BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet   **7th January 2026**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, WhatsApp Policy and Cyber Meeting Notes

Relevant Portfolio Holders	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holders Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Debra Goodall
Report Author: Mark Hanwell	Job Title: ICT Transformation Manager Contact: mark.hanwell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881248
Wards Affected	None
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Governance
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

   The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE to;

   1) Adopt the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy (Appendix 1) as a formal policy document.

   2) Adopt the WhatsApp Policy (Appendix 2) as a formal policy document.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy has been developed to ensure the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of AI technologies across Bromsgrove District Council. The policy outlines the principles, governance, and operational expectations for AI use, including transparency in automated decision-making, data protection, and human oversight. It also addresses the use of third-party tools and the importance of training and education for staff.

2.2 The WhatsApp policy has been developed to provide staff guidance in use of the social media application and sets out when it is, and is not, acceptable to use WhatsApp, and how to reduce the risks of using it.

2.3   Adoption of the policies will be accompanied by a communications campaign to both Members and Council staff to ensure successful adoption.

2.4   Training on the effective and ethical use of AI technology to be made available for both Members and Council staff.

3.   OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1   The AI policy mandates that all AI tools used within the Council must be approved and listed in the Information Asset Register. Automated decision-making must comply with UK GDPR and include human oversight. Staff must not input confidential or personal data into public AI tools. Procurement processes must include clauses prohibiting unauthorized AI use. Training programs will be developed to ensure staff understand responsible AI use.

3.2   The WhatsApp Policy states WhatsApp is only permitted for the narrow band of uses as set out in the document, where it helps to meet a particular need to communicate. In general, WhatsApp should be considered a last resort for work purposes, to be used when there is no viable alternative across the systems the councils provide for work purposes. WhatsApp is a social media application, and is therefore also covered by our Social Media Policy.

3.3   ICT will keep a list of permitted AI tools to be used by the Authority and will ensure these are upgraded where possible (some will be based solely in the cloud and upgraded by the vendor).

3.4   WhatsApp will not be updated by ICT where it is used on peoples own devices and will require the staff member to keep their apps up to date.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   There are no financial implications.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The AI policy aligns with UK GDPR and ICO guidance, particularly in relation to automated decision-making and data protection.

5.2   The WhatsApp policy tries to mitigate the potential for data breaches that could involve the authority being fined by the Information Commissioners Office.

6. **OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

    Local Government Reorganisation

6.1   There are no implications regarding Local Government Reorganisation or Devolution for either policy.

    Relevant Council Priority

6.2   Both policies may help the council to deliver on all its priorities.

    Climate Change Implications

6.3   The use of AI has raised questions about the amount of water used to cool cloud-based servers, however, the use of AI is now embedded into many computer systems and the AI policy sets out to ensure its correct usage and therefore limit any unnecessary use where possible.

6.4   There are no climate change implications for the use of WhatsApp.

    Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.5   The policies attached apply to all staff.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1   Risks include misuse of AI tools, data breaches, and reputational damage. Mitigations include policy enforcement, training, DPIAs, and oversight mechanisms. The policy provides a framework to manage these risks effectively.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

    Appendix 1 - AI Policy
    Appendix 2 - WhatsApp Policy