



# Technology Innovation Showcase for Local Government

End of project report  
January 2025

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## **Acknowledgements**

The team at the Local Government Association (LGA) would like to thank our delivery partner, PUBLIC, for its substantial contribution to the success of our Technology Innovation Showcase for Local Government.

We would like to thank all our challenge owners located in councils across the country for sharing their expertise and experiences, and for showcasing the power of collaborative innovation to solve common challenges in the local government sector. Thank you also to all the vendors who engaged with this project, especially those who showcased their products.

Special thanks to our keynote speakers from The Ada Lovelace Institute and 10 Downing Street's Data Science team – and our expert panellists whose insights helped shape the project over its four-month duration and provided valuable feedback at the Showcase event.

Finally, thank you to all attendees, stakeholders and organisers whose engagement and enthusiasm made the event possible.

A list of challenge owners can be found in Appendix 1, and a list of shortlisted and selected vendors is available in Appendix 2.

## Foreword

The digital age presents a defining moment for local government in England. While constrained budgets, digital skills gaps and outdated systems pose significant challenges, they also underscore the urgent need for innovation and collaboration. This is the sector's chance to not just adapt, but to lead the way in using digital methods to deliver improved outcomes for residents.

Initiatives like our Technology Innovation Showcase are vital catalysts in this journey. By providing a platform for councils to connect with innovative businesses, share best practices, co-design solutions and forge powerful partnerships, a showcase model can help to accelerate the adoption of transformative technologies.

For too long, local authorities have grappled with the limitations of legacy systems and underinvestment in digital infrastructure. These challenges, compounded by evolving cyber threats and the constant pressure to do more with less, can seem daunting. Yet, within these challenges lies an extraordinary opportunity for transformation.

Local government possesses a unique strength: an intimate understanding of the needs and aspirations of the communities it serves. This deep-rooted connection, combined with a growing appetite for innovation and agile leadership, means the sector is well-placed to harness the true potential of digital technologies. Imagine: streamlined services, data-driven decision-makings and personalised support that truly makes a difference in people's lives.

To achieve this vision, the sector must develop – and be supported to develop – better collective processes for working with small technology businesses. These businesses, often at the forefront of innovation, can offer agile solutions and specialised expertise to address the unique challenges faced by local authorities. In a sector characterised by market concentration, often by large vendors, local government's role in fostering Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) markets must be supported. By working more closely with SMEs, councils can unlock a wealth of creativity and ingenuity.

Working with SMEs has the potential to accelerate digital transformation, ensure the safe and responsible development of AI and maximise benefits for local communities.

Responsible deployment is impossible without responsible development of AI. By carefully assessing the responsible practices of AI vendors and asking the right questions around

how they designed their tools, councils can ensure that the deployment of AI is responsible, safe and ethical and councils retain the trust of their communities.

As shown through our Technology Innovation Showcase, collaboration empowers local authorities to overcome shared challenges, reduce costs and ultimately deliver better services to residents. Moreover, collaboration can unlock the potential of collective purchasing power and shared risk, ensuring that councils can access the best value and the most innovative solutions. This collaborative model not only drives meaningful improvements but also fosters a culture of continuous learning and development across the sector.

I believe that initiatives like our Technology Innovation Showcase, and the opportunities brought by such events, can help the sector to harness the power of innovation and collaboration to build a future where digital technology enables councils to create thriving, resilient and truly digitally empowered communities.

A huge thank you to the LGA team, and our delivery partner PUBLIC, for bringing this initiative to life, and to all the council officers who generously shared their invaluable insights and expertise.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all the innovative suppliers for showcasing their solutions and for helping to shape the future of local government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Gittins', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Louise Gittins, Chair, Local Government Association

## 1. About the Showcase

### 1.1 Introduction

This report provides an overview of the LGA's Technology Innovation Showcase; a new initiative to support councils with artificial intelligence (AI) and smart technology exploration. The project culminated in an event featuring a set of promising solutions each presented by a selected group of startups and SMEs. In this report, we explain our design and delivery approach, and present set of insights and reflections on supporting digital innovation in local government. We encourage councils and vendors to consider our findings in the collective search for new digital methods that can help deliver improved outcomes for residents.

### 1.2 Policy context

The idea for our Technology Innovation Showcase came about in Spring 2024. We decided upon the idea as a way to provide a stage for councils to present their challenges to a wider audience, including industry experts and potential collaborators and suppliers. Our conversations with researchers at the Ada Lovelace Institute, working on ways to ensure data and AI work for people and society, were particularly valuable in shaping our thinking.

The AI policy landscape has continued to shift over the last 10 months; we welcome the ambitions of [the AI Opportunities Action Plan \(2025\)](#) and [have published a briefing detailing how and why local government has to a crucial play in each area](#). We're excited about the opportunities that our Showcase model presents for implementing many of the recommendations outlined in the Government's Action Plan.

We have demonstrated that a Showcase model can expand the public sector's understanding of the AI ecosystem and support market shaping – particularly through engagement with SMEs. We're particularly encouraged by the Action Plan's emphasis on a 'Scan>Pilot>Scale' approach to prototyping – and we have shown the value of employing a 'scanning' phase through our Showcase model.

A commitment from government and/or other stakeholders to fund our Showcase 'winners' and to fund a prototyping capability through [a Local Government Centre for Digital Technology](#) (2024), would be instrumental to our efforts to mobilise at pace a series of local government pilots to spearhead the UK's AI transformation.

### 1.3 Buy, build or both?

For councils, selecting an AI model often involves a three-part decision: councils can choose to 'build' their own AI solutions in-house, 'buy' commercially available off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions, or adopt a 'hybrid' approach by leveraging a vendor's technology to create bespoke solutions, often with vendor support. Our initiative focused exclusively on COTS solutions, in response to findings from our network engagement and [survey results](#). Our survey found that 63 per cent of those respondents using or exploring AI were paying external suppliers for AI tools or technologies, indicating that this is currently the most prevalent approach within the sector.

### 1.3 A challenge-led approach

We took a 'challenge-led' approach to this project. It was critically important to us that the project was sector-led and that the challenges presented to vendors were created by councils across England. We wanted councils (our challenge owners) to identify and articulate their problems to which the market could respond through an open invitation. This approach resulted in vendors responding directly to here-and-now problems faced by one or more councils.

We worked with councils to define a set of challenges that were a good match for AI and smart technology solutions, alongside our delivery partner PUBLIC. This approach was instrumental to the success of the initiative. Councils articulated a total of 92 challenges, which we grouped into service areas. We selected four main themes based on commonality, scalability and ongoing engagement with the sector (see Section 3).

Over 250 officers engaged with our initiative. More than 100 of these took part in our challenge development phase leading to a well-balanced set of challenge statements reflecting some of the biggest challenges facing councils. The commitment of councils to work together in ways that opened-up new perspectives was a key success of project – showing what can be achieved through strategic collaboration.

### 1.4 Working with vendors

Our Showcase initiative provided a degree of assurance to councils by only showcasing potential AI and smart technology solutions from vendors who demonstrated a commitment to safe, responsible and ethical practices. To be eligible for the Showcase, vendors were



asked to commit to – or provide evidence of – the following before being invited to pitch a potential solution (see Section 5 for further details of our assessment process):

- Working in the open, within the bounds of commercial confidentiality.
- Being willing to open-up products and data to scrutiny.
- Being a legal entity in the UK.
- References from references.
- Product cost, accuracy and performance information.
- Relevant licenses and permissions (e.g., cyber security and data protection).
- Business and financial status of company.
- Supporting local authorities with GDPR and Public Sector Equality Duty compliance.
- An understanding of digital challenges within the public sector.
- Producing solutions that represent the needs of end users.

### 1.5 The main event

Our Showcase event combined in-person and online attendance to ensure accessibility across England. We brought together public servants, subject matter experts and technology suppliers in a unique setting to foster learning through practical insights. We were delighted that researchers from The Ada Lovelace Institute chose to publish a new report '[Spending Wisely](#)' at our event, and attendees heard about '[Evidence House](#)' led by 10 Downing Street's Data Science team – an initiative that shows the transformative potential of public sector innovation challenge programmes.

We maintained strong online engagement throughout the Showcase, with approximately 150 officers participating at any given point. Almost nine in ten attendees said they would attend a similar event again, and more than nine in ten are planning to continue exploring a solution they saw presented or a similar product. This feedback demonstrates the value of using a challenge-led approach to enable councils to tell their own stories and identify the type of support they are looking for from industry.

### 1.6 Funding

Our Showcase was funded by the LGA's Sector Support Programme for Cyber, Digital and Technology, a programme funded by the UK Government. No prizes or rewards were offered to councils or vendors, and there was no promise of business being secured. The 'payoff' for participating was the chance to learn, network and create partnerships.

