

Council – 20th March 2025

Notice of Motion

Integrating Artificial Intelligence to Improve Local Services

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform local government services by increasing efficiency, reducing costs, and improving service delivery for residents. Councils across the UK are already trialling AI to streamline administrative processes, enhance customer service, and optimise resource allocation.

A study by Public First estimates that AI could save the UK's public sector up to £38bn annually by 2030, with significant benefits for local government. AI-powered automation has the potential to free up council staff from repetitive administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on frontline services. For example, using AI-driven chatbots to improve response times for resident enquiries, predictive maintenance tools that prevent costly infrastructure repairs, and data analysis systems that help identify vulnerable residents in need of support.

Given the budgetary constraints on Southend-on-Sea City Council, it is vital that we explore new ways to deliver high-quality services cost-effectively and efficiently. This is a crucial step towards making Southend into a smart, efficient, and modern local authority.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Instruct officers to conduct a full assessment of all services the Council currently provides, identifying areas where AI can improve efficiency, reduce costs, or enhance service quality;
2. Develop a policy paper outlining how AI can be integrated into key service areas, such as waste management, housing, customer service, social care, and infrastructure maintenance;
3. Work with local businesses and service providers to explore how AI can improve the local economy of Southend, attracting investment through technology and innovation;
4. Ensure appropriate funding is allocated in the next budget to support the responsible adoption of AI in Council services, ensuring value for money and ethical use of technology;
5. Develop workshops for Council staff, stakeholders, and local businesses to promote AI understanding and equip them with the skills needed to harness AI for improved service delivery.

Proposed by: Cllr O Cartey

Seconded by: Cllr C Campbell