

AI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: TURNING PLAYBOOK STRATEGY INTO ACTION

A Comprehensive Report for Local Authorities
Aligning with the UK Government's AI Playbook

A REPORT BY
Outcomes Matter Consulting

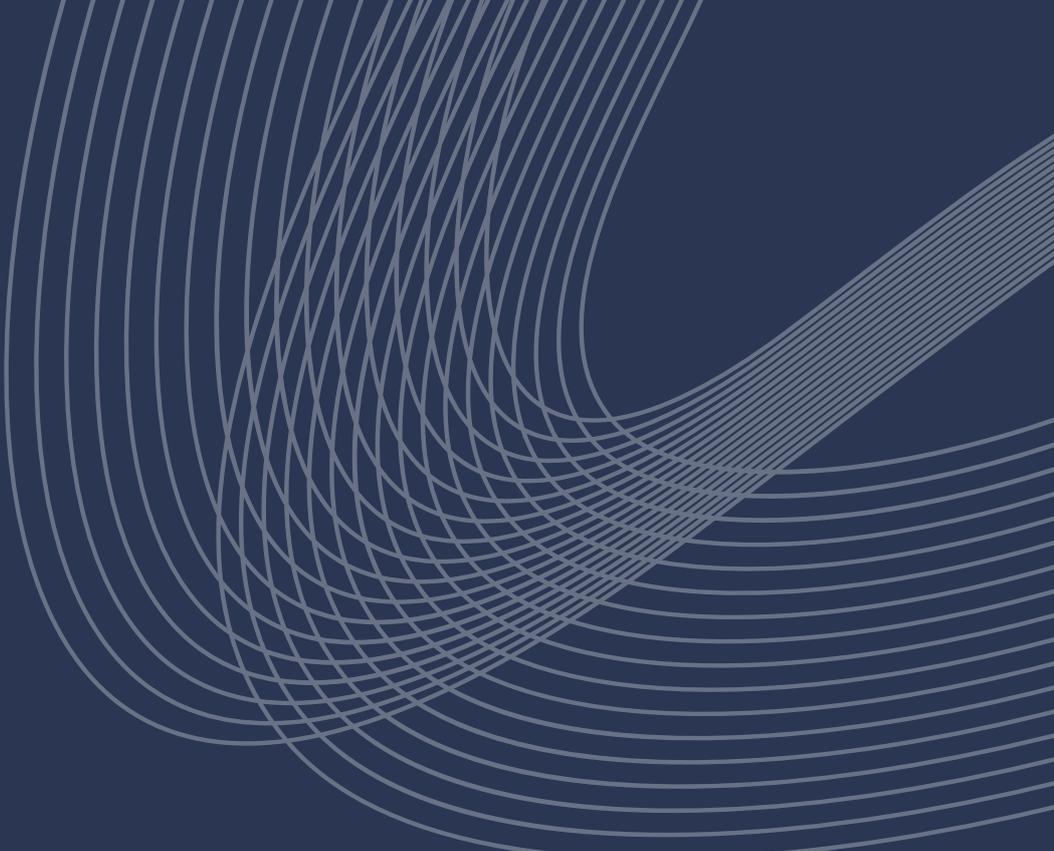
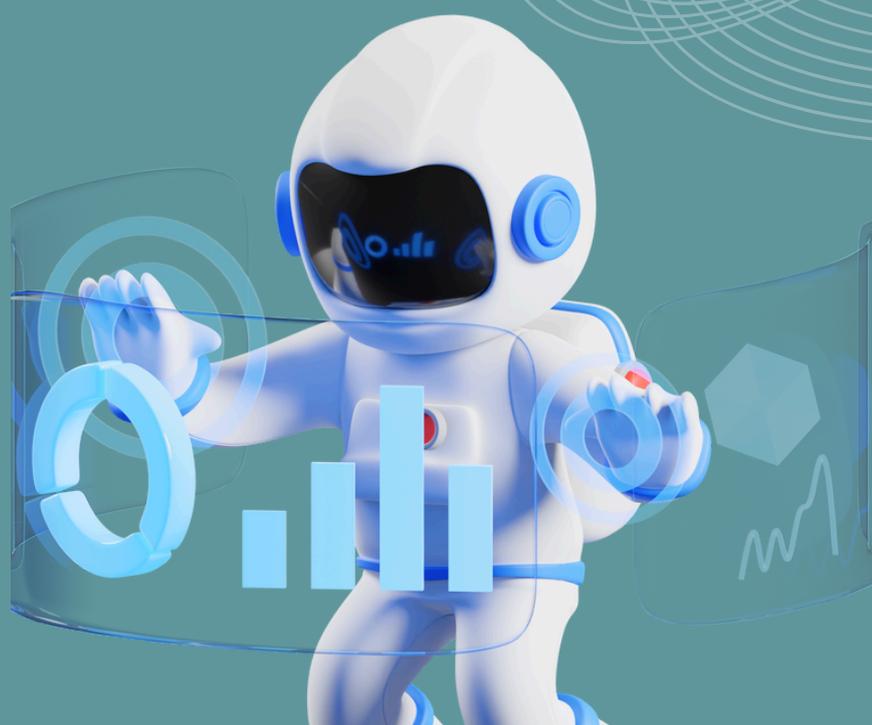