## 2. Overall goal

### 2.1 Aims and objectives

Our Technology Innovation Showcase for Local Government aimed to create a space for vendors of AI and smart technology to pitch innovative ideas across a set of core challenges set by councils themselves. Its objectives were three-fold:

- To facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing: To empower councils by fostering a sector-led approach, enabling collaborative problem-solving and the exchange of best practices across local government.
- To highlight innovation and explore use cases: To showcase cutting-edge solutions to key challenges, test emerging guidance, and demonstrate what is possible for councils through innovative technologies.
- To promote transparency and engagement: To champion a new approach to engaging with the market early, encouraging vendors to work openly, share their quality assurance processes, and build trust through transparency and collaboration across sectors.

### 2.2. Definitions AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to products and services that exhibit two key characteristics: adaptability and autonomy. As defined in the [UK Government's Pro-Innovation Approach to AI Regulation](#) (2023), adaptability describes an AI system's ability to identify patterns and connections in data beyond those explicitly programmed, developing new approaches after its initial training. Autonomy refers to the capability of these systems to make decisions without direct human control or intervention.

Smart technology encompasses networked systems and devices that can communicate and interact with each other and their environment. This definition includes technologies that can collect, share and analyse data to enhance service delivery and decision-making processes. These solutions often complement AI systems but can also operate independently to improve efficiency and effectiveness in local government operations.

The distinction between these technologies is important for councils as they consider different solutions to address their challenges. While AI systems may offer more complex analytical capabilities and autonomous decision-making potential, smart technology solutions can provide immediate practical benefits through improved connectivity and data

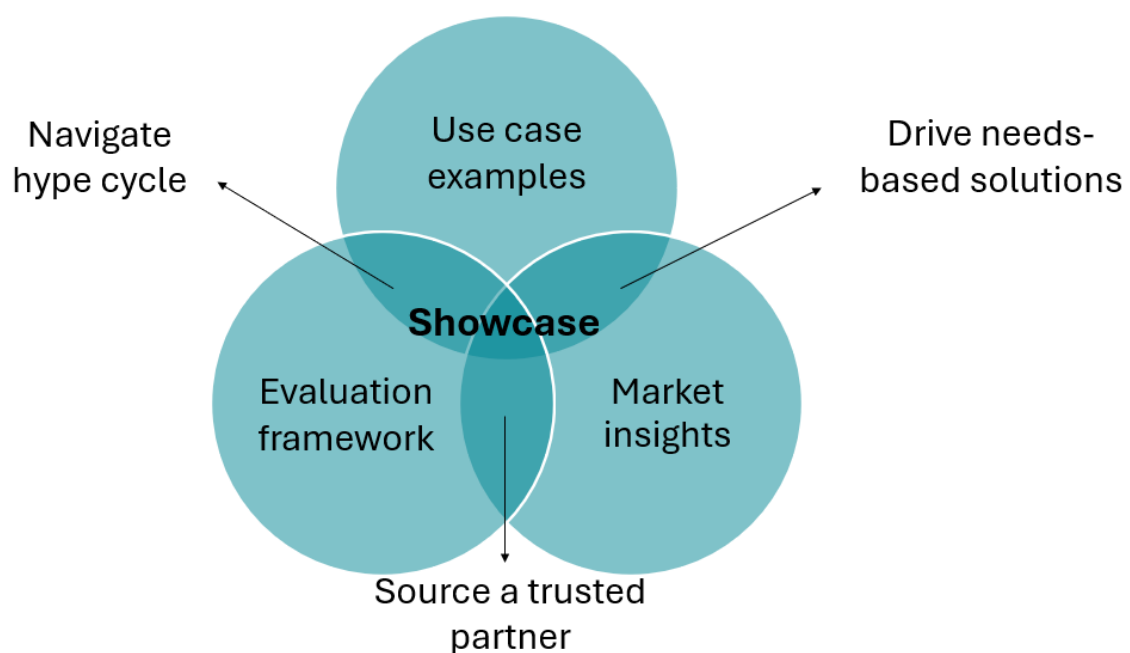
sharing. Both types of technology present opportunities for local government to enhance service delivery and operational efficiency, while also requiring careful consideration of implementation approaches and safeguards.

### 2.3 Research insights

Our Showcase initiative was informed by our [AI State of the Sector](#) survey which we ran in early 2024. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of councils responded, with representation from each authority type and region in England. Fifty-one per cent of these councils reported being at the beginning of AI use or exploration. Additionally, 63 per cent of those respondents exploring or using AI were paying external suppliers for the provision of AI tools or technologies, or were in the process of procuring this.

Of the councils that responded, 41 per cent said a lack of use cases was one of the biggest barriers to deploying AI. More than half requested more guidance on how AI can be purchased, implemented and monitored in line with public sector compliance. Our Showcase responded to these asks by providing a) information on the specific situation in which an AI product or service could potentially be used b) insights into the current AI technology market and c) guidance on how solutions can be evaluated. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between these three foci, alongside other overlapping focal points.

**Figure 1: Showcase focus**



## 2.4. Wider support

AI and smart technology promise to bring numerous benefits to local government, but alongside the rewards are also risks. Our Showcase is one of the ways we have been supporting dialogue and good practice. Over the past two years, we have been actively supporting councils in the safe and responsible adoption of AI and championing innovative practices in the sector. Key initiatives include:

- **[State of the sector AI report](#)**: Our 2024 report provides insights into AI adoption in local government. We are currently working on an updated version, as adoption of AI within the sector continues to advance.
- **Responsible AI procurement guidance**: In collaboration with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), we are developing practical guidance to ensure responsible AI procurement. This guidance is expected to be released in early 2025.
- **[AI use case bank](#)**: We have created a repository of AI use cases from councils across England to highlight innovation and best practices. We are set to double the number of use cases on the bank in early 2025.
- **[AI Communities of Practice](#)**: We have established two active communities (AI Network and [AI Practitioners Network](#)) with over 700 members to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- **[Advocacy](#)**: We actively participate in national AI discussions to ensure that local government is represented in national policy development and parliamentary debate.

All our work and resources are captured on our [Artificial Intelligence Hub](#). As we move into 2025/26 delivery, we will continue to listen and respond to local government colleagues and develop our offer based on the needs of the sector.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Call for challenges

Between 15 August and 19 September 2024, we ran an open call for challenges. We invited councils in England to submit details of a challenge they faced to which AI or smart technology might offer a good solution. This process was supported by several engagement activities:

- **Interactive session (20 August):** Our AI Practitioners' Network convened for an interactive session to explore potential options for creating a challenge statement.
- **Challenge definition workshop (4 September):** We hosted a dedicated workshop at the LGA's AI Network meeting to refine challenge statements.
- **Transformation network presentation (15 September):** We presented the initiative to our Transformation Network, fostering further discussion and interest in council challenges.

Through these events and discussions, we engaged with over 150 officers. We facilitated a collaborative environment where council officers could discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by AI and smart technology within local public service delivery. Officers who were considering submitting a challenge statement were given the opportunity to discuss their challenge in a one-to-one conversation with members of the project team. This gave them the opportunity to refine their statement guided by our 'How Can We...?' method (see Appendix 6).

#### 3.2 Submissions received

In total, 92 separate challenge statements were submitted (see Box 1). Statements were received from all council types and each region of England.

##### Box 1: Details of submission

Challenge statement from:	Number
Individual councils	76
Consortium of councils	10
Local government representative bodies	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>

### 3.3 Shortlisting process

There was a three-stage process to selecting the challenge statements:

- **Addressability:** Challenge statements were first assessed against AI and smart technology addressability i.e., the feasibility of the solution solving the challenge.
- **Economic value:** Challenge statements were secondly assessed against the likely economic value, should the challenge be solved.
- **Positive impact:** Challenges were thirdly assessed against the a) likely positive impact on the end user b) wider sector applicability and c) any likely reputational risks.

### 3.4. Selected statements

Following the shortlisting process, we selected four challenges statements to which vendors would be invited to propose a solution. Box 2 gives full details of each statement.

#### Box 2: Challenge statements

**Challenge 1: How can AI and smart tech tools enable social care practitioners to spend more time with people who require their support?** This challenge sought a solution that would reduce the administrative burden on social work practitioners by streamlining assessment processes, automating scheduling, and improving case management and coordination. The challenge also outlined the opportunities for AI and smart technology in early intervention and care planning optimisation.

**Challenge 2: How can AI and smart tech tools enhance the efficiency of different stages of the planning process?** This challenge sought a solution that would save planning officers time through consultation and application summarisation, and report generation for less complex cases. The challenge also looked for ways to simplify residents' access to planning information, improve application and validation checks and respond to queries faster.

**Challenge 3: How can AI and smart tech tools help implement a digital front door to a council's information and services?** This statement sought solutions for delivering inclusive, user-friendly access to council services to enable residents to efficiently engage with the council online. The challenge focused on accessibility, leveraging information from a diverse range of sources, integration of interpretation and self-service options.

**Challenge 4: How can AI and smart tech tools improve local places through optimising the delivery of services?** This statement sought solutions to enhance traffic and waste resource and management. The challenge asked for AI and smart technology tools that could provide data-driven incident detection, optimise waste collection scheduling and transport routing, and support transport planning for SEND children.

See [Technology Innovation Showcase](#) for more details.

### 3.5. Why these challenge statements?

The four challenge statements outlined in Box 2 were carefully selected following extensive discussion and deliberation by the entire project team. They focus on services with a high administrative burden and areas where councils face significant capacity demands. Within each of these areas, there is significant potential to enhance productivity and drive efficiency with the use of AI and smart technology. Several factors guided our selection:

- **Sector engagement:** Our continuous engagement with the sector, including dedicated meetings, specific showcase engagement sessions, and active listening to key trends within our networks. The four selected statements were a blend of common themes identified across the 92 challenge statements submitted.
- **Stakeholder insights:** Insights from conversations with a panel of sector experts, including representatives from the [Ada Lovelace Institute](#), the [Alan Turing Institute](#), [Socitm](#), [London Office for Technology and Innovation](#) (LOTI), [Greater London Authority](#) (GLA), the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) were crucial in shaping the final challenge statements.
- **Subject matter expertise:** Collaboration with specialist teams within the LGA, particularly within [Partner in Care and Health](#) (PCH) and [Planning Advisory Service](#) (PAS), provided valuable service-specific knowledge to ensure that the selected challenges addressed areas where AI can deliver the most significant value.

## 4. Analysis of submissions

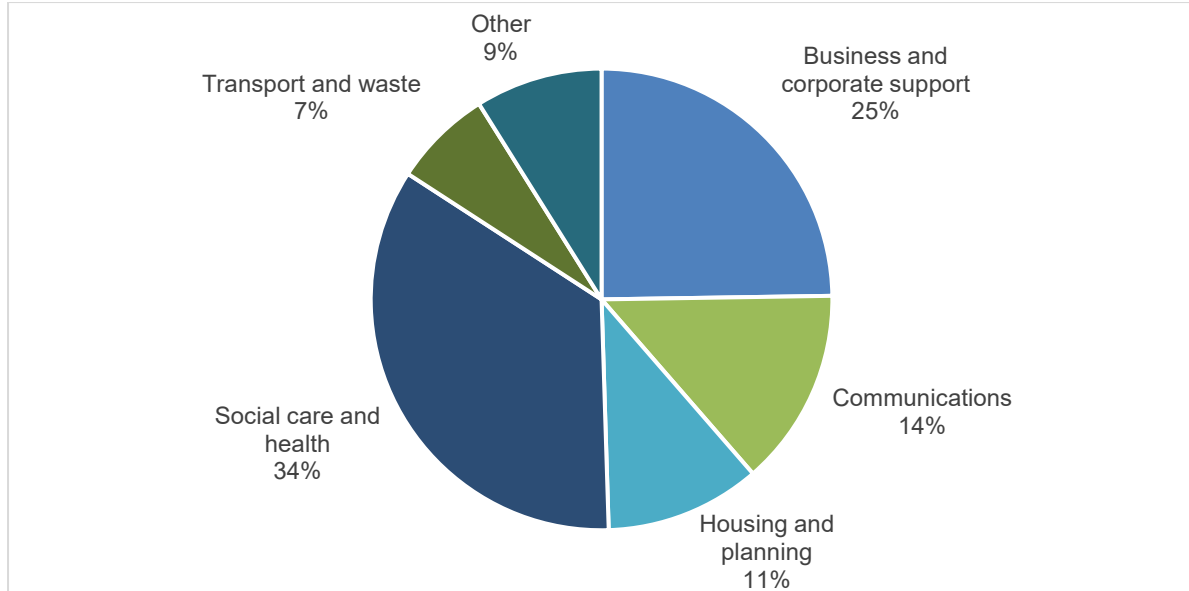
### 4.1 AI implementation areas

To support wider understanding of where within a council AI and smart technology might be implemented, we analysed the 92 challenge statements based on service area application. We found:

- 35 per cent of submissions were related to health and social care.
- 25 per cent of submissions were related to business and corporate support.
- 14 per cent of submissions were related to communications.

Other service areas with fewer submissions were planning, housing, roads, transport and waste (see Figure 2). Notably, some service areas did not receive any submissions such as electoral services, climate change, and culture and sports – although this may be as a result of the composition of the networks used to communicate and provide support on the submission process.

**Figure 2: Percentage share of challenge statements by service area or team**



The abundance of health and social care, and business and corporate support, challenge statements mirror the findings of our [State of the Sector: AI](#) survey, which found that councils are predominantly using, and/or prioritising, AI in these two areas. While well-established AI solutions exist, the emphasis on these areas in our challenge statements indicates a strong council interest in exploring specific applications.

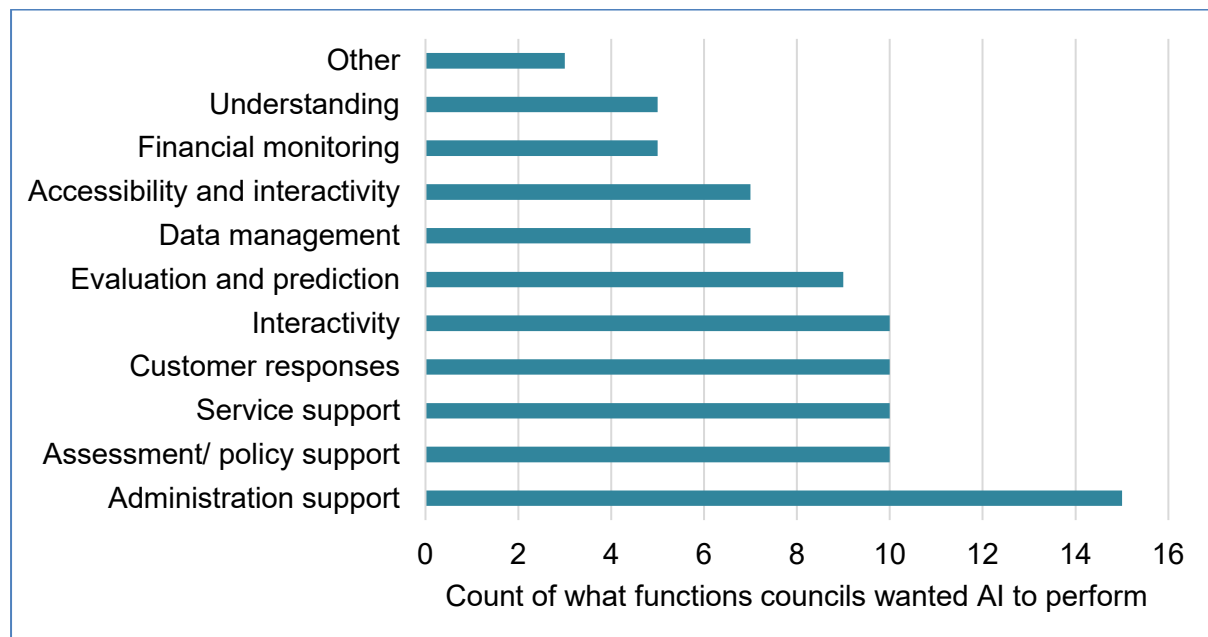


Given that many councils are in the early stages of their AI adoption journey, it's reasonable to expect that they may initially focus on embedding AI where high administrative burdens exist, before exploring its broader strategic potential across the organisation.

#### 4.2 AI and smart tech tasks

Each challenge statement was reviewed in terms of the function for which councils wished to use AI and smart technology (see Figure 3). Administration support was the most frequently mentioned task, with 15 submissions. This was followed by interactivity, customer response, service support, and assessment/policy support, each mentioned in 10 statements. While most AI tasks were specific to individual services, their application could be broadly replicated across various services. For example, challenge statements in social care, business and corporate support and planning mentioned summarisation in specific contexts. The overlap of tasks demonstrates the potential AI and smart tech implementation could have beyond a specific service or team, potentially transforming the way the entire council operates.

**Figure 3: What tasks do councils want AI and smart tech to perform?**



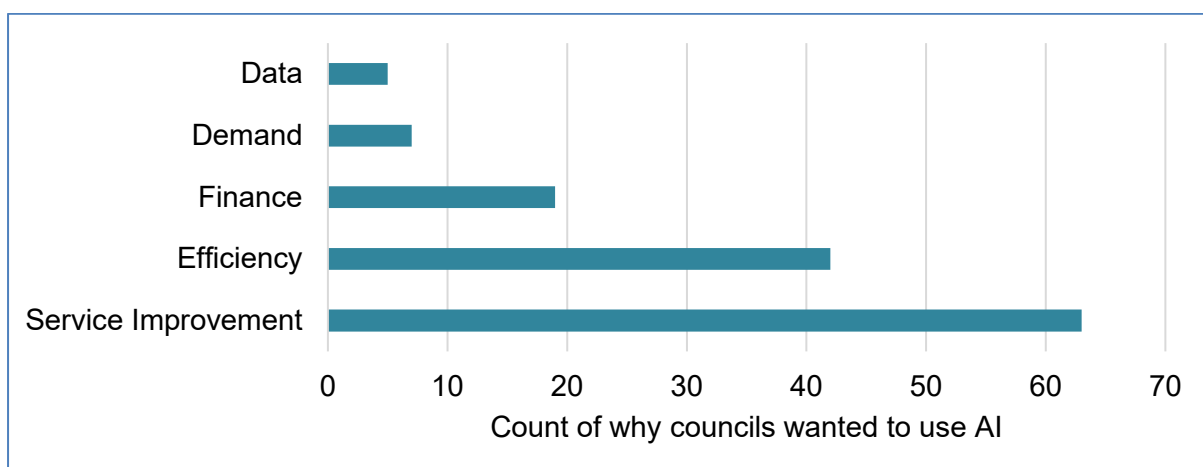
As shown in Figure 3, the range of different tasks councils wanted AI to perform, shows a focus on the internal business use of AI. It appears, based on challenge statements, that councils see AI as a facilitative tool to complement existing processes, transforming how tasks are completed and not, at this point, changing the nature of the work performed. This suggests that councils are looking at AI to alleviate the administrative burden that many of their services and functions present, such as social care and planning (see also Appendix 5).

Additionally, it is important to recognise that many councils are trialling the use of AI to understand its strengths, limitations and build effective governance protocols. As the sector's confidence and capabilities grow, we may see a shift in councils exploring more outwardly-facing AI applications in addition to the largely internally-facing applications found in our challenge statements.

### 4.3 AI drivers

Based on our analysis of challenge statements, service improvement was the main reason for councils wanting to implement AI by a considerable margin, followed by efficiency and finance. This suggests councils see AI as a vehicle for positive change and transformation. Of the challenge statements referring to service improvement, themes such as 'improved outcomes for residents' and 'increased satisfaction with services' appeared. This suggests that councils' implementation and outcome focus is on residents and service users, as one might expect, even if the functions for which they wish to use AI are largely internal.

**Figure 4: Why do councils want to deploy AI and smart technology?**



As shown in Figure 4, almost half the challenge statements referenced efficiency as a reason for wanting to use AI. While efficiencies and finances naturally overlap, it is interesting that finances are referred to less than efficiencies. This suggests that AI is not being looked to simply as a cost-cutting technique but as a broader transformation tool to help improve service delivery. The co-existing priorities of service improvement and efficiency are useful points of considerations for technology providers when thinking of ways to meet the needs of councils (see also Appendix 5).

## 5. Vendor engagement and selection

### 5.1 Application

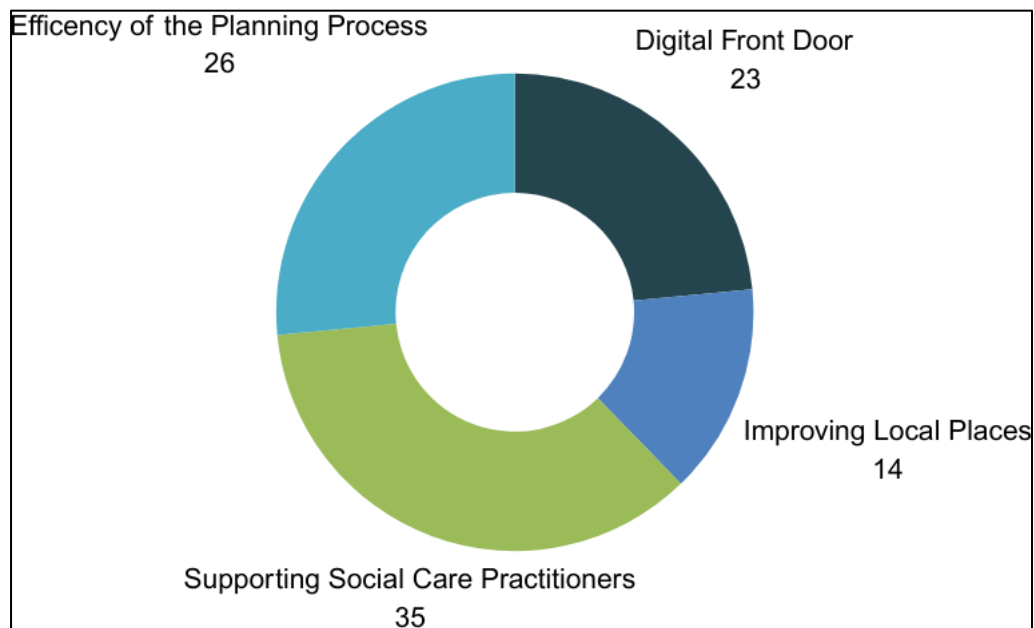
To be eligible for the Showcase, vendors were asked to commit to – or provide evidence of – the following before being invited to pitch a potential solution:

- Working in the open, within the bounds of commercial confidentiality.
- Being willing to open-up products and data to scrutiny.
- Being a legal entity in the UK.
- References from references.
- Product cost, accuracy and performance information.
- Relevant licenses and permissions (e.g., cyber security and data protection).
- Business and financial status of company.
- Supporting local authorities with GDPR and Public Sector Equality Duty compliance.
- An understanding digital challenges within the public sector.
- Producing solutions that represent the needs of end users.

### 5.2. Application process

Eligible vendors were invited to express their interest in one of our four challenge statements using an online application form. This form asked for details of their company, their proposed solution and its relevance to the challenge(s). We received 98 applications in total, and 71 of those were from eligible vendors (see Figure 5). Most vendors expressed an interest in responding to the challenge statement set by social care practitioners. We received several applications from vendors who had previously received funding and resourcing through government funds such as from the LGA, MHCLG, and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

**Figure 5: Challenges that vendors submitted to answer**



### 5.3 Stage 1 of selection process

We reviewed applications using a two-stage process. Stage 1 involved rating each application against the five criteria outlined in Box 3 (see also Appendix 4). Recognising the lack of robust assurance within the current AI ecosystem, our assessment tool was developed in collaboration with key partners, incorporating learnings from key central guidance and similar projects successfully delivered by PUBLIC. We incorporated insights from relevant government departments, particularly the Responsible Technology Adoption Unit (within DSIT), and key regulators.

In particular, the compliance criterion reflected insights from the LGA's ongoing work with the EHRC and ICO. We are currently finalising a practical guide in partnership with these two organisations (titled 'How to Build Equality and Data Protection into your AI Commissioning and Procurement Processes: A Guide for Councils in England') to support responsible AI procurement. Each application was reviewed by three assessors made up of members of the LGA and the PUBLIC team, and 22 out of the 71 were invited to the interview stage, stage 2.

### Box 3: Vendor Selection Criteria

- **Originality and impact:** This theme considered the originality and potential impact of the proposed solution. We looked to select solutions less well-known across the sector and those judged to hold the most promise of likely impact.
- **Team and technology:** This theme considered both vendor and solution maturity. We looked to select vendors with ample technology experience and capabilities, evidenced via case study accounts.
- **Compliance:** This theme considered a vendor's approach to the responsible adoption of AI and smart technology. We looked to select vendors who were well-informed about data protection, responsible AI deployment and compliance in the context of local government (this included Cyber Essentials and ISO certifications).
- **Scalability of the solution:** This theme considered a variety of factors such as a vendor's approach to implementation and the likely scalability across different council sizes and types.
- **Cost-effectiveness and sustainability:** This theme considered the likelihood that a vendor could support a council over an extended period of time if their solution was deployed. We also assessed the financial sustainability of vendors and the likelihood that they could offer good value-for-money.

### 5.4 Stage 2 of selection process

Stage 2 of the selection process involved a 30-minute interview. Vendors were asked a series of questions based on their application. To assess their knowledge and understanding of a council's statutory duties and commitment to the safe and responsible development of AI tools, we pre-selected priority questions from Box 3. These questions focused on key areas such as accuracy and transparency, fairness and equality, and data security of their proposed AI solutions.

Three assessors awarded scores using the same evaluation criteria as in Stage 1, but with the addition of a more in-depth assessment of ethical considerations and the cyber and data security risks associated with their proposed solutions. The three highest scoring vendors in each challenge were invited to participate in the Showcase.

Additionally, a 90-minute training session was offered to all shortlisted vendors. The session addressed the complexities of the public sector procurement process, covering key aspects such as:

- **Purchasing frameworks:** Explaining relevant frameworks and their implications.
- **Key statutory duties:** Outlining crucial local council obligations, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Data Protection requirements, and their specific application within the context of AI adoption and implementation.
- **Showcase format:** Providing a detailed explanation of the showcase format and allowing ample time for questions and clarification.

The assessment process aimed to select vendors and solutions that were most relevant to curated challenges from councils, while simultaneously establishing a baseline level of assurance aligned with statutory and ethical considerations. The process also facilitated direct engagement between the project team and vendors, enabling the team to explain the complexities and challenges of the procurement ecosystem and technology adoption within the local government context. Additionally, it provided a valuable opportunity for the project team to gain a greater understanding of the barriers SMEs have entering local government markets.

## 5.5 Themes and selection

We received 71 applications from eligible vendors wishing to pitch a solution to one or more of our challenge statements. From these, we were looking to invite 12 vendors, three for each challenge statement, to present at our Showcase. Boxes 4 to 7, below, provide details of the vendors we selected; 11 products were AI-based solutions, and one was a smart tech solution (also see Appendix 2 for further details).

Also below, we provide a themed analysis of all 71 applications to support understanding of the breadth of solutions on the market, and also what councils might wish to look for when conducting market engagement. From a vendor perspective, our analysis identifies themes that may aid understandings of what councils are likely to find useful from a supplier.

#### **Box 4: Efficiency of the planning process**

*Applications received: 26*

The applications received for this challenge highlight the potential value of AI to streamline aspects of the planning process. Most applications focused on supporting citizen engagement and consultation through AI-powered sentiment analysis. [The Future Fox](#) was selected for its pre-existing compatibility with processes involved in local authority planning.

Solutions targeting cumbersome or time-consuming elements of the planning process rather than generic tools stood out. [Genie AI](#) was selected for its ability to draft, review and negotiate section 106 agreements. And [Verna Earth](#)'s Mycelia solution was selected for making clear how it could help councils meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) reporting and other ecological considerations.

Small businesses designing solutions to support Local Planning Authorities can make significant breakthroughs in streamlining the planning process, including in the areas outlines above and, for example, in relation to heritage land and buildings, and in the preparation of design codes. Solutions designed by individuals with specific topic familiarity were especially well-placed to address the challenges councils faced.



## Box 5: Supporting social care practitioners

*Applications received: 35*

The high number of applications received for this challenge reflects the pressing need to address numerous concerns for social care. It is an area for which AI and smart technology could relieve many burdens, such as excessive time pressures, but it is also a high-risk area with service user, and regulatory, complexities.

Automated transcription solutions featured in the submissions received from vendors for use in either face-to-face or over-the-phone meetings – aimed at supporting service users and social workers through the production of accurate, real-time case notes. [Emma AI](#) and [Starlight](#) were selected for their deep subject knowledge gained through first-hand and professional experience of the care sector.

We also received submissions from vendors offering tools that used data to support the prioritisation of care services and to monitor the condition of those receiving care. Of the various tools offered, [Lilli](#) was selected.

Owing to our ‘originality’ criteria we did not showcase products from vendors already established in supporting social care teams. Such vendors, however, did successfully demonstrate the potential value of their products for social care practitioners.

It was encouraging to see vendors open to collaborating with the health and care sector to improve the quality and robustness of social care. We saw examples of tools that can, for instance, support cross-working between the NHS, education and social care.

Most submissions offered solutions to challenges within adult social care. However, it is likely that some would be equally applicable to children’s social care. There is scope for further engagement with industry to identify and promote tools that can meet the nuanced and complex needs of services for children and young people.

### **Box 6: Improving local places**

*Applications received: 14*

A number of submissions focused on intelligent transportation and traffic management. [Immense Simulations](#), [Podaris](#) and [Alchera Technologies](#) were selected for their use of AI technologies to support transport planning and systems, including ways to limit disruption and manage works.

Despite interest from councils, no vendors submitted a solution for detecting potholes or optimising waste management. There is ample potential for vendors to apply their technology to these two areas, and to fill a gap not currently met by some facilities management providers.

### **Box 7: Digital front door**

*Applications received: 23*

The number of applications submitted for this challenge highlights an interest in creating a seamless 'front door' experience for residents, businesses and visitors through a single route to access services.

[Futr](#) and [Beebot](#) were selected because they looked to address specific customer friction points, which was a stronger approach than was presented by other chatbot and virtual assistant submissions.

[Mortar](#), a modular platform that can be used to help deliver multiple services, was also selected due to its use of co-design and its focus on good service design to help customers get to the information they need.

There is scope for vendors interested in this challenge area to further consider, for example, how to integrate IoT technologies into 'front door' solutions to support users in finding the information they need from a council.

## 6. Insights and reflections

### 6.1 A challenge-led approach

Our challenge-led approach was valuable for three reasons. First, it enabled councils to identify problems themselves to which vendors could respond (which we could later filter using a bespoke evaluation framework). This meant each challenge focused on here-and-now problems. Second, it provided a structured environment for the formation of ideas. We facilitated this through a series of challenge definition workshops. This meant councils at various stages of AI maturity, from discovery to adoption, were able to share experiences. Third, it enabled councils to work together on shared problems. This enhanced the credibility and legitimacy of each challenge, leading to more interest from vendors.

### 6.2 Collaborative spaces

Our initiative focused on creating collaborative spaces for councils to explore emerging technologies, supported by expert scrutiny and peer learning, without the pressure to procure. As mentioned above, we facilitated collaboration through a series of challenge definition workshops. For example, a meaningful discussion between councils informed a social care challenge statement – based on pooled evidence that social care practitioners were spending approximately 70 per cent of their time on paperwork rather than direct care delivery.

North Yorkshire Council sponsored two of the four challenge statements. Its IT Business Relationship Manager provided the following feedback on the benefit of defining challenge statements in collaboration with other councils:

*‘The Innovation event was a really interesting and valuable way to tackle our shared challenges. As councils, we were empowered to describe our challenges and reframe the conversation back to what outcomes we want rather than the latest bit of tech. Working in this way means working for and with councils holistically and for shared benefit rather than leaving us to tackle suppliers (and their sales pitches!) alone. It felt much more collaborative across all parties and gave a fresh new way to tackle issues and open up the space for solutions.’*

Cath Ritchie, Business Relationship Manager at North Yorkshire Council

### 6.3 A focus on start-ups and SMEs

Our initiative focused on start-ups and SMEs rather than incumbent technology vendors. High market concentration can produce undesirable consequences for local authorities; as such, product novelty, experimentation and co-design were important aspects of our approach. Equally, our engagement with startups and SMEs highlighted the difficulties they face trying to enter the local government market. We sought to create a unique environment wherein such vendors could directly discuss with councils the possible outcomes of their innovation, prior to the launching of a formal procurement process.

In moving away from traditional vendor-focused formats, our initiative gave councils the opportunity to discuss their challenges and aspirations with vendors. By facilitating an open, low-pressure space for the sharing ideas and knowledge, we were able to deepen understanding of the opportunities and the realities of AI adoption.

### 6.4 Contributions from expert panels

We assembled a panel of experts, one per challenge statement, to provide feedback on each vendor's pitch. Each panel played a pivotal role in scrutinising the benefits and disbenefits of each solution. A summary of their feedback is provided below:

- **Planning:** Representatives from [MHCLG's digital planning team](#), [Enfield Council](#) and the [Digital Task Force for Planning](#) shared valuable perspectives on integrating new technologies into existing workflows. The panel cautioned against an over-reliance on dominant market players, advocating for more diverse and flexible approaches for technology adoption.
- **Local place:** Representatives from [Connected Places Catapult](#) and [Geovation](#) spoke about the importance of aligning technology with local priorities to deliver meaningful outcomes for communities. They emphasised the vital role data plays in driving innovation by helping organisations make better decisions and optimise workflows – supported by robust data governance.
- **Social care:** Representatives from [North Tyneside Council](#), [The Alan Turing Institute](#), [Social Finance](#) and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) discussed 'patient voice' in the context of technology-enabled care. The panel also emphasised the importance of trust, data governance and success metrics in ensuring that AI enhances rather than replaces human-centred care. Panellists voiced concern about the possibility that time pressures could, inadvertently, result in using AI tools to make decisions rather than to provide advice.

- **Digital front door:** Representatives from [Apolitical](#) and [Ayup Digital](#) provided feedback to vendors from a service design perspective and stressed the importance of understanding complete user journeys. Their comments positioned citizen engagement and digital accessibility at the heart of this challenge by stressing the need to balance technological solutions with inclusivity and broader service outcomes. Keri Landau, Head of Government Partnerships at Apolitical said of the event:

*‘Today was a great example of how important it is for councils to share and learn from one another. It’s about building trust and understanding while fostering innovation. We need to understand how to innovate effectively within government frameworks.’*

### 6.5 Contributions from speakers

Our event offered additional support to councils through contributions by The Ada Lovelace Institute and the No.10 Data Science Team. Their presentations placed AI and smart technology in a wider strategic context, while also focusing on challenges and opportunities for local government. Together, they offered a blend of thought leadership and practical guidance, which guided conversations throughout the day.

A keynote address by the [Ada Lovelace Institute on AI procurement](#) within local government marked a key moment in the Showcase. Ada’s researchers found significant gaps in current procurement processes and guidance. These gaps, which exist because AI solutions can be so complex, create a barrier for councils in adopting technologies effectively. Ada’s researchers outlined a need to see procurement as a strategic enabler rather than a procedural hurdle, capable of driving innovation while ensuring governance remains robust and ethical. Dr Mavis Machirori, Senior Researcher at Ada Lovelace Institute, said:

*‘There is a great opportunity for AI technologies to bring benefit to communities, but they need to be bought well. Currently, the landscape in which AI is procured does not support those aims around benefitting society. We are pleased to be part of this very useful discussion and look forward to seeing how local government procurement of AI can grow to support service providers and their communities.’*

Ada’s research highlights critical issues, including the absence of clear, consistent definitions for AI across local government, ongoing data governance difficulties and limited access to actionable insights. To address these challenges, The Ada Lovelace Institute has

called for a new national taskforce for AI procurement in local government. The taskforce would aim to unify guidance, standardise tools such as contract templates, develop success metrics, and build technical skills. The emphasis on coordinated support resonated strongly with attendees, particularly given the shared challenges councils face in navigating procurement processes individually.

A second keynote address from The 10 Downing Street Data Science Team (10DS) complemented the insights provided by The Ada Lovelace Institute. Eoin Mulgrew, Head of Innovation Programmes, presented a series of practical lessons drawn from central government experience. He outlined how initiatives such as 10DS's Evidence House programme have successfully used innovation challenges and hackathons to accelerate the development of AI solutions. These approaches highlight the importance of embedding technical expertise in public sector organisations to help foster innovation.

## 6.6 Key messages for councils

We outlined below some steps councils can take to continue their AI journey:

- **Explore collaboration opportunities:** Our Showcase demonstrates the value of collaborative problem-setting. We created a space for officers from a wide range of councils, and service areas, to exchange knowledge and ideas, and to share information on existing solutions. Working together creates opportunities for a more joined-up approach to increase AI readiness across councils and better align the technology market with the demands of local authorities.
- **Join a network:** The LGA's AI Networks were instrumental in shaping the challenges explored at our Showcase – providing a space for officers to connect with likeminded people in the AI community. Our AI networks feature items such as practice examples and emerging guidance on buying AI responsibly (for example, previous discussions have focused on data protection, risk and assurance, and compliance duties).
- **Focus on outcomes:** Our Showcase prioritised a focus on outcomes. We encouraged officers, through our challenge definition workshops, to frame their challenge statement around a user's need such as a new parent looking for support or a social worker writing up case notes. The point being that an AI or smart tech solution is a means to an outcome, not the outcome itself. We achieved this by using a methodology called 'How Can We...?' (see Appendix 6).

- **Engage the market:** Our Showcase, and similar initiatives, provide a range of soft testing benefits. These include better market intelligence (becoming more aware of current solutions), challenge-led procurement (approaching the market with a clear idea of one's needs without specifying a solution), and pre-market engagement (canvassing feedback on one's requirements before a tender is issued).
- **Access guidance:**
  - The LGA has produced guidance for councils on [understanding supply analysing and managing the market](#).
  - The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced guidance on the [relationship between data protection laws and PSED](#).
  - The ICO provides useful advice and practical toolkits for AI adoption [guidance and practical toolkits for AI adoption](#) and data protection risk mitigation.
  - The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) produces guidance [on how to carry out early market engagement successfully](#).
  - The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) has produced [step by step pre procurement guidance](#).

## 6.7 Support for vendors

To provide the best experience for our local authority members, we helped vendors to prepare for the Showcase. Our guidance focused on ways to frame a pitch around the specific needs of our challenge owners, using evidence presented to us by councils in the early stages of the project. As a result, vendors made good attempts to tailor their narrative to the pain points of our challenge owners and, more broadly, each pitch connected more closely with our wider local authority audience. All vendors were well-placed to answer questions about how their solution could offer benefits for councils.

Providing support to vendors was important; all participants of our Showcase benefitted from vendors' enhanced understanding of how councils operate, including the cost and demand challenges they face. For further guidance on working with councils, vendors can visit the LGA's Procurement Hub which outlines [helpful tips for working with councils](#).

## 6.8 Feedback from vendors

Following our Showcase, we received overwhelming positive feedback from, and about, participating vendors. Our core audience of council officers praised the demonstrations from vendors, with each presentation leading to discussions on how each solution (or a variation) could be used to enhance local council services.

For vendors, presenting their solution to multiple councils all at once, had obvious benefits. And during post-event feedback sessions, several vendors reported on the productive conversations they had held with councils because of the Showcase, unrelated to any planned or live procurement opportunities.

Moving forwards, vendors asked for more showcase-type events, and remarked upon the potential value of cross-sector roundtables to speak directly to councils about the challenges and opportunities of AI and smart tech. They also suggested modifications to the format of the Showcase, notably to breakdown the one-directional aspect of presentations.

### 6.9 Key messages for vendors

Below, are some messages for vendors that may support conversations with councils:

- **Use simple language:** Explain a product in plain English particularly when referring to complex processes and compliance standards to make it easier for an audience to evaluate how a solution might work in their context.
- **Tell a story:** Our Showcase featured presentations from vendors with first-hand experience of the council service to which their solution responded. All good product stories start with context – and establishing this from the start can be profoundly impactful.
- **Build case studies:** Where possible, sharing a list of customers, and how a product can be adapted and used in other contexts, helps to build trust and confidence in the potential of a solution to achieve good outcomes.
- **Standout from others:** We found through our Showcase that using novel or outside-the-box presentation techniques was successful in grabbing attention.
- **Address compliance:** Explain how a solution is compliant with the required regulatory rules for the jurisdiction served by councils and be familiar with sector-specific concerns about compliance management.
- **Gain sector knowledge:** Be familiar with the functions of local government including those with associated legal duties to work within the scope of these requirements.
- **Work transparently:** Be open about the data and systems that run a solution, and address concerns about transparency, explainability and accountability to build trust and confidence.
- **Design for scale:** To work across multiple councils, consider ways in which a solution can provide value across local government.



## 7. Looking ahead

### 7.1 Building on success

The positive response to our Showcase highlights the value of early market engagement for both councils and vendors. Councils gained insights into innovative solutions, while vendors had the opportunity to understand the needs of the local government sector more directly. The success of our Showcase has opened up numerous opportunities and considerations for future collaboration and events with councils and vendors.

There is a clear appetite for further Showcase events. The LGA is committed to building on this enthusiasm, and we are exploring ways to develop the initiative to maximise its reach and impact. We are engaging with stakeholders who have reached out to suggest ways to fund and shape future events. As we move into 2025/26, we will be considering how best we can further support councils in navigating the complexities of public sector technology procurement – we provide some early thoughts below.

### 7.2 Service-specific 'AI in Action' Showcase series

The LGA's first Technology Innovation Showcase highlighted the wide-ranging applications of AI and smart technology to challenges faced by local government. While the initial event covered multiple service areas, future showcases may benefit from a single focus on a specific service area. This targeted approach would enable a deeper exploration of unique challenges and potential solutions within a given area of business.

Several priority service areas could form part of the LGA's Showcase series. Beyond the areas featured in the initial Showcase, many other pain points were identified in the 92 challenge statements submitted by councils. For example, housing, a critical service facing numerous challenges, could be a valuable focus for a future Showcase. Furthermore, over 300 local authorities have declared a climate emergency, and almost two-thirds of English councils aim to achieve carbon neutrality twenty years ahead of the national target. Consequently, exploring how existing and emerging AI capabilities can support these ambitious goals could be another focus for a Showcase.

Additionally, revisiting service areas initially covered in the inaugural showcase, such as social care, could also be beneficial. Social care remains a high priority for councils, often dominating discussions on AI adoption due to the service's significant operational costs and rising demand, as recently reported by the [County Councils Network](#). Allocating time for in-

depth conversations on strategies to enhance social care's productivity and efficiency would be valuable for social care practitioners.

### 7.3 A focus on in-house development

There is no standard approach to AI adoption across councils. A council's approach will be influenced by its internal capacity, capabilities, and resource allocation for AI development. Furthermore, factors such as organisational culture, the existing digital and technological ecosystem, and overarching corporate priorities can heavily influence a council's AI strategy. There is, however, a growing trend towards in-house development. This is evidenced by the establishment of our AI Practitioners' Network, in partnership with [LocalGov Digital](#), which was specifically created to explore alternative approaches to relying solely on COTS solutions.

Developing in-house AI tools or adopting a hybrid approach can offer cost-effective and bespoke alternatives to COTS solutions. Additionally, by developing or significantly customising AI solutions, councils can enhance their control over data security and ensure compliance with data protection regulations. This is crucial for councils handling sensitive citizen data or looking to deploy AI in service areas such as social care. However, they require significant internal expertise and a high level of digital maturity. Even hybrid approaches necessitate enhanced digital skills and knowledge to ensure the long-term sustainability of the approach.

Future showcase events could be used as a platform to highlight the in-house development work of councils and discuss the challenges of developing tools internally. Additionally, future iterations could emphasise the potential for collaborative development between vendors and councils, as this began to emerge during the initial showcase event.

To further encourage bespoke tool development, future showcases could incorporate a hackathon-style element. This would allow councils to rapidly prototype concept AI tools over a few days, fostering innovation and accelerating knowledge transfer. Exploring partnerships with central government projects such as the [incubator for AI](#) (i.AI) are worth consideration. Such partnerships could provide local authorities with valuable support and leverage central development capacity and skills.

## 7.4 Piloting and development

Future iterations of a showcase could include an ‘incubator space’ or sandbox, for commended solutions, providing a safe environment for testing, de-risked piloting, and co-developing technology with vendors. This would support decision-makers, often operating under time and resource constraints, by offering a low-risk, supported space to experiment with new technologies and evaluate potential solutions, facilitated by the LGA and partners.

Such ‘incubators’ would enable councils to trial and test technology early in pre-procurement and market engagement stages, providing valuable feedback to vendors and allowing them to refine their solutions to meet council requirements. This process would instil greater confidence in councils purchasing AI technology from SMEs. Additionally, it would benefit SMEs by providing a deeper understanding of council dynamics and enabling them to develop technology tailored to the sector’s needs. This could increase market diversification for councils, which is currently perceived as being concentrated by larger, more established technology firms.

## 7.5 Funding and sponsorship

Funding is one of the most significant challenges for both councils and SMEs. Moving forward, the LGA’s ambition is to explore partnerships with key central government departments and commercial partners to deliver future showcase events. Such partnerships could enhance the opportunities for the funding required to progress technology solutions on the ground, and provide the potential to explore routes to market for various solutions.

For SMEs, seed funding could be provided to take their idea from conception into a pilot or proof-as-concept (POC) within a local authority, covering the costs associated with developing prototypes. For local authorities, such pilots or POCs have the potential to provide insight into wider service improvements or efficiency gains. These insights could be presented to decision-makers to make the case for longer-term investment. Local authorities would gain from the resulting technical expertise and assurance provided by partnering with a vendor during a trial period, and also cross-sector knowledge sharing.

## 8. Conclusion

For the LGA, the Technology Innovation Showcase was a first-of-its-kind initiative. It aimed to uncover technology solutions with the potential to meet a need as defined by councils in market perceived as supplier-led. Based on the feedback we received, our Showcase offered valuable learning for councils and vendors. It provided a space for councils to access market intelligence often underutilised within the public sector, and provided a meaningful opportunity for vendors to showcase new products and ideas.

There is a range of technology innovation happening in the private sector, with a diverse pool of suppliers outside of larger, incumbent suppliers, that councils may not have always have the time or opportunities to learn about. Our initiative introduced us to just a fraction of the AI and smart technologies on the market – and were able to only showcase a handful at our event. But importantly, we created a space for councils to approach the purchasing of technology through a problem-setting methodology. And, similarly, a space for vendors to directly respond to the here-and-now challenges that councils are facing.

We will continue to advocate for the responsible adoption of AI solutions in our work with councils, civil servants, academics, regulators and industry. This coordinated cross-sector approach is critical for nurturing mutual understanding and alignment. Through our engagement, we aim to contribute to a stronger state of digital readiness across the sector – meaning that councils feel more able to adapt to, and integrate with, new technologies. The introduction of a new Procurement Act next month will present further opportunities for early market engagement innovation. We will carry on providing support on the buying and managing of AI systems through a package of information, advice and guidance and the promotion of good practice.

## Afterword

The LGA's Technology Innovation Showcase has been a landmark programme for the local government sector. With over a hundred challenges submitted and more than 70 vendors applying to participate, the event shows a clear trend among councils for leveraging new technology and for innovative providers to commit resources to support them.

Networks like the LGA's AI Network and AI Practitioners' Network have been utilised to great effect, new dialogue has been opened between No.10 and local government, and possible new partnerships between local authorities have been established.

While it can be challenging for councils to fully engage with trends in the development of AI solutions, there is significant optimism surrounding their use, demonstrated by the engagement we had from Showcase attendees. Additionally, resulting conversations signify a positive shift in the dynamic between councils and vendors towards a more collaborative, transparent and joined-up approach, and demonstrate the value of Showcase events.

These council-vendor engagements have generated a better understanding of new providers, including those less than two years old and/or with limited experience in the local authority sector but who could offer significant value. Take, for example, Genie AI, who have demonstrated strong product-market fit in the private sector but are less familiar with the public sector, or Starlight and Emma, who are newer providers to the space but with meaningful front-line experience.

Looking ahead, I'd like to see more joined-up challenge scoping, with councils problem-solving together and with technology professionals, and ultimately, better procurement and implementation of AI services. There is huge potential for councils and vendors to implement solutions, and for a 'showcase' model of engagement to be replicated in different parts of the country and in different service areas.

The success and impact of the Technology Innovation Showcase was due to the efforts of all involved. At PUBLIC, we know how difficult it can be to bridge the gap between the tech world and the public sector. The team at the LGA, council officers, vendors and all other stakeholders involved in this project deserve enormous credit and thanks for their vision and desire to try and improve council services.

Johnny Hugill, Director of Commercial, Spend and Impact, PUBLIC

## Appendix 1: List of challenge owners

Table 1: Authorities who defined and sponsored each of the challenge statements

Challenge statement	Owners
Digital Front Door	Bath and Northeast Somerset Council City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council Devon County Council North Yorkshire Council Sefton Council Stevenage Borough Council
Supporting social care practitioners	Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council Cornwall Council Dorset Council Kirklees Council North Northamptonshire Council North Yorkshire Council Plymouth City Council Sefton Council Somerset Council South West ADASS St Helens Borough Council Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council West Northamptonshire Council
Efficiency of the planning process	Planning Advisory Service South Hams District Council South West Devon Borough Council Teignbridge Council
Improving local places	Cambridgeshire County Council Peterborough City Council Teignbridge Council Thanet District Council

## **Appendix 2: List of featured vendors**

### **Digital Front Door**

[Futr AI](#) is a SaaS platform aimed at transforming how public services engage with their staff and citizens. It is a multichannel, multilingual AI and live chat hybrid solution focusing on seamless communication between public services and the public across multiple platforms to help ensure that people receive timely and accurate support in their preferred language.

[Mortar's](#) Hoop'd is a modular framework for building customised service design solutions, focused on supporting users and staff in navigating, promoting and communicating services. A Hoop'd solution applies intelligence to help generate accessible communication content, compile directories, make personalised recommendations, and prioritise cases.

[Beebot AI](#) provides a platform aimed at delivering modern, intuitive and improved user experience for citizens, council staff and council partners through an engaging and easy to use interface. It combines technologies such as conversational AI and robotic process automation with AI-driven analytics to help organisations reduce costs, drive scalability and enhance user experiences.

### **Efficiency of the Planning Process**

[Genie AI](#) uses AI to automate the drafting and review of section 106 agreements. Genie's technology has been developed for legal accuracy in collaboration with 'Magic Circle' law firms, such as Withers and CMS, and for security in partnership with Oxford, Imperial Universities and UCL.

[Verna Earth](#)'s tools assist a range of users, including planning authorities and developers, to engage with complex ecological information to drive better environmental outcomes. One of Verna's tools is Mycelia, a software solution to support the implementation of new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation in England.

