

REPORT PC26.058 AGAR Assertion 10

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1. BACKGROUND

Review of Compliance with AGAR Assertion 10 (Digital and Data Compliance)

The 2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide introduced a new Assertion 10 to the Annual Governance Statement, applicable to AGARs for the financial year 2025/26 onwards.

Assertion 10 brings together requirements relating to digital and data governance, including email management, website compliance, accessibility, information publication, and data protection. These requirements do not create new legal obligations but consolidate existing statutory duties into a single, auditable governance assertion.

To answer 'Yes' to Assertion 10, the Council must be able to demonstrate that it has taken appropriate steps during the financial year to ensure compliance with these requirements.

This report sets out the requirements of Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR), and the measures in place to ensure that the Council is compliant with those requirements.

It provides Members with assurance that appropriate systems, policies and controls are in place in respect of digital governance, data protection, and information management.

2. SUMMARY

To support a positive response, the Council must demonstrate compliance in the following areas:

2.1 Email and Communications

Use of council-owned domain email addresses for official business. Appropriate control and security of communications.

2.2 Website and Accessibility

A publicly accessible website. Compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2 AA). Publication of required information in accordance with the Transparency Code and Freedom of Information legislation. Maintenance of an up-to-date accessibility statement

2.3 Data Protection and GDPR

Compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. Adoption and regular review of relevant policies (e.g. Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notices). Lawful processing, storage, and retention of personal data.

2.4 Freedom of Information and Transparency

Adoption of the ICO Model Publication Scheme. Procedures in place for handling Freedom of Information requests. Publication of governance and financial information.

2.5 IT Governance and Security

Adoption of an IT Policy. Secure use of council devices, systems and data. Appropriate backup, access and cybersecurity arrangements.

3. HOW THE COUNCIL MEETS THESE REQUIREMENTS

The following summary sets out how the Council meets and can evidence compliance with the requirements of Assertion 10.

3.1 Email and Communications

The Council operates from council-controlled email accounts – using a .gov.uk domain. Officers are supplied with one or more password-controlled devices that allow access to emails via an application such as Outlook. These devices are returned when officers leave the Council. Members have access to Council emails via web browser with unique login details. Members' access is terminated when they leave office.

3.2 Website and Accessibility

The Council maintains a public website which is regularly updated. The site is designed and technically updated by Parish Online. That company is a specialist in this area and focuses on local government clients. The company certifies that 'Your website will remain compliant as requirements change, including the latest Assertion 10 of the SAPP Practitioners' Guide.' Statutory documents are published in accordance with legal requirements. An accessibility statement is in [place](#), templated by Parish Online; as well as a [Privacy Notice](#) that tells visitors how we process their personal information.

3.3 Data Protection and GDPR

The Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and re-registers each year. A General Data Protection Policy was adopted in October 2025 (PC25.139). It contains as Data Audit. Document Retention and Deletion Policy was adopted in December 2025 (PC25.151(b)). Personal data is processed in accordance with legal requirements and good practice.

Further, all current Members have read and signed their acceptance of responsibility for data protection with our General Data Protection Awareness Checklist. This checklist is

included in the Acceptance of Office paperwork given to all new Members. All Officers and Members have been offered data protection training via LearningNest.

3.4 Freedom of Information and Transparency

The Council has adopted the ICO Model Publication Scheme in May 2025 (PC25.074). Procedures are in place to respond to Freedom of Information requests within statutory timescales through this scheme and through our Data Protection Policy. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk have completed FOI training provided by LearningNest. Governance and financial information are published in line with statutory requirements.

3.5 IT Governance and Security

The Council has adopted an IT Policy in October 2025 (PC25.139) covering acceptable use, data security, and governance. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the secure storage, backup and access to digital records. We have contracted with an external specialist supplier, Hive Communications. Data is held on secure cloud servers (SharePoint) and backed up regularly and virus and other security software have all been implemented by Hive.

4. RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

- a) Notes the requirements of Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance;
- b) Confirms, having considered the report and the advice of the Clerk, that the Council is compliant with the requirements of Assertion 10 and has met the relevant ‘proper practices’ during the financial year; and
- c) Resolves that the Council may answer ‘Yes’ to Assertion 10 in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2025/26.