

To receive a report on Assertion 10 Compliance and consider any actions and associated expenditure.

Report to:

Policy and Finance

Date of Report:

3 March 2026

Officer Writing the Report:

Office manager / Assistant to the Town Clerk

Purpose of the report:

To ensure Members are aware of the Town Councils duty to comply with the 2025 Practitioners Guide for Assertion 10, Digital and Data Compliance.

Officer's Recommendations:

Members are advised to confirm that Saltash Town Council is meeting the requirements of Assertion 10 by ensuring that, and approving appendices attached:

- The Council's website meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA standard. **Appendix A.**
- The Council's website publishes all information required under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.
- A council-owned domain is used for all email communications.
- The Council complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. **Appendix B.**
- An IT Policy is in place that governs the secure and lawful use of digital systems and data subject to approval at the meeting. **Appendix C.**

Members are also asked to note that, while Saltash Town Council is not yet able to meet all accessibility requirements for its website, compliance will be achieved from 2026. In the meantime, where an accessible version of a document is required, members of the public are asked to contact the Council office so that an accessible format can be provided subject to approval at the meeting. **Appendix D.**

Report Summary:

The 2025 Practitioners' Guide issued by the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP), formerly JPAG, introduces a new requirement — Assertion 10: Digital and Data Compliance, which must be completed as part of the 2025/26 AGAR. This represents a significant strengthening of expectations relating to digital governance, data protection, website accessibility, and online publishing obligations.

Assertion 10 consolidates and expands responsibilities previously included under other assertions. From the year ending 31 March 2026, councils must demonstrate compliance with several mandatory requirements.

Key Mandatory Requirements for Compliance:

1. Council-owned domain email

The guidance states that Councils must operate generic email accounts hosted on a council-owned domain. Free services such as Gmail or Outlook can no longer be used. This ensures data security, ownership, and authenticity of communications.

Saltash Town Council does not use free or generic email accounts therefore fully complies with the standards. All councillors, officers and shared inboxes operate under.gov.uk email addresses.

2. Website legal & accessibility requirements

The guidance states that all Council websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA standard. The Accessibility Statement must be updated to reflect compliance.

Saltash Town Council has received the outcome of an external website accessibility audit. The audit recommendations will be implemented as soon as practicable, with an amended Accessibility Statement reflecting the outcome of the audit attached as **Appendix D**.

It is acknowledged that some Saltash Town Council digital documents may not yet fully meet accessibility standards. Until full compliance is achieved, Saltash Town Council will provide accessible versions of any documents upon request.

The Town Council publishes all required documentation, including financial information, agendas, minutes, and policy documents.

3. Data protection and GDPR compliance

The guidance states that Councils must explicitly confirm compliance with:

- UK GDPR (2016)
- Data Protection Act 2018

The 2025 Practitioners' Guide strengthens expectations around data governance, including secure email management, accessible digital content, and robust data protection practices. Councils must understand the personal data they hold, apply appropriate security measures, and provide suitable training for staff and councillors.

In September 2025, Saltash Town Council appointed a Data Protection Officer (DPO) to undertake a comprehensive audit of all personal data held. **Appendix B**

4. Mandatory IT policy

The guidance states that all Councils (except parish meetings) must adopt an IT Policy that sets out expectations for the secure and lawful use of IT systems, including personal and council-owned devices.

Saltash Town Council has an existing IT Policy, which has been reviewed to ensure full compliance with Assertion 10 and alignment with NALC and CALC guidance. **Appendix C.**

5. Recommended website domain naming

The guidance states, although not legally required, Councils are encouraged to use a.gov.uk website domain to ensure a secure, professional, and authoritative online presence.

Saltash Town Council operates its official services through a.gov.uk domain, www.saltash.gov.uk

6. Risk of non-compliance

The guidance states, if a Council cannot meet all requirements, it must answer “No” to Assertion 10. Internal and external auditors may then highlight this as:

- an “Other Matter” in the audit report, or
- an “Except For” qualification if a council incorrectly declares compliance.

This increases public scrutiny and may require corrective action.

Saltash Town Council has prioritised preparation to ensure full compliance by 31 March 2026.

Signature of Officer:

Office Manager / Assistant to the Town Clerk