[The Future Fox's](#) PlaceBuilder platform handles the setup of a consultation for planning processes with the aim of helping councils save time and money by removing the manual, repetitive tasks involved in launching, analysing and reporting on planning consultations. Its AI technology is used to produce high-quality reports that adhere to planning-specific standards.

## **Improving Local Places**

[Alchera Technologies](#)'s enterprise-grade mobility and infrastructure systems provide software tools and machine learning applications to power data-driven infrastructure. Currently, it provides three off-the-shelf tools, Alchera Bus, Alchera Data Hub and Alchera Highways, each capable of delivering granular mobility data, helping local authorities improve networks strategically and operationally.

[Immense Simulations](#) provides AI-powered fleet and traffic management tools to public sector officers and their supply chain partners. These tools enable a rapid and consistent assessment of interventions that may affect operations and performance. Standardised reports are generated, detailing the locations and times of potential queues, delays, disruptions to key routes, likely detour behaviours, and associated CO2 and NOx emissions.

[Podaris](#)'s web-based platform leverages cloud collaboration technology to optimise transport planning, analysis, and stakeholder engagement. Its platform enables users to create and analyse multi-modal transport networks — including traditional modes like rail and bus, as well as innovative modes such as micro-mobility and personal rapid transit.

## **Supporting Social Care Practitioners**

[Emma AI](#) is an AI-driven monitoring system with three main products. Emma Core is a conversational interface app to support frontline care teams with organisation- and person-specific data kept within digital products. Emma Analytics analyses historic care delivery to flag changes in care needs or concerns. Emma Generation can train a Generative AI model with organisation- and person-specific data to generate, for instance, AI Care Act assessments and Quality Assurance Reports.

[Lilli](#) provides proactive lifestyle monitoring technology to the health and social care sector. Deployed in the homes of people receiving/needing care, Lilli's non-intrusive, sensor-based technology provides a detailed view of behaviour patterns needed to assess care needs. This enables care providers to make quick, evidence-based decisions in real-time, accelerating assessments and reablement, reducing hospital visits and admissions, and speeding up discharge.

[Starlight](#) offers a suite of smart tools for transforming how social care practitioners work, automating administrative burdens. The platform streamlines processes from intelligent referral triaging and case allocation to automated record-keeping and real-time analytics. By handling the time-consuming paperwork, Starlight aims to help practitioners focus on human



care.

### Appendix 3: List of shortlisted vendors

Name	Contact details	Roles	Challenge
Beebot AI	Zoran Ristic <a href="mailto:Zoran.ristic@beebotai.com">Zoran.ristic@beebotai.com</a>	Senior Solutions Consultant	Digital front door
CC2i	Jane Hancer <a href="mailto:jane.hancer@cc2i.org.uk">jane.hancer@cc2i.org.uk</a>	Programme Director	Digital front door
FutrAI	Lee Skyrme <a href="mailto:lee@futr.ai">lee@futr.ai</a>	CTO and Co-Founder	Digital front door
Mortar	George Unsworth, <a href="mailto:george@mortar.works">george@mortar.works</a>	CEO, Founder	Digital front door
Commonplace	Mike Saunders <a href="mailto:mike@commonplace.is">mike@commonplace.is</a>	CEO and Co-founder	Efficiency of the planning process
Future Fox	Annette Jezierska <a href="mailto:annette@thefuturefox.com">annette@thefuturefox.com</a>	CEO	Efficiency of the planning process
Genie AI	Ed Kendall <a href="mailto:ed.ken.24@genieai.co">ed.ken.24@genieai.co</a>	Head of Sales	Efficiency of the planning process
Preoptima	Alex Bentock <a href="mailto:alex@preoptima.com">alex@preoptima.com</a>	Founder's Associate	Efficiency of the planning process
Verna Earth	Matthew Brown <a href="mailto:matthew.brown@verna.earth">matthew.brown@verna.earth</a>	Co-CEO	Efficiency of the planning process
Alchera	Tom Mckenna <a href="mailto:tom@alchertechnologies.com">tom@alchertechnologies.com</a>	Business Development Manager	Improving local places
Coplug	Darshana Gothi Chauhan <a href="mailto:contact@coplugdata.com">contact@coplugdata.com</a>	CEO, Founder	Improving local places
DGCities	Balazs Csuvar <a href="mailto:balazs.csuvar@dgcities.com">balazs.csuvar@dgcities.com</a>	Director of Innovation and Net Zero	Improving local places
Immense Solutions	Robin North <a href="mailto:robin.north@immense.ai">robin.north@immense.ai</a>	CEO	Improving local places
Podaris	Devon Barret <a href="mailto:devon@podaris.com">devon@podaris.com</a>	Co-founder	Improving local places
Andi 2iC-Care	David Trott <a href="mailto:David.Trott@2ic-care.com">David.Trott@2ic-care.com</a>	Sales Director	Supporting social care practitioners
Beam	Rachel Astall <a href="mailto:rachel@beam.org">rachel@beam.org</a>	Chief Customer Officer	Supporting social care practitioners
Emma AI	Charles Cross <a href="mailto:charles@askemma.org">charles@askemma.org</a>	Co-founder	Supporting social care practitioners
Lilli	Nick Weston <a href="mailto:nick.weston@intelligentlilli.com">nick.weston@intelligentlilli.com</a> Matthew Ford <a href="mailto:matthew.ford@intelligentlilli.com">matthew.ford@intelligentlilli.com</a>	Chief Commercial Officer; Sales Director	Supporting social care practitioners
Starlight	Shazbaz Ahmed <a href="mailto:shahbaz@starlight.inc">shahbaz@starlight.inc</a>	CEO, Founder	Supporting social care practitioners

## Appendix 4: Assessment tool

Category and weighting	Originality and Impact of the solution (25%)	Team & Technology: Solution & vendor maturity (25%)	Scalability of solution (20%)	Compliance: Supporting responsible adoption of AI within the public sector (20%)	Cost effectiveness and sustainability (10%)
<b>Rationale, link to eligibility criteria and application questions</b>	<p>Ensure solutions represent needs of end users.</p> <p>Application question focused on how their solution can address the challenge outlined</p>	<p>Provide customer references, product accuracy, and performance information,</p> <p>Understand digital challenges within the public sector</p> <p>What is the existing capabilities and market traction of the solution?</p> <p>Openness and explainability of the solution in their application</p>	<p>Current public sector or relevant case studies</p> <p>Application question on how they would address constraints and challenges in the statement</p> <p>Is the solution applicable to the local government sector?</p> <p>With the information provided, how scalable would the technology be/ level of customisation required?</p>	<p>Support local authorities with GDPR and Public Sector Equality Duty compliance</p> <p>Provide evidence of relevant licences where appropriate</p> <p>Application question on how vendors would ensure the privacy and security of public sector data</p> <p>*For shortlisted Vendors, will be asked to complete the adapted DSIT AIME self-assessment framework</p>	<p>Provide evidence of business and financial status of the company</p> <p>Value and date provided of their most recent round of funding</p> <p>Is the organisation financially stable?</p>

## **Appendix 5: Thematic analysis of challenge statements**

### **Which tasks did councils want AI and smart technology to complete (see Figure 3)?**

- Accessibility and interactivity: Improve access to information and services, promoting interaction with the council.
- Administrative support: Complete repetitive or time intensive administrative tasks.
- Assessment/ policy support: Assist with assessment and policy compliance and completion such as social care assessments and FOI requests.
- Customer responses: Supporting councils to respond to queries and streamline communications.
- Data management: Improve data availability and security.
- Evaluation and prediction: Collate information to provide recommendations and insights.
- Financial monitoring: Assist with revenue generation and maximising spend efficiency.
- Service support: Improve the quality of different council services through supporting existing services.
- Understanding: Improve the visibility of information.

### **Why did councils want to use AI and smart technology (see Figure 4).**

- Data: Improving data access and quality.
- Demand: Helping councils to provide services in the context of increased demand and reduced capacity.
- Efficiency: Enable staff to complete more meaningful work by improving the speed of processes and tasks.
- Finance: Reducing expenditure and increasing income.
- Service improvement: Improving outcomes and experiences for residents and service users, such as increasing accessibility and an understanding of resident needs.

## Appendix 6: 'How Can We...?'

We encouraged councils to work collaboratively using the 'How Can We...?' incipit when drafting challenge statements to focus attention on desired outcomes. We also offered several prompts to support the process:

- What is the desired change or impact on the end user we are trying to achieve?
- What would success look like if the above was achieved?
- What council service priority area will the solution target?
- Has problem has been unsuccessfully solved in the past, and how?
- Are there examples of where best practice and/or solutions have been used in this area before?

We gave this example of a challenge statement: *"How can AI tools personalise experiences when residents interact with public services outline?"*



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