

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER - THE MAYOR**

A meeting of the Executive Member - The Mayor was held on Thursday 18 December 2025.

**PRESENT:** C Cooke - Elected Mayor

**OFFICERS:** K Allan, S Bonner, A Johnstone and L Zipfell

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None.

25/10 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the fire evacuation procedure.

25/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

25/12 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

None.

25/13 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)**

None.

25/14 **QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS (IF ANY)**

None.

25/15 **DATA MANAGEMENT POLICY 2025-2028**

The Mayor considered the revised Data Management Policy 2025–2028 which had been reviewed as part of its scheduled triennial review to ensure continued compliance with legislation and alignment with the Council's Information Strategy. The policy set out the rules and guidance necessary to standardise, manage, and safeguard data throughout its lifecycle.

The revised policy included minor changes, specifically alignment with the new Information Strategy (2025–2029) and an update to the list of applicable laws and regulations to include the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

**OPTIONS**

**The Council could have chosen not to adopt corporate policies on data management; however, statutory duties remained in place, and in the absence of a standard approach, there would have been an increased risk of making decisions that failed to meet those legal duties. Given these duties were in place, this option was not recommended.**

**ORDERED that the revised Data Management Policy 2025-2028 be approved.**

**REASONS**

**Regular review of the policy was considered good practice. It was recommended that the revised policy be approved to provide the Council with a framework for assessing data quality and taking appropriate action to address any deficiencies.**

25/16 **SURVEILLANCE POLICY 2026/7**

The Mayor considered a report which presented the Surveillance Policy for 2025–2026. The report explained that, in accordance with the Statutory Codes of Practice under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Council was required to review its use of

surveillance powers and update the policy at least annually. The policy provided a framework to ensure that any surveillance activity undertaken by the Council was lawful, necessary, proportionate, and compliant with human rights and data protection obligations. The review included minor amendments to reflect staffing changes, with no other substantive changes required.

#### **OPTIONS**

Although the Council should have had a policy that set out how it complied with RIPA, it could have decided not to have a policy covering both RIPA and non-RIPA activity. However, this was not recommended, as a single policy provided a coherent and systematic approach and was in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency.

**ORDERED** that the revised Surveillance Policy 2026/2027 be approved and the content of the report on use of surveillance powers in 2025 be noted.

#### **REASONS**

The proposed policy would ensure that surveillance activity undertaken by the Council complied with its strategic priorities and statutory obligations, was lawful and that due regard was given to human rights and to data protection rights. A decision from the Mayor was sought as the agenda item was within their portfolio.

25/17

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY**

The Mayor considered a report presented the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2025–2028 which had been developed to ensure the lawful, ethical, and responsible use of AI technologies across the organisation. It set out a clear framework to guide the use of AI in supporting service delivery and innovation, while safeguarding data, maintaining transparency, and ensuring human accountability. The policy confirmed that AI would only be used to support, and not replace, human decision-making and included provisions for staff training and supplier compliance.

The Mayor emphasised the importance of ensuring robust human safeguarding and stated that it was vital for policies and procedures to remain up to date in line with advancements in AI.

#### **OPTIONS**

The Council could have decided to operate without a formal AI Policy. However, in the context of increasing use of AI technologies across the public sector, the absence of a clear policy would present significant risks. These include inconsistent use of AI tools, potential non-compliance with data protection and ethical standards, and a lack of transparency or accountability in decision-making. 6.2 Setting out a clear and consistent approach to the use of AI provides a shared understanding across the organisation and with partners. It ensured that AI is used in a way that supports the Council's digital ambitions and helps deliver high-quality, ethical, and efficient services to residents and businesses in Middlesbrough.

**ORDERED** that the adoption of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2025 – 28 be approved and that the Head of ICT and Digital has authority to make changes to the policy, following consultation with the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), to ensure the policy keeps pace with emerging AI technology, legislation, case law and guidance from government.

#### **REASONS**

It was noted that having a clear policy to guide the use of AI was essential for a modern, complex organisation. While AI technologies offered significant opportunities to improve productivity, streamline operations, and enhance service delivery, they also introduced risks relating to data protection, ethics, and accountability without appropriate governance. The policy ensured that AI was used in a way that aligned with the Council's strategic priorities, supported innovation, and maintained compliance with legal and ethical standards. By embedding human decision-making and clear governance, the policy provided a basis for the Council to adopt AI confidently and responsibly.

25/18

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

None.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) were published unless the decision(s) become subject to the call in procedures.