EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy

1. Purpose and scope

The council recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) can support efficient administration, accessibility, communication and service delivery. This policy sets the conditions for using AI safely, ethically and lawfully while protecting council information and public trust.

It applies to councillors, employees, contractors, volunteers and any person using AI for council business, whether on a council or personal device. It covers standalone AI services and AI features built into other software.

Core position

AI may support research, drafting, analysis and administration. It must not replace human judgement, democratic accountability, professional advice or the lawful exercise of the council's functions.

2. Policy principles

- Accountability: the council and the individual user remain responsible for every decision, communication and action.
- Human oversight: AI output is advisory or draft material only. An accountable person must review the complete output, test it against the intended purpose and relevant evidence, correct any errors or omissions, and approve the final work before it is used, published or sent.
- Lawfulness and privacy: use must comply with data protection, confidentiality, equality, freedom of information, copyright and other applicable duties.
- Accuracy: factual claims, calculations, quotations, sources and legal references must be checked.
- Fairness: users must consider bias, discrimination, accessibility and the effect on different people or groups.
- Transparency: significant AI involvement should be recorded or disclosed where that would help explain how work was produced.
- Security and proportionality: users must select an appropriate approved tool and enter no more information than is necessary.

3. Using AI Tools

The council must adopt one of the following models and delete the unused option.

Approved tools only

Only tools listed below may be used for council business. Any additional tool requires prior written approval from [the Clerk / Full Council / nominated committee].

Tool	Approved users	Approved purposes
Microsoft Co-pilot	Councillors & Clerk	Improving reports, policies, Council documents. Improving responses to communications. Summarising documents. Research. Create posters, questionnaires, social media posts.
ChatGPT	Councillors & Clerk	As above

4. Permitted and prohibited use

AI may be used to assist with:

- first drafts of routine correspondence, reports, policies, agendas, newsletters, website or social media content;
- proofreading, summarising and explaining public or appropriately anonymised information;
- research and idea generation, provided sources and claims are independently checked;
- accessibility tasks, such as plain-English versions or alternative text, subject to human review;

AI must not be used to:

- make or determine council, employment, disciplinary, regulatory, procurement or other decisions;
- exercise delegated authority, approve expenditure or provide an unchecked planning response;
- publish or send content automatically without an accountable person reviewing it;
- create false, deceptive, defamatory, discriminatory or misleading material;
- present invented facts, sources, quotations or records as genuine;
- circumvent council procedures, access controls, legal duties or professional advice.

5. Information and data handling

Personal, confidential, commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted information must not be entered into an AI tool unless its use is necessary for an authorised council purpose and the specific application has been approved for that classification of information. Approval must confirm appropriate access controls, contractual protections and data-protection safeguards. A paid account is not automatically secure or approved.

Classification	Examples	Rule
GREEN: public	Adopted policies, published agendas and minutes, website text, public reports	May be entered into an approved tool. Check accuracy and copyright.
AMBER: internal	Draft reports, working notes, operational information, non-public correspondence	Use only where necessary in an approved secure tool. Remove identifiers and confidential details where possible.
RED: restricted	HR or complaint files, bank or payroll data, safeguarding information, legal advice, tender evaluations, special category data	Do not enter into free, public or unapproved tools. Use only where expressly authorised following data-protection and security checks.

Before submitting information

- Use the minimum information necessary and remove names, contact details and other identifiers where possible.
- Check who can access the input and output, where it is stored, how long it is retained and whether it may be used to train the provider's model.
- Consider whether a data protection impact assessment, contractual check, consent or other authorisation is required.
- Do not rely on an AI provider to decide whether council information is lawful or appropriate to submit.

6. Accuracy, oversight and decisions

AI can produce confident but inaccurate, incomplete or invented answers. Before relying on an output, the user must review it in full, verify material facts against reliable sources, recalculate material figures, confirm quotations and legal references in the original sources, and correct unsuitable or unsupported language. AI output must not replace specialist legal, financial, HR, planning or technical advice.

No AI system may make a final decision on behalf of the council. Councillors remain responsible for their motions, statements, correspondence and social media activity. Officers remain responsible for advice and decisions within their roles and delegations.

7. Ethical and fair use

- Use AI only for a legitimate council purpose and in a way that is necessary and proportionate.
- Consider whether the output could disadvantage, exclude, stereotype or discriminate against any person or group.
- Provide a meaningful human route for challenge or correction when AI has materially informed work affecting an individual.
- Do not use AI to imitate a real person, manipulate residents, fabricate public support or undermine democratic debate.
- Apply the Nolan Principles and the council's codes, policies and values to AI-assisted work.

8. Transparency, records and copyright

Significant AI use must be recorded where it materially informs a report, recommendation, decision, public communication or work affecting an individual. The record must be sufficient to explain the purpose of the AI use, the tool used, the human checks completed and how the final content or conclusion was reached. Prompts, outputs and related records may be subject to records-management, audit, freedom of information, data-protection or disclosure requirements.

Routine spelling, grammar or formatting assistance does not normally require disclosure. Users must check that AI-generated text, images or other content can lawfully be used and does not infringe copyright, trademarks, licences or other rights.

9. Incidents and concerns

Any unauthorised disclosure, inappropriate output, suspected personal data breach, security concern or misuse must be reported immediately to the Clerk. The user must stop the affected use, avoid deleting relevant prompts, outputs or records, and follow any instructions given to contain the incident. The council will assess the incident, preserve relevant records, consider notification duties and suspend the tool or use where appropriate.

10. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Full Council	Adopts and reviews the policy, determines the approval model, authorises any delegated approval arrangements and oversees material risks, incidents and changes to approved use.
Clerk	Implements the policy, approves or records tools where authorised, provides guidance and manages incidents.
All users	Follow this policy, protect information, check outputs and remain accountable for their work.
Contractors and suppliers	Meet the council's contractual, security, confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

11. Approval, training and review

Users should receive guidance proportionate to the tools, information and risks involved. The council may require training before particular tools or uses are authorised. Failure to comply may result in access being withdrawn and action under relevant council procedures or contracts.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following a significant change in technology, legislation, guidance, council systems or risk, or after a material AI-related incident. The Clerk will maintain the approved tools register and local implementation details under the authority recorded below and will report material changes to Full Council.

Signed for and on behalf of Edlesborough Parish Council	
Name	Cllr Rosie Booth
Signature	*R Booth*
Position	Chair
Adopted on	15/10/26
Minute Record	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy