

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting 20th November 2025

Green party group Motion on AI

To be proposed by Cllr Joanna Wright

This Council Notes that:

1. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasing rapidly, bringing both benefits and risks.
2. Data farm capacity is expanding rapidly, partly due to the growing use of AI in the UK and worldwide.
 - a. The UK is already the third-largest host for data centres, behind the US and Germany.¹
3. The government has designated data centres as critical national infrastructure, recognising their importance to the UK's economic future. However, there are concerns about their impact, including the potential knock-on effect on household energy bills.²
4. There are growing concerns about the environmental impact of these large facilities. Many data centres require substantial water usage for cooling, yet most operators do not disclose their water consumption data.³
5. There are concerns that the use of AI may erode human cognition over time.⁴
6. Local councils across the UK are trialling AI tools aimed at streamlining tasks in the planning process and social care, including note-taking.⁵
7. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology stated the technology could accelerate post committee meeting tasks, allowing officers to focus on the task at hand rather than paperwork. Early trials in central government show that officials saved on average, one hour of admin per one-hour meeting.⁶
8. Bath and North East Somerset has introduced the following AI:⁷

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyr9nx0jrzo>

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12255134/>

⁵ <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/61064-councils-to-use-ai-for-preparing-meeting-minutes-as-part-of-government-trial>

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- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

- a. Microsoft Copilot: To assist in various administrative functions, speeding up repetitive or time-consuming manual tasks.
 - b. Magicnotes: Utilised specifically within social care, Magicnotes aids in transcribing and then producing high-quality summaries of a wide range of meeting types.
 - c. Zoom: Used for telephony and supporting our contact centre teams. It includes call transcription capabilities that use AI to help summarise calls for staff.
9. Bath and North East Somerset allocated £65,000 in the 2025/2026 budget for Artificial Intelligence (AI) investment aimed at improving resident facing services.⁸
10. The Digital Strategy 2023 states that the council will use data and intelligence to inform transparent decision making, including a defined and applied framework for the ethical and secure use of data, including leveraging new data technologies such as AI.⁹
11. Bath and North East Somerset assures that no personal data is used solely by the AI technology provider to improve their AI products and all data is stored and processed in either the UK or EU;¹⁰
12. AI tools are not employed in the decision-making process and all decision making is made by Council officers;¹¹
13. AI-produced content undergoes review by a Council officer before being used further.¹²

This Council Resolves to:

1. To consult on and develop an AI Ethics Policy and request Cabinet to agree to resource this with a view to subsequent Council approval of the Policy and its publication.
2. The Policy to include as a minimum the following:
 - a) Recognition that AI is already being used by Bath and North East Somerset in various ways and its use is increasing which brings both benefits and risks; and

⁷ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/use-ai-technologies>

⁸ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/budget-consultation-2025-2026>

⁹ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/digital-strategy>

¹⁰ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/use-ai-technologies>

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

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- b) Note there are concerns about the data accessed by AI, and how it affects interaction with residents.
- c) Acknowledgement of the energy use and wider environmental footprint associated with AI is significant, and increasing; and
- d) Consideration and assessment of the energy use and environmental impact associated with the use of AI as part of any future deployment or procurement process.
- e) Transparency about when AI is used; and
- f) To publish guidelines on where use of AI might be limited.
- g) Consideration the impact of AI on job satisfaction and cognitive skills, with regular reviews.

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