

IMPORTANT - Changes to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

For the 2025/26 financial year, the AGAR has undergone some changes. The main change is the addition of a new assertion – Assertion 10 (Digital and Data Compliance).

For clarity, the AGAR is the document that underpins Council's accountability and transparency. It essentially summarises the council's financial activities and governance during a financial year. The AGAR serves as a basis for both internal and external audits, ensuring financial integrity and compliance with regulations.

A crucial new requirement that Councils **must** be able to demonstrate compliance with data protection laws as part of their annual return.

These following actions therefore must be proven:

Assertion – sub section	Description	Council's status and/or required actions
1.47	Every authority must have a generic email address hosted by an authority-owned domain. Staff and Councillors are to use these email addresses.	All staff and Councillors have been provided with a .gov.uk email address
1.48	Smaller Authorities must meet legal requirements for all existing websites, regardless of what domain is being used	Council must ensure its website complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency Code for smaller authorities (if applicable). (See 1.50)
1.49	All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (where applicable) .	Advised by Vision ICT Website is compliant following a website MOT carried out by website provider to ensure continued compliance with accessibility. Office liaising with Vision ICT ongoing.
1.50	All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (where applicable)	Council has adopted the ICO model publication scheme to be compliant with the FOI 2000. This can be found on our website.
1.51	All smaller authorities must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Act (2018)	Council will need to carry out regular data audits. New Policy in place
		Council already has a Data Protection Policy in place.
		Regular training of staff and Members will be required on data protection .

		Councillors provided with training on data protection principles, and have been made aware of training available . The Clerk has completed Data Protection Training and has in turn trained the council staff.
1.52	All smaller authorities must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.	Council adheres to UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
1.53	The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies an authority as both a Data Controller and Data Processor.	Members to be aware of this principle. As detailed in training document.
1.54	All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - Clerks, Members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.	The Council has adopted an IT Policy.

Updated

12th January 2026