

Scottish Borders Council Generative AI Use Guidance

Introduction

At Scottish Borders Council, we are committed to leveraging digital tools to enhance productivity, improve the quality of work, and ultimately deliver superior services to our community. The effective use of generative AI tools is a key part of this strategy, enabling staff to work more efficiently and creatively.

We recognise the potential of these tools to transform our workflows and are keen to support our staff in learning how to use them effectively. At the same time, we are dedicated to managing the associated risks, ensuring that AI tools are used responsibly and in compliance with all relevant National policies and regulations.

While acknowledging the power of AI in improving productivity, we seek to also reassure staff across the organisation that these tools are aimed at complementing roles rather than replacing them and support our commitment to providing staff with the right tools and wider service improvement.

This guidance outlines the principles and guidelines for the safe and effective use of generative AI tools, helping staff to harness their benefits while safeguarding against potential risks. By adhering to this guidance, we can collectively contribute to a more innovative, efficient, and secure working environment.

Key Principles

- 1. Purpose and Scope:** This guidance outlines the safe and effective use of generative AI tools by staff at Scottish Borders Council.
- 2. Ethical Use:** Ensure AI tools are used ethically, responsibly, and in alignment with the Council's values and objectives set out in [SBC's Council Plan](#). AI tools are intended to support staff in carrying out their roles more efficiently.
- 3. Transparency:** Maintain transparency in AI usage, ensuring staff and stakeholders are aware of AI involvement in processes and decisions, and accountability measures will be put in place to reassure staff

Major Risks and Mitigation

- 1. Data Privacy:** Avoid inputting sensitive or personal data into generative AI tools adhere to all existing SBC data protection policies (*some links attached in section below*).
- 2. Accuracy and Reliability:** Verify AI-generated content for accuracy and reliability before use. Do not rely solely on AI outputs for critical decisions, and make sure the SBC context is considered in anything you produce using AI tools, such as ensuring proposals are compliant with legislation, law and localised needs applicable to SBC.
- 3. Bias and Fairness:** Be aware of potential biases in AI tools and take steps to mitigate them. Ensure AI use promotes fairness and equality.
- 4. Confidentiality:** Do not input confidential or sensitive information into generative AI tools in order to prevent unauthorised access or data breaches.
- 5. Intellectual Property:** Be cautious of intellectual property and plagiarism risks. Verify the originality of AI-generated content, provide appropriate sources used and ensure it does not infringe on existing copyrights or trademarks.

Adherence to Existing Policies

- 1. Data Protection:** Comply with all SBC Data Protection regulations and policies, ensuring the confidentiality and security of all data. These policies include:
 - a. [SBC Policy on Data Protection](#)
 - b. [Data Sharing Policy](#)
- 2. Information Management:** Follow the Council's information management policies to maintain the integrity and accessibility of information:
 - a. [Link to SBC Information Management Staff Information](#)
- 3. Confidentiality:** Respect confidentiality agreements and handle all information with the utmost care and discretion.

Expected Behaviours

- 1. Professionalism:** Use AI tools in a manner that reflects the professionalism and integrity expected of Scottish Borders Council staff.
- 2. Continuous Learning:** Stay informed about the latest developments in AI and seek training to enhance your understanding and skills. This will allow a greater benefit for SBC and individuals through more effective results from any AI tools used.
- 3. Collaboration:** Work collaboratively with colleagues to ensure the responsible and effective use of AI tools.

Examples of AI Tools

- 1. Chatbots:** For customer service and internal support (e.g., answering common queries).
- 2. Content Generators:** Tools like GPT-4 for drafting reports, emails, or other documents.
- 3. Data Analysis Tools:** AI-driven analytics platforms for processing and interpreting large datasets.
- 4. Image Recognition:** Tools for identifying and categorising images in digital archives.
- 5. Language Translation:** AI services for translating documents and communications.
- 6. Bing Co-pilot:** For assisting with web searches, summarising information, and enhancing productivity.

Implementation and Oversight

- 1. Viva Engage Page:** A Viva Engage page will be created for ongoing discussions and updates related to AI tools.
- 2. Audit Group:** A small group will be created to audit AI tools, who will resolve any issues that arise and support the development of the Generative AI Policy on an ongoing basis.
- 3. Training:** Training and support on the use of AI tools will be provided to ensure staff have equal opportunity to access and use the tools available to them.

This guidance will be updated in line with developments in the technology and understanding of AI, and through a wider development of SBC's Digital and AI Strategy. However, by adhering to this guidance, staff will contribute to the safe, ethical, and effective use of generative AI tools, supporting the Council's priorities and values, whilst allowing SBC staff to support their SBC work with AI tools already available.