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THE AI PLAYBOOK AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



The UK Government's AI Playbook is a **timely and necessary** step towards ensuring the **effective and responsible** adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in public services. However, **local government operates in a different reality** compared to central government. The complexity, funding pressures, and direct engagement with residents mean that councils require an AI strategy that is **practical, ethical, and built for scale**.

At **Outcomes Matter Consulting**, we work directly with councils to bridge the gap between **AI ambition and AI action**. This report serves as a **comprehensive roadmap** for local authorities looking to leverage AI **not just for efficiency, but to improve real-world outcomes** for communities.

IN THIS REPORT, WE WILL EXPLORE:

01

Key takeaways from the AI Playbook and their relevance for local authorities.

02

Barriers to AI adoption that councils must overcome.

03

A structured framework for practical AI implementation.

04

Real-world case studies demonstrating the impact of AI in local services.

05

Recommendations for action, ensuring councils can implement AI sustainably and ethically.

01. THE AI PLAYBOOK: WHAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO KNOW

The AI Playbook provides essential **guidance and best practice principles** that can support the public sector in embedding AI responsibly. Several key themes emerge from the document that are particularly relevant to local government:

Ethical and Transparent AI

The Playbook emphasises the need for **fair, explainable, and accountable AI systems** to ensure **public trust and compliance with ethical standards**. Local authorities must ensure that AI **augments human decision-making rather than replacing it**, particularly in sensitive areas like **social care, SEND services, and housing**.

AI for Efficiency and Decision-Making 📊

The Playbook outlines how AI can help public services by **automating administrative tasks, enhancing data analysis, and improving service planning**. Councils have vast amounts of **structured and unstructured data** that, when leveraged properly, can drive **early intervention strategies, predictive analytics, and operational efficiencies**.

The Role of Data and Security 🔒

One of the biggest challenges for councils is **ensuring robust data governance**. AI relies on **high-quality, well-structured, and secure data**, which means:

- **Clear data governance policies** must be in place.
- AI tools should be **designed with privacy and security by default**.
- **Collaboration with IT and legal teams** is critical to ensuring compliance with **GDPR and data protection laws**.

Moving from Pilots to Scalable AI Solutions 📈

A common issue in local government AI adoption is that many projects **stall at the pilot stage**. The Playbook encourages organisations to think beyond pilots and develop **scalable AI strategies** that integrate with **long-term digital transformation plans**.



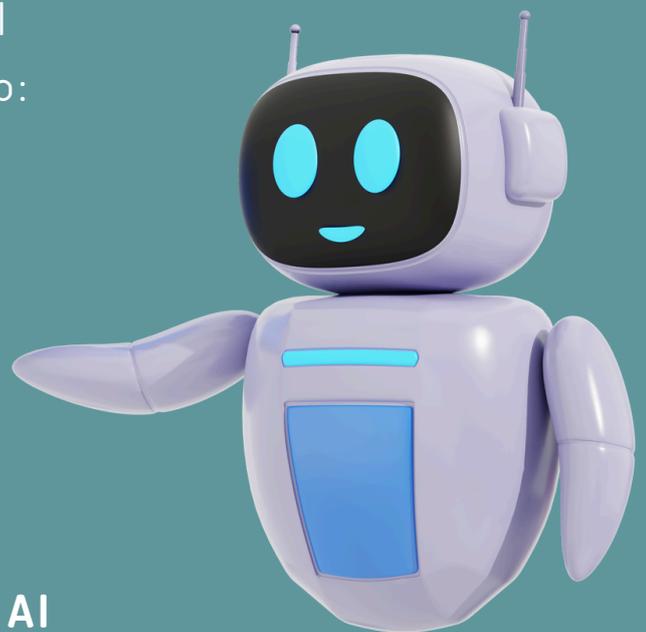
BARRIERS TO AI ADOPTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Despite the enthusiasm for AI, **local authorities face multiple barriers** when it comes to adopting and scaling AI solutions. These challenges must be **acknowledged and addressed** to ensure sustainable implementation.

Funding and Resource Constraints

Unlike central government, local councils often **lack the budget** for AI investment. This makes it essential to:

- Focus on AI solutions that **demonstrate immediate impact** on efficiency and service quality.
- **Leverage partnerships** with private sector and third-party providers to secure funding.
- Explore opportunities for **shared AI procurement frameworks** to reduce costs.



Digital Maturity Gaps

Councils vary widely in their **digital readiness**. Some local authorities have **strong digital infrastructure**, while others are still **grappling with legacy systems**. Before AI can be embedded, councils need to:

- Conduct a **digital maturity assessment** to identify gaps.
- Develop **AI literacy programs** for staff to build confidence and understanding.
- Ensure AI tools **integrate seamlessly** with existing council systems.

Workforce Readiness and Change Management

AI is not just about technology—it's about **people**. Councils need to ensure that:

- Staff understand how to **use AI tools effectively**.
- AI adoption is **co-designed with frontline workers** to avoid resistance.
- Adequate training and **change management support** are provided to ease the transition.

Ethical and Legal Considerations

AI can only be effective if it is **trustworthy**. Councils must:

- Establish **clear AI governance frameworks**.
- Prioritise **human oversight in AI decision-making**.
- Ensure AI applications **comply with data protection and non-discrimination** laws.

By addressing these **key barriers**, councils can ensure AI adoption is **responsible, transparent, and beneficial to residents and staff alike**.

03. A STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK FOR AI ADOPTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

To overcome these challenges, councils must adopt a **structured, phased approach** to AI implementation. This ensures AI is **practical, sustainable, and impactful** rather than a short-term experiment.

PHASE 1: AI READINESS ASSESSMENT

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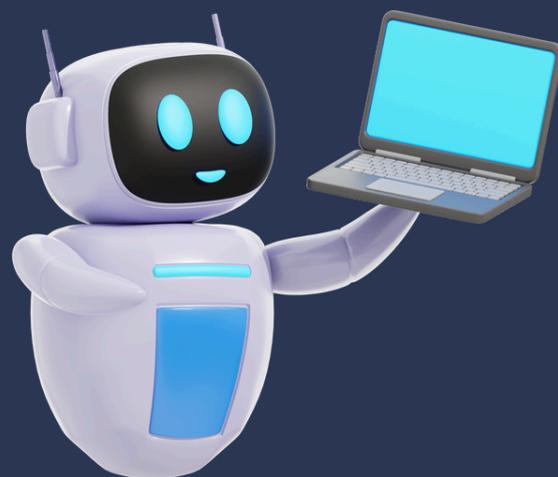
Assessing Organisational Maturity and Strategic Fit

Before deploying AI, councils must establish a **clear understanding of their readiness**. This includes:

- **AI-Specific Policies & Governance:** Have policies been created to address AI ethics, risks, and operational use?
- **Workforce Preparedness:** Are frontline staff trained to understand and engage with AI-driven tools?
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Have **residents, social care teams, education professionals, and service leads** been engaged to ensure AI solutions align with real needs?

Action Steps:

- ✓ Conduct an **AI Maturity Scale assessment** to benchmark current readiness.
- ✓ Appoint **AI champions** within departments to lead internal discussions.
- ✓ Host **stakeholder workshops** to explore AI's role in different service areas.
- ✓ Create an **AI governance framework** covering **ethics, risk mitigation, and compliance**.



PHASE 2: AI PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

🔍 **Deploying AI in High-Impact, Low-Risk Areas** AI pilots should focus on **measurable, high-value** areas where technology can make an **immediate difference**. Prioritising services with **high administrative burdens** and **predictable workflows** ensures the greatest return on investment.

📌 Key Pilot Areas:

- **Generative AI for Documentation:** Automate 80% of casework drafting, reducing case backlog and giving professionals more time for direct engagement.
- **Predictive Analytics for Demand Planning:** Enable teams to predict service demands, allocate resources efficiently, and intervene earlier.
- **AI-Powered Chatbots:** Provide instant 24/7 customer service and information, cutting call volumes by up to 40% and freeing up staff for complex cases.



💡 Action Steps:

- ✓ Define **clear success metrics**.
- ✓ Select **one or two AI solutions for a pilot**, ensuring diverse **service user input**.
- ✓ Implement **data governance protocols** to maintain privacy and security.
- ✓ Establish a **real-time monitoring dashboard** to track progress and adjust as needed.

PHASE 3: SCALING AI SOLUTIONS

Embedding AI in Everyday Operations for Long-Term Gains

Once pilots demonstrate success, councils should develop a **scalable strategy** to integrate AI into daily operations across multiple departments.

Key Focus Areas:

- **Leadership Buy-In & Policy Alignment:** Ensure AI initiatives are embedded in **council-wide digital transformation plans**, not isolated projects.
- **Advanced Data Governance & Security:** Strengthen **GDPR-compliant frameworks**, ensuring transparency in **AI decision-making**.
- **Workforce AI Training & Upskilling:** Implement a **tiered AI training programme** covering **basic AI literacy, data ethics, and AI tool usage**.

Action Steps:

- ✓ Integrate AI solutions into **corporate strategies and annual budgets**.
- ✓ Set up a **dedicated AI task force** to oversee ongoing implementation.
- ✓ Establish an **AI Knowledge Hub** to share **best practices, case studies, and performance insights** across council departments.
- ✓ Evaluate **AI effectiveness annually**, using **public transparency reports** to enhance community trust.

By following this structured framework, councils can ensure that AI implementation is **deliberate, ethical, and deeply rooted in improving public services**. AI should not be seen as a **one-off tech experiment**, but rather as a **long-term enabler of better, faster, and more accessible public services**.

04. AI IN ACTION: LOCAL AUTHORITY CASE STUDIES

AI is already making a **tangible impact** in local government services. Below are some practical case studies demonstrating its effectiveness.

EHCP PLUS: SEND SERVICES

EHCP Plus is a **cutting-edge AI-powered tool** designed to support SEND caseworkers by automating the **drafting of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs)**. Traditionally, EHCPs require extensive documentation and coordination between multiple stakeholders, leading to administrative burdens and delays in providing essential support for children and families.

Impact of EHCP Plus:

- **6+ hours saved per EHCP case**, reducing administrative workload.
- **Faster turnaround times**, ensuring that families receive timely support.
- **Improved consistency in documentation**, enhancing the quality and accuracy of EHCPs.
- **Reduced workload for SEND professionals**, allowing them to focus on **direct engagement with children and families** rather than paperwork.



By integrating AI into the EHCP drafting process, local authorities can **enhance efficiency and service delivery** while ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks.

HEY GERALDINE: ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Hey Geraldine is a **personalised AI assistant** developed to support **social care professionals**. Designed as an AI-powered chatbot, **Hey Geraldine provides instant access to key information**, helping users navigate local authority services efficiently.

Impact of Hey Geraldine:

- **Saves professionals 15 minutes per query**, enabling quicker resolution of service queries and better use of resources.
- **Enhances engagement** between practitioners and service users by providing **personalised recommendations**.
- **Reduces pressure on the OT team**, allowing them to focus on complex cases.
- **Available 24/7**, ensuring teams can access vital information and support outside of core office hours.



By leveraging conversational AI, councils can improve accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency in workforce and citizen engagement, ensuring more effective service delivery.

CHC PLUS: ADULT SOCIAL CARE

CHC Plus is a **cutting-edge AI-powered tool** designed to support social workers and healthcare professionals by **automating the drafting of Continuing Healthcare (CHC) checklists**. Traditionally, CHC applications require extensive documentation, multi-agency coordination, and adherence to complex frameworks, leading to **delays, inconsistencies, and administrative burdens**.

Impact of CHC Plus:

- **1 - 2 hours saved per CHC checklist**, significantly reducing administrative workload.
- **Improved quality and clarity** in CHC applications, reducing rejection rates and appeals.
- **More time for professionals** to focus on direct engagement with individuals and families.
- **Reduced costs** by improving approval rates and minimising unnecessary administrative effort.



These case studies highlight how AI is **actively transforming public services—enhancing efficiency, reducing administrative burden, and improving resident outcomes** across multiple local authority functions. Councils that embrace these AI-driven tools can expect to see **significant improvements in service delivery, staff well-being, and community engagement**.

05. NEXT STEPS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

As AI continues to reshape local government services, councils must move from **exploration to implementation**. Taking a **strategic, collaborative approach** will ensure AI adoption is **responsible, impactful, and sustainable**.



Join the LGAi.uk AI Community – Connect with other councils leading AI adoption, share best practices, and access expert resources. **Collaboration is key to accelerating AI success.**



Use the LGAi AI Maturity Scale & Cross Service Usability Matrix – Identify your council's AI readiness and pinpoint priority areas for AI implementation. **Understanding where you are is the first step to knowing where to go.**



Engage with AI suppliers & experts – Work with **trusted partners** to co-design AI solutions that are ethical, scalable, and tailored to your council's unique needs. **Successful AI adoption is built on strong partnerships.**



Develop a clear AI roadmap – Align AI projects with your council's broader **digital transformation strategy**, ensuring they deliver measurable impact and long-term value.



Strengthen AI governance and workforce readiness – Implement ethical AI frameworks, provide training for staff, and establish oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, and trust.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We strongly believe that AI is **not a replacement for people** – it is a tool that enables local authorities to **deliver better, faster, and more efficient public services.**

The councils that **act now** will be best positioned to drive **innovation, improve outcomes, and future-proof their services.**

At **Outcomes Matter**, we help councils **turn AI ambition into action**—ensuring AI solutions are **practical, responsible, and designed for real-world impact.**

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 Join the LGAi.uk AI community: LGAi.uk