



Ramsgate Town Council

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

Adopted	28 January 2026
Due to review	Annually

Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as Microsoft Copilot, are becoming increasingly embedded in everyday office software and administrative processes. When used appropriately, these tools can support efficiency, consistency and productivity across Council activities.

This policy provides Ramsgate Town Council with a clear, proportionate framework for the safe, ethical and responsible use of AI. It enables the Council to benefit from AI technology, while ensuring that risks relating to data protection, information, security, equality, transparency and environmental impact are properly managed.

This policy is deliberately cautious in approach. It permits the use of Microsoft Copilot only within the Council's secure Microsoft 365 environment and explicitly prohibits the use of unapproved public AI platforms for Council business. This reflects the need to maintain control over Council data and comply with legal obligations.

A core principle of the policy is that AI must support, not replace, human judgement. All AI generated content must be reviewed by a councillor or officer, and accountability for decisions remains firmly with the individual and the Council.

This policy also recognises that AI can introduce risks of bias, inaccuracy and environmental harm if used without oversight. It therefore requires proportionate governance, clear rules for use, and awareness of equality and sustainability considerations.

This policy will help the Council make informed and responsible use of AI tools, while protecting residents, staff, councillors and the Council itself.

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1. Policy Statement

Ramsgate Town Council recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an increasingly important tool that can support more efficient, consistent and high-quality services. When used appropriately, AI can assist officers and councillors in administrative, analytical and creative tasks, supporting informed decision making and improved outcomes for residents.

This policy sets out how Ramsgate Town Council will balance the opportunities presented by AI with the need to manage associated risks. It establishes a clear framework for the safe, ethical and responsible use of AI, ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory and governance requirements.

2. Scope and Audience

This policy applies to:

- All Ramsgate Town Council employees (officers).
- All Ramsgate Town councillors.
- Contractors, subcontractors and partners acting on behalf of the Council.

The policy applies to the use of AI tools for any Council related activity, whether for occasional, strategic or day-to-day operational purposes.

3. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define what is meant by AI in the context of Ramsgate Town Council. This policy should help enable the safe and effective use of AI to support service delivery and internal efficiency, while setting clear rules, responsibilities and governance arrangements for its use.

The Council must ensure compliance with data protection, information governance and equality legislation, while being accountable and transparent around the use of AI. This policy should position the Council to adapt to future developments in AI technology, as and when they occur.

4. Definition of Artificial Intelligence

For the purposes of this policy, Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems or software that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Text generation and summarisation.
- Data analysis and pattern recognition.
- Drafting documents or correspondence.
- Translation and language assistance.
- Decision support tools.

AI systems are typically trained on large datasets and may produce outputs that appear authoritative but are not always accurate.

5. Key Principles

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

- **Human oversight** - AI outputs must always be reviewed by a human. Decisions remain the responsibility of Council officers or councillors.
- **Non-reliance** - AI should support, not replace, professional judgement, skills or accountability.

- **Lawfulness and compliance** - AI must be used in accordance with data protection, copyright, equality and other applicable legislation.
- **Ethical use** - AI must not be used in ways that could cause harm, discrimination or unfair outcomes.
- **Transparency** - The Council will be open about how and why AI is used. Where appropriate, AI generated content will be clearly credited.
- **Proportionality** - AI should only be used where it clearly adds value.
- **Security** - AI use must not compromise Council data, systems or information.

6. Approved AI Tools

Ramsgate Town Council will only permit the use of Council approved AI tools that operate within approved and managed platforms.

At the time of adoption of this policy, the approved AI tools to be used are:

- **Microsoft Copilot**
This is provided as part of the Council's Microsoft 365 account and is contained within the Microsoft 365 environment, not via the usual public AI platforms.
- **Canva AI**
This is used within the Council's managed Canva account for design and communications purposes.

These tools are approved because they are accessed through Council controlled accounts and are used for limited, low-risk purposes.

Other public or consumer AI platforms (for example, standalone generative AI tools such as ChatGPT or DALL-E) must not be used for Council business unless explicitly approved.

Approval for any additional AI tools must be obtained through the Town Clerk. These may require additional risk and data protection assessments.

7. Rules for Use

When using AI for Council business, users must:

- Use only Council approved AI tools.
- Always check and validate AI generated content for accuracy and appropriateness.
- Ensure that AI generated material is clearly identified where appropriate.
- Never input personal data, confidential information or sensitive Council data into AI systems.
- Avoid copying and pasting content from unknown or untrusted sources into AI tools.
- Ensure AI outputs do not infringe copyright or intellectual property rights.
- Use AI in a way that aligns with the Council's values and standards of conduct.

Where AI has been used to generate or substantially assist content, the following wording (or similar) should be included where reasonable:

“Some content may have been generated or assisted by artificial intelligence.”

AI must not be used to make fully automated decisions about individuals without appropriate legal authority and safeguards.

8. Data Protection and Information Governance

AI use must comply with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Ramsgate Town Council’s Data Protection and Retention Policy.
- Ramsgate Town Council’s Communications Policy.
- Ramsgate Town Council’s IT Policy.

Where a proposed use of AI involves new processing of data, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) must be completed before use.

Entering personal data into AI systems without authorisation will be treated as a data breach.

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Ramsgate Town Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity.

AI systems can reflect or amplify bias. Users must therefore:

- Be alert to biased or discriminatory outputs.
- Avoid using AI in ways that could disadvantage individuals or groups with protected characteristics.
- Escalate concerns where AI outputs appear unfair, inaccurate or discriminatory.

Any AI tool proposed for wider or public facing use must be assessed for equality impacts.

10. Environmental Considerations

AI systems can have significant environmental impacts due to energy and water use in data centres.

The Council will:

- Use AI proportionately and only where it adds clear value.
- Prefer suppliers with clear sustainability commitments.
- Encourage efficient and responsible use of AI tools.

The Council will not:

- Use AI to generate images or other resource intensive outputs unless there is a clear business need.
- Use AI for trivial or excessive tasks, where the environmental cost is disproportionate.¹

¹ For example, a single generated AI image can use energy comparable to charging a fully charged smartphone.

11. Governance and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for AI governance rests with the **Town Clerk**, supported by the Council's appointed IT support provider.

Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring this policy aligns with existing Council policies, including Acceptable Use, Data Protection and Retention and Standing Orders.
- Approving the use of Microsoft Copilot within the Council's Microsoft 365 environment.
- Considering and approving (or rejecting) any proposals for additional AI enabled tools, supported by appropriate risk and data protection assessments.
- Ensuring councillors and officers are informed of their responsibilities when using AI.
- Overseeing responses to any incidents, breaches or complaints relating to AI use.

AI related risks and issues may be reported to the appropriate committee (for example, Finance and General Purposes), where strategic oversight is required.

12. Training and Awareness

The Council will ensure that councillors and officers are provided with proportionate guidance and support to enable safe and effective use of AI tools.

This will include:

- An introduction to Microsoft Copilot and its appropriate use in Council work.
- Clear guidance on data protection, confidentiality and personal data.
- Understanding the limitations of AI, including inaccuracies and bias.
- Reinforcing the requirement for human review and accountability.

Training may be delivered through briefings, written guidance or refresher updates, rather than formal mandatory training programmes, reflecting the size and capacity of the Council.

13. Compliance and Breaches

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Failure to comply may result in:

- Withdrawal of access to AI tools.
- Disciplinary action for employees.
- Action under the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Any suspected misuse, data breach or security incident involving AI must be reported immediately in line with Council procedures.

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, technology, Microsoft Copilot functionality, or Council practice.

Appendix – Appropriate Use of AI at Ramsgate Town Council

This appendix provides practical guidance on how Artificial Intelligence (AI), specifically Microsoft Copilot, may and may not be used at Ramsgate Town Council.

A1. Permitted Uses

Ramsgate Town Council does not use AI for delivering services to the public or on its websites. AI may only be used internally to support officers and councillors with administrative, communications and preparatory tasks.

Approved tools include Microsoft Copilot (within Microsoft 365) and Canva AI (within the Council's Canva account).

Permitted uses include:

- Summarising reports, agendas or background documents.
- Assisting with drafting internal documents.
- Producing first drafts of text for articles, newsletters, posters or promotional material.
- Supporting the design of posters or visual material using Canva AI features.
- Rewriting or shortening text for clarity, accessibility or plain English.
- Helping to structure content or generate ideas, headings or outlines.

All AI generated content must be reviewed, edited and approved by a councillor or officer before use.

A2. Prohibited Uses

AI must not be used for:

- Providing automated responses to residents or members of the public.
- Publishing AI generated content directly to the Council's website or social media without human review.
- Making decisions about individuals or groups.
- Processing or analysing personal data.
- Delivering or supporting frontline Council services.
- Acting as a substitute for professional judgement, legal advice or democratic decision-making.

The Council does not deploy AI chatbots, automated decision-making tools or predictive systems in public-facing services.

A3. Review and Accountability

AI outputs are advisory only. Responsibility for the accuracy, tone and appropriateness of any content remains with the councillor or officer using the tool.

Any uncertainty about whether a particular use of AI is appropriate should be discussed with the Town Clerk before proceeding.