- Monitor AI tools for accuracy, accessibility, fairness and unintended consequences
- Seek and act upon feedback from staff, residents and partners
- Review data and trends to identify bias or harm
- Publish high-level transparency information
- Update staff guidance frequently
- Review this protocol annually

AI systems that cause harm, reduce accessibility, or introduce unacceptable risk will be suspended or decommissioned.

## Protocol review

To remain relevant as AI evolves, Solihull Council will:

- Keep this protocol principle-based and tool-agnostic
- Maintain flexible staff guidance that can be updated rapidly
- Adopt external frameworks rather than rewriting them
- Monitor national policy developments and legal changes
- Build ongoing workforce capability and AI literacy
- Test new tools carefully with real users before widespread adoption
- Require co-production or user review for high-impact resident-facing AI

# Related guidance

- AI Guidance for Solihull Council staff (for internal Council use)
- Local guidance for use of approved systems e.g. Magic Notes (for internal Council use)