

AI Readiness and Service Improvement Audit for Local Government

A practical, top level self audit to help government staff spot safe AI opportunities and put the right safeguarding in place.



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AI is already being used in local government

Whether formally through digital transformation programmes or informally by staff looking to reduce administrative workload.

However, many councils are still asking important questions:

- Who should oversee AI use across services?
- What tools are safe to use for council staff?
- How do we manage governance, risk and accountability?
- Where can AI genuinely improve service delivery?
- How do we move from experimentation to measurable service improvement?

This assessment is designed to help you evaluate your council's readiness and identify practical opportunities for safe, responsible AI adoption.

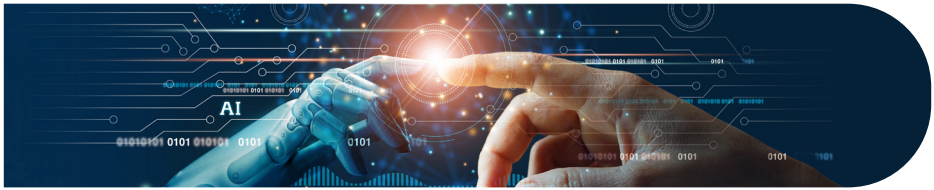
Discover:

- ✓ How prepared your council is for AI adoption
- ✓ Where AI and automation could improve service delivery
- ✓ Opportunities to reduce administrative burden
- ✓ Governance and compliance gaps that may need addressing
- ✓ Whether your council could benefit from an AI Practitioner

Estimated completion time: 20 minutes

AI Practitioner for Local G





Section 1: AI Readiness Assessment

Score each statement:

Score	Meaning
0	Not in place
1	Limited
2	Partially established
3	Fully established

Statement	Score
We have someone responsible for coordinating AI activity	
AI has been discussed at leadership or management level	
We have agreed which AI tools staff may use	

Statement	Score
Staff understand what information should never be entered into AI tools	
AI use has been considered within our information governance processes	
We have clear expectations around human oversight and accountability	

Statement	Score
Staff understand the benefits and limitations of AI	
Staff know how to use AI safely and appropriately	
Staff know who to ask for support or guidance	

Total Score ____/27

Your AI Readiness Score

0–9: Foundation Stage

AI use is likely happening informally

Priority actions:

- Establish governance
- Create basic guidance
- Identify approved tools
- Begin staff awareness conversations

10–18: Developing Stage

You have started exploring AI but may lack consistency

Priority actions:

- Introduce pilot projects
- Strengthen oversight
- Build staff confidence
- Define ownership

19–27: Advancing Stage

You have strong foundations in place

Priority actions:

- Scale successful pilots
- Measure impact
- Develop internal expertise
- Create long-term strategy

Section 2: AI Opportunity Audit

Identify where AI could have the biggest impact in your council

For each area below, score:

Time Pressure

How much staff time does this process currently consume?

Improvement Opportunity

How much could this process benefit from better systems, automation or AI support?

Score	Meaning
1	Low
2	Limited
3	Moderate
4	High
5	Significant

Process Area	Time Pressure	Improvement Opportunity	Total
Resident enquiries and customer services			
Casework administration			
FOI and SAR management			
Reporting and performance monitoring			
Meeting administration and minute taking			
HR and recruitment processes			
Revenues and benefits administration			
Housing workflows			
Forms and application processing			
General administration			

Total Score ____/90

What Your Score Means

18-35 | Low Opportunity

Current processes may already be manageable, or AI may not yet be a strategic priority.

36 - 60 | Moderate Opportunity

There are likely several areas where AI or automation could improve efficiency, consistency or workload.

8-10 | High Opportunity

Your council may have significant potential for operational improvement through AI-supported workflows, automation and better systems.

High-scoring areas are often strong starting points for an AI Practitioner project because they combine:

- repetitive workload
- process inefficiencies
- and measurable improvement opportunities

Your High Priority Areas

1.

2.

3.

Identify Your Top 3 Opportunities

Opportunity 1

Current Process:

Estimated time spent each month:

Potential benefit:

Opportunity 2

Current Process:

Estimated time spent each month:

Potential benefit:

Opportunity 3

Current Process:

Estimated time spent each week:

Potential benefit:

Safe AI Checklist

Before introducing any AI solution, ask:

Governance

- ☐ Who owns this initiative?
- ☐ Which governance group will review it?
- ☐ How will success be measured?

Information Governance

- ☐ Could personal or sensitive resident data be exposed?
- ☐ Is a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) required?
- ☐ Have information governance requirements been considered?

Human Oversight

- ☐ Who reviews outputs?
- ☐ What decisions must remain human-led?
- ☐ How will errors be identified and corrected?

Public Trust

- ☐ Is the process transparent and explainable?
- ☐ Could bias affect outcome?
- ☐ Would the council be comfortable explaining this use publicly?



Does Your Council Need an AI Practitioner?

You may benefit from developing an AI Practitioner if:

- ☐ Staff are already using AI but there is no clear ownership
- ☐ You want to reduce administrative workload
- ☐ You are exploring automation opportunities
- ☐ You need stronger governance and oversight
- ☐ You want to improve service delivery
- ☐ You want measurable outcomes rather than isolated experiments
- ☐ Multiple teams are interested in AI but activity is uncoordinated
- ☐ You want to improve data quality and reporting

Tick Count

0-2 ticks

You may only need basic awareness and guidance

3-5 ticks

You could benefit from a designated AI lead

6-7 ticks

Developing an AI Practitioner is likely to deliver significant value

Next Step: Build Internal AI Capability

Councils that achieve the greatest value from AI do more than adopt tools. They develop internal capability to identify opportunities, manage risk and deliver measurable service improvements.

The AI Practitioner for Local Government Apprenticeship helps professionals build the skills, confidence and governance knowledge needed to lead safe, effective AI and automation projects within their authority.

Apprentices will learn to:

- ✓ Coordinate the ethical and responsible use of AI and automation within local government environments
- ✓ Identify opportunities to reduce workload through automation of administrative and operational processes
- ✓ Improve data quality, reporting and information flow across council systems
- ✓ Design, build and manage low-code automation solutions using common public sector technologies
- ✓ Lead change safely and effectively, including staff engagement, risk management and compliance
- ✓ Apply safeguarding, data protection and GDPR principles to AI and digital tools in public services
- ✓ Deliver a substantial workplace project that creates measurable impact for their service area or authority

Eligibility

To be eligible for the programme, participants must:

- Be currently employed within a local authority or eligible public sector setting and have employer support to complete the programme
- Have a role that involves systems, data, operations or administrative responsibility
- Be able to complete a workplace project as part of the apprenticeship
- Have the right to work and study in England